

# Unfilled Teaching Positions in Illinois



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# Unfilled Positions Trends in Illinois<sup>3</sup>

## Background

The unfilled positions data comes from the unfilled positions collection reported in the Employment Information System (EIS) collected by the Illinois State Board of Education. An unfilled position is defined as “a position that is not filled by an appropriately licensed, permanent educator as of Oct. 1. This position may be vacant or may be filled by an employee who lacks proper credentials (e.g., no Professional Educator License, no Educator License with Stipulations, etc.), such as a substitute, to fill the position permanently.”

The unfilled positions collection is reported annually in October by several entity types including Regional Offices of Education, public districts, special education districts/cooperatives, other state-funded entities, and vocational districts/schools. The outcome variables used to measure unfilled positions are unfilled full-time equivalent (FTE) and the approximate vacancy rate. Unfilled FTE is reported by the employer entity at the position level. There are four position types: administrative, paraprofessional, school support personnel, and teaching. A table of positions by position type is included in the appendix. The approximate vacancy rate is calculated by taking the sum of unfilled FTE and dividing it by the sum of the unfilled FTE for the current school year and filled FTE for the previous school year.

$$\text{Approximate Vacancy Rate School Year 2026} = \frac{\text{Unfilled FTE SY 2026}}{\text{Unfilled FTE SY 2026} + \text{Filled FTE SY 2025}} * 100$$

## Topics

1. How has the approximate vacancy rate changed over the past three years statewide?
2. What are the trends in unfilled positions by geographic area?
3. Which positions have had an increase in unfilled positions?
4. For severe shortages such as special education and bilingual positions, have unfilled positions decreased over time?
5. How do early childhood<sup>4</sup> vacancies with a nonpublic district employer compare to those with a public district employer for school year 2025-26?

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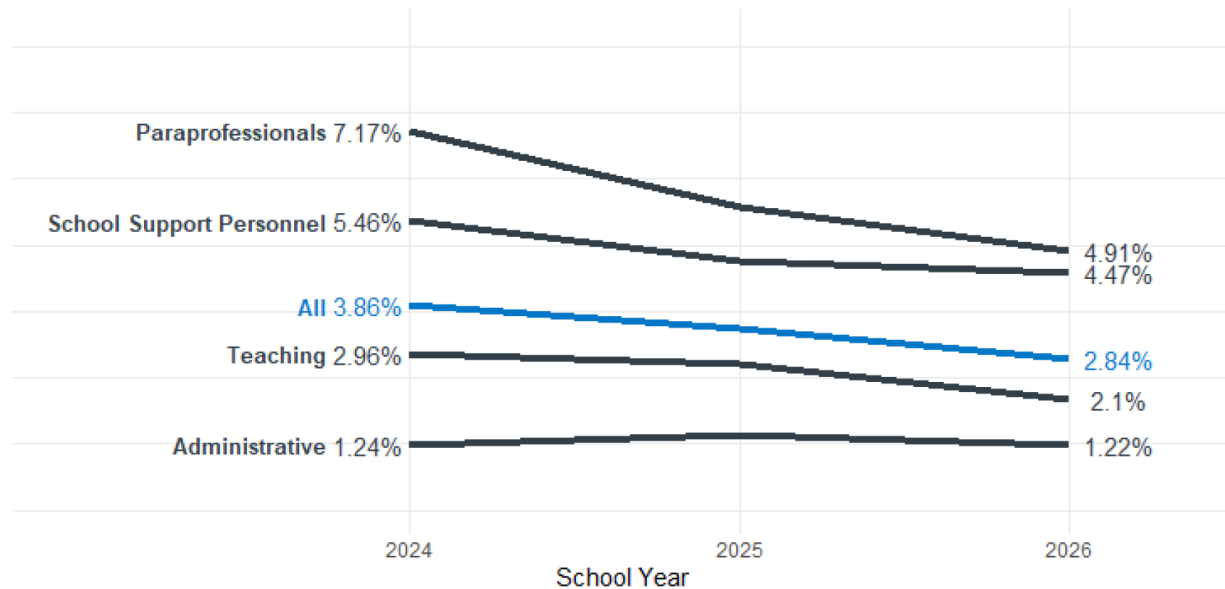
<sup>4</sup>Nonpublic entities with [early childhood](#) attendance sites that receive Preschool for All (PFA) or Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE) funding are required to submit employment and unfilled positions data in EIS. Early childhood includes prekindergarten enrollments.

