



# Solving Indiana's Educator Shortage Crisis

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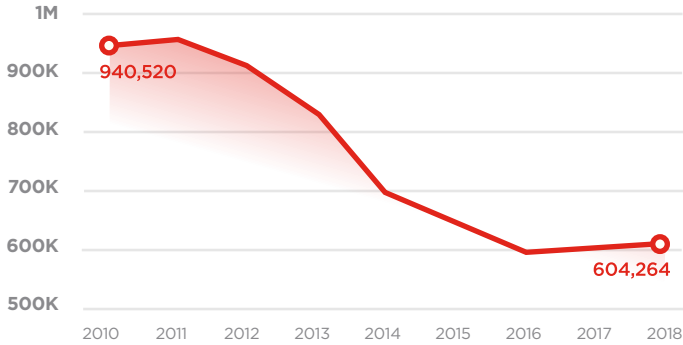
## 2023 Legislative Priorities

More than a decade of inadequate education funding and efforts to de-professionalize the education profession has resulted in an educator shortage crisis. ISTA has a plan, but it will take us all — educators, school administrators and parents — to make sure all students have caring, qualified, committed educators in their school.



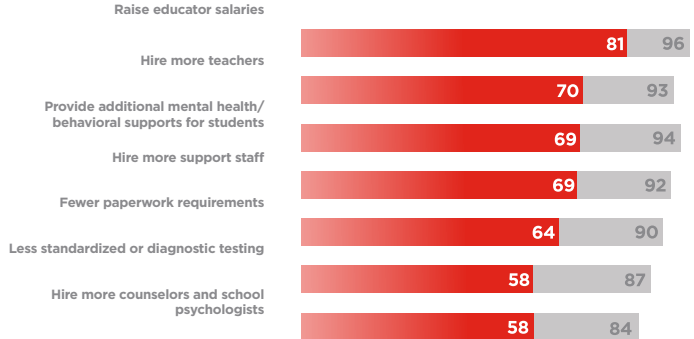
# Implement Competitive and Attractive Pay And Benefits

Teacher preparation program enrollment (Fig. 1)



Teacher preparation program enrollment by year, 2010–2018. [SOURCE](#)

Addressing Burnout (Fig. 2)



Above is a list of different proposals to address educator burnout. [SOURCE](#)



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Provide significant increased funding to public schools to ensure that the goals tied to Indiana’s teacher salary rankings are reached and that teacher shortages can be reduced.*

Indiana is experiencing historic teacher shortages across the state. As of December 2022, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) job bank has more than 1,500 teacher vacancies.

Nationally, the number of students enrolling in teacher preparation programs has shown a [marked decline](#) since 2010. (See Fig. 1, Above)

Compensation is a universal barometer to gauge a profession’s ability to attract and retain interest. Teaching is no different.

Teacher compensation is central to attracting and retaining qualified and caring educators. In January 2022, the National Education Association (NEA) conducted a [nationwide survey](#) of its members and found that 55% of educators, regardless of age or years of service, planned to leave the profession

earlier than expected and that around 96% of educators participating in the survey supported increasing teacher salaries as a way to combat burnout. (See Fig. 2, Above)

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI), issued an alarm last year over the growing [teacher pay gap](#), summarizing that teachers are paid less (in weekly wages and total compensation) than their nonteacher college-educated counterparts, and the situation has worsened considerably over time.

Following more than a dozen years of relative stagnant funding, lawmakers in 2021 made historic initial increased investments in school funding and coupled those investments with statutory guidance to intentionally drive dollars to teacher compensation through collective bargaining.

The statutory guidance called for the starting pay of \$40,000 and an expenditure goal of at least 45% of tuition support going to teacher salaries.

Data from the 2021 – 22 school year showed that progress is being made on the \$40,000 starting pay goal. Out of 306 collective bargaining agreements (including cooperatives and career centers), only 42, or 14%, of the contracts were either not at the \$40,000 minimum salary rate, or if a two-year contract, would not reach it in the second year.



As for the 45% expenditure goal, the IDOE indicated in 2022 the statewide average expenditure percentage was 47.65% of the total tuition support amount for FY 2022 going for full-time teacher salaries.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- Support the creation of a commission to identify and report comprehensive information concerning Education Support Professionals (ESPs) in each school district.
- Grant collective bargaining rights to ESPs to ensure they receive a living wage.
- Create a grant program designed to recruit and retain ESPs, including signing bonuses, benefits packages and commercial drivers license certification costs.

