

2020

ILLINOIS BILINGUAL TEACHER SHORTAGE

**Voices from the Field
and Recommendations**

Erika Méndez
Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, PhD

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend deep gratitude to the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) for their collaboration in this project. The IRC is a service agency that provides professional development and educational programming to teachers and program administrators serving linguistically and culturally diverse students. The IRC was able to disseminate this survey to their large base of English Learner coordinators and program directors. This partnership was instrumental in gathering practitioner voices for this brief. We also extend deep appreciation to Amaya Garcia, Deputy Director of English Learner Education at New America, who provided extensive and thoughtful feedback. Lastly, we thank the English Learner Directors of Illinois who took the time to provide their thoughtful insights to this project.

Sylvia Puente, *President & CEO*

The Latino Policy Forum is the only Latino public policy and advocacy organization in Illinois. Puente has earned a national reputation as a bridge builder and a trailblazer, having been recognized by Hispanic Business Magazine as one of the “100 Most Influential Hispanics in the U.S.”

About the Authors

Erika Méndez, M. Ed, *Senior Education Policy Analyst*

Through her work, Méndez draws awareness to the different obstacles facing Latino and English Learner children in Illinois and works on policy solutions that address inequities faced by these students, starting in early childhood and across the educational continuum.

Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, PhD, *Director of Education Policy and Research*

The Forum’s education agenda advocates for all Latinos and English Learners to have access to high quality care and education services that are linguistically and culturally responsive in an effort to close the opportunity gap. Vonderlack-Navarro manages a team of four who lead efforts in: family and community engagement and capacity building; equitable access to quality early childhood and bilingual programming; and issues regarding bilingual teacher recruitment and retention.



Executive Summary

This brief highlights factors influencing the bilingual/ESL teacher shortage in Illinois. It brings to the forefront practitioner voices in addressing this challenge and uses their insights to create recommendations for both policy and practice.

This report provides the following: a review of English Learner (EL)¹ demographics, state law regarding language programming, and EL Director perspectives regarding educator recruitment and retention issues. The brief culminates with recommendations for state agencies, policymakers, and institutions of higher education for how Illinois might address the bilingual/ESL teacher shortage.

The recommendations focus on the following areas of the bilingual teacher shortage:

- (1) Teacher recruitment
- (2) Teacher retention and compensation
- (3) Considerations for expanding recruitment from abroad



¹ The acronyms English Learner (EL), English Language Learner (ELL), and English as a Second Language (ESL) tend to focus on a student's need to acquire English. Emergent Bilingual (EB) and Dual Language Learner (DLL) are terms viewed as more assets-based and recognize that these children bring rich cultures and languages to school. Federal law and many Illinois state statutes refer to these students as English Learners (ELs). Some individuals or groups may have strong preferences for one term or another. For the sake of consistency with references, citations, quotes and federal law, we will use the acronym EL throughout this policy brief.

Introduction

In 2019, English Learners (ELs) represented 12 percent of Illinois students—a growth of 58 percent from 2005 to 2018. Of this group, 76 percent are Spanish speaking and most will need bilingual services.⁷

The Illinois State Board of Education projected a need of almost 600 bilingual educators through the 2019-20 school year.⁸ To complicate matters further, almost a quarter of teachers in front of EL students are not fully licensed; they need support to obtain the bilingual endorsement. Bilingual educators are deemed as one of the hardest positions for school districts to fill.⁹ As universal preschool comes to fruition in Chicago Public Schools, administrators estimate that another 400 bilingual educators will be needed to fill these classrooms by the end of the rollout. It is not yet known how many more bilingual educators will be needed as preschool expansion occurs throughout Illinois.

Part of the tension in implementing quality bilingual programs in Illinois is the shortage of qualified staff in certain areas of the state, particularly educators that share the same home language as students. Research contends that employing quality bilingual teachers is the single most important educational factor for optimal EL achievement.¹⁰

To better understand how English Learner program directors are dealing with the shortage, the Latino Policy Forum (the Forum) conducted a survey with 119 of the total 350 program directors statewide. Respondents were attendees at the state's Annual Bilingual Directors meeting.

Bilingual endorsed teachers, those that can demonstrate fluency in a language other than English, are critical for the academic success of students on their way to learning the English language. Longitudinal research contends that support of a

child's home language development over time not only builds English proficiency, but also has positive effects on a child's long-term academic success.¹¹ By valuing the skills and content knowledge students possess in their home language, the educational focus moves away from remediation.¹² ELs in bilingual programs who receive supports in their home language are more likely to demonstrate long-term cognitive flexibility, higher high school graduation rates, and increased likelihood of enrolling in post-secondary institutions.¹³

According to Illinois School Code Article 14C, districts must offer EL programs to students. Transitional Programs of Instruction are mandated when even one EL child enrolls in a school. Once 20 or more students of the same primary language are enrolled at a site, some form of Transitional Bilingual Education is required. The latter program necessitates that the teacher of record be fluent in the student's home language. Bilingual teachers, in particular, are in great demand.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has intensified urgency around quality education for ELs. For the first time, a five-year timeline to master English language proficiency on the state administered ACCESS assessment has been instituted. This means schools must demonstrate adequate growth toward English proficiency for 20 or more ELs enrolled at the site. These expectations cannot be met without the necessary endorsed teacher at the helm.

This brief highlights factors influencing the bilingual/ESL teacher shortage in Illinois. It brings to the forefront practitioner voices in addressing this challenge and uses their insights to create recommendations for both policy and practice.

