**IARSS 2023-2024 teacher shortage survey results overview**

**OVERVIEW**

* 91 percent of districts report problems with teacher shortages
* 73 percent of districts report less than 50 percent of teacher applicants have proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 52 percent of districts report employee burnout for working conditions is a major or significant factor for teacher shortages

**TEACHERS**

* 84 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with teacher shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 20 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 56 percent of school leaders say half or less of their teacher candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 88 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open teaching positions
* Leading causes of teacher shortages:
  + 54 percent: employee burnout from working conditions
  + 49 percent: better compensation in another profession
  + 48 percent: increased responsibilities
  + 40 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 39 percent: better compensation in a neighboring Illinois district
  + 32 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size
* Leading causes of teacher open positions:
  + 42 percent: resignations to move districts
  + 26 percent: resignations for a different profession
  + 23 percent: retirement
  + 20 percent: new, permanent positions
  + 18 percent: changed a staff assignment
  + 15 percent: medical leave
* 23 percent of school leaders reported no unmet need for teachers in 2023-2024 school year. For the remaining 77 percent, leading solutions for unfilled teacher positions were:
  + 348 schools: hired a substitute with a substitute license
  + 287 schools: hired a substitute on a short-term license
  + 261 schools: hired a retiree
  + 224 schools: assigned extra duty to existing employee
  + 151 schools: combined classes
  + 136 schools: increased class sizes
* 32 percent of school leaders say they did not hire anyone not fully credentialed. For the rest, 381 (56 percent) hired on a short-term approval and 187 (28 percent) hired on a temporary license

**SCHOOL SUPPORT PERSONNEL**

* 79 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with school support personnel shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 17 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 59 percent of school leaders say half or less of their school support personnel candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 94 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open school support personnel positions
* Leading causes of school support personnel shortages:
  + 59 percent: better compensation in another profession
  + 50 percent: better compensation in a neighboring Illinois district
  + 47 percent: employee burnout from working conditions
  + 45 percent: increased responsibilities
  + 41 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 37 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size
  + 35 percent: better compensation at a district in a nearby state
* Leading causes of school support personnel open positions:
  + 40 percent: resignations to move districts
  + 31 percent: resignations for a different profession
  + 23 percent: new, permanent positions
  + 16 percent: retirement
  + 15 percent: new, temporary positions
  + 14 percent: medical leave
* 39 percent of school leaders say they had no unmet need for school support personnel. For the remaining 61 percent, leading solutions for school support personnel openings were:
  + 205 schools: outsourced using a third-party vendor
  + 188 schools: assigned extra duty to existing employee
  + 150 schools: hired a retiree
  + 141 schools: shared school support personnel within grade spans
  + 119 schools: shared school support personnel with no distinction
* 128 schools hired short-term approval credentials for employees to fill school support personnel – 447 schools hired no one not fully credentialed

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

* 81 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with special educator shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 20 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 58 percent of school leaders say half or less of their special educator candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 85 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open special educator positions
* Leading causes of special educator shortages:
  + 56 percent: employee burnout from working conditions
  + 52 percent: increased responsibilities
  + 46 percent: better compensation in a neighboring Illinois district
  + 40 percent: better compensation in another profession
  + 39 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 36 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size
* Leading causes of special educator open positions:
  + 42 percent: resignations to move districts
  + 25 percent: new, permanent positions
  + 20 percent: changed a staff assignment to meet student needs
  + 18 percent: resignations for a different profession
  + 18 percent: changed a staff assignment to fill crucial role
  + 16 percent: retirement
* 44 percent of school leaders reported no unmet need for special educators in 2023-2024 school year. For the remaining 56 percent, leading solutions for unfilled special educator positions were:
  + 179 schools: assigned extra duty to existing employee
  + 175 schools: hired a substitute with a substitute license
  + 148 schools: hired a substitute on a short-term license
  + 146 schools: combined classes
  + 144 schools: increased class sizes
  + 131 schools: hired a retiree
* 195 schools say they used short-term approval credentials to fill special educator positions, and another 87 schools used temporary licensure. 372 schools say they did not hire anyone not fully credentialed