# How has the approximate vacancy rate changed over the past three years statewide?

Statewide school year 2025-26 approximate vacancy rate: **2.84%**

**Figure 1:** Approximate vacancy rates reflect the percentage of unfilled positions reported in school years 2023-24 through 2025-26. Total and position type vacancy rates are included.

**Approximate Vacancy Rates Continue to Decrease Over the Past 3 Years**



Statewide, the approximate vacancy rate for school year 2025-26 was 2.84%, continuing a steady and slight decrease compared to school year 2024. In Figure 1, the approximate vacancy rate declined for all four types of positions as well. The biggest decline in vacancies is the paraprofessional position type, where school year 2023-24 was reported as 7.17% compared to 4.91% in the 2025-26 school year. The administrative position type continues to have the smallest approximate vacancy rate statewide.

## What are the trends in unfilled positions by geographic area?

**Table 1:** Most geographic areas decreased in unfilled FTE and approximate vacancy rate from school year 2023-24 to 2025-26. Geographic areas are ordered by largest increase to largest decrease in unfilled FTE.

Geographic Area <sup>3</sup>	Approximate Vacancy Rate <sup>4</sup> SY 2024	Approximate Vacancy Rate SY 2026	Unfilled FTE <sup>5</sup> SY 2024	Unfilled FTE SY 2026	Difference Unfilled FTE
Other <sup>6</sup>	7.61%	8.19%	20.00	24.00	4.00
Southwest	2.39%	2.33%	290.13	289.80	-0.33
Southeast	2.89%	2.16%	238.40	182.29	-56.11
Northwest	3.06%	2.11%	523.53	370.23	-153.30
East Central	5.45%	4.23%	817.77	657.84	-159.93
West Central	4.68%	3.33%	681.56	498.45	-183.11
City of Chicago	5.83%	3.96%	2,021.40	1,464.00	-557.40
Northeast	3.11%	2.23%	3,290.72	2,430.49	-860.23

While all regions (except “Other”) reported less unfilled FTE and lower approximate vacancy rates, the extents to which they declined differ. The City of Chicago and Northeast regions reported the biggest decreases in unfilled FTE, with more than 500 fewer unfilled positions in school year 2025-26. Meanwhile, the Southwest region reported a decrease of less than one FTE.

<sup>3</sup>Geographic area is determined by the working location indicated in the Entity Profile System. A map of the service areas is available on the [Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools](#) website.

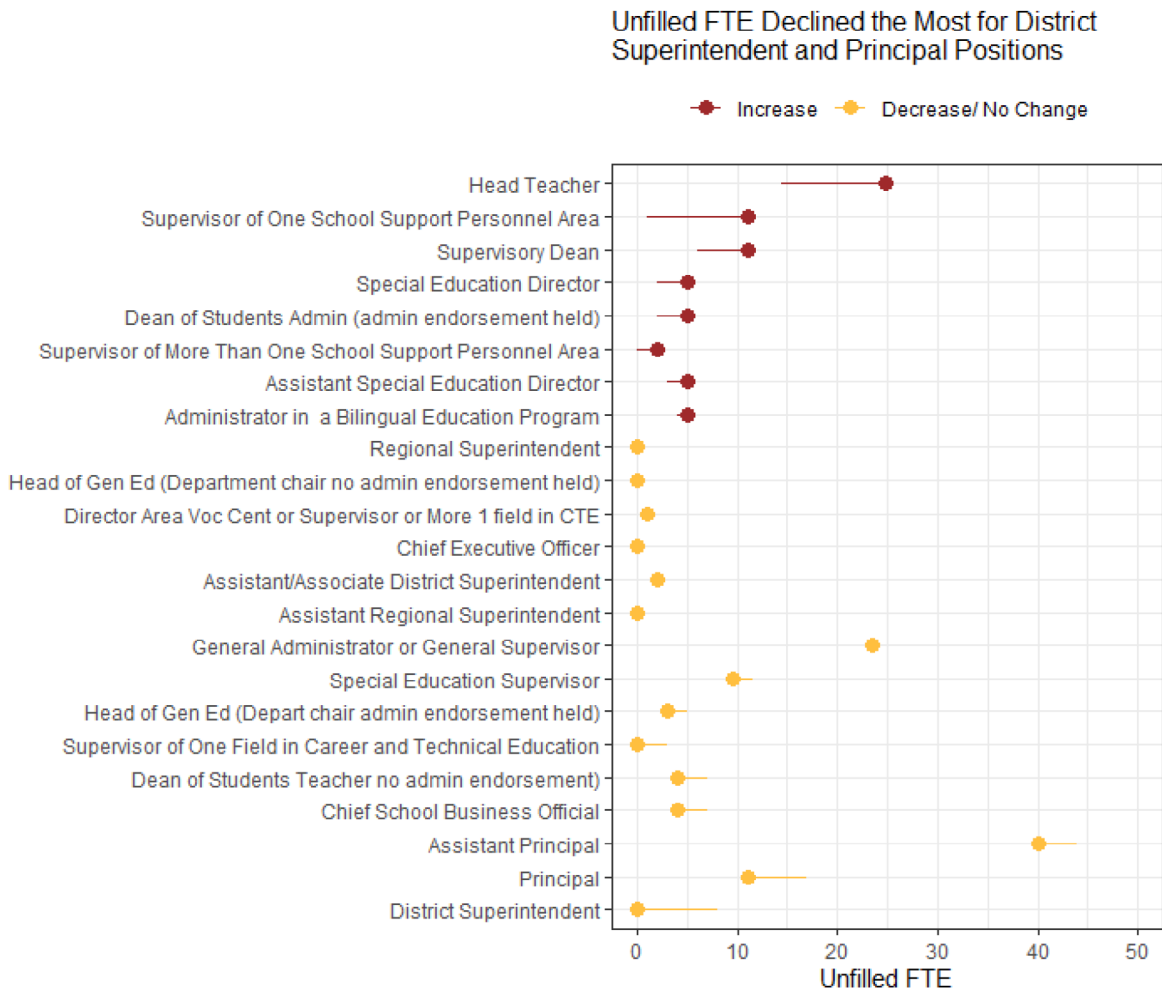
<sup>4</sup>Approximate vacancy rate: Low-High