ENGLISH LEARNER DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE NEED FOR BILINGUAL TEACHERS

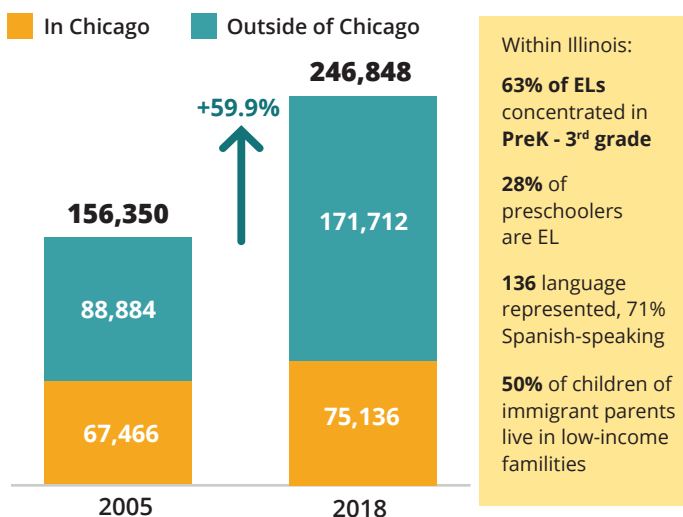
The state's supply of qualified bilingual teachers has not kept pace with the growing EL population. Over the course of 12 years, the EL population grew from 156,350 to 246,848, accounting for a 58 percent growth. This increase largely exists outside of Cook County. In fact, there are a number of counties that experienced more than a 200 percent growth in ELs: Madison, LaSalle, Grundy, Sangamon, Kankakee, Peoria, and Kendall. By and large, 69 percent of the ELs in the state are in districts outside of Chicago. Forum analysis finds that 70 percent of the state's ELs are concentrated within 44 districts. This data illuminates how areas across the state will only continue to need bilingual/ESL endorsed teachers moving into the future.

ELs as a subgroup are young and diverse. While 140 languages are spoken, the majority, 76 percent, are Spanish speaking. Overwhelmingly, ELs are concentrated in grades PreK-5th; as such, the greatest shortage in bilingual/ESL teachers is within early childhood and the elementary grades.

A host of growing research contends that, when supported by licensed and endorsed bilingual teachers, high-quality language instruction and early bilingualism can contribute to the long-term success of a student.¹⁴ For this reason, it is critical to build a pipeline of teachers with bilingual skills to promote optimal achievement among the state's ELs.

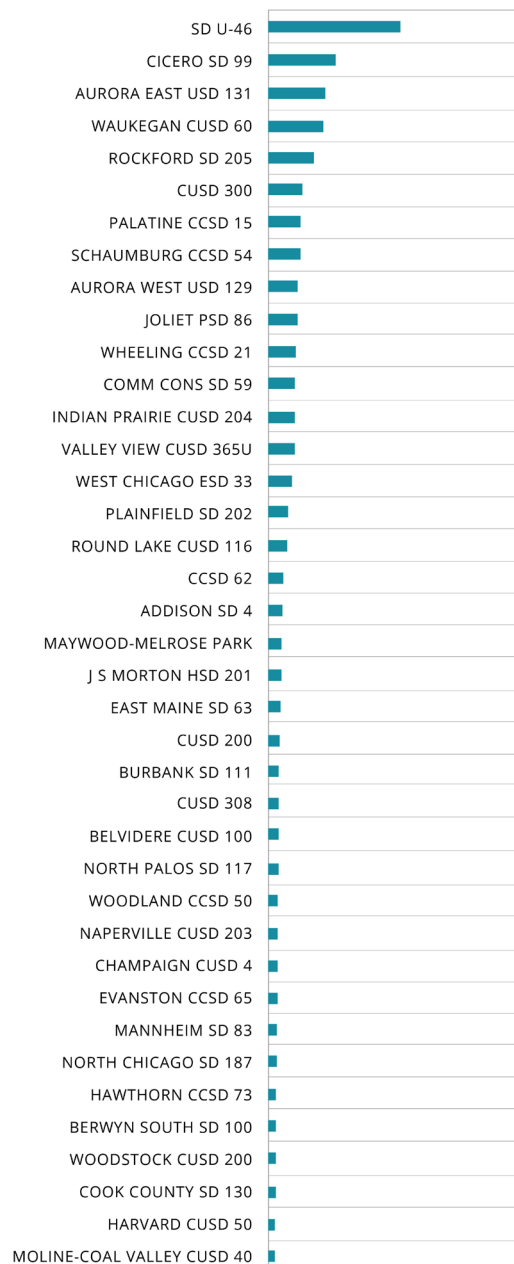
The bilingual/ESL teacher shortage is a complex problem whose root cause varies across the state. It is especially

Increase in Number of ELs in and Outside Chicago Between 2005 and 2018



70% of English Learners are Concentrated within 40 School Districts

Number of English Learners
 CPS serves 71, 837 English Learners



Data Source: 2018 report card data file

important to support the counties and regions that are receiving these students and do not have access to many qualified teaching candidates. Oftentimes these areas are not within close proximity to institutions of higher education that house teacher preparation programs. University/school district partnerships are not always feasible. At the same time, while Chicago has a number of institutions of higher education preparing teachers, they can also be challenged in filling bilingual teaching positions due to the lack of candidates entering the teaching profession. Overall, the shortage is a comprehensive problem.

In addition, the reputation of bilingual education has long been hampered by how achievement data on ELs is analyzed. Current EL achievement outcomes might lead one to a conclusion that bilingual education does not work. The way data is being examined, however, is the heart of the issue.

Most data analysis of English Learners focuses on their standardized test scores at one point in time, while they are still developing English. Once they have acquired English, their academic progress as English Learners is no longer tracked. The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research's, "English Learners in Chicago Public Schools: A New Perspective" contradicts many misconceptions regarding English Learners, including that they are a drain on the system and do poorly academically. The success of more than 18,000 ELs in the study occurred in a specific policy context that requires native language instruction by a qualified bilingual/ESL educator. The research shows that English Learners in Chicago Public Schools go on to be academically successful and have better attendance and grades in core subject areas than native English speakers.¹⁵ For EL services to continue to be successful, Illinois needs to strategize ways to cultivate the future pipeline of qualified bilingual/ESL educators.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN ILLINOIS

Language programs available to students can differ by school. Qualifications to teach in these classrooms also differ depending on the program designated for the school. Illinois offers two main types of programming: (1) Transitional Bilingual Education and (2) Transitional Program of Instruction.¹⁶

1 Elements of Transitional Bilingual Education

- › Schools must implement a bilingual program if 20 or more ELs are enrolled in a school and are from the same language background. This necessitates employing a qualified bilingual teacher.
- › In order to be qualified, the teacher must hold teacher licensure, pass a target language exam and hold a bilingual endorsement. The target language exam tests a teacher's ability to communicate in a language other than English across the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- › Bilingual education at the school level offers high quality instruction in English and in the home language in core academic subjects. The qualified teacher must be able to deliver instruction across the curriculum in English and the target language.

