



2018

TEACH ILLINOIS
STRONG TEACHERS, STRONG
CLASSROOMS

POLICY SOLUTIONS TO ALLEVIATE TEACHER SHORTAGES IN ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 2018

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

Illinois State Board of Education's Vision for Illinois Schools

Experience, research and intuition tell us that teachers are the cornerstone of a successful education, and in turn a thriving economy and healthy civic community. Unfortunately, Illinois, like many states, is struggling to ensure the state has a highly effective, diverse teaching corps to fill its P12 classrooms. Far too many bilingual, special education, rural and high-poverty classrooms lack a trained educator. If Illinois is to deliver on its commitment to equity and its promise to ensure all students are college-and-career ready, it must ensure every student has access to effective teachers.

Over the last four years, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has addressed teacher shortage issues through legislative and regulatory changes. Still, some school districts continue to struggle to staff classrooms. In September 2017—hearing from district and school leaders that the situation was critical—ISBE launched Teach Illinois to better understand staffing challenges and craft a holistic set of policy solutions to address them. The yearlong effort aimed to build off the work already underway across Illinois.

Teach Illinois, a partnership between ISBE and the Joyce Foundation, began with a “year of study,” which gave state board officials a chance to conduct over 40 focus group sessions and hear from more than 400 teachers, parents, students, principals, superintendents, college of education deans and other partners. ISBE staff heard challenges, such as the dilemmas rural and high-poverty urban districts face in recruiting teachers. ISBE officials also heard promising practices and thoughtful policy ideas about licensure, teacher leadership and teacher diversity.

This report captures the work of Teach Illinois. It features takeaways from the year of study, highlights national research and best practices, and includes state data analysis. It culminates with a suite of recommendations for the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Legislature to consider as they seek to ensure every Illinois student has a well prepared and highly effective teacher on day one of the school year.

The Teacher Shortage Defined

While Illinois' teacher shortage is often thought of as a wholesale issue affecting all 852 school districts, the data show the problem strikes specific districts, subject areas and regions of the state. Illinois' educator Supply and Demand [report](#) provides a more vivid and nuanced picture of the problem.¹

Teach Illinois Builds on Previous Policy and Legislative Initiatives

Illinois has been making steady legislative and regulatory progress toward alleviating teaching shortages. Recent initiatives include:

- Alleviated substitute teaching shortages by creating a short-term substitute teaching license and reducing barriers to gaining a substitute teaching license (e.g., reduced application fee)
- Allowed reciprocity for out-of-state educators who seek to teach in Illinois
- Expanded the short-term emergency approval for special education
- Created short-term approvals in other content areas to allow districts flexibility when filling vacant classrooms
- Changed regulations for the test of basic skills: allowed out-of-state tests and a super-scoring¹ on the ACT/SAT; required the test for initial licensure only (not endorsements)
- Created a provisional license for in-state educators who have not passed the edTPA
- Changed requirements for entry into an alternative licensure program: there is no longer the need to complete a certain number of hours of content coursework

¹Super-scoring means a student can take their highest math, science, reading and English scores achieved on tests taken from any date and average the scores together to get the highest possible composite score.

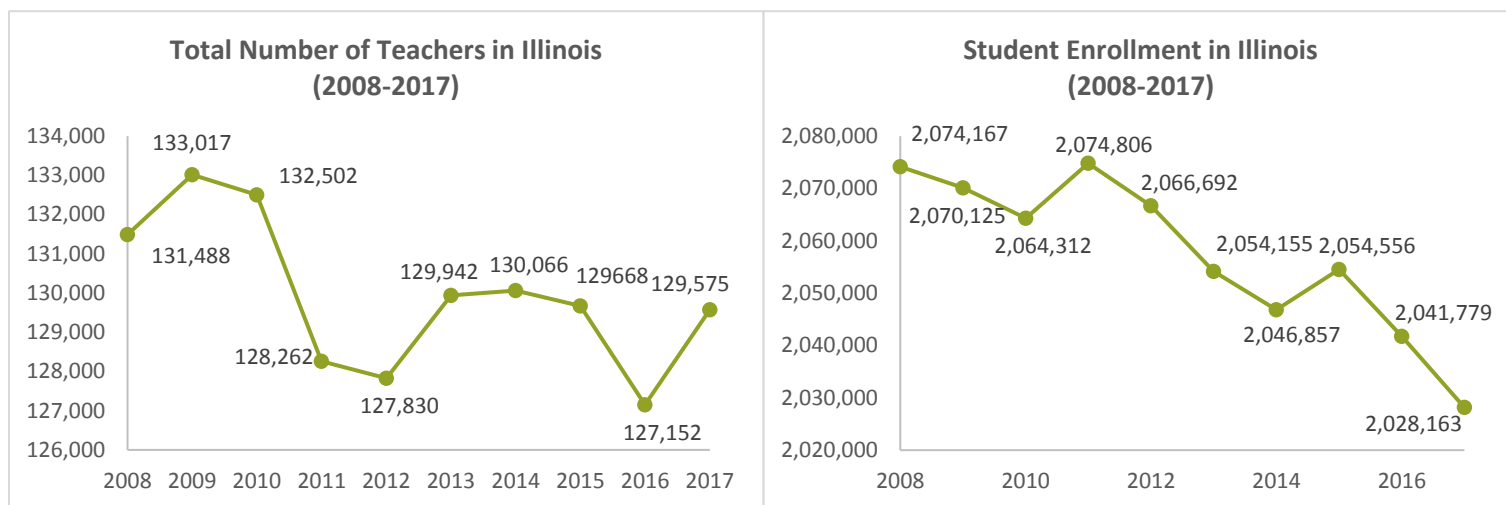
¹ ISBE, [Educator Supply and Demand in Illinois](#). (2018).

Teacher Supply

The biggest supply of teachers for Illinois' classrooms is returning educators, whose return rate typically hovers at about 90 percent. In the 2016-17 school year, about 89 percent of teachers were retained in the same position and four percent were retained in a different position.² The second biggest supply comes from teachers new to the profession. In 2015, about 4,750 people graduated from an Illinois teacher preparation program and received a teaching license. That number climbed to about 6,000 in 2015-16 but dropped to about 5,400 in 2016-17.³

It's clear the teacher workforce problems begin early in the pipeline. The state and the nation have seen drops in the number of young people wanting to go into the profession. A [report released in early August 2018](#) by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education found that between 2008 and 2016, there was a 23 percent decline in the number of people completing teacher preparation programs nationwide.⁴ And Illinois' decline is even steeper: Between 2010 and 2016, the number of candidates enrolling in and completing teacher preparation programs decreased by 53 percentage points.⁵

Between 2008 and 2018, the state saw a 3.4 percent decrease in the total number of Illinois teachers. The number has fluctuated between about 127,000 teachers and 133,000 teachers in any given year.⁶ Given there's been a decline in student enrollment, a drop in the number of teachers is unsurprising. But the challenge lies in the numbers: The decline in the number of teachers outpaced the decrease in student enrollment (3.4 percent and 2.2 percent respectively).⁷



Source: ISBE, "Total Teachers FTE" (2018), Illinois Report Card. ISBE, "Student Report Card Data" (2018); ISBE, "Enrollment" (2018), Illinois Report Card.

² Ibid: 11.

³ Ibid: 12.

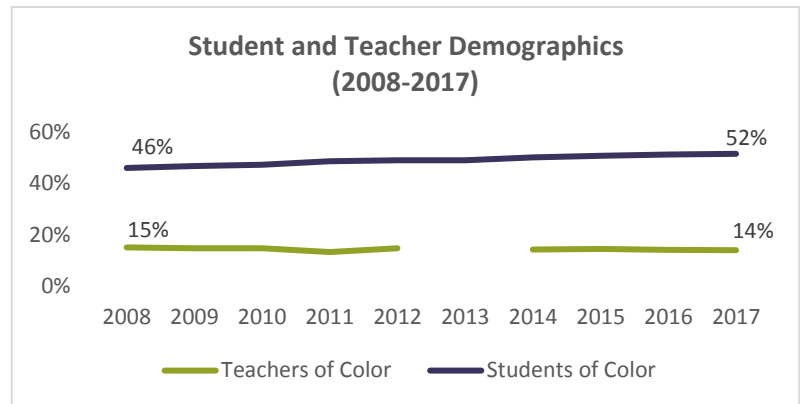
⁴ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, [Colleges of Education: A National Portrait](#) (2018).