<sup>5</sup>Unfilled FTE: Low-High

<sup>6</sup>Entities included in Other: Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice School District 428, Illinois Youth Center – St. Charles, Illinois Youth Center – Pere Marquette, Illinois Youth Center –Warrenville, School District 428 Illinois Youth Center – Harrisburg, Illinois Youth Center Chicago, Illinois School for the Deaf, Illinois School for the Visually Impaired, Illinois State University Laboratory Schools, University High School, Thomas Metcalf School, University of Illinois High School, Abilities Plus, Timber Ridge School, Illinois Center for Rehab & Education – Roosevelt, and University of Illinois Lab School.

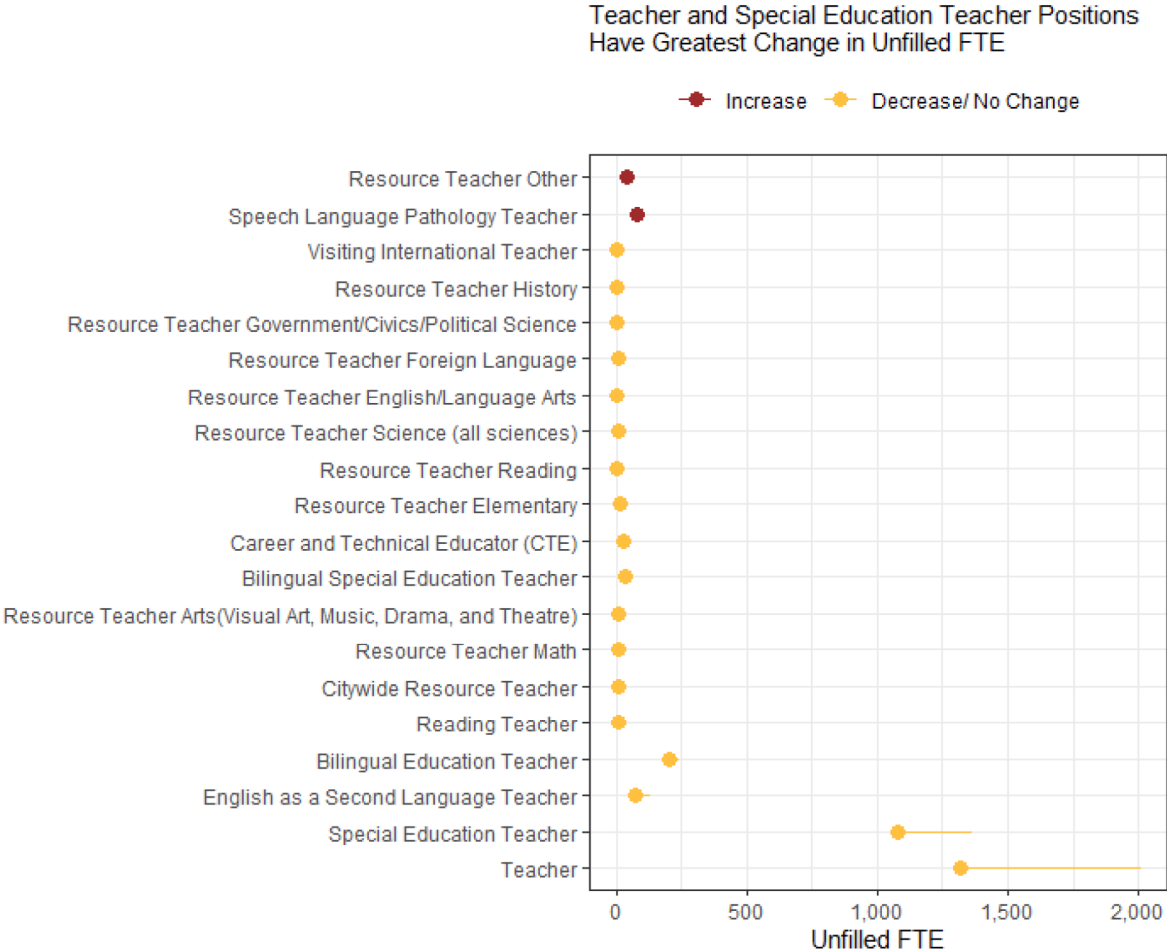
# Which positions have increased in unfilled positions between school year 2023-24 and school year 2025-26?