2 Elements of Transitional Program of Instruction

- › Schools must implement an English as a Second Language (ESL) program if there are less than 20 ELs from the same language background. This necessitates employing an ESL endorsed teacher.
- › In order to be qualified, the teacher must hold teacher licensure and an ESL endorsement and does not have to take target language exam.
- › ESL education at the school level offers specialized ESL instruction and native language support.

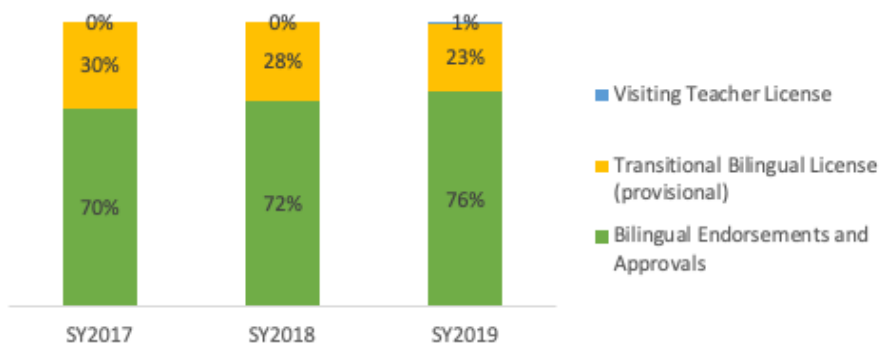
Given that the majority of ELs are Spanish speaking, there is a greater need for teachers who can demonstrate bilingualism in English and Spanish and who can complete the bilingual endorsement.

It is also important to note that many current bilingual educators are working with a provisional license. As defined by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Transitional Bilingual Educator License with Stipulations requires a Bachelor's Degree and passing the Target Language Proficiency Test in the desired language (see chart on page 8).¹⁷

As indicated in the chart, 23 percent of bilingual educators hold a provisional Transitional Bilingual License with Stipulations, meaning they do not have the stipulated credentials equipping them with the knowledge and skills to teach English Learners academic language. Supporting provisional teachers to be fully qualified would be a critical component to addressing the teacher shortage and ensuring that ELs have the qualified teachers to meet their unique needs. Teachers who are not fully qualified could run the risk of exiting students too early. As EL expert Dr. Sonia Soltero says (2020):

“Misconceptions about second language proficiency often lead educators to exit ELs too early into general education classes based on their English conversational skills alone (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skill—BICS). These reclassified ‘former’ ELs no longer receive specialized academic or language support in the form of ESL or bilingual services even though they continue to struggle with the demands of academic English.”¹⁸

Exiting students before they are fully developed in their academic English can pose adverse consequences for their long-term achievement. Nevertheless, the provisional pathway is a critical source of recruitment to address the bilingual teacher shortage. The field needs to be responsive by developing supports to help these candidates achieve their full level of licensure with endorsements. Above all the quality of second language instruction, teacher expectations, and instructional practice play a critical role in second language acquisition.



Almost a quarter of teachers in front of EL students are not fully licensed; they need support to obtain the bilingual endorsement

*Source: Forum analysis. ISBE Data Request 2019

Types of Bilingual Licensure in Illinois

VISITING INTERNATIONAL TEACHER

License available to candidates who were educated abroad who have successfully gone through formal recruitment process with an Illinois school district. A memorandum of understanding has to be in place with the country recruited from.

TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL LICENSE (Provisional/TYPE 29)

The transitional bilingual educator license is a temporary endorsement that is valid for 5 years for a candidate who meets requisites set forth by ISBE. Educators with this license must complete the requirements for a professional educator license and subsequent endorsements.

BILINGUAL LETTER OF APPROVAL

Educators who hold a professional educator license (PEL) and have taken the necessary coursework to add the Bilingual approval or Bilingual/ESL endorsement to:

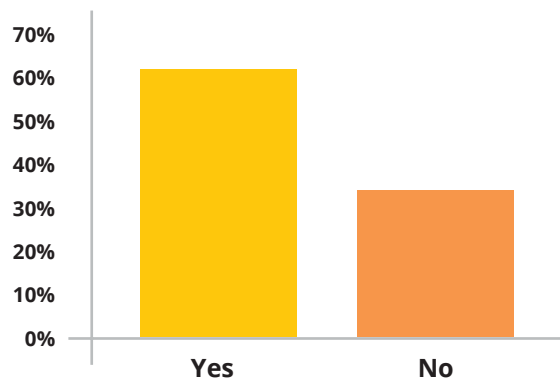
- Primary level on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Certificates;
- Middle grade level on Elementary, Secondary, and Special Certificates; and
- High school level on Secondary and Special Certificates

Source: Illinois State Board of Education. Educator Licensure: Educator License with Stipulations: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-License-with-Stipulations.aspx>

EL DIRECTOR SURVEY FINDINGS

In collaboration with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC), the Forum surveyed 119 EL program directors across the state to understand the implications of the bilingual/ESL shortage. To better understand the EL program director community, it is important to note their level of training. In Illinois, administrators who supervise programs for ELs have a set of required qualifications and responsibilities. District and school administrators who supervise EL programs evaluate bilingual education teachers and organize parental involvement activities and must have specialized skills. Knowledge of federal and state laws that guide EL programs, research and theories of bilingual education and language skills to communicate with parents who are not proficient in English are important prerequisites. In districts serving large numbers of ELs (over 200), the ability to speak the language of the majority of ELs is required by law. EL program directors often evaluate instruction that is conducted in students' native language, and guide districts when adopting instructional materials in languages other than English and for ESL.¹⁹

English Learner Director Survey: As an EL program director do you serve more than 200 ELs?