⁵ Title II: Higher Education Act, "2017 Title II Reports, National Teacher Preparation Data: Illinois" (2017), accessed August 20, 2018, <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/StateHome.aspx>.

⁶ ISBE, "Total Teachers FTE" (2018), Illinois Report Card, accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=teachers&source2=totalteacherfte&Stateid=IL>.

⁷ ISBE, "Enrollment" (2018), Illinois Report Card, accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=enrollment&Stateid=IL>.

The diversity of the teaching pool also is cause for concern. The Illinois student population has become increasingly diverse while the teaching corps remains predominately white and female. Over the last ten years, the percentage of students of color in Illinois increased from 46 percent to 52 percent while the percentage of teachers of color remained static at around 15 percent. The challenge is reflected in college of education enrollment trends. In the 2015-16 school year, 72 percent of all teacher candidates in Illinois identified as white.⁸ The state must be attentive to these trends, as a growing body of research shows that students, especially students of color, benefit greatly from a diverse teacher workforce.⁹ The Illinois student body has also become more linguistically diverse, creating a greater demand for bilingual teachers than has been seen historically. The number of students whose native language is something other than English increased from 4.4 percent in 2014 to 10.1 percent in 2017.¹⁰ Moreover, the number of students whose native language is Spanish decreased by 6.5 percentage points between 2013 and 2017, meaning there are English learners speaking a greater number of primary languages across the state.¹¹

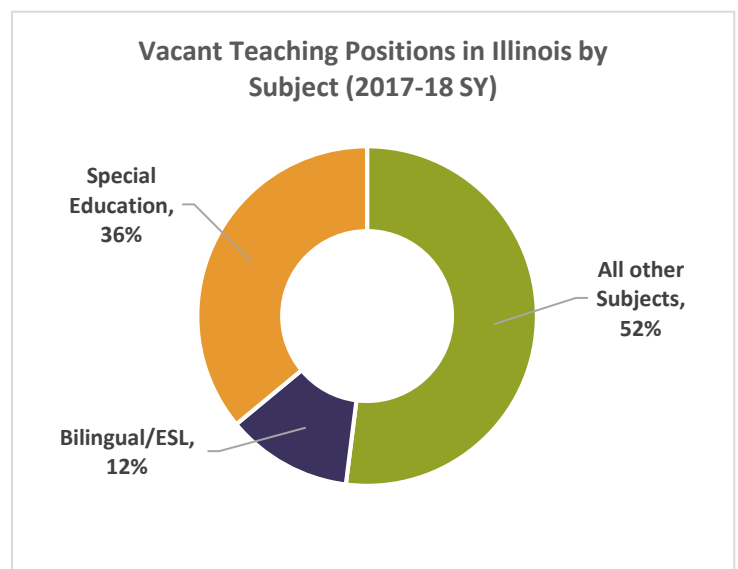


Source: ISBE, "Student Report Card Data" (2018); ISBE, "Enrollment" (2018), Illinois Report Card. Note: Source reflected a gap for 2013 data.

Teacher Demand

During the 2017-18 school year, there were 1,407 vacant teaching positions in Illinois.¹² To put this number in perspective, there are roughly 130,000 teachers in the state.¹³ By looking closely into the 1,407 vacant positions, it is apparent that some districts and some subject areas are disproportionately impacted by the teacher shortage issue.

First, the teacher shortage is most pronounced in special education and bilingual education/English as a second language classrooms. As shown in the chart on the right, vacant positions for these subjects account for 48 percent of the total vacancies.



Source: ISBE, Supply and Demand Data (2018).

⁸ Title II: Higher Education Act, "2017 Title II Reports, National Teacher Preparation Data: Illinois" (2017), accessed August 20, 2018, <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Error.aspx>.

⁹ David Figlio, *The importance of a diverse teaching force* (2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-importance-of-a-diverse-teaching-force/>.

¹⁰ AIR, *Preparing Teachers and Staffing Schools: Patterns in Illinois' Teacher Licensure and Employment* (2018).

¹¹ Ibid.

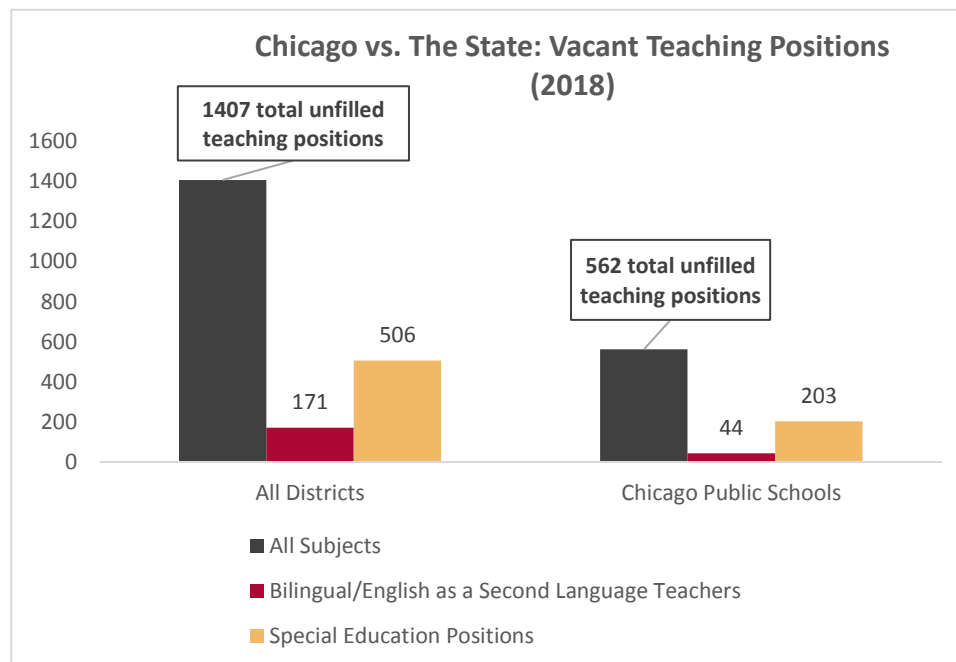
¹² ISBE, *Supply and Demand Data* (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.isbe.net/edsupplydemand>.

¹³ ISBE, "Total Teachers FTE" (2018), Illinois Report Card, accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=teachers&source2=totalteacherfte&Stateid=IL>.

Second, the city of Chicago faces greater challenges filling teaching positions as compared to other regions of the state. Data show 40 percent of the state’s unfilled teaching positions are in Chicago Public Schools (CPS).¹⁴ Particularly, CPS encounters difficulty in recruiting and hiring special education teachers.

Third, the state’s rural areas find it difficult to supply classrooms with qualified educators. During ISBE’s year of study, many superintendents and principals working in rural districts expressed staffing challenges, with many noting they once had scores of applicants for teaching positions but now have just a few—or sometimes none. As one rural superintendent shared, **“How quickly the pipeline dried up is astonishing.”**

Finally, the Illinois teacher shortage is, for the most part, focused in under-resourced districts. According to Advance Illinois, a state advocacy and policy non-profit organization, 90 percent of the 2017 teaching vacancies were in districts funded below adequacy.¹⁵ Likewise, 80 percent of vacant special education positions and 95 percent of vacant bilingual education positions are in districts funded below adequacy.¹⁶ Those most directly impacted by the teacher shortage are special education students, English learners, students attending CPS—90 percent of whom are students of color¹⁷—and students living in rural areas.



Source: ISBE, *Supply and Demand Data* (2018).

¹⁴ Teaching positions as defined here are coded as “instructional staff”, which is slightly different than how positions are reported to the Department of Education in the “Teacher Shortage” report. There are 1,401 unfilled teaching positions for that report.

