

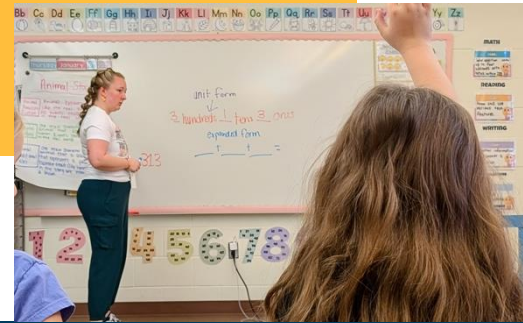
Teacher Vacancy Grant FY 2024

West Prairie CUSD 103

The Challenge

West Prairie is a rural district in West Central Illinois located near Macomb, a university town where higher salaries are offered, creating high turnover in our teacher workforce. Combined with high administrative turnover, our district has a retention rate of 81%, which is far below the state average.

Our small size, while fostering a strong sense of community, also creates many single-teacher departments, which limit teachers' opportunities for collaboration. Teacher Vacancy Grant funds have increased support for teachers and created a pipeline for locally grown teacher candidates.



**\$100,747
awarded**

Strategic Local Investments

Strategy 1: Hire an Instructional Coach

The Teacher Vacancy Grant allowed our district to hire an instructional coach, who is directly responsible for providing training and support to classroom teachers in grades preK-12 across three buildings.

Outcomes

- The instructional coach made 639 contacts with a caseload of 54 teachers in 2023-24.
- The coach collaborated with administrators to implement a semester-long professional development series focusing on elements of effective instruction, incorporating lesson studies and peer observations.
- As a result of increased teacher support, our teacher retention increased from 81% in SY 2023-24 to 94% in SY 2024-25.

Strategy 2: Develop a 'Grow Your Own' Program

The Teacher Vacancy Grant provided funds to engage high school students interested in pursuing teaching as a career in a daily hands-on immersion experience with elementary students.

Outcomes

- Three students in spring 2024 and four students in fall 2024 participated in an 18-week observation and assistant program with 15 certified teachers.
- Four students pursuing degrees in education received tuition reimbursement for dual credit high school courses.

Strategy 3: Implement a Mentorship Program

The funds provided by Teacher Vacancy Grant supported a rigorous mentoring program between novice and veteran teachers.

Outcomes

- Nine veteran teachers partnered with 11 novice (Years 1-2) teachers during 2024-25.
- Meetings provided intensive support, resulting in zero mid-year resignations.

"Because of access to the Teacher Vacancy Grant, I was able to get my master's in education and become a teacher to better my students while working in the classroom."

-Bella Dean, West Prairie North Elementary