*Source: Latino Policy Forum (April 2018) EL Director Survey

The findings indicate that over 66 percent of respondents serve more than 200 ELs in their district. Their credentials to oversee bilingual programming, however, were varied: 55 percent hold both a bilingual and an ESL endorsement; 23 percent hold only an ESL endorsement; and 4.3 percent hold only a bilingual endorsement. The rest of the respondents were working on earning the endorsements. Not all of the EL directors have the appropriate credentials required by law.

REPORTED SHORTAGES

Respondents indicated that the majority (93 percent) had experienced a bilingual/ESL teacher shortage within the last three years. The shortage was mostly concentrated within bilingual preschool (54 percent) and K-5th grade (80 percent). While there is a need for ESL qualified teachers across grade spans, the endorsement is more easily obtained than the bilingual endorsement due to the fact that you do not need to be bilingual and the shortage is much less pronounced than the bilingual shortage.

Preschool for All Bilingual Teacher Shortage

English Learners comprise 28 percent of the preschool population (ISBE Illinois Public School Enrollment 2017-18 data). It is important to note that preschool programs are included in Article 14C of the school code mandating bilingual instruction. As preschool intends to augment kindergarten readiness, it is critical that early learning be aligned with elementary instruction. Article 14C stipulates that schools with 20 or more students enrolled who speak a language other than English must receive instruction in that primary language.

However, there are challenges recruiting these teacher candidates to the field. Preliminary findings from the Illinois Early Childhood Workforce Hiring Survey (2017) highlight that the most difficult position to hire is a lead teacher licensed by ISBE. Forty-two percent of respondents indicated a need for bilingual staff with 15 percent needing more than two bilingual staff. More than half of respondents (55 percent) state there is a limited pool of bilingual early childhood candidates. Recruiting preschool teachers is especially cumbersome for classrooms that are mandated to have bilingual instruction. To teach in these early childhood classrooms, teachers require a grade span endorsement in addition to a bilingual endorsement.

Given the difficulty Illinois faces in attracting candidates to this specific shortage area, the Forum and the Ounce of Prevention Fund collaborated to create recommendations to increase the number of Early Childhood Licensed Teachers with a bilingual/ESL endorsement. Below are some of the recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION

Expand enacted ISBE Short Term Approval Rules (Section 25.430) to allow for candidates with bachelor in early childhood (Gateways level 5) and those who hold a teacher license with stipulations endorsed for Transitional Bilingual Teacher (Type 29) to teach in "Preschool for All" settings while pursuing a PEL with an Early Childhood Endorsement.

RECOMMENDATION

Allow institutions of higher education to create both alternative licensure programs and subsequent endorsement pathways for teachers already holding a PEL.

RECOMMENDATION

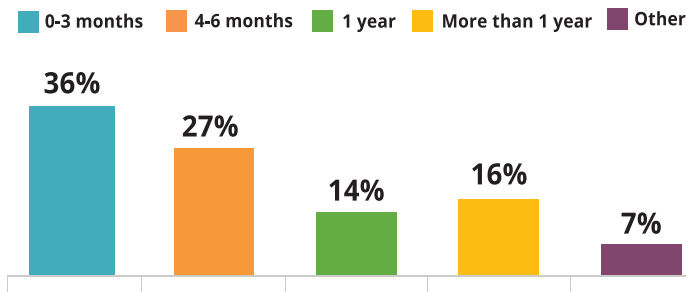
Request that ISBE set a numeric goal for increasing the bilingual/ESL-endorsed early childhood teacher statewide, prior to the expiration outlined in legislation (Section 25.430).

Advocacy efforts around this challenge resulted in legislation mirroring the recommendation on short-term approval. Public act 100-0645 allows early childhood (level 5 credentialed) teachers and transitional bilingual teachers with a provisional license (i.e. type 29) to teach in Preschool For All settings while pursuing their early childhood endorsement. This rule sunsets in 2024. While the other recommendations are popular in current political circles, the state has yet to adopt any resolution.

When vacancies occur, respondents indicated the amount of time it typically takes to fill a position. The range of time can be anywhere between 0-3 months (36%), 4-6 months (27%), one year (14%), and more than one year (16%). Of those program directors who indicated needing

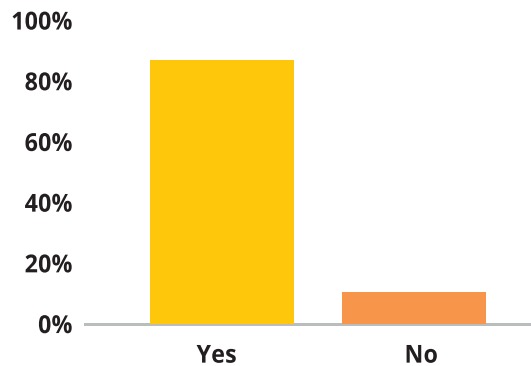
more than one year to fill a position, the reason stated was largely due to requirements for fluency in low incident languages (i.e. other than Spanish). After Spanish (76%), the other most commonly spoken languages are Arabic (4%), Polish (3%), Urdu (2%), and Pilipino (1%).²⁰

English Learner Director Survey: When you have vacancy, in general, how long does it take to fill?



*Source: Latino Policy Forum (April 2018) EL Director Survey

English Learner Director Survey: In the last three years, has your district experienced a bilingual teacher shortage?