**Figure 2:** Each data point represents the change in unfilled FTE from school year 2023-24 to school year 2025-26 for administrative positions and the unfilled FTE in school year 2025-26. Positions are ordered from greatest increase to greatest decrease.



Administrative positions continue to have fewer than 50 unfilled FTE positions. The Head Teacher position had the largest increase in unfilled FTE for administrative positions, approximately 15 more unfilled positions reported in school year 2025-26 compared to 2023-24. The Assistant Principal position continues to be the position with the most unfilled positions reported for the administrative positions category. District Superintendent had the largest decrease in unfilled positions and no unfilled positions reported in school year 2025-26. Of the remaining administrative positions, only Supervisor of One School Support Personnel Area, Principal, and District Superintendent had a change in unfilled FTE greater than five.

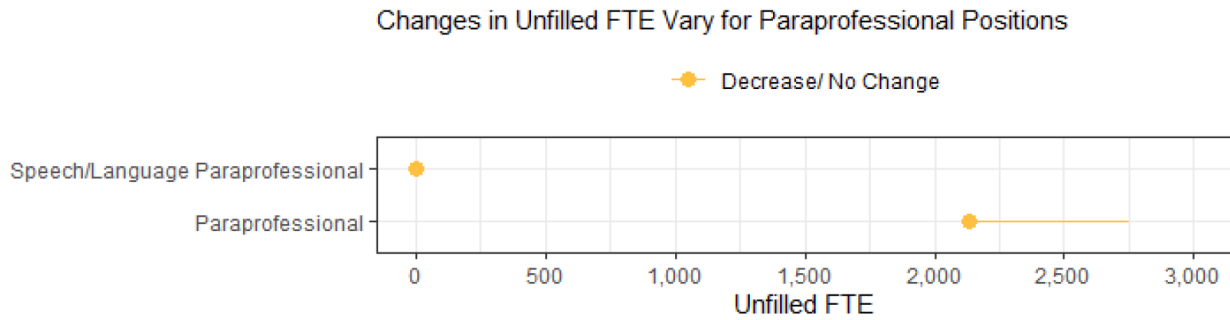
**Figure 3:** Each data point represents the change in unfilled FTE from school year 2023-24 to school year 2025-26 for teaching positions and the unfilled FTE in school year 2025-26. Positions are ordered from greatest increase to greatest decrease.



Teacher and Special Education Teacher remain two of the top three positions with the highest number of vacancies across all positions. The same five teacher positions had the greatest number of unfilled FTE in both school year 2023-24 and school year 2025-26: Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Bilingual Education Teacher, English as a Second Language Teacher, and Speech Language Pathology Teacher. However, four of the five positions showed decreases over this period. The Teacher position saw the largest decline, dropping from approximately 2,000 unfilled FTE in school year 2023-24 to about 1,300 in school year 2025-26. Special Education Teacher vacancies decreased by 280 FTE, and English as a Second Language vacancies declined by around 63 FTE. The remaining positions changed by fewer than 40 unfilled FTE.

