**IARSS 2024-2025 teacher shortage study overview**

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

* Illinois schools continue to struggle finding teachers, with 87 percent reporting an educator shortage problem
* Illinois schools need more credentialed candidates for open positions. 96 percent of education leaders say they have fewer than five applicants when teaching positions are open, and 65 percent say half or fewer of their teacher applicants have proper credentials
* Schools expect their teacher position needs to increase, with 71 percent reporting increased need since last school year and 80 percent expecting the need to grow over the next five years
* The top 3 causes of shortages: limited applicants, issues related to salary/benefits, poor working conditions
* The top 3 impacts of shortages: certified staff shortages, limited applicants, poor working conditions
* More than 6,100 teacher positions were remedied by alternative measures. Popular methods: hiring a substitute, modifying class offerings or teacher responsibilities, leaving positions unfilled and unremedied
* The top 3 strategies to combat shortages: improve recruitment, provide incentives, support for staff
* The top 3 desired solutions for shortages: state/federal support, provide incentives, improve recruitment
* Unfilled positions: hiring substitutes with a substitute license, assigning extra duty to existing employees, hiring retired educators/employees
* Top ISBE/legislative policies for shortages: increased number of days retired educators can substitute without impacting retirement status, increasing number of days a substitute can sub to 120 days, expanding short-term approvals
* Top ISBE/legislative funding solutions: providing evidence-based funding for hiring of additional staff, mentoring and induction systems to support new teachers, principal mentoring, career and technical education career pathway grant
* ESSER funding for hiring: more than half of all schools surveyed made no ESSER-funded hires. Those that did created full-time positions that will continue, provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will end when the funding runs out, and created full-time positions that will be eliminated

**STATE OF THE SHORTAGE**

* 87 percent of education leaders report an educator shortage problem (teachers, special ed teachers and school support personnel)
  + 91 percent of education leaders report a substitute teacher shortage problem
  + 81 percent of education leaders report a paraprofessional shortage problem
  + 33 percent of education leaders report an administrator shortage problem
* 65 percent of education leaders report 50 percent or fewer of teacher applicants have proper credentials
  + 24 percent of education leaders report 50 percent or fewer administrator applicants held proper credentials
* 91 percent of education leaders report having fewer than five applicants for each open teacher position
  + 75 percent of education leaders report having fewer than five applicants for each open paraprofessional position
  + 45 percent of education leaders report having fewer than five applicants for each open administrator position
* 71 percent of education leaders report their district’s need for teacher positions increased since the previous school year
  + 62 percent of education leaders report their district’s need for paraprofessional positions increased since the previous school year
  + 31 percent of education leaders report their district’s need for administrator positions increased since the previous school year
* 80 percent of education leaders anticipate their need for teacher positions will increase in the next five years
  + 62 percent of education leaders anticipate their need for paraprofessional positions will increase in the next five years
  + 39 percent of education leaders anticipate their need for administrator positions will increase in the next five years

**SHORTAGE CAUSES:** Education leaders were asked about the top 3 causes of shortages and top 3 impact of shortages

* **Top Causes**
  + Limited applicants – 395
  + Issues related to salary/benefits – 382
  + Poor working conditions – 239
  + Certified staff shortages -- 175
  + Geographic specific issues – 152
  + Difficulty with recruitment or retention – 143
* **Top Impacts**
  + Certified staff shortages – 339
  + Limited applicants – 320
  + Poor working conditions – 246
  + Issues related to salary/benefits – 107

**ADDRESSING SHORTAGES**

* 6,117 teacher positions were remedied by alternative measures (teacher, special educator and school support personnel positions)
  + 1,009 general special education teacher
  + 454 elementary education (self-contained 1st-5th grade)
  + 395 PK-12 bilingual education
  + 280 early childhood (pre-K)
  + 274 school psychologist
  + 263 school social worker
  + 251 high school (9th-12th grade) English language arts
  + 226 middle school (6th-8th grade) English language arts
  + 222 speech language pathologist non-teaching
  + 188 middle school (6th-8th grade) mathematics
* Schools used various alternative measures to remedy position vacancies
  + 1,285 hired a substitute
  + 1,034 positions remain unfilled and unremedied
  + 1,013 modified class offerings and/or educator responsibilities
  + 639 hired an educator on a short-term approval (STA or STE)
  + 620 outsourced using a third-party vendor to provide an in-person educator
  + 414 hired a retired educator
  + 385 hired an educator “out of field”
  + 370 hired an educator with a temporary license
  + 271 utilized virtual learning platform or converted class to online using a remote educator
  + 47 other
  + 39 utilized a university student placed in a clinical setting
* 157 administrator positions were remedied by alternative measures

