**IARSS 2024-2025 teacher shortage survey results talking points**

Our latest statewide survey of Illinois schools shows our long-running teacher shortages remain persistent:

* 87 percent of districts report problems with teacher shortages
* 65 percent of districts report less than 50 percent of teacher applicants have proper credentials for the position they are seeking
* 91 percent of districts report having fewer than five applicants for each open teacher position
* 71 percent of districts report seeing greater teacher position needs than last school year, and 80 percent anticipate those needs will grow over the next five years

The picture varies again widely by region. In some Illinois counties, 80 percent or more of schools report their shortages are not serious. But in others – often rural, downstate counties but also in some cities – all schools say they are struggling to find teaching talent.

Shortages continue to be reported as most significant in specialty areas, often where students need the most help: special education, career and technical education, school psychologists and speech-language pathologists, social workers, nurses.

New this year: We asked school leaders to identify their top 3 causes of shortages and top 3 impacts of those shortages. We also asked them to identify their top 3 current strategies to combat shortages and the top 3 desired solutions to relieve shortages:

* Top causes: limited applicants, issues related to salary/benefits, poor working conditions
* Top impacts: certified staff shortages, limited applicants, poor working conditions
* Current strategies: improve recruitment, provide incentives, support for staff
* Desired solutions: state/federal support, provide incentives, improve recruitment

What’s working: School leaders identified more than 6,100 teacher position openings that were remedied by alternative measures. General special education teacher, elementary education, early childhood and bilingual education were the most frequent positions addressed.

* Top remedies: hiring a substitute, modifying class offerings or educator responsibilities, outsourcing to a third-party vendor, hiring an educator on a short-term approval

Unfilled position solutions: Educators hired a substitute holding a substitute license, assigned extra duty to existing employees, hired a retired educator/employee, hired an educator with a short-term approval, hired a substitute with a short-term license.

Policy solutions: Increasing number of days retired educators can substitute without impacting their retirement status, increasing number of days a substitute can sub up to 120 days, expanding short-term approvals all are most effective state (ISBE, General Assembly policy solutions). Most helpful funding efforts are evidence-based funding formula to hire additional staff and mentoring/induction stems to support new teachers.

What needs to happen next? IARSS proposes short-term and long-term solutions:

* Continue increasing funding for schools
* Release more data to help drive policy decisions about shortage remedies and help school hiring managers find the right candidates for their districts
* Invest in school and teacher leadership
* Offer mentoring, administrative support and financial incentives to draw candidates for acute shortage needs