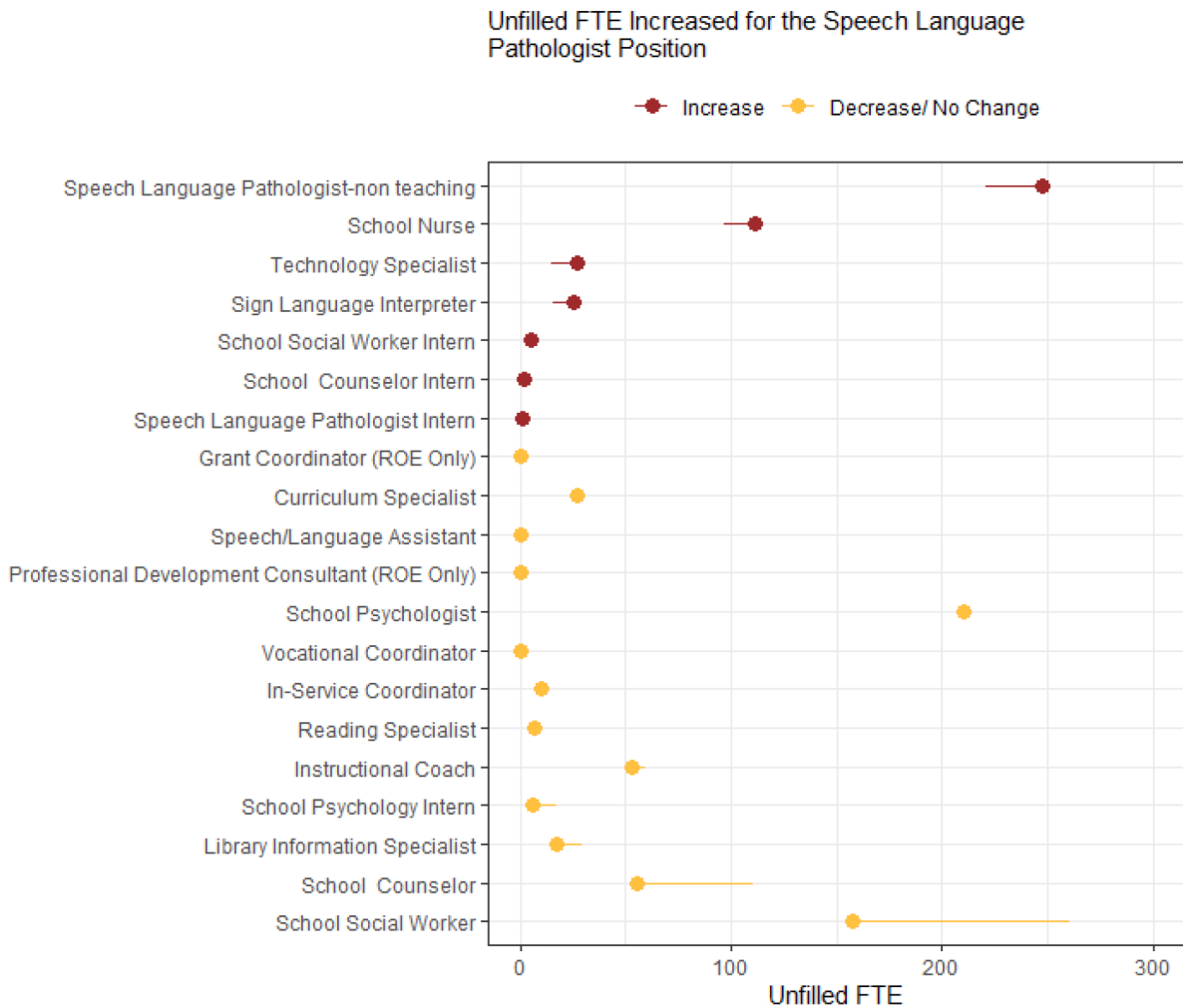
Resource Teacher Other was one of only two positions with an increase, rising by approximately 20 unfilled FTE. The other was Speech Language Pathology Teacher, which increased by just two unfilled FTE.

**Figure 4:** Each data point represents the change in unfilled FTE from school year 2023-24 to school year 2025-26 for paraprofessional positions and the unfilled FTE in school year 2025-26. Positions are ordered from greatest increase to greatest decrease.



Paraprofessional vacancies decreased from 2,750 to 2,133. It continues to be the position with the highest number of vacancies across all position types. Speech Language Paraprofessional vacancies decreased from one in school year 2023-24 to none in school year 2025-26.