**ADMINISTRATORS**

* 38 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with administrator shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 6 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 28 percent of school leaders say half or less of their administrator candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 45 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open administrator positions
* Leading causes of administrator shortages:
  + 42 percent: employee burnout from working conditions
  + 41 percent: increased responsibilities
  + 37 percent: better compensation in a neighboring Illinois district
  + 29 percent: better compensation in another profession
  + 27 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 25 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size
  + 25 percent: better compensation at a district in a nearby state
* Leading causes of administrator open positions:
  + 28 percent: resignations to move districts
  + 16 percent: promotions
  + 15 percent: retirement
  + 13 percent: resignations for a different profession
  + 12 percent: new, permanent positions
* 87 percent of school leaders reported no unmet need for administrators in 2023-2024 school year. For the remaining 13 percent, leading solutions for unfilled administrator positions were:
  + 44 schools: hired a retiree
  + 23 schools: distributed additional admin duties among teachers
  + 23 schools: hired a teacher earning admin endorsement

**PARAPROFESSIONALS**

* 83 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with paraprofessional shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 14 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 17 percent of school leaders say half or less of their paraprofessional candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 75 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open paraprofessional positions
* Leading causes of paraprofessional shortages:
  + 65 percent: better compensation in another profession
  + 41 percent: employee burnout from working conditions
  + 41 percent: better compensation in a neighboring Illinois district
  + 39 percent: increased responsibilities
  + 32 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 30 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size
* 64 percent of school leaders (405 schools) say they did not hire anyone not fully credentialed. For the rest, 209 hired on a short-term approval

**SUBSTITUTES**

* 93 percent of school leaders surveyed indicated they have a serious or very serious problem with substitute shortages
  + The shortage perception ranges greatly across the state – 33 percent in some counties, up to 100 percent in others
* 78 percent of school leaders say half or less of their substitute candidates have the proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 35 percent of school leaders say they received none or very few (under five) applicants for their open substitute positions
* Leading causes of substitute shortages:
  + 46 percent: limited number of applicants due to district urbanicity
  + 41 percent: limited number of applicants due to district size

**NON-LICENSED STAFF**

* 73 percent of responding school leaders say they had problems finding bus drivers
* 60 percent say custodial/maintenance staff are hard to find
* 43 percent say food service workers are hard to find

**OTHER FINDINGS**

The survey asked school leaders about a number of solutions they are finding to improve educator recruitment/retention. The highest levels of success came from:

* Actively working to improve working conditions to improve educator retention
* Proactively working to place student teachers in the district
* Supporting paras in completing required for PEL by providing financial resources
* Offering additional compensation or benefits to retain staff
* Actively working to increase leadership capacity to improve educator retention

The survey asked school leaders about actions taken at the state level (ISBE and the Legislature) to improve teacher recruitment/retention. The highest-rated changes include:

* Increasing the number of days retired educators can sub without impacting their retirement status
* Increasing the number of days a substitute can sub up to 120 days
* Providing EBF that allowed the district to add additional staff
* Waived passing of the teacher performance assessment for issuance of PEL

The survey asked school leaders about actions that could be taken at the state level (ISBE and the Legislature) to improve teacher recruitment/retention. The highest-rated changes include:

* Modifying the teacher pension tier system
* Providing additional loan forgiveness for more educators
* Providing financial support to teacher prep candidates teach in chronic shortage areas
* Investigating salary parity with other professions with the same licensure and education
* Offer additional scholarships to teaching candidates

**SURVEY DETAILS**

* 761 of 965 school districts responded (78.8 percent)
* Overall teacher shortage ratings steady – 3.4 like 2023, up from 3.0 in 2018 but down from 3.6 in 2022
* Number of teacher positions filled by alternative measures up significantly in 2024 – 3,233, versus 1,271 in 2023, previous high was 1,996 in 2018
* Administrator shortage steady – 2.1, down from 2.2 in 2023, 1.2 in 2018
* Substitute shortage steady – 4.1, same as 2023, 4.0 in 2018
* All teacher shortage areas most significant in special education and CTE, followed by middle school/high school, then elementary
* School psychologists, speech-language pathologists, social workers, and nurses lead school support personnel shortages
* Teacher shortages most severe in city districts, in vocational centers, in west-central, southwest and east-central Illinois
* Most problems with finding qualified applicants seen in rural districts, in vocational centers, and in west-central, southwest and southeast Illinois