¹⁵ Advance Illinois, *Illinois Teacher Shortage Hits Vulnerable Students Hardest* (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <http://www.advanceillinois.org/datadesk-teachershortage/>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ ISBE, “City of Chicago SD 299: Racial/Ethnic Diversity” (2018), Illinois State Report Card, accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/district.aspx?districtid=15016299025&source=studentcharacteristics&source2=studentdemographics>.

Call to Action

The Illinois teacher shortage has become a rallying cry for practitioners and policymakers across the state. Illinois is ready for forward-thinking ideas that will ensure a highly trained, diverse teacher workforce, and bold solutions to guarantee every Illinois student has a top-notch educator.

The state must implement policies that attract Illinois' most talented people into the profession, prepare them for the complex classrooms they will face, and support them to excel in their jobs. These solutions should maintain high standards for recruitment and preparation, while also providing relief to districts facing acute challenges. Providing adequate funding to under-resourced districts is not only an enabling condition, it is paramount to this effort.

The time to act is now. Education leaders in Illinois can work together to ensure the state has a well-prepared and diverse teacher workforce that provides a high-quality education for every single student in the state. As State Superintendent Tony Smith stated: ***"Addressing the teacher shortage and changing the narrative about teaching in our state is a collective activity; it requires dialogue and active collaboration."***

Teach Illinois builds on ISBE's [mission and vision](#) by proposing a set of policy solutions that address all facets of the teaching pipeline, spanning recruitment into the profession, preparation, licensure and retention.¹⁸ The recommendations address teacher shortages for the state as a whole but also provide opportunities for targeted approaches to address challenges faced by regions and subject areas most affected by the teacher shortage. These policies are built on the foundational belief that the teaching workforce needs to be diverse, highly effective and representative of the students served in schools.

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to:

- I. Coordinate a statewide campaign to elevate the teaching profession and inspire young people, especially those of color, to join the profession.
- II. Incentivize and create opportunities for P12 and postsecondary institutions to work together to create streamlined pathways into the teaching profession.
- III. Support partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs in order to closely align teacher supply and demand.
- IV. Develop innovative, results-based approaches to educator preparation.
- V. Develop and adopt a research-based bar for licensure that leads to a highly effective and diverse workforce.
- VI. Promote teacher leadership and career pathways with differentiated responsibilities and appropriate incentives.
- VII. Develop robust teacher mentorship and induction programs.

¹⁸ ISBE, [Illinois State Board of Education](#) (2018).

Teach Illinois **Recommendations**

Teacher Pipeline

Recommendation I

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to coordinate a statewide campaign to elevate the teaching profession and inspire people, especially those of color, to join the profession.

Research by the Illinois Education Research Council found that only 3.2 percent of Illinois post-secondary students become Illinois public school teachers and they tend to be less diverse when compared with Illinois college graduates in other fields.¹⁹ A coordinated statewide campaign has the potential to change public perceptions about the teaching profession, inspire individuals to pursue a career in teaching and build a high quality, diverse pipeline. The campaign can serve to both recognize and celebrate current teachers and encourage diverse individuals to enter the profession. Focus areas should include recruiting people of color and encouraging prospective candidates to enter into shortage areas, including special education and bilingual education.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Elevate the teaching profession** by acknowledging the impact teachers have and celebrating successes of classroom practitioners.
2. **Coordinate stakeholders** by creating a coalition or council focused on promoting the profession.
3. **Elevate hard to staff teaching positions** by strategically advertising for them.
4. **Promote the benefits of teaching to groups under-represented in the profession (community outreach strategies)**, such as young men and young people from minority cultural backgrounds, by presenting teacher role models from these backgrounds, correcting misconceptions responsible for negative views of teaching and disseminating information about teaching.²⁰
5. **Support districts** by providing guidance on how they can use social media to celebrate teachers in the region and inspire others to join the profession.
6. **Involve diverse communities** by encouraging grassroots, community-led organizations to participate in—and shape—the campaign.

From the Field

“My grandmother said she was proud to say her granddaughter was a teacher. For my generation, I’m not sure she’d say the same thing.”—Principal from a rural district in Southern Illinois

During the stakeholder meetings, ISBE heard from high school students who said they had not considered teaching as a profession because they thought it might be **“too stressful,”** and **“too big a responsibility.”** They also said they worried the pay was too low and that there were not good career ladders built into the profession that would allow them to move up the pay scale. As Illinois seeks to increase the number of applicants into the teaching profession there are a myriad of issues to consider—and the first may be this battle of perception. Today, a commonly understood narrative is that teachers are overworked and underpaid. The national discourse around effectiveness and teacher performance exacerbates this perception. These accounts impact the number of young people who have decided to make teaching a career.²¹ Teacher preparation institutions in Illinois have witnessed

¹⁹ Bradford White, Karen DeAngelis, Eric Lichtenberger, *The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline* (Edwardsville: IERC, 2013): 14.

²⁰ OECD, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005): 9.

²¹ Valerie Strauss, “Why today’s college students don’t want to be teachers” (Washington Post, 2015).

completion rates steadily decline over the years:²² The top 25 teacher preparation institutions in the state have seen a decline of over 45 percent in the past decade, from over 8,000 graduates in 2008 to just over 4,000 graduates in 2016.²³ During stakeholder meetings, many participants called for ISBE to launch a coordinated statewide campaign to elevate the status of the teaching profession, seeing this as a way to draw more young people into the profession as well as curb shortages in rural and urban areas and specific content areas.

To accompany the campaign, ISBE will explore compensation issues statewide, as the link between perception and pay surfaced repeatedly in statewide focus groups.

“Compensation has a key role in driving the current situation. Because demands on teachers are high in comparison to the modest salary, many people don’t see it as a desirable career. To compound this, financially strapped districts simply can’t compete with the compensation offered in better resourced areas, and as a result of the disparity, they will continue to lose candidates. There needs to be a more equitable statewide pay structure.”

—Cross sector focus group participant

Research & Exemplars

Countries with strong teacher pipelines actively promote the teaching profession. Singapore—a country known for its high-quality education system—uses various media platforms to “sell” teaching as an attractive career. Their advertisements inform the public about the value of the teaching profession and the many professional opportunities available within education.²⁴

Similarly, charter schools across the United States often employ effective marketing strategies to recruit highly effective, diverse teachers. Research and interviews support that the most successful charter schools use online platforms to articulate their value proposition, build brand recognition and target specific candidates.²⁵ For example, IDEA Public Schools focuses its marketing efforts on building a strong brand awareness, using platforms such as YouTube, television commercials and billboards to highlight IDEA’s success.²⁶

Many state departments of education have launched marketing campaigns to elevate the teaching profession:

State departments of education are beginning to follow suit. States such as Louisiana, Michigan and Arkansas use social media to celebrate the teaching profession and provide resources to prospective



Michigan | [#proudMeducator](#)
Initiative that aims to acknowledge, elevate and celebrate the work of great educators in Michigan



Louisiana | [Be Irreplaceable. Be a Teacher.](#)
Webpage that inspires individuals to teach in LA and provides resources for prospective teachers



Arkansas | [#TeachArkansas](#)
Social media campaign encouraging educators to share their journey as a teacher

²² 46 percent decline between 2012 and 2016 in the number of bachelor-level candidates completing their teacher preparation program; AIR, *Preparing Teachers and Staffing Schools: Patterns in Illinois’ Teacher Licensure and Employment* (2018).

²³ Advance Illinois, *Illinois Teacher Shortage Hits Vulnerable Students Hardest* (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <http://www.advanceillinois.org/datadesk-teachershortage/>.

²⁴ National Center on Education and the Economy, *Empowered Educators, Singapore: A Teaching Model for the 21st Century* (Washington DC: NCEE, 2016).

²⁵ National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, *National Best Practices: Teacher Recruitment and Pipelines* (2016).

²⁶ Ibid: 12.

teacher candidates. Although direct impact of these state-led campaigns is hard to measure, it is clear that teachers are being recognized and celebrated more regularly and on a wide-scale basis.

