

GUEST COLUMN WITH JEFF VOSE, PRESIDENT, IARSS

More and more school districts around Illinois are finding it difficult to find qualified candidates and fill open teaching positions. The Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS), as part of the leadership behind Vision 20/20, has been working to address these challenges resulting from a decreasing number of applicants and concerns over the perceived quality of applicants. These concerns led to a recent Teacher Shortage Survey developed by IARSS and conducted at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

The survey results largely substantiated what education officials statewide knew to be a developing problem. Sixty percent of Illinois school districts responding reported trouble filling teaching positions. Seventy-five percent of those districts are seeing fewer qualified candidates than in past years, with the numbers much higher in rural districts and in central and northwest Illinois. Sixteen percent of schools have canceled programs or classes because of teacher shortages with particular problems in special education, reading, English, language arts, and math and science.



Jeff Vose, President, IARSS



Ben Schwarm (IASB); Jeff Aranowski (ISBE); Jeff Vose (IARSS)

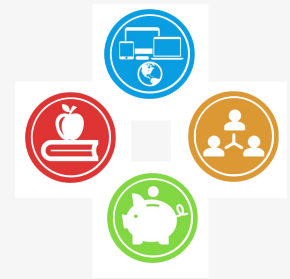
The survey addressed all three types of school districts – elementary, high school and unit districts. The data showed that staffing shortages are particularly problematic for secondary schools with eighty percent of high school districts and eighty-seven percent of unit school districts noticing fewer quality candidates applying for positions.

The survey identified a combination of factors contributing to the teacher shortage: educators leaving Illinois and the profession, fewer students enrolling in teacher training programs and out-of-state educators unwilling to relocate to Illinois and/or unable to meet the state's licensure mandates without substantial delays and additional requirements.

On a brighter note, the survey gave some solid data and more detailed information to move forward to address these problems. IARSS and Vision 20/20 effectively jumpstarted the conversation by taking the concerns of local school districts directly to the Illinois State Board of Education, the Governor's office and legislators to address this growing crisis.

As a direct result, the Illinois House and Senate passed Senate Bill 2912 on November 16, 2016. This bill addresses the state's substitute teacher shortage and amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code. It makes changes to teacher licensure laws in line with those suggested by Vision 20/20.

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FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

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(cont'd) It addresses provisional in-state educator endorsements, provisional career and technical educator endorsements, substitute teacher licenses (by removing the provision that requires a test of basic skills for renewal), teacher leader endorsements, and minimum requirements for educators trained in other states. This bill simplifies and expedites processes for applicants, expands reciprocity that more closely matches other states' requirements, and modifies regulations to support educators as professionals. These significant and much needed accomplishments became a reality as Governor Rauner signed the bill at Carbondale High School on January 6, 2017.

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION JOINS VISION 20/20 SUPPORTERS

A special thanks to the Alpha Kappa Alpha Educational Advancement Foundation for its grant to Vision 20/20. The Foundation was formed in 1980 by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., an organization with a rich and distinguished history of service that spans nearly a century. Vision 20/20 is grateful for the Foundation's commitment to promoting lifelong learning and for its generous support of Vision 20/20 work to fulfill the promise of public education.



MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP

As we enter the new year, 2017, it's a good time to reflect on the past year and set new goals for our third year of Vision 20/20. When Vision 20/20 was introduced in November of 2014, we pledged to improve our public schools and we are seeing great success. During the past two years we have had three bills become law in our state. This year, we intend to continue our quest to introduce and pass legislation to build upon our successes. On February 21-22, school leaders from throughout Illinois will gather in Springfield at the Alliance Leadership Summit to support pillars of Vision 20/20 and advocate for public education. We hope you will join us in this critical work on behalf of our students and communities.

Roger L. Eddy, [IASB](#)

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Jason Leahy, [IPA](#)

WE'RE GROWING

Welcome Our
New School District!

Kaneland CUSD #302

SUPPORTING DISTRICTS

523

STUDENTS REPRESENTED

817,688

PETITIONS SIGNED

857

SIGN OUR PETITION!

Join the support for Vision 20/20 and
sign our petition!
[Click here.](#)

VISIT US AT [HTTP://ILLINOISVISION2020.ORG](http://ILLINOISVISION2020.ORG)