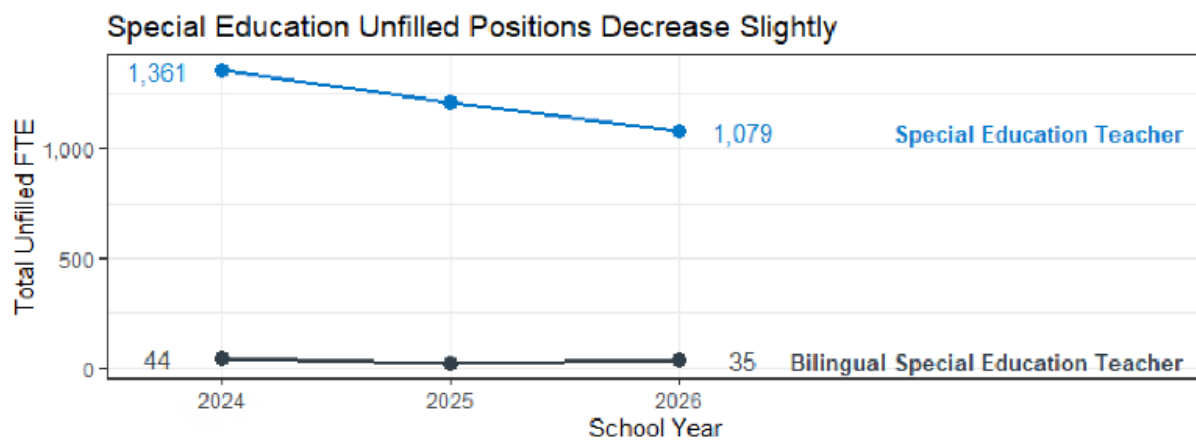
**Figure 5:** Each data point represents the change in unfilled FTE from school year 2023-24 to school year 2025-26 for school support personnel positions and the unfilled FTE in school year 2025-26. Positions are ordered from greatest increase to greatest decrease.



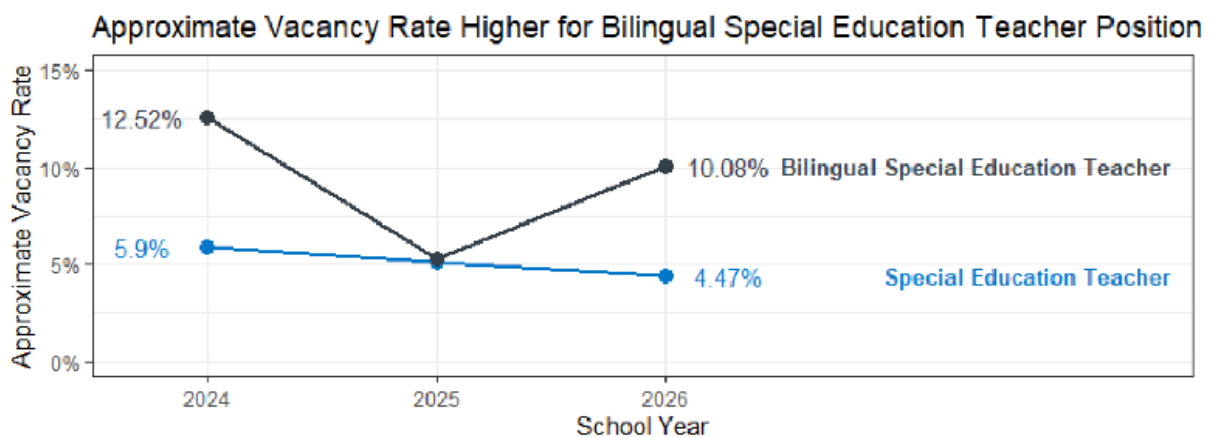
The same five school support positions had the greatest number of unfilled FTE in both school year 2023-24 and school year 2025-26: Speech Language Pathologist-non teaching, School Psychologist, School Social Worker, School Nurse, and School Counselor. The Speech Language Pathologist-non teaching position now has the most vacancies – increasing by about 27 unfilled FTE. The School Social Worker position decreased by 100 unfilled FTE from school year 2023-24 to school year 2025-26. School Counselor vacancies declined by 50% of their 2023-24 school year value to 55 in 2025-26. School Psychologist and School Nurse vacancies changed by fewer than 20. Most school support personnel positions changed by less than fifteen FTE (except Speech Language Pathologist-non teaching, School Counselor, and School Social Worker).