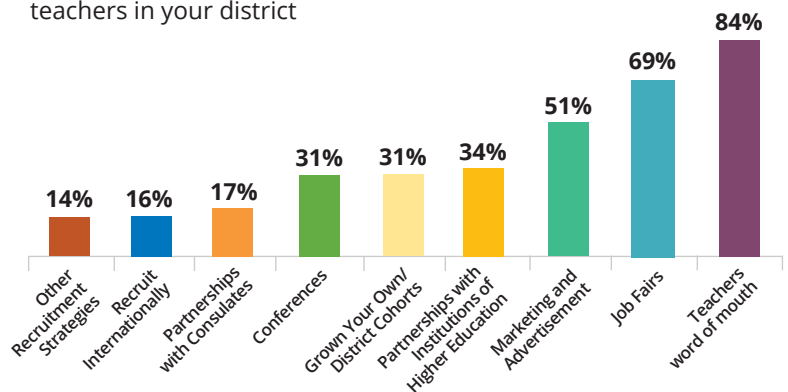


*Source: Latino Policy Forum (April 2018) EL Director Survey

CHALLENGES TO RECRUITMENT

The survey asked respondents to indicate various strategies they use to recruit bilingual/ESL teachers. Program directors are creative in applying a myriad of strategies and often indicated using more than one type. Despite efforts to engage in more structured types of recruiting methods, teacher word of mouth (84%) was the most effective way to attract teachers to a district. Next were job fairs (69%) and marketing/advertising (51%). Fewer program directors make use of partnerships with higher education institutions (34%), "Grow Your Own" cohort models (31%), and conferences (31%).

English Learner Director Survey: Please indicate which of the following strategies are used to recruit bilingual/ESL teachers in your district



*Source: Latino Policy Forum (April 2018) EL Director Survey

The survey's results revealed the popularity of cohort models, where resources are invested to support a group of individuals pursuing teacher licensure. One-third of respondents use cohort models. These models included strategies such as tutoring support for candidates to pass entry requisites and other testing requirements, including the target language exam.

The districts also supported the cohort participants with financial support to cover tuition and licensing fees.

The survey also wanted to gauge what districts do when the bilingual/ESL vacancies are not filled. Overwhelmingly, districts will fill a position with a teacher in the process of the acquiring the appropriate endorsements (65%). A potential pitfall to this strategy is if the candidate is pursuing an ESL endorsement when a bilingual endorsement is needed. In such cases, students will not receive the native language support without the qualified bilingual teacher. Directors also indicated they rely on paraprofessionals for language support in the classroom in absence of a qualified bilingual teacher (40%). Paraprofessionals, as research has indicated, are more likely than the teacher of record to share the same language and cultural background of the students they serve. A concern exists in the field when paraprofessionals, who have less pedagogical preparation, are used to conduct student assessments or to fill the role of a teacher. Further research is needed to know if paraprofessionals in Illinois are receiving professional development to provide language support in the classroom.

Qualitative results strongly revealed that the Transitional Bilingual Licensure with Stipulations (formally referred to as Type 29) remains one of the most common pathways toward building a bilingual teacher workforce. This licensure pathway allows for someone who has a bachelor's degree and is able to pass a target language exam to be the teacher of record for up to five years. These candidates can sometimes be criticized because they are considered the teacher of record without having pedagogical knowledge and skills for linguistically responsive education. The severity of the bilingual teacher shortage, however, still makes this a popular recruitment pathway. These candidates must pursue licensure during the five years. The Transitional Bilingual Licensure with Stipulations is not renewable. Recently, with the help of the Forum's advocacy, this pathway became allowable within state-funded Preschool For All programming (P.A. 100-0685).

Fostering Bilingual Teacher Candidates: Washington State Exemplar

New America Foundation published a report in 2017, "Bilingual Teacher Fellows at Highline Public Schools," highlighting Washington state's model for recruiting linguistically and culturally diverse paraprofessionals into the teacher pipeline. The Woodring Highline Future Bilingual Teacher Fellow Program is a targeted two-year program for paraprofessionals designed to offer them a bachelor's degree, teaching credential, and an endorsement in reading, ESL, or bilingual.

In 2016, the fellow program recruited 16 fellows to complete the program. Fellows worked full-time as paraprofessionals gaining valuable classroom experience that was then scaffolded over the next two years. In addition, fellows also attended classes in the evenings and weekends. Research shows that programs like the Woodring Highline Future Bilingual Teacher Fellow Program are designed to prepare the next generation of bilingual teachers. Programs of this design have "enabled the school district to 'grow its own' by providing paraprofessionals with the necessary financial, academic, and logistical supports to become certified teachers." The program's success is also attributed to significant state-level financial commitment to address shortages in bilingual/ESL.²³

In addition, there are several program exemplars from other states that have created a specific pathway for paraprofessionals with an associate degree, or 60 or more credit hours, to attain a teaching license. Many of these alternative licensure programs are designed to address shortages. For example, the alternative licensure program in Washington is designed for paraprofessionals seeking certification in subject matter of geographic shortage area. Similarly, Arkansas' rural teacher initiative is designed to incentivize candidates to rural school districts. These models exemplify a two-year residency program where the candidate receives their teacher license with stipulations. Illinois could learn from these states in changing its rules on alternative certification.

CHALLENGES TO RETAINING HIGHLY QUALIFIED BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHERS

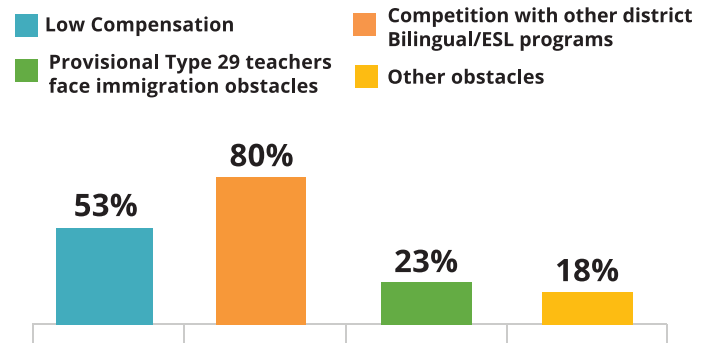
Beyond issues of recruitment, districts also struggle to retain teachers. ISBE (2013-15) data revealed that early retention rates for bilingual teachers are the lowest of all educators. Respondents indicated that one of the biggest challenges was the high demand and competition with other districts who also need teachers for their bilingual/ESL programs (80%). The second biggest challenge was due to low compensation (53%). In a report by Advance Illinois (2018), the bilingual teacher shortage is most acute in districts furthest from funding adequacy and, as a result, with lower salaries. There is a significant link between adequate school funding, teacher salary/benefits, and sustainability of the bilingual teacher workforce.