**SHORTAGE STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS:** Education leaders were askedfor their top 3 current strategies to combat shortages and top 3 desired solutions to relieve shortages

* **Current Strategies for Shortages**
  + Improve recruitment – 442
  + Provide incentives – 402
  + Support for staff – 166
  + Improve culture/climate – 123
  + State/federal support – 101
  + Reduce needed staff – 55
  + Reduce responsibilities – 30
* **Desired Solutions for Shortages**
  + State/Federal support – 375
  + Provide incentives – 219
  + Improve recruitment – 214
  + Support for staff – 61
  + Improve culture/climate – 55
  + Reduce needed staff – 15
  + Reduce responsibilities – 14

**UNFILLED POSITIONS STRATEGIES:** Education leaders were asked about various ways they have remediated unfilled positions

* **Teacher Positions**
  + Hired a substitute holding a substitute license – 280
  + Assigned extra duty to existing employees – 195
  + No unmet need – 181
  + Hired an educator with a short-term approval (STA) – 179
  + Hired a retired educator/employee – 177
  + Hired a substitute holding a short-term license – 172
* **Special Educator Positions**
  + No unmet need – 257
  + Increased caseload of existing employees – 174
  + Hired a substitute holding a substitute license – 157
  + Combined classes – 102
  + Increased class sizes – 102
* **School Support Personnel Positions**
  + No unmet need – 275
  + Outsourced using a third-party vendor – 155
  + Assigned extra duty to existing employees – 124
  + Hired a retired educator/employee – 94
  + Shared SSP across schools with no distinction for grade spans – 81
  + Shared SSP across schools within grade spans – 78
* **Administrator Positions**
  + No unmet need – 600
  + Hired a retired educator/employee – 47
  + Distributed additional administrative duties to teacher leaders – 23
  + Hired a fully released teacher earning admin endorsement – 17

**EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT/RETENTION SOLUTIONS**

* **ISBE/ILGA policies**
  + Increased number of days retired educators can substitute without impacting their retirement status – 86 percent helped
  + Increased number of days a substitute can sub up to 120 days – 85 percent
  + Expansion of short-term approvals – 83 percent
  + Allowed the use of undergrads in approved educator prep programs to obtain substitute licenses – 69 percent
  + Waived passing of the teacher performance assessments (i.e. edTPA) for issuance of PEL – 60 percent
* **ISBE/ILGA funding**
  + Provided evidence-based funding (EBF) that allowed our district to add additional staff – 59 percent helped
  + Mentoring and induction systems that provide tailored support to new teachers – 53 percent helped
  + Principal mentoring – 50 percent helped
  + Career and technical education (CTE) career pathway grant – 37 percent helped

**ESSER FUNDING FOR POSITIONS:** Education leaders were asked how they used federal ESSER funds for educator positions

* **Teachers**
  + 362 none of the above
  + 179 we created full-time positions that will continue
  + 126 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will cease
  + 83 we created full-time positions that will be eliminated
  + 62 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will continue
  + 26 we created part-time positions that will be eliminated
  + 20 we created part-time positions that will continue
* **Special Educators**
  + 571 none of the above
  + 51 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will cease
  + 33 we created full-time positions that will continue
  + 33 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will continue
  + 11 we created full-time positions that will be eliminated
  + 3 we created part-time positions that will continue
  + 2 we created part-time positions that will be eliminated
* **School Support Personnel**
  + 478 none of the above
  + 104 we created full-time positions that will continue
  + 36 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will cease
  + 31 we created full-time positions that will be eliminated
  + 23 we provided supplemental pay for existing staff that will continue
  + 10 we created part-time positions that will continue
  + 9 we created part-time positions that will be eliminated