## For severe shortages such as special education and bilingual positions, have unfilled positions decreased over time?

**Figure 6:** Unfilled FTE reported in school year 2023-24 to 2025-26 by special education position.

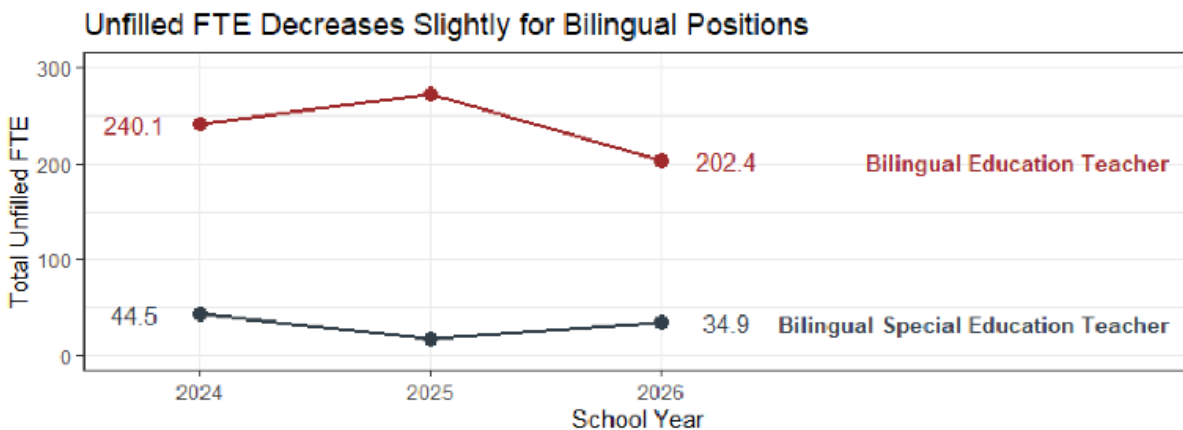


**Figure 7:** Approximate vacancy rates reflect the percentage of unfilled positions reported in school year 2023-24 to 2025-26 by special education position.

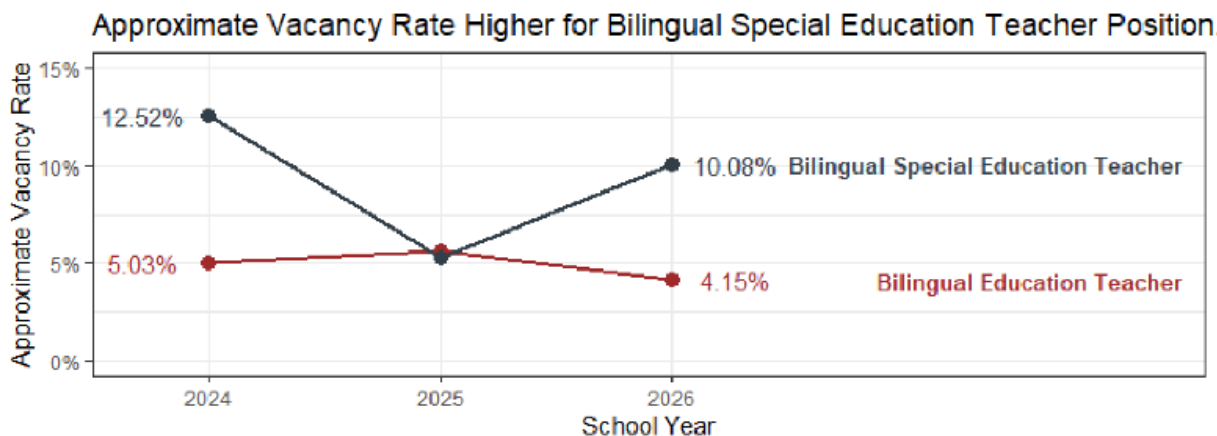


Unfilled positions decreased for both the Special Education Teacher and Bilingual Special Education Teacher positions statewide. In school year 2025-26, there were 1,079 unfilled Special Education Teacher positions versus 35 unfilled Bilingual Special Education Teacher positions. While the Special Education Teacher position has more reported unfilled FTE positions, it has a lower approximate vacancy rate due to the large amount of filled Special Education Teacher positions. Both positions had a lower approximate vacancy rate in school year 2025-26 in comparison to 2023-24.

**Figure 8:** Unfilled FTE reported in school year 2023-24 to 2025-26 by bilingual position



**Figure 9:** Approximate vacancy rates reflect the percentage of unfilled positions reported in school year 2023-24 to 2025-26 by bilingual position.



Statewide, both bilingual positions had a small decrease in reported unfilled positions comparing school year 2023-24 to 2025-26, resulting in lower approximate vacancy rates. The Bilingual Education Teacher position had a decrease of around 40 unfilled positions in school year 2025-26 versus 2023-24 while the Bilingual Special Education position had a decrease of around five unfilled positions.