Qualitative data illuminates the link between inadequate school funding and how long a teacher stays in a district. Various EL directors reported high levels of teacher stress and burnout from the impact of working in high-need communities with complicated caseloads (see chart).

The qualitative data suggests that some EL directors feel that school/district leadership and general education teachers do not understand the nature of their work. This resulted in feelings of being isolated and unsupported. As one respondent stated, “Bilingual/ESL teachers in Illinois need to be respected and viewed as experts by general education teachers. Many leave...because of the lack of importance this role has historically [been viewed] by general education teachers.” A number of respondents suggested that there be planned professional development that promotes intentional collaboration between teachers in general education and their bilingual/ESL colleagues. This professional development could provide an overview on the rights of ELs and the details of Article 14C within Illinois School Code regarding ELs. Other respondents recommended that teacher candidates take mandatory coursework to support linguistically diverse students. This would ensure all teachers have a baseline understanding of the needs of ELs. Overall, the lack of understanding of bilingual/ESL programming made some respondents feel marginalized and that leadership did not have the knowledge to advocate on their behalf.

Oftentimes individuals with the highest levels of language skills are immigrants themselves. Program directors reported difficulties in assisting these individuals with teacher licensure (22%). These difficulties were linked to challenges with their immigration status. It was also indicated that this group is apt to struggle with passing the various licensure requirements, particularly entry requisites and content exams that are conducted solely in English.

English Learner Director Survey: From your perspective, please indicate which of the following you would consider obstacles for retaining bilingual/ESL teachers



*Source: Latino Policy Forum (April 2018) EL Director Survey

The various issues outlined by survey respondents informed the recommendations discussed in the next section.

The Daily Life of a Bilingual Teacher: Review of Qualitative Data

Burnout was a common theme that surfaced among the respondents in this survey. Overwhelmingly, respondents attributed higher workloads and the additional responsibilities bilingual teachers have to the challenges in retaining bilingual teachers. Among these additional responsibilities, respondents cited the following:

- > Translation/interpretation services
- > Resource Referrals
- > Providing families with help when filling out social service applications
- > Assessments
- > Creating instructional materials for students
- > Immigration related questions from families
- > Supporting coordinating or running Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (BPAC) efforts

It was reported that many bilingual teachers have to create resources for their ELs, especially for low-incident languages. As one respondent claimed, they “do more work than the monolingual English teacher for the same rate of pay.”



Recommendations to Recruit and Retain Bilingual/ESL Teachers

Respondents were asked to identify possible strategies for dealing with the bilingual/ESL teacher shortage. Strategies were then aggregated within three categories: pre-service preparation, compensation, and recruitment from abroad. These strategies informed the following recommendations regarding funding, pre-service efforts, and the creation and expansion of the bilingual teacher pool. ISBE is responsible for setting the requirements for teacher licensure and the Illinois General Assembly for allocating school funding and scholarships. In order to address the shortage in a timely manner, collaboration amongst these entities is essential.

BILINGUAL PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

- ✓ **ISBE expedites its endorsement initiative by changing rules (Section 25 Education Licensure) to allow Institutions of higher education to create both alternative certification and subsequent endorsement pathways for teachers already holding a Professional Teacher License (PEL).**
- ✓ **ISBE sets a numeric goal for increasing the bilingual/ESL endorsed early childhood PEL statewide over the next five years.**
 - Develop recruitment plan to target teacher candidates.
 - Provide teacher candidates stipends to attain early childhood grade span endorsement and/or bilingual/ESL endorsement.
- Improve student advisement so that candidates graduate on time.
- Institutions of Higher Education should have faculty with bilingual/ESL expertise.
- As institutions of higher education struggle with finding faculty with the bilingual/ESL skill set, consider partnering with school districts to find qualified adjunct faculty.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- ✓ **Institutions of higher education embed cultural and linguistic competencies into their teacher education programs.**
 - Institutions of higher education should require all teacher candidates to take coursework that covers competencies needed to support ELs.
- ✓ **The Illinois State General Assembly and ISBE invest in innovative cohort pathways for language teachers.**
 - Create alternative licensure programs for paraprofessionals who are bilingual. Research finds that these candidates will likely stay in the field longer than peers given their ties to the community.
 - Paraprofessionals who are bilingual with a bachelor's degree could enter the Provisional Transitional Bilingual Educator pathway. This pathway should be paired with a targeted scholarship program that provides financial support to paraprofessionals pursuing the program.
 - Make the alternative licensure pathway available to candidates with an associate's degree. In Illinois, the alternative licensure program is only available to candidates with a bachelor's degree, GPA of at least 3.0,

and have passed required content-based exams. This proposed model would be a two-year residency program where the candidate receives their teacher license with stipulations.