ESPs include bus drivers, food service employees, custodians, technicians and skilled trades persons, clerical and administrative staff, security and instructional aides. They each play an important part in the service delivery of the educational program.

As of early December 2022, the IDOE job bank has nearly 1,000 ESP vacancies across the state. This number likely doesn't include a number of school district who do not use the state job bank.

Indiana continues to lack any meaningful data on their work from a centralized vantage point—including data on wage levels, benefits, numbers of individuals employed, daily and weekly hours, and scope of responsibilities.

Also, ESPs are not guaranteed the right to collectively bargain and often earn less per hour than many of the high school students they serve. These are the working conditions that are fueling the shortages.

The problem is national and requires a multifaceted approach to solving. With regard to school bus drivers specifically, a 2021 survey of drivers cited, “50% of respondents said the rate of pay is a major factor affecting their ability to recruit and retain drivers, 45% cited the “length of time to secure a commercial drivers license (CDL)”, 38% the “availability of benefits” and 38% the “hours available to work.”

Instructional aides and substitute teachers are being routinely tapped to become licensed teachers due to the shortage in teaching, and cafeteria workers and custodians continue to be hard to fill jobs.

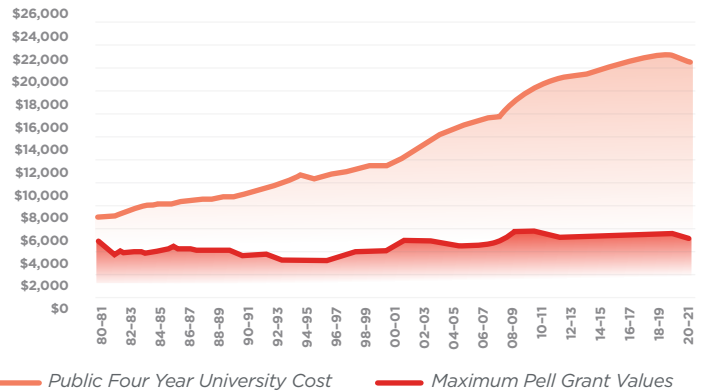


### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Amend Indiana law to exempt student loan debt relief from Indiana's state income taxation.*

On August 24, 2022, President Biden announced a plan to address the high cost of higher education by, in part, canceling up to \$20,000 in debt to a Pell Grant recipient with loans held by the U.S. department of education and up to \$10,000 to a non-Pell Grant recipient. Educators are a key target for this relief.

### The Cost of Attending College Has Skyrocketed — But Federal Support Has Not Kept Pace



Cost of College Attendance and Maximum Pell Grants in 2021 Dollars, 1980–2021.

SOURCE: COLLEGEBOARD, U.S. DEPT OF EDUCATION

According to a 2020 NEA [survey](#) of educators working in pre K-12 and higher education institutions, the following represent a selection of the findings:

- Nearly half (45%) of educators have taken out a student loan to fund their own education, with the average total amount standing at \$55,800.
- More than half who have taken out a student loan to fund their own education still have a balance, with an average current debt amount of \$58,700. Fourteen percent of educators with unpaid student debt have a current balance of \$105,000 or higher.
- Younger educators are more likely than older educators to have taken out student loans to help pay for their education.
- Four in ten educators (42%) with 11 years or more of experience who took out student loans have not



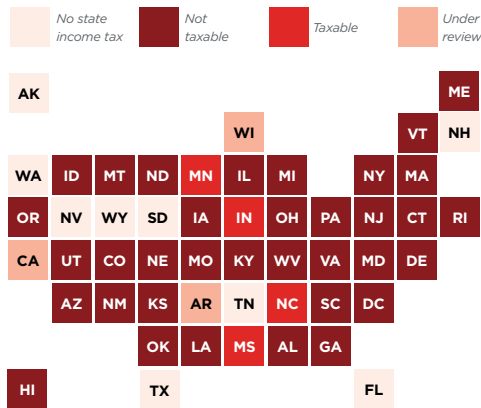
- fully paid them off. While nearly 40% has a balance of less than \$52,000, 14 percent report having at least \$105,000 remaining to pay off and the average current debt was \$56,500.
- Over a quarter of educators ages 61 and up who took out student loans still have a balance, and within that group, almost four in 10 have \$45,000 or more left to pay off.
- Black educators were significantly more likely than white or Latin(o/a/x), Hispanic, and Chican(o/a/x) educators to have taken out student loans. Over half (56%) of all Black educators have taken out student loans compared to 44 percent of white educators.
- Black educators took on significantly more debt than other racial/ethnic groups, with an average initial total of \$68,300 among those who took out loans, compared to \$54,300 for white educators.