Recommendation II

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to incentivize and create opportunities for P12 and postsecondary institutions to work together to create streamlined pathways into the teaching profession.

A [2018 survey](#) by American College Testing (ACT), the organization that administers one of the nation's most common college entrance examinations, found that only five percent of test takers noted they were interested in teaching as a profession.²⁷ Teaching fell behind business, visual arts and “undecided” in the ranking of job interests. Researchers for ACT suggested that students might change their minds if they had an early experience with teaching and direct paths into the profession. Given that 50 percent of teachers in Illinois teach in the same county in which they graduated high school,²⁸ local pathways into the profession may help diversify the teaching corps and alleviate regional pipeline concerns.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Incentivize pathways with small grants** to fund P12 and higher education to work together to create clear, smooth pathways into teaching.
2. **Create a community of practice**, similar to the [60 x 2025 Network](#), to help develop and spread best practices in teaching pathways.²⁹
3. **Identify common postsecondary teacher preparation foundational courses** and facilitate additional dual-credit certification paths so these opportunities can be expanded statewide for interested students.

The state has an opportunity to build off the 2016 [Postsecondary Workforce Readiness \(PWR\) Act](#), which requires districts and state agencies to help students select and complete a postsecondary option that will lead to meaningful employment.³⁰ School districts can offer high school graduates the opportunity to earn a college and career pathway endorsement on their diploma in one of seven³¹ career areas.³² In four areas, public-private committees have identified competencies that reflect the knowledge and skills employers seek from entry-level employees. A recently formed [public-private committee](#) is now developing competencies for pathways into teaching.³³ Pathway endorsements also link to the state's ESSA plan, which holds schools accountable for ensuring students are college- and career-ready. Highlighting new opportunities for the pathway endorsement in teaching can be used to demonstrate readiness under the state's ESSA college- and-career-readiness indicator.

²⁷ Michelle Croft, Gretchen Guffy, Dan Vitale, [Encouraging more High School Students to Consider Teaching](#) (2018).

²⁸ National Governors Association, [Improving Teacher Preparation Policy and Programs: Building a High-Quality Teacher Workforce in the state of Illinois](#) (2017).

²⁹ 60 by 25 Network, “About” (2017), accessed August 20th, 2018, <http://60by25.org/about/>.

³⁰ Illinois Community College Board, “Academic Affairs and Career & Technical Education” (2017), accessed August 26th, 2018, https://www.iccb.org/academic_affairs/?page_id=316.

³¹ Pathways include: STEAM; Agricultural, Food & Natural Resources; Health Sciences; Information Technology; Business; Social Science & Public Services; Multidisciplinary.

³² “College and Career Pathway Endorsements and State Honors: Recognizing Readiness for College & Careers in Illinois’ Future Economy,” accessed August 26th, 2018, <https://www.niu.edu/ilhstocollege/hr-477/career-pathways-endorsements/HR%20477%20Career%20Pathway%20Endorsements%20FINAL%2012.pdf>.

³³ Pathways to Prosperity, “Illinois Competency Mapping Resources” (2016), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://ptopnetwork.iff.org/>.

The PWR Act is strengthened by the recent passage of the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) (Perkins Act).³⁴ Its emphasis on career exploration and career pathways beginning in late elementary school grades allows students to pursue exploratory and targeted experiences in teaching as well as earn dual credit.

From the Field

“We consider this investing in our own. We are confident that they will be ready to teach on Day One because we are the ones preparing them to be ready.”—Associate Superintendent in suburban Chicago district, in reference to the district’s pathways program

For many educators, early hands-on teaching experience is what originally drew them into the profession. A positive experience in high school, through an internship or supported through a mentoring experience, can inspire and motivate students to pursue a career in teaching. Stakeholders in focus groups shared that the process of inspiring individuals to pursue a career in teaching must start early, even before individuals seek undergraduate degrees and enroll in teacher preparation programs. Currently, however, many Illinois high school students have limited access to and experience with the profession. The opportunities for exposure that do exist are often under-resourced, unsustainable, and few and far between.³⁵ While opportunities for early exposure to teaching as a profession are limited across Illinois, challenges are exacerbated in small rural districts, which may not have the infrastructure to design or offer career exploration opportunities due to a lack of teachers to support students in this work.

Research and Exemplars

Kansas has a statewide [career pathways](#) framework that is similar to Illinois’ [career cluster framework](#)—both of which are aligned to the [16 nationally recognized career clusters](#).³⁶

High School Teaching Pathways in District 214

The Educator Prep Career Pathways initiative in Township High School District 214 aims to prepare today’s high school students to become tomorrow’s teachers. Educator Prep is fueled by a partnership between the district, local elementary school districts, and National Louis University and Northeastern Illinois University. District 214, in Chicago’s diverse northwest suburbs, and its higher education partners have built a deliberate pathway for students to move from high school, to college, to licensure to classroom teacher. The program begins with a sequence of high school courses—such as foundations for learning and development—that provide students an early feel for education as a career. Students who continue with the program earn early college credits in education-related courses while in high school. They also spend several days a week teaching lessons in K12 classrooms under the close supervision of a master teacher, who offers advice for improvement. Students can then continue in the Educator Prep program with a postsecondary partner and earn a bachelor’s degree and a teaching license with low-cost options. The district provides a network of supports for students while in college to increase the likelihood they graduate and become teachers. The district also guarantees a student teaching placement and first access to district teaching jobs. District 214, a national leader in the career pathways movement, offers programs of study in early childhood education, elementary and secondary education.

Laz Lopez, associate superintendent for teaching and learning in District 214, said nearly half of the students enrolled in the Educator Prep pathway are underrepresented minorities. ***“We consider this investing in our own,”*** he said. ***“We are confident that they will be ready to teach on Day One because we are the ones preparing them to be ready. And we know what makes a great teacher in our district.”*** The Educator Prep program was life changing for Jasmine Bautista, who graduated from District 214 in 2018. A first-generation college student, she was awarded a full-ride scholarship to National Louis University and intends to enroll in the teacher prep program and, eventually, become a special education teacher. She said the district’s program helped her ***“stay on track and keep focused on the one thing I always wanted to be—a teacher.”*** The early teaching experience she gained in high school confirmed—even heightened—her desire to become a teacher. The early college credits fast-tracked her to her dream. ***“I feel like they helped set me up to be a successful teacher.”***

Source: District 214 staff (July 2018).

³⁴ Congress.Gov, “H.R.2353 – Strengthening Career and Technical Education for 21st Century Act” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2353>.

³⁵ Revolution Impact, Focus Groups (Illinois, 2018).

³⁶ Kansas State Department of Education, “Education and Training (CTE Career Cluster)” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/Content-Area-A-E/Education-Training-CTE-Career-Cluster>; Office of Community College Research and Leadership, [Illinois Career Clusters, Pathways, and Programs of Study Guide](#) (Champaign, 2013); Pathways to College & Career Readiness, [Career Clusters](#) (nd).

In Kansas, districts use the state’s framework to build innovative career and technical education pathways for students. In 2013, Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) began using the framework to create its “Diploma +” program, which offers middle and high school students robust career and technical education pathways.

KCPS’s Diploma+ program requires all sixth grade students attending Kansas City Public Schools to create individualized academic plans or “dashboards,” which help them track goals and accomplishments associated with career(s) they are interested in pursuing upon graduating from high school (the class of 2021 will be the first class to graduate under the requirements of the Diploma+ program).³⁷ Once students reach their sophomore year of high school, they use the dashboard to help them determine which “career and technical education pathway” they will enroll in for their remaining high school years.³⁸ One pathway the district offers is an “Educator Prep” pathway, which provides students the opportunity to participate in [Educators Rising](#), a program committed to cultivating highly skilled educators by guiding young people (including high school students) on a path to becoming accomplished teachers.³⁹ Participation in this program gives KCPS students the opportunity to learn foundational teacher training skills, acquire field-based experience in a classroom and earn an early childhood education certificate.⁴⁰ After a few short years of implementing the Diploma+ program, KCPS has seen success. As of May 2017, 53 percent of participants earned a high school diploma and one or more Diploma+ endorsements.