- Illinois should create and invest in a pathway for paraprofessionals without a BA to enter the teaching profession. For Illinois, the program requirements could be:
 - Associate's degree or 60 college credit hours with a GPA of at least a 3.0
 - Applicable content-based test
- As part of the program, candidates must complete intensive sessions (over summer) of methods/pedagogical content. Once requirements of licensure program are met, then:
 - Enter into three-year residency program. The first two years of a three-year residency, candidates placed in classroom as paid paraprofessionals and are taking the required coursework. The individual is assigned to a mentor teacher.
 - Prior to the third year of residency, the individual completes any coursework required by the program and/or required coursework for endorsement. The individual must be recommended by the program for the third year.
 - In the individual's third year of the program, the candidate is placed in the classroom as a paid, full time teacher of record.
 - Pass the edTPA performance-based assessment during the first semester of the third year of teaching residency, and successfully complete year two of residency and any remaining program requirements.
- Support programs that provide financial incentives to candidates seeking to enter the profession.
- Develop and finance initiatives that recruit high school students who graduate with the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy as a potential candidate pool. Recipients of the Seal of Biliteracy would be provided with scholarships incentivizing them to enter the teacher workforce.
 - For example, Illinois P.A. 100-0982 establishes the Supporting Future Teachers' Program. The intent of the program is to create pathways for high school graduates and/or community members who were at one point an EL, low-income, or recipients of the State Seal of Biliteracy to begin the steps to become a teacher.
 - Another example of this pathway is Grow your Own Illinois (GYO). GYO is a teacher training program meant to support community members to become licensed teachers in their neighborhood schools. GYO is expanding their reach to students who have taken dual credit courses or have received the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Fund a "Transition to Teaching Program" for career changers holding a bachelor's degree and possessing bilingual skills to enter a master's program earning teacher licensure and the bilingual endorsement. Candidates fulfilling these requirements

could pass a target language exam and therefore be eligible for the Transitional Bilingual Licensure with Stipulations (Type 29).

✓ **General Assembly incentivizes institutions of higher education to recruit and support linguistically and culturally diverse teacher candidates.**

- Improve and increase financial aid and scholarships to these teacher candidates.
- Support increased investments and amendments to the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program. Currently, this scholarship encourages academically talented minority students to pursue teaching by awarding a \$5,000 scholarship. Increased investments should both increase the number of recipients and the total amount they receive. Priority should be given to candidates who are bilingual.
- Provide additional investments to institutions of higher education dedicated to support advising and mentoring of candidates.

RETENTION AND COMPENSATION

✓ **School districts create local incentives to attract bilingual/ESL teachers to the profession.**

Provide bilingual teachers with a financial incentive due to their specialized skillset and increased workload.

- Provide the current teaching staff with stipends to earn bilingual/ESL endorsements.

✓ **Illinois Teacher Associations work with school districts to develop compensation structures to recruit and retain bilingual staff.**

- Conduct a survey to ascertain which districts are differentiating salaries for bilingual staff and how the salary schedules included credit for the endorsements.

RECRUITMENT FROM ABROAD

✓ **ISBE expands work with foreign consulates to recruit qualified teachers from abroad.**

- Recruitment of teachers from other countries remains a popular way for districts to meet their bilingual teacher shortage. Currently, teachers from abroad largely come from Spain, due to a long-standing relationship between ISBE and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain. Respondents encouraged ISBE to expand such foreign teacher programs into other countries.
 - Develop a memorandum of understanding with different consulates to establish teacher recruitment partnerships.
 - Develop guidance for districts on how to engage in foreign recruitment and create strong induction practices to support incoming teachers from abroad.

CONCLUSION

This brief began with a review of changing EL demographics in Illinois. With 58 percent growth since 2005, Illinois needs a strong bilingual teacher workforce to ensure the educational success of the growing EL population. The need is amplified by state mandates regarding bilingual education and heightened educational expectations stipulated by ESSA. EL directors grappling with the workforce shortage are doing their best to find innovative strategies to best serve their students. Despite these efforts, the difficulties brought on by the shortage require state-level interventions from the General Assembly, ISBE, and higher education institutions. In order to have more students meet college readiness standards, Illinois needs to invest in these recommended strategies for growing a bilingual teacher workforce. These solutions offer hope for solving a long-standing problem that will greatly improve education for the growing EL population.



APPENDIX

Survey Questions and Methods

In partnership with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC), the Forum disseminated this survey to gather insights from the field on the impact the teacher shortage is having on the ground and to inform recommendations for consideration. The IRC is a service agency that provides professional development and educational programming to teachers and program directors serving linguistically and culturally diverse students. The IRC was able to disseminate this survey to their large base of program directors coordinating English Learner services. The survey was distributed through the IRC listserv that primarily consists of program directors and practitioners who have attended the Annual Bilingual Directors Meeting. This Annual Bilingual Directors Meeting has state wide representation. The listserv from this meeting has about 350 contacts. Our sample size was 119. The survey was optional, and results kept confidential. Survey topics included:

SHORTAGE DESCRIPTORS

- Grade spans with greatest bilingual/ESL vacancies
- Average time to fill bilingual/ESL vacancy
- Alternatives used to fill vacancies
- Suggestions to alleviate the bilingual/ESL teacher shortage
- Endorsement possessed
- More than 200 ELs served by that district

RECRUITMENT

- Strategies to recruit
- Challenges for bilingual teachers' candidates trying to enter the field

RETAINING

- Obstacles retaining bilingual teachers
- Funding
- Resources used to address bilingual/ESL teacher vacancies
- Need for more information and guidance
- Gaps in knowledge about ELs and pedagogy
- Additional information needed by EL directors
- Greatest challenges faced as EL director

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Please indicate any additional information that could alleviate the shortage of bilingual/ESL teachers in Illinois.
- Is there any other information that you would like to provide to address gaps in information regarding ELs and their education?