For the first time in 10 years, lawmakers provided a 1% COLA to Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS) retirees in 2021. ISTA supported the COLA because it had been 10 years since the legislature had enacted one. It was way past time for a pension base adjustment.

However, since 2019, teacher retirees have seen a 35% loss in purchasing power. Few are jeopardized more than those who are on a fixed income during times of higher inflation. INPRS is in a fiscal position to do more for those who gave a lifetime of professional service to Indiana's future.

A COLA was necessary to break the cycle of stipends, but the state and INPRS is in a fiscal position to do more. Few are jeopardized more than those who are on a fixed income during times of higher inflation.

### Taxes on Student Debt Cancellation, by State



SOURCE: BLOOMBERG STATE TAX NAVIGATOR AND NEWS REPORTS AS OF SEPTEMBER 13.

Regardless of politics, the efforts behind the debt relief should be seen as a useful tool to help working Hoosiers, particularly educators. Indiana is one of only four states in line to tax this benefit based upon its current law.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Provide a meaningful cost-of living adjustment (COLA) increase for retired educators.*



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Create a state-funded program to provide up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave for public school employees.*

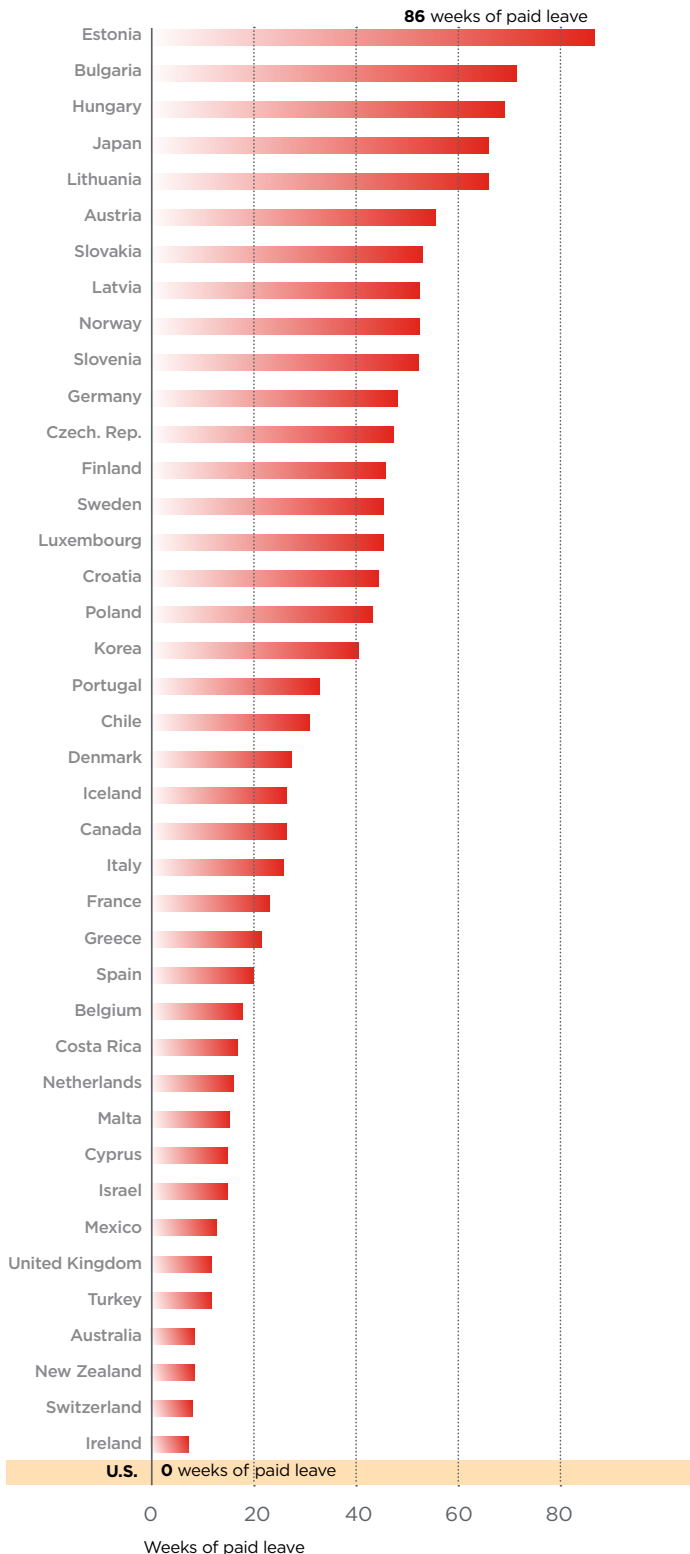
The United States is the only country among 41 nations that does not mandate any paid leave for new parents, [according](#) to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

