

Support HB4652 - Student Teaching Stipend Program

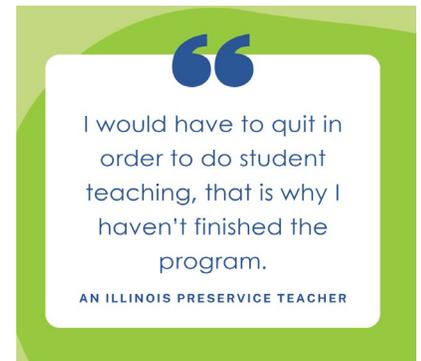
Background: A well-prepared and diverse teacher workforce is critical for advancing educational outcomes in Illinois. Student teaching is a formative aspect of teacher preparation that gives students an opportunity to apply what they have learned in their program. There is more our state can do to strengthen preparation and reduce inequitable barriers during the student teaching experience, enhancing our capacity to recruit and retain high-quality educators. Nine other states have found similar solutions, including Michigan and Colorado.

Challenge: Unpaid student teaching prevents prospective teachers from obtaining licensure.

Student teaching is a full-time experience. Student teachers who are working adults have to quit their jobs or work nights/evenings to remain employed on top of this full-time commitment. Unlike in other professions where paid internships are now standard, student teaching is largely unpaid in Illinois.

Unpaid student teaching is a [significant financial barrier](#) which can deter students from pursuing a degree in education and prevent some from completing their educator preparation programs. On average, educator preparation programs in Illinois require 521 hours of service. If students could otherwise earn at least minimum wage in a different paid job, that's at minimum \$7,800 in lost wages.

The burden of unpaid student teaching impacts all student teachers, but falls particularly hard on those who already face financial stress. Lower-income students are disproportionately likely to be Black or Latinx—meaning unpaid student teaching is also a barrier to diversity in teaching.



Challenge: Student teachers need to be paired with strong, well-trained cooperating teachers.

Research shows that when student teachers work with a top-performing cooperating teacher, their effectiveness in their first year in the classroom is similar to the average third-year teacher. Yet in Illinois, with no statewide training requirements, cooperating teachers receive variable support across educator preparation programs and districts. Further, in recent years, institutions of higher education report that it has become harder to recruit cooperating teachers. To best serve prospective educators, steps must be taken to enhance interest in and preparation for this vital role.

Solution: Support HB4652

This bill will support prospective educators and strengthen the pipeline by:

1. Establishing a state program to distribute \$10,000 stipends during the student teaching experience, with priority for student teachers with demonstrated financial need to eliminate the financial barrier.
2. Providing meaningful stipends and training for cooperating teachers to attract educators to the role and ensure consistent and quality support.

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How will the stipend program work?

Administration: HB4652 proposes IBHE as the lead agency, responsible for working jointly with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to administer the program.

Student Teacher Stipends (\$10,000)

- Funds will be disbursed from IBHE to educator preparation programs (EPPs).
- Stipends can be distributed to students as either financial aid or wages.
- If underfunded, stipends will be prioritized for student teachers with the greatest financial need.

Cooperating Teacher Stipends (\$2,000)

- Funds will be disbursed through ISBE to school districts and early childhood providers.
- Recipients of the stipend must complete a state-approved training once every five years.
- If underfunded, stipends will be reduced in proportion to the level of underfunding.

Cost: Fully funding stipends for all student teachers and cooperating teachers will take an estimated \$68M.

Evaluation: The program will be evaluated for its impact after three years.

HB4652 will enable student teachers to enter placements with some of the greatest need.

Despite the fact that recruiting student teachers has been shown to help alleviate shortages, districts in Illinois facing chronic shortages are currently less likely to do so. Without a state investment, many of these districts do not have the funding to provide compensation. HB4652 can change that.

The program created under HB4652 will also increase student teachers' ability to travel to placements in rural areas. A recent poll of preservice teachers showed that 72% would be willing to commute more than 30 minutes for student teaching placement if it were paid—benefiting rural schools and centers far from educator preparation programs.

By providing stipends to student teachers and support for cooperating teachers, we can create an environment where preservice teachers feel supported in their choice to become educators, and in which the work they do on the path to licensure is valued. Better still, we can take steps toward ensuring Illinois has a diverse workforce that is well equipped to support the next generation.

For more information, contact:

Unique Mickens at unique.mickens@ieanea.org

Jelani Saadiq at jsaadiq@advanceillinois.org