## How do early childhood vacancies with a nonpublic district parent entity compare to those with a public district parent entity for school year 2025-26?

**Table 2:** Nonpublic parent entity versus public parent entity with unfilled positions at an early childhood working location in school year 2025-26.

Parent Entity Category	Unfilled FTE SY 2026	Filled FTE SY 2025	Approximate Vacancy Rate
Nonpublic	61.26	430.34	12.46%
Public	2.00	187.97	1.05%

In school year 2025-26, nonpublic entities reported 61.26 unfilled positions at an early childhood working location while public entities reported only two unfilled positions at an early childhood working location.

## Conclusion

Statewide vacancies continue a downward trend over time. This trend is mirrored by position type vacancies. The magnitude of declines in vacancies varies by geographic area, position type, and position. All three of the positions with the highest number of vacancies (Paraprofessional, Teacher, and Special Education Teacher) have decreased in vacancies over time.

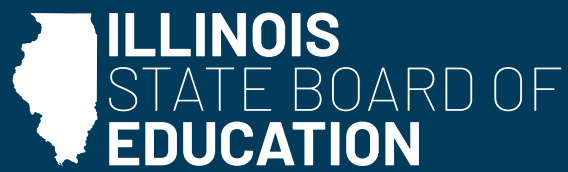
## Appendix

**Table A1:** Unfilled Position Type for EIS Unfilled Positions

Position Type	Position
Administrative	District Superintendent
Administrative	Assistant/Associate District Superintendent
Administrative	Chief Executive Officer
Administrative	Principal
Administrative	Assistant Principal
Administrative	Supervisory Dean
Administrative	General Administrator or General Supervisor
Administrative	Director Area Voc Cent or Supervisor or More 1 field in CTE
Administrative	Chief School Business Official
Administrative	Head Teacher
Administrative	Supervisor of One Field in Career and Technical Education
Administrative	Administrator in a Bilingual Education Program
Administrative	Regional Superintendent
Administrative	Assistant Regional Superintendent
Administrative	Dean of Students Admin (admin endorsement held)
Administrative	Head of Gen Ed (Department chair admin endorsement held)
Administrative	Dean of Students Teacher (no admin endorsement)
Administrative	Head of Gen Ed (Department chair no admin endorsement held)
Administrative	Assistant Special Education Director
Administrative	Special Education Director
Administrative	Special Education Supervisor
Administrative	Supervisor of More Than One School Support Personnel Area
Administrative	Supervisor of One School Support Personnel Area
Paraprofessionals	Paraprofessional
Paraprofessionals	Speech/Language Paraprofessional
School Support Personnel	Vocational Coordinator
School Support Personnel	Curriculum Specialist
School Support Personnel	Instructional Coach
School Support Personnel	Library Information Specialist

<b>Position Type</b>	<b>Position</b>
School Support Personnel	Reading Specialist
School Support Personnel	Technology Specialist
School Support Personnel	Professional Development Consultant (ROE Only)
School Support Personnel	Grant Coordinator (ROE Only)
School Support Personnel	Cued Speech Interpreter
School Support Personnel	In-Service Coordinator
School Support Personnel	Sign Language Interpreter
School Support Personnel	School Counselor
School Support Personnel	School Counselor Intern
School Support Personnel	School Nurse
School Support Personnel	School Nurse Intern (9 Week)
School Support Personnel	School Psychologist
School Support Personnel	School Psychology Intern
School Support Personnel	School Social Worker
School Support Personnel	School Social Worker Intern
School Support Personnel	Speech Language Pathologist-non teaching
School Support Personnel	Speech Language Pathologist Intern
School Support Personnel	Speech/Language Assistant
Teaching	Teacher
Teaching	Reading Teacher
Teaching	Bilingual Education Teacher
Teaching	English as a Second Language Teacher
Teaching	Visiting International Teacher
Teaching	Speech Language Pathology Teacher
Teaching	Career and Technical Educator (CTE)
Teaching	Special Education Teacher
Teaching	Bilingual Special Education Teacher
Teaching	Resource Teacher Arts (Visual Art, Music, Drama, and Theatre)
Teaching	Resource Teacher History
Teaching	Resource Teacher Government/Civics/Political Science
Teaching	Resource Teacher English/Language Arts
Teaching	Resource Teacher Reading

Position Type	Position
Teaching	Resource Teacher Math
Teaching	Resource Teacher Science (all sciences)
Teaching	Resource Teacher Foreign Language
Teaching	Resource Teacher Economics
Teaching	Resource Teacher Elementary
Teaching	Resource Teacher Other
Teaching	Citywide Resource Teacher



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