A growing number of states offer some form of paid family leave: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington.

Indiana teachers may qualify for unpaid, job-protected leave for 12 weeks under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), but for the most part must cobble together sick days to have some paid time off with their newborns, and then supplement that with unpaid leave. This becomes another source of workplace frustration particularly when new parents are forced to return to the classroom before they are ready and/or effectively take a pay cut to have a child.

Increasingly, the private sector is responding to this gap in benefits. As [reported](#) in the June 13, 2022 issue of Congressional Research Service, "According to a recent national survey of employers conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 23% of private industry employees had access to paid family leave (parental leave and family caregiving leave) through their employers in March 2021, and 42% had access to employer-supported short-term disability insurance policies.

## U.S. ranks last in government-mandated paid leave for new parents



The availability of these benefits was more prevalent among professional and technical occupations and industries, high-paying occupations, full-time workers, and workers in large companies. Announcements by several



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Open additional funds held by school districts for teacher pay by amending the definition of deficit finance.*

large companies in recent years indicate that access may be increasing among certain groups of workers.”

Redefining deficit finance will ensure that excess cash and rainy day fund balances held by school districts may become the subject of continued negotiation by local unions and school boards. ISTA is proposing that a school corporation cannot declare deficit financing if the sum of education fund and rainy-day fund cash balances exceeds 25% of the district’s annual certified education budget.

Some school districts continue to leave state tuition support funding meant for teaching and learning unspent amassing indefensibly large cash and rainy-day fund balances. By the [most recent data](#), two-thirds of Indiana school districts keep cash and rainy-day fund balances in excess of 25% of their respective education fund annual budgets and there are 11 districts with balances equal to a full year’s education budget (100% or more in reserves).

Maintaining these large surpluses year after year hurts kids and staff. Further, once a school district makes the decision to leave state tuition support funding unspent (or otherwise refuses to agree to spend those funds) in the year the money is provided, in subsequent years, if the parties go to fact-finding, only dollars from the current tuition support revenue can be considered — and not any balances amassed in prior years. This leads to unwarranted stockpiling.

The deficit finance law reads in part, “‘Deficit financing’ for a budget year means actual expenditures exceeding the employer’s current year actual education fund revenue...” The result is that school employers can use this statutory scheme to contravene lawmakers’ intentions regarding dollars provided for teaching and learning.

While ISTA recognizes that every good business model calls for a degree of prudent future planning and reserves, the degree to which some districts have systemically refused to leverage education fund revenue on the service delivery of education in the year it is provided is indefensible.



# Improve Learning and Working Conditions



## ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- *Invest, at a minimum, inflationary level increases for basic grants containing foundation and complexity funds for schools. Without at least meeting inflation, services for students will continue to suffer. For comparison, simply repeating Indiana's historic commitment from its last budget would not meet today's impact of inflation.*
- *Expand the factors used to determine complexity funding qualification.*
- *Fix a technical error that is causing mass under-reporting of students qualifying under the Indiana's complexity definition.*
- *Increase special education and English language learner (ELL) funding so that complexity funding can do all that it is intended to do.*

## FOUNDATION GRANT

The foundation grant is the central component in Indiana's school funding formula as it impacts every school district. Currently, the per student foundation is set in law at \$6,235 per student. An increase in the foundation benefits all school districts.

As of December 2022, inflation is currently hovering around 7%. It is impossible to know how the health of the economy will be next spring when lawmakers adjourn, but it is safe to assume that higher levels of inflation will impact this next biennium to a degree not seen in years. Public schools are not exempt from these pressures, and neither are educators.