³⁷ Mid-America Regional Council, [Career & Tech Education in Grater Kansas City: Preparing High School Students for the Next Step](#) (2017).

³⁸ Mid-America Regional Council, [Career & Tech Education in Grater Kansas City: Preparing High School Students for the Next Step](#) (2017).

³⁹ Educators Rising, “Mission” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.educatorsrising.org/>.

⁴⁰ Kansas City Public Schools, “Career & Technical Education” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.kcpublicschools.org/Page/6323>.

Teacher Preparation

Recommendation III

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to support partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs in order to closely align teacher supply and demand.

Investing in and encouraging partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs can create joint responsibility for the development of effective educators and produce robust and diverse teacher pipelines for local school districts. While research shows high-quality partnerships have positive and powerful effects on both the district and the preparation program, initiating partnerships can be a challenge due to competing commitments and limited resources. In collaboration with partners statewide, ISBE will work to create the conditions to support current partnerships and encourage new ones to form.

“We decided to focus on alternative licensure as a strategy to place more bilingual teachers in our classrooms—which led to the formation of the Portland Dual Language Teacher Fellows Program in 2016. By allowing dual language teacher fellows to pursue their degree and licensure while already working as classroom teachers, this approach helps build a solid bilingual teacher pipeline.”

Source: Alma Galicia, *Solving the Bilingual Teacher Shortage*

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Seek and provide funding** for a competitive grant program focused on data sharing and preparation alignment to workforce needs to districts and preparation programs pursuing partnerships.
2. **Facilitate data sharing** by developing or enhancing a data system that teacher preparation programs and districts can use to easily access, share, and align teacher supply and demand data.
3. **Serve as a hub of resources** by sharing reports, best practices and promoting lessons learned from current partnerships, including sharing lessons learned from the [Continuous Improvement Communities of Practice](#).⁴¹
4. **Support teacher preparation institutions** in developing approaches for the recruitment of diverse candidates to tightly align with what districts are seeking.⁴²

From the Field

“My district is calling universities to ask if they have candidates and we’re being told there are very few... I have four vacancies right now and only two applicants.” —Superintendent from rural district in Central Illinois referencing desire to have a stronger connection to preparation providers

Many districts in Illinois and across the country struggle to find highly effective teachers for every student on the first day of school.⁴³ Strategic partnerships between preparation programs and schools districts can combat these challenges and ***“create a seamless experience where new teachers grow, thrive and advance student achievement.”***⁴⁴ Such partnerships are especially relevant in Illinois, as graduates of preparation programs have become increasingly more likely to obtain employment within

⁴¹ ISBE, [Continuous Improvement Communities of Practice](#) (2018).

⁴² ISBE, in collaboration with district and building leaders and higher education faculty, is participating in *The Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Initiative* (DLRT). DLRT is focused on: Increasing the racial diversity of the teacher workforce so it is representative of P12 student enrollment; and ensuring all teachers demonstrate culturally responsive practice by identifying opportunities for them to build these skills, practices, and dispositions along the continuum of the teacher pipeline.

⁴³ Education First, [Ensuring High-Quality Teacher Talent: How Strong, Bold Partnerships between School Districts and Teacher Preparation Programs are Transforming the Teacher Pipeline](#) (2016).

⁴⁴ Education First, [Ensuring High-Quality Teacher Talent: How Strong, Bold Partnerships between School Districts and Teacher Preparation Programs are Transforming the Teacher Pipeline](#) (2016): 3.

the state. These data provide a strong base to build local partnerships, thus allowing districts to share forecasts of openings with educator prep programs, and the educator prep programs to tailor outreach and preparation to the needs of partner districts.

“Homegrown programs are the way to go—[they] will create a workforce that is familiar with and already integrated in the community and culture.”

—Teacher of the year focus group participant

Research and Exemplars

Across the country, there are many examples of successful partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs that have been, and continue to be, mutually beneficial in efforts to address shortages in specific content areas.⁴⁵ One such example comes from Oregon, where in the summer of 2016, Portland Public Schools (PPS) and Portland State University (PSU) created a bilingual teacher pipeline collaborative to recruit, develop and retain bilingual teachers. The partnership now provides 28 dual language teacher fellows the opportunity to work as full-time classroom teachers, substitutes or paraprofessionals while simultaneously earning a master’s degree in elementary education with a bilingual/English to Speakers of Other Languages endorsement or a degree in secondary education with a world language endorsement. To enter the program, individuals must gain admission to the teacher preparation program at PSU and acquire a teaching position at PPS.

After the first year of program implementation, the district has virtually eliminated its bilingual teacher shortage. The program—described as a “**resolute success**”—has not only resolved the district’s bilingual teacher shortage but has also put teachers into the classroom who principals describe as strong and engaged.⁴⁶ As the PPS Senior Director of Dual Language Immersion stated, “***The whole premise of this [program] was the belief that we had already tomorrow’s teachers...in our community. We just have to identify them and equip them.***”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Amaya Garcia, [*Building a Bilingual Teacher Pipeline: The Portland Public Schools and Portland State University Dual Language Teacher Partnership*](#) (New America, 2017).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Recommendation IV

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to develop innovative, results-based approaches to educator preparation.

As enrollment in educator preparation programs declines nationwide, there is momentum to try new approaches to teacher training. Teacher preparation programs, themselves, have responded by working more closely with districts or changing curricula to better prepare candidates, according to a new report by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.⁴⁸ Some states have gone even further, experimenting with **competency-based teacher preparation programs** that eliminate credit hour and course requirements and, instead, require students to show mastery in specific areas and subjects.⁴⁹ During its tour across the state, ISBE heard many stakeholders suggest more innovative paths into teaching could help close shortages, diversify the workforce and help districts—especially those in rural settings—hire the teachers they need.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Study innovative approaches to educator preparation** and evaluate effectiveness.
2. **Review current statutes and rules** to support opportunities for expanded pathways approved as a statewide preparation route.
3. **Develop a multi-step process** for educator preparation programs to earn formal approval by providing data that demonstrate positive P12 outcomes. This process would align to outcome indicators and measures suggested by the **Partnership for Educator Preparation (PEP)**.⁵⁰
4. **Support collaboration** by encouraging educator preparation programs (EPPs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to co-design, develop and implement preparation routes that support the workforce needs of their communities and regions (e.g., preparing teachers in shortage areas and preparing a more diverse workforce).

Through the proposed study, ISBE will consider provisions that would allow programs to be authorized by the state (for five years) with annual monitoring and data reporting via the PEP Committee recommendations. Programs that demonstrate positive impact on P12 student outcomes would receive formal approval for another five years. Those that are not able to show improved P12 student outcomes would no longer retain approval. Additional recommendations for program approval may include allowing:

- Programs to extend preparation into the first few years of teaching before granting permission for licensure. “Intern” candidates would complete a year-long student teaching experience as co-teachers of record and continue for the following year(s) as “resident” teachers. Candidates would be evaluated on a competency rubric that would allow an individual to master the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.
- Through partnership between districts and IHEs, the design and implementation of a program that includes intensive clinical experiences focusing on improved P12 student outcomes.

ISBE’s proposal to study, with the intent to expand, criteria for program approval allows the opportunity to be responsive to stakeholder input and research around best practice for program design.

⁴⁸ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, *Where We stand: Clinical Preparation of Teachers* (2012).

⁴⁹ Nick Roll, *Green Light for Competency-Based Teacher Ed* (Inside Higher Ed, 2017), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/11/01/competency-based-teacher-education-program-receives-state-approval>.

⁵⁰ ISBE, “Partnership for Educator Preparation (PEP)” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Partnership-for-Educator-Preparation.aspx>.

