

HOW ILLINOIS DISTRICTS ARE ADDRESSING TEACHER SHORTAGES

AN EVALUATION OF THE TEACHER VACANCY GRANT PILOT PROGRAM



STUDY OBJECTIVES

Applications to receive funding from the Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program (TVGPP) were analyzed to understand how districts conceived of the following:

- **Causes** of teacher shortages
- **Strategies** to mitigate shortages
- **Allocation of funds** to various solutions

KEY FINDINGS

1. The causes of teacher shortages in TVGPP districts are multifaceted.

Districts most commonly identified **compensation**, **lack of qualified applicants**, **routine attrition**, and **competition from neighboring districts** as root causes of teacher shortages. Most districts identified multiple causes for their staffing difficulties.

2. The solutions districts proposed were equally multipronged.

TVGPP districts commonly proposed **special compensation** (e.g., bonuses), **development of teacher preparation pathways**, and **professional learning** as solutions. Most districts proposed multiple solutions.

3. Causes and solutions were well aligned.

Nearly all TVGPP districts developed solutions that emphasized recruitment, retention, or both, depending on causes. Most districts identified causes and solutions in both recruitment and retention.

4. Teachers and Illinois teacher colleges were the biggest indirect recipients of grant funds.

Districts allocated money to teachers in the form of bonuses, both for hiring (\$3.0M) and retention (\$4.1M), tuition payments for initial licensure or additional endorsements (\$8.3M), and professional learning (\$1.2M for mentoring alone). They also allocated funding towards classroom resources and programs for morale, but these efforts cost much less.

ABOUT THE GRANT BACKGROUND

- Three-year state-funded initiative, implemented in the 2023-24 school year
- Allocated \$45M to Illinois' most understaffed school districts in first year
- Designed to fulfill funding needs for teacher recruitment and retention
- Aims to reduce unfilled teaching positions statewide

ELIGIBILITY

- Qualifying districts had highest counts of unfilled teaching positions in 2022-23 school year
- 170 districts, serving roughly 870,000 students, participated
- 60% of districts were rural, 40% of districts were urban

[Read the full report here.](#)



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