As a point of comparison and perspective, lawmakers in the last biennium enacted foundation funding increases that totaled \$1.12 billion for the 2021-23 biennium and in August of 2022, lawmakers refunded \$200 per taxpayer making a one-time statewide expenditure of \$1 billion.

## COMPLEXITY FUNDING

According to a recent study commissioned by the [Indiana Urban Schools Association](#) (urban schools association), Indiana's annual dollar commitment to complexity funding has decreased by over \$400 million since 2015.

Presumably those lost dollars became part of foundation fund increases. This represents a disquieting signal of unresponsiveness to student need, particularly in those areas in which there are larger concentrations of complexities and especially during this post-COVID period.

## MEASURING COMPLEXITY

Concerning the factors that Indiana uses to determine complexity funding, namely the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and participation in the Foster Care (FC) program, the same Urban Schools Association study found that Indiana is one of only two states to only use these direct certification factors. Indiana shares that distinction with Illinois.

Indiana can make improvements in defining those factors that relate to complexities in learning. Some additional measures to consider besides SNAP, TANF, and foster care include student high mobility, average income by school district, textbook assistance, and receipt of Title I services.

The Urban Schools Association study also uncovered an additional issue regarding complexity funding. Once Indiana went to direct certification with SNAP, TANF, and foster care as its factors, that move required Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) data to drive the funding through the IDOE.

Through a series of inquiries, it was discovered that there are significant numbers of students not being counted simply due to differences in software language between the FSSA and the IDOE systems. Kids from the same family were being treated differently; some qualifying and some not. In other words, kids are being dropped off the qualification list based upon a purely technological glitch. It is believed that the under-reporting statewide is in the tens of thousands of kids.



**SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ELL FUNDING:**

The 2022 Interim Study Committee on Fiscal Policy heard testimony from a variety of public-school stakeholder groups, including ISTA, supporting specific increases in special education and ELL funding. Not only would those increases fully fund special education and ELL, but they would also enable funds currently attributable to complexity to do what they were intended to do – help students whose learning is negatively impacted by poverty and other trauma.

The Urban Schools Association report studied both complexity and special education. Some key findings:

- While it is true that Indiana’s more complex schools are funded at a higher level than less complex schools, funding for Indiana’s least complex schools has increased 44% faster than its most complex schools. This has been due to a shift away from complexity funding and toward the foundation grant which has caused faster tuition support growth in low complexity schools.
- There is an existing 16% funding gap for FY 2023 even after notable special education funding increases enacted in this current biennium.
- To close the gap on special education in FY 2023 requires an additional \$122 million.
- Estimates on ELL funding gap needs suggest an additional \$55 million to \$72.5 million be added to the current \$27 million appropriation.

Essentially, school districts are backfilling the gaps in special education and ELL funding by leveraging their complexity funding. This needs to be addressed.



**ISTA RECOMMENDATION**

*Develop and fund a universal and free public preschool program within the next three years.*

In 2015, after having been one of only nine states without a state-funded pre-K program and the only state in the Midwest without such a program, Indiana created a five county pre-Kindergarten pilot program called On My Way Pre-K. By 2017, the pilot grew to 20 counties. In 2019, lawmakers removed the pilot label and expanded the On My Way Pre-K program statewide.

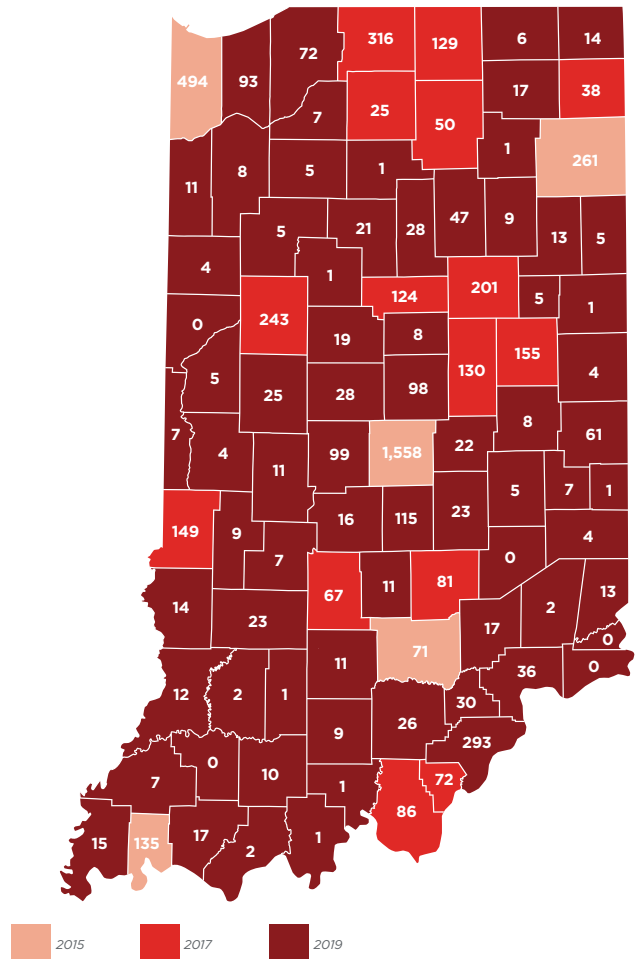
Indiana’s program awards grants to 4-year-olds from low-income families—with the added requirement that the parents be working. There are issues centered on accessibility to programs that are related to the income