From the Field

“Do we need to rethink what that training looks like for teachers to be well prepared?”; “Prep routes can be more effective by incorporating more experiential learning that provides a real sense of what it means to be a teacher; is significant in length and level of responsibility; includes communication with students’ families; and places student teachers in high-need districts to build their skill to be effective and a connection that will lead them to consider a job there.” —Cross sector focus group participants

During the stakeholder conversations around teacher preparation, group participants focused largely on the outcomes they wanted to see, rather than the structure of the programs. Stakeholders were less interested in talking about inputs (i.e. credit hour requirements) and more focused on outputs (i.e. effectiveness of the graduates who landed in classrooms). In general, they defined “quality” teacher preparation programs as those that offer students extensive clinical experience with skilled mentor teachers. There was unanimous agreement that a high quality field experience is the single best way for teacher candidates to develop effective pedagogical content, classroom management, and data driven decision-making practices. Focus group participants also noted that “quality” preparation programs equip teacher candidates with the content knowledge and pedagogical skills in the employment of culturally relevant practices to connect and build relationships with all students, regardless of race, class, gender and other differences. Overwhelmingly, they said teaching candidates should understand and be able to employ techniques of social emotional learning (SEL) and trauma informed instruction.⁵¹

Research and Exemplars

Illinois would join the ranks of national leaders if it implemented a results-based approval process for teacher preparation programs. There are a handful of states paving the way toward innovative preparation and approval processes. Minnesota uses a portfolio-model as an alternative pathway to obtaining a teaching license. [Licensure via Portfolio](#) provides an alternative process to assess the knowledge, skills and competencies of individuals seeking a license who may not have completed an approved teacher preparation program in the licensure field being sought.⁵²

No other state has taken a bolder approach than Louisiana. In line with how leading nations approach teacher preparation, Louisiana launched the nationally recognized [Believe and Prepare](#) pilot program in 2014. The program offers aspiring teachers a full year of practice under an expert mentor and a competency-based program design. In October 2016, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), with support from the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR), adopted landmark regulations to [expand yearlong residencies and competency-based curricula statewide](#).⁵³ Since 2014, BESE has awarded over \$9 million in grant awards to teacher preparation providers and their school system partners to advance this shift to full-year residencies for all aspiring teachers.

Tennessee’s approval process is noteworthy for its focus on diversity, its effort to align teacher supply and demand across subject areas, and its commitment to long-term results. In 2017, when the state

⁵¹ Joyce Foundation and Advance Illinois, Teacher Summit (2018).

⁵² Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, “*Licensure via Portfolio*” (nd), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://mn.gov/pelsb/aspiring-educators/portfolio/>.

⁵³ Louisiana Department of Education, “*Believe and Prepare*” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/teaching/believe-and-prepare>; Louisiana Department of Education, “*BESE Expands Full Year Classroom Residency for Teachers*” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2016/10/12/bese-expands-full-year-classroom-residency-for-teachers>.

reorganized its approval process, Tennessee Department of Education set minimum performance standards for preparation programs in three key domains: candidate profile, employment and provider impact. While the employment domain is standard practice—measuring the provider’s performance in preparing educators—the candidate profile and provider impact domains are exemplary. The candidate profile domain evaluates the provider’s ***“ability to recruit a strong, diverse cohort of candidates and prepare them to teach in the content areas of greatest need.”*** This motivates teacher preparation programs to recruit diverse candidates and prepare candidates for high-need subjects. Additionally, the provider impact domain—a results-based metric—evaluates the effectiveness of program graduates once they are teaching full time.

Teacher Licensure

Recommendation V

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to develop and adopt a research-based bar for licensure that leads to a highly effective and diverse workforce.

To ensure every student in Illinois has a highly trained and effective educator, ISBE is committed to affirming the bar for entry into the profession has the appropriate rigor and the entry requirements reflect the work teachers are preparing to undertake. To that end, ISBE intends to review the assessments and exams the state requires for licensure. The guiding principles behind this work: maintaining a high standard for entry into the profession while ensuring the exams do not unduly prohibit or discourage applicants or interfere with efforts to diversify the teaching workforce.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Authorize a study** on teacher licensure requirements to inform future policy recommendations.
2. **Evaluate approaches to the basic skills assessment** with a goal of maintaining a high standard for licensure while increasing flexibility and responsiveness to the field.
3. **Revise policy** by increasing flexibility to meet qualifications for endorsement areas. This may include allowing bilingual educators additional ways to receive foreign language or bilingual endorsements while ensuring expertise and fluency.⁵⁴

From the Field

In a recent letter to State Superintendent Tony Smith, the deans of the state's colleges of education offered to help the state review and modify the current testing and licensure qualifications. ***"The Deans of Illinois public and private colleges of education are committed to addressing the teacher shortage in the short-term and growing a diverse teacher pipeline in the long-term,"*** they wrote. ***"We welcome the opportunity to work with our legislators and the Illinois State Board of Education in this regard."***

During the stakeholder meetings, scores of participants spoke about the licensure bar. Some felt it should be removed or lowered, while few voiced support for keeping it as is. The majority of respondents requested either elimination or modification of scoring. As the agency and partners consider how to approach this work in a way that maintains a high bar for entry while addressing shortage areas, it will consider the following proposals:

- Discontinue the administration of the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP.) Continue to allow teacher candidates the opportunity to use either the ACT or SAT for the purposes of demonstrating "basic skills."
- In collaboration with key stakeholders, develop a research framework for a multi-year study of basic skills testing approaches. One suggestion for the study design is to identify small pilot groups where teacher candidates use either the ACT/SAT, portfolio or general education (GE) requirements to demonstrate basic skills. Research questions could include: (1) Is there a difference between candidates who used the ACT/SAT, portfolio or GE requirements in regards to student teaching evaluations completed by the cooperating teacher? (2) Is there a relationship between candidates who used the ACT/SAT, portfolio and GE requirements to demonstrate basic skills and performance in student teaching and edTPA? (3) Is there a difference between candidates who used the ACT/SAT, portfolio and GE requirements to demonstrate basic skills in relation to first year teacher evaluations? (4) Is there a difference between candidates who used the ACT/SAT, portfolio and GE

⁵⁴ For example accepting the Seal of Bi-literacy or passing a test to prove language proficiency as an alternative to completing coursework.

requirements in retention once in a district? (5) Is there a difference between candidates who used the ACT/SAT, portfolio and GE requirements in retention as a teacher in Illinois schools?

Research and Exemplars

All 50 states require testing for aspiring teachers (e.g., basic skills test, content area exam, etc.). Thirty-nine states and D.C. require a *basic skills assessment*, of which nine states require aspiring teachers pass before licensure; four states require aspiring teachers pass before student teaching; and 29 states offer ACT, SAT and/or GRE as an alternative (of which 24 accept ACT, including IL). Eleven states have no stand-alone, state-mandated basic skills exam, with two states leaving the decision to require a basic skills exam up to individual teacher preparation programs (AZ & ID); four states include additional testing requirements, just not a basic skills exam (IA, KS, NY, OH, OR); and five states have no basic skills exam requirement (AZ, CO, MT, OR, SD), but do require other forms of testing.

According to researcher Dan Goldhaber, there is a modest correlation between basic skills licensure tests scores and student achievement.⁵⁵ For example, a teacher's basic skills test scores are modestly predictive of his or her student's achievement in middle and high school math and highly predictive of his or her student's achievement in high school biology.⁵⁶ Correlation between incoming academic credentials and student learning outcomes is more evident when working with "at-risk" students⁵⁷ and SAT and ACT predictive validity are stronger when combined with high school GPA (and vice versa).⁵⁸ Additionally, research shows a moderate correlation between incoming academic credentials (e.g., GPA) and teacher effectiveness.⁵⁹ Of note, however, research shows teacher candidates of color tend to pass teacher licensure exams at a lower rate than their white peers.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ As measured by student math test score gains in elementary grades; Dan Goldhaber, Trevor Gratz and Roddy Theobald, *What's in a teacher test? Assessing the relationship between teacher licensure scores and student STEM achievement and course-taking* (Seattle: CEDR, 2016).

⁵⁶ Dan Goldhaber, Trevor Gratz and Roddy Theobald, *What's in a teacher test? Assessing the relationship between teacher licensure scores and student STEM achievement and course-taking* (Seattle: CEDR, 2016).

⁵⁷ Charles Coble, Edward Crowe and Michael Allen, *CAEP Standard 3.2 Research, Study and Analysis* (TPA, 2016).