- ¹ ISBE (2020). Illinois Reportcard
- ² ISBE (2019). English Learners in Illinois SY2017-18 Statistical Report.
- ³ ISBE (2019). English Learners in Illinois SY2017-18 Statistical Report.
- ⁴ Illinois State Board of Education “Teach Illinois Strong Teachers Strong Classrooms: Policy Solutions to Alleviate Teacher Shortages in Illinois” (2018), <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Teach-Illinois-Memo.pdf>
- ⁵ Gándara, Patricia and Maria Estela Zarate (2014): “Seizing the Opportunity to Narrow the Achievement Gap for English Learners.” Accessed November 14, 2019: <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/language-minority-students/seizing-the-opportunity-to-narrow-the-achievement-gap-for-english-learners-research-based-recommendations-for-the-use-of-lcff-funds-1>
- ⁶ ISBE (2020). Illinois Reportcard
- ⁷ ISBE (2019). English Learners in Illinois SY2017-18 Statistical Report.
- ⁸ ISBE (2019). English Learners in Illinois SY2017-18 Statistical Report.
- ⁹ Illinois State Board of Education “Teach Illinois Strong Teachers Strong Classrooms: Policy Solutions to Alleviate Teacher Shortages in Illinois” (2018), <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Teach-Illinois-Memo.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Gándara, Patricia and Maria Estela Zarate (2014): “Seizing the Opportunity to Narrow the Achievement Gap for English Learners.” Accessed November 14, 2019: <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/language-minority-students/seizing-the-opportunity-to-narrow-the-achievement-gap-for-english-learners-research-based-recommendations-for-the-use-of-lcff-funds-1>
- ¹¹ Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Martinez, M.I., & Molina, R.G. (2018). Dual Language education as a state equity strategy in J.Rosa (Eds), *Language and Social Justice in Practice*. NY, New York. Routledge.
- ¹² Collier, Virginia P. and Wayne P. Thomas (2004) *The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All.* NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 2: 1-20
- Valentino, R. and S.F. Reardon (2014) “Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English language learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency,” Center for Educational Policy Analysis: Stanford University Graduate School of Education. Accessed July 26, 2016: https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Valentino_Reardon_EL%20Programs_14_0319.pdf
- Umansky, I. and S.F. Reardon (2014) “Reclassification Patterns Among Latino English Learner Students in Bilingual, Dual Immersion, and English Immersion Classrooms,” *American Educational Research Journal*, pp.1-34
- ¹³ Gandara, P. (2015) “The Implications Of Deeper Learning For Adolescent Immigrants and English Language Learners,” *Students at the Center: Deeper Learning Research Series*. Accessed July 26, 2016: <http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/The-Implications-of-DL-for-Adolescent%20Immigrants-and-ELLs-110415a.pdf>
- Callahan, R. and P. Gandara (2014) “Contextualizing Bilingualism in the Labor Market: New Destinations, Establish Enclaves and the Information Age,” Edited R. Callahan & P. Gandara, *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market*. Multilingual Matters: Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto
- Bialystok, Ellen (2008). “Second-Language Acquisition and Bilingualism at an Early Age and the Impact on Early Cognitive Development,” *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*: 1-8. Accessed on October 21, 2013: http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/documents/BialystokANGxp_rev.pdf
- Bialystok, Ellen (2010). “Bilingualism,” *Advanced Review*, Accessed on October 21, 2013: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/wcs.43/abstract>
- Fish, Sarah and Jill P. Morford (2012). “The Benefits of Bilingualism: Impacts on Language and Cognitive Development,” *Visual Language and Visual Learning Research Brief: #7*. Accessed on October 21, 2013: <http://vl2.gallaudet.edu/assets/section7/document206.pdf>
- “Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs,” A joint statement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on July 21, 2016: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/dll_policy_statement_final.pdf
- ¹⁴ Vonderlack-Navarro, R. (2013). *Early Language and Literacy Development Critical to Academic Achievement*. Retrieved from <https://latinopolicyforum.org/blog/early-language-and-literacy-development-critical-to-academic-achievement>
- Espinosa, Linda M. (2013) “PreK-3rd: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners. An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report.” *Foundation for Child Development Policy Action Brief*. Accessed on October 14, 2013: <http://fcd-us.org/resources/prek-3rd-challenging-common-myths-about-dual-language-learners-update-seminal-2008-report>
- Espinosa, L. (2018). “Encouraging the Development and Achievement of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood.” Accessed on January 30, 2019: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1192671.pdf>
- Gándara, P., & Zárate, M. E. (2014). *Seizing the Opportunity to Narrow the Achievement Gap for English Learners: Research based recommendations for the use of LCFF funds (Rep.)*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project: UCLA.
- ¹⁵ de la Torre, M., A. Blanchard, E. Allensworth, and S. Freire (2019) “English Learners in Chicago Public Schools. A New Perspective.” *University of Chicago Consortium on School Research*. Accessed May 11, 2020: <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2019-12/English%20Learners%20in%20CPS-Dec2019-Consortium.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Illinois State Board of Education: Division of English Language Learning. (2016). *A Detailed Look at Full-Time TBE, Part-Time TBE, and TPI component Requirements*. Retrieved from <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/tbe-tpi-ft-pt-components-pres010816.pdf>
- ¹⁷ Accessed August 26, 2020: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-License-with-Stipulations.aspx>
- ¹⁸ Vonderlack-Navarro, R. and K. Garibay-Mulattieri (2020). “Illinois English Learner Handbook. For School Board Members, District Administrators, and Principals.” *Latino Policy Forum*. Accessed on August 26, 2020: <https://elhandbook.org/>
- ¹⁹ Vonderlack-Navarro, R. and K. Garibay-Mulattieri (2020). “Illinois English Learner Handbook. For School Board Members, District Administrators, and Principals.” *Latino Policy Forum*. Accessed on August 26, 2020: <https://elhandbook.org/>
- ²⁰ Illinois State Board of Education. (2018). *Department of English Language Learning. SY2017 Data Request*.
- ²¹ Williams, C.P., A. Garcia, K. Connally, S. Cook, & K. Dancy. 2016. “Multilingual Paraprofessionals: An Untapped Resource for Supporting American Pluralism.” *New America Education Policy*. www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/multilingual-paraprofessionals.
- ²² Advance Illinois. (2018). *Illinois Teacher Shortage Hits Vulnerable Students Hardest*. Retrieved from <http://www.advanceillinois.org/datadesk-teachershortage/>
- ²³ Amaya Garcia, “Bilingual Teacher Fellows at Highline Public Schools” (Washington: New America, 2017), available at <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/building-bilingual-teacher-pipeline>