⁵⁸ Charles Coble, Edward Crowe and Michael Allen, *CAEP Standard 3.2 Research, Study and Analysis* (TPA, 2016).

⁵⁹ Chad Aldeman and Ashley LiBetti Mitchel, *No Guarantees: Is it Possible to Ensure Teachers Are Ready on Day One?* (Bellwether, 2016).

⁶⁰ Center for Education Data & Research; Matt Barnum, "Certification rules and tests are keeping would be teachers of color out of America's Classrooms. Here's how." (Chalkbeat, 2017), accessed March 1, 2018, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/us/2017/09/12/certification-rules-and-tests-are-keeping-would-be-teachers-of-color-out-of-americas-classrooms-heres-how/>.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Recommendation VI

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to promote teacher leadership and career pathways with differentiated responsibilities and appropriate incentives.

Teacher turnover and attrition are costly in both human and financial costs. A [study](#) by the Alliance for Excellent Education estimated the cost at \$2 billion annually.⁶¹ More troubling, a TNTP report, “[The Irreplaceables](#),” found that half of teachers in the top 20 percent of effectiveness left their school within five years.⁶² Teachers leave for many reasons, but the lack of career advancement opportunities is a primary factor, according to a [report](#) by the teacher policy and voice group, Teach Plus.⁶³ In a [2018 survey](#) conducted by another teacher voice group, Educators for Excellence, 92 percent of teachers said they wanted more opportunities to advance their careers and professional skills while remaining in the classroom as teachers.⁶⁴ As schools become more complex organizations, there has been a national push to adopt staffing structures that allow for teacher leadership opportunities and more distributive leadership within schools.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Promote innovative approaches to teacher leadership**, including providing support for the teacher leadership pilot program and sharing findings with districts statewide.
2. **Expand current teacher leadership opportunities** by allowing entities outside of higher education (including districts) to offer leadership endorsements through the demonstration of competencies.
3. **Encourage districts to consider incentives** and other types of recognition for teachers in leadership roles.
4. **Develop statewide consortiums** of districts, regional offices of education and educator preparation programs to articulate and support career pathways aligned to leadership options including state licensure, the Illinois teacher leadership endorsement and nationally recognized teacher certificate.⁶⁵
5. **Advocate for adequate funding** for all districts.

ISBE has already embraced teacher leadership as a critical position in schools and districts. In 2017-18, for example, ISBE collaborated with stakeholders across Illinois to build a fund focused on teacher leadership into the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. The state is in the process of designing and disseminating a teacher leadership pilot grant program that will allow districts to compete for grants that fund research and investigate problems of practice related to teacher leadership. As stated in the ESSA plan, “***This work will be used to increase clarity on the roles and work of a teacher leader.***”⁶⁶ Moving forward ISBE will work with partners such as the Teacher Leadership Effectiveness Committee of the Illinois P20 Council to ensure the new efforts capitalize on previous state work focused on teacher leadership and build on learnings from the pilot program.

⁶¹ Alliance for Excellent Education, “*Teacher Attrition Costs United States Up to a \$2.2 Billion Annually, Says New Alliance Report*” (2014), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://all4ed.org/press/teacher-attrition-costs-united-states-up-to-2-2-billion-annually-says-new-alliance-report/>.

⁶² TNTP, *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America’s Urban Schools* (2012).

⁶³ Teach Plus, *How to Retain Effective Teachers Through Teacher Leadership* (nd).

⁶⁴ Educators for Excellence, *Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America’s Educators* (2018).

⁶⁵ Task Force on Program Accountability, Assessment, Accreditation and Policy, *Illinois Leading the Way: Multiple Pathways to Enhancing the Profession* (2018).

⁶⁶ ISBE, *Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act* (2018).

Conversations with stakeholders around the state reinforced the concept that long-term, sustainable funding is a significant challenge for districts hoping to implement teacher leadership opportunities. Currently in Illinois, adequately funded districts possess the resources needed to support more opportunities for teachers, while underfunded districts do not. To address this opportunity—and support district-led teacher leadership and career pathways—ISBE must continue advocating for adequate funding for all districts in Illinois as a top priority.

From the Field

“The number one thing that made teachers happy, according to recent research, was time to work with their peers, and authentic collaboration. [Teachers want to] feel like a professional and know they have a voice that is valued.”—Cross sector focus group participant

Focus group participants reinforced the trends shown in research, regarding the importance of teacher leadership opportunities, stating that such opportunities promote retention and prevent burnout among teachers.⁶⁷ Teacher leadership/career ladders were a prime focus of discussion during the Teach Illinois Summit, hosted by Advance Illinois and the Joyce Foundation. The participants suggested the state should provide adequate funding for districts to implement teacher leadership pathways and promote pathways that provide added compensation for added duties. Additionally, teacher leadership programs and policies continue to be a main focus of the Teacher Leadership Effectiveness (TLE) subcommittee of the P20 Council. The Committee is committed to promoting differentiated leadership and career pathways to meet all teachers’ goals and aspirations. The three main pathways consist of: (1) a pathway to acquire skills for a future job within school and district administration; (2) a pathway to offer teachers the opportunity to stay in the classroom *and* participate in leadership and/or advocacy roles; (3) a pathway to become a formal teacher leader or instructional coach.⁶⁸

Research and Exemplars

Over the last decade, more and more states have implemented policies and dedicated resources to ensure all teachers have the ability to develop leadership skills and advance their career.

Tennessee, for example, started building more robust teacher leadership opportunities as early as 2011 when the State Board of Education adopted Teacher Leader Model Standards.⁶⁹ In 2013, the state [revised these standards](#) and developed a Teacher Leader Network in order to develop adaptable leadership models for implementation in districts across the state.⁷⁰ Between 2013 and 2016, 28 districts—representing geographic socioeconomic and demographic diversity of the state—participated in the Teacher Leader Network and created innovative, exemplary teacher leadership

For Tennessee educators, creating a strong group of teacher leaders has multiple benefits:

- Increased student achievement and growth through the development of a shared leadership structure at the school level
- Broader dissemination and use of effective teacher strategies through an increase in teacher collaboration
- Stronger and more positive school and district culture through the development and retention of highly effective teachers

Source: Tennessee Department of Education, “*Teacher Leadership*” (2018).

⁶⁷ Revolution Impact, Focus Groups (Illinois, 2018).

⁶⁸ Teacher Leadership Effectiveness Committee, *2018 Recommendations to ISBE* (2018).

⁶⁹ Tennessee Department of Education, “*Teacher Leadership*” (2018), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.tn.gov/education/teaching-in-tennessee/teacher-leader-guidebook.html>.

⁷⁰ Tennessee Department of Education, *Revised Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards* (2013); Tennessee Department of Education, *Tennessee Teacher Leader Network 2015-16 Guidebook* (2016).

models.⁷¹ While the state provided guidance and support, it was ultimately up to each district to determine the type of teacher leadership model to implement and how to incentivize participation (e.g., additional compensation).⁷² To ensure noteworthy practices were shared broadly across the field, state leaders published three Teacher Leader Guidebooks, providing districts and schools with ***“different [teacher leadership] models that are grounded in these [state teacher leader] standards, yet illustrate distinct pathways for our schools and districts to consider when attempting to leverage the power and potential of teacher leader development.”***⁷³

In recent years, many other states have followed suit. During the 2017 Legislative session, nine states⁷⁴ enacted legislation supporting teacher advancement and leadership.⁷⁵ Arkansas, for example, enacted a House Bill 142, permitting the State Board of Education to create a tiered system of licensure, which will include a teacher leader license or endorsement and allow districts to differentiate teacher compensation.⁷⁶

TEACHER LEADERS IN ILLINOIS

Chicago Public Schools is one of several Illinois districts focused on teacher leadership as a recruitment and retention strategy. In 2017, the district launched seven Opportunity Culture schools to extend the reach of excellent educators, provide them with paid leadership opportunities and, ultimately, boost student achievement. Each Opportunity Culture school uses a team of teachers and administrators to decide how to reallocate their school’s budget and redesign the schedule so teacher leaders have added time to coach, plan and collaborate with a small team. These multi-classroom leaders—who have a record of high student achievement—lead data analysis for their team. And, they continue to classroom teach. For taking on the added responsibilities, these teacher leaders receive added pay—in Chicago they get between \$7,500 and \$11,000 per year. Matt Lyons, Chief Talent Officer for Chicago Public Schools, shared that he launched the Opportunity Culture schools after hearing top-notch educators complain about a lack of leadership/career advancement options in the district. These teachers wanted to remain in the classroom, but also longed to stretch their minds and talents. Lyons launched the effort in seven high-need schools and plans to expand it to seven more next year. ***“We saw this as a way to let great teachers continue to grow professionally, while also providing additional supports for new teachers,”*** he said. The Opportunity Culture model operates in more than 225 schools in over 20 school districts nationwide. A 2018 [study](#)¹ by the American Institutes for Research found that Opportunity Culture schools using the multi-classroom leadership model raised student achievement.

A recent study² by the UChicago Consortium on School Research found that principals use teacher leadership to establish strong learning climates. Liz Meyers, principal at Phillip Randolph Elementary School in Chicago, said she opted into the Opportunity Culture program because she recognized the power of teacher leaders. She also saw it as a way to retain her best teachers, who are recruited by other schools. ***“These teachers want a way to impact change outside their individual classrooms,”*** she said. ***“I want to keep them in the building so they can use all the talents they have to impact the school.”***

Sources: ¹Ben Backes and Michael Hansen, *Reaching Further and Learning More? Evaluating Public Impact’s Opportunity Culture Initiative* (AIR & Brookings Institution, 2018); ²Elaine Allensworth and Holly Hart, *How do Principals Influence Student Achievement?* (UChicago Consortium on School Research, 2018).

⁷¹ Tennessee Department of Education, [Tennessee Teacher Leader Network 2015-16 Guidebook](#) (2016).

⁷² National Council on Teacher Quality, *“Leadership Opportunities: Tennessee”* (2017), accessed August 20th, 2018, <https://www.nctq.org/yearbook/state/TN-Leadership-Opportunities-79>.

⁷³ Tennessee Department of Education, [Tennessee Teacher Leader Network 2015-16 Guidebook](#) (2016): 2.

⁷⁴ Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon.

⁷⁵ Education Commission of the States, [Teacher Development and Advancement](#) (2018).

⁷⁶ Education Commission of the States, [Teacher Development and Advancement](#) (2018).

Recommendation VII

ISBE will work with partners across Illinois to develop robust teacher mentorship and induction programs.

There is a growing body of research suggesting high-quality induction and mentorship programs positively impact teacher retention and student outcomes. ISBE will work with school districts and other organizations to support and encourage locally led new teacher induction and mentorship programs.

ISBE will work with partners to:

1. **Provide research-based guidelines** for how and why schools and districts should implement new teacher induction and mentorship programs, ensuring the guidelines are not a one-size fits all approach.
2. **Identify, document and share** effective new teacher induction and mentorship models and practices. This may include convening peer-learning networks across districts and regions.
3. **Encourage districts to use Federal Title Program funds** to support new teacher induction and mentorship programs.
4. **Advocate for adequate funding** to ensure all districts have the resources needed to implement a new teacher induction and mentorship program.

In 2015, State Superintendent Tony Smith requested state funds to support a new teacher induction and mentoring program. Grant money (\$750,000)—funded through ISBE’s Teacher Licensure fund—was awarded for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. This funding stream was exhausted by 2018, but 12 districts launched new induction and/or mentoring programs or supported existing programs.⁷⁷ These data continue to reinforce the cry for adequate funding, as adequately funded districts have the flexibility to re-allocate funds to support leadership initiatives, while inadequately funded districts face serious constraints in this area. ISBE will continue to advocate for more state-level grant money to support new teacher induction and mentorship programs, but adequate funding for all school districts in Illinois is an enabling condition to sustain local teacher induction and mentorship programs.

From the Field

“When I first started teaching, I had a mentor who observed me, gave feedback, and talked through practices. I also had a new teacher group that met regularly to share experiences. Those supports were so important, and kept me in the classroom longer than I might have otherwise stayed.” — Partnership for Educator Preparation focus group participant

Forty-four percent of new teachers in Illinois leave their initial school of employment within the first two years.⁷⁸ By the fifth year of teaching, 67 percent leave their initial school of employment and 25-30 percent leave the teaching profession altogether.⁷⁹

Reflecting findings from state and national research, focus group participants in Illinois find mentorship programs for new teachers to be of great value. They noted that mentors for new teachers help districts recruit and retain teachers and improve student achievement. Advertising teacher support systems to

⁷⁷ Currently districts that want to implement a new program or sustain an existing one, must allocate their own funds.

⁷⁸ Karen DeAngelis and Jennifer Presley, [*Leaving School or Leaving the Profession: Setting Illinois’ Record Straight on New Teacher Attrition*](#) (IERC, 2007).

⁷⁹ Karen DeAngelis and Jennifer Presley, [*Leaving School or Leaving the Profession: Setting Illinois’ Record Straight on New Teacher Attrition*](#) (IERC, 2007).

potential district applicants is imperative, numerous focus group participants suggested, because many applicants value the supports provided as a new teacher over compensation.

Mentorship for new teachers was a key topic of conversation for teacher focus groups as well. Many participants recounted their own story, describing the positive influence a mentor teacher had on them at one point or another. As one participant claimed, her early career mentor “*shaped her as a teacher.*”

Research and Exemplars

New teacher induction and mentorship programs can increase retention rates of new teachers, enhance teachers’ skills and increase student performance. According to national research, new teachers who do not receive mentoring and other supports leave at more than two times the rate of those who do.⁸⁰

Additionally, a recent study on the [NTC mentoring program](#) found students whose teachers participated in a mentor program outperformed their grade level peers in both English/language arts and mathematics. The teachers produced gains of about two to three and a half additional months of learning in English language arts, and two to four and a half months in math.⁸¹

Under Race to the Top (RttT), North Carolina identified two high-priority needs to support the state’s lowest performing schools: (1) help teachers in North Carolina succeed during their initial years teaching; (2) retain qualified teachers across the state serving in high-need schools.⁸² Based on these needs, North Carolina used RttT grant money to develop the [North Carolina New Teacher Support Program](#) (NC NTSP), which seeks to improve the instructional knowledge, skills, attitudes, effectiveness and retention of participating teachers. The program consists of multi-day trainings, instructional coaching and professional development.⁸³

In 2015, the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina at University of North Carolina analyzed the effect the program had on teacher effectiveness and retention. Findings reveal what participants in the program already knew: NC NTSP was extremely effective, especially at increasing teacher effectiveness and retention.

Highlights from NC NTSP Evaluation

- NC NTSP evaluation sample teachers were significantly more likely to return to teaching in North Carolina public schools, to the same LEA and to the same low-performing school.
- NC NTSP evaluation sample teachers felt the program components had positively impacted their teaching, compared to similar services provided by their own school.
- Overall, NC NTSP evaluation sample teachers had significantly higher EVAAS (education value-added assessment system) estimates compared to other fifth and eighth grade science teachers.

⁸⁰ Anne Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop & Linda Darling-Hammond, [Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators](#) (Learning Policy Institute, 2016).

⁸¹ Madeline Will, “*Mentors for New Teachers Found to Boost Student Achievement—by a Lot*” (EdWeek, 2017), accessed August 20th, 2018, http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2017/06/new_teacher_center_mentor_study.html.

⁸² Kevin Bastian and Julie Marks, [North Carolina New Teacher Support Program: Final Race to the Top Evaluation Report](#) (Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation: North Carolina, 2015).

⁸³ Ibid.

Acknowledgments

ISBE would like to thank the over 400 Illinoisans who participated in focus groups and shared ideas and resources throughout the year of study. Additionally, ISBE would like to recognize the Joyce Foundation for their generous support of this project, and Education First Consulting and Revolution Impact for technical support and content expertise.