guidelines and the work requirement. However, the current \$22 million appropriation limits the accessibility of the program.

In a September 2016 study commissioned jointly by the Indianapolis Chamber, the Mayor of Indianapolis, The United Way of Central Indiana and the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Family Foundation, [estimated](#) that a universal pre-K program for 4-year-olds would cost approximately \$187 million.

The [most recent data](#) indicates that Indiana funds 6,117 preschoolers through On My Way Pre-K, which is just a fraction of the number of 3- and 4-year-olds.

**Total Statewide Enrollment 2022-2023, 6,117**



*Grant Enrollment by County*

There have been numerous studies documenting the strong correlation between early education (or lack thereof) and life and career outcomes.



[Ninety percent](#) of one's brain development occurs before age 5. Preschool [decreases](#) a kid's chances of incarceration later in life. Data tells us that kids who attend preschool experience [fewer](#) disciplinary actions.

Other compelling factors associated with preschool attendance include better test scores, fewer dropouts, better physical health, and eventual higher earning capacity.

Additionally, an Indiana [study](#) demonstrated a four to one return on investment for every dollar spent on early childhood. This is consistent (if not conservative) with other national and state research findings. As an example, the U.S. Chamber Foundation notes there is an up to one to 16 return.

These contentions point to a bona fide need for additional state funding, resources and support for expanding universal public Pre-K in Indiana as soon as possible.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*In concert with recommendations from the Governor's Public Health Commission report, ISTA supports policies to support the recruitment and retention of more student support professionals as it seeks to address the wellness of the whole child.*

As with other educators, there is an equally troubling shortage issue regarding the hiring and retention of vital student services, especially as schools face increased numbers of students experiencing trauma.

- **Guidance Counselors:** The American School Counselor Association recommends that a guidance counselor caseload be 250 students. [In Indiana](#), the caseloads average 533.
- **School Nurses:** According to the recent health commission report, "school corporations are required to employ at least one bachelor's level registered nurse (RN) and one RN for every 750 students is recommended. There is no formal data collection mechanism to quantify the availability of school nurses; however, it is known that not all school corporations meet these standards."
- **School Psychologists:** The National Association of School Psychologists [recommends](#) the caseloads be 1: 500 - 700 students. Just 8% of districts nationally meet the recommended ratio. In 2020 - 21, the national ratio was 1,162 to one psychologist. In Indiana, the ratio is between 1,500 and 2,000 students to one school psychologist.

- **Speech Pathologists:** An American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [survey](#) reveals that Indiana's latest median caseload was 76. At the caseload range of 41 - 50, approximately 60% of speech language pathologists perceive their caseload size as [unmanageable](#).
- **School Social Workers:** Due to the varying needs and responsibilities that school social workers have in schools, there are no caseload recommendations set by the School Social Workers Association of America. However, anecdotally, the disparity between supply and demand for these services mirrors that of the other pupil service professionals described herein.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- *Address health and safety of teachers and school staff by creating a centralized database for on-the-job injuries caused by students on staff.*
- *Require all teacher preparation institutions in Indiana include meaningful professional training in de-escalation techniques and other preventative strategies.*
- *Make failure to report injuries a misdemeanor.*
- *To ensure that teachers have a meaningful voice in creating health and safety solutions, give teachers the ability to bargain class sizes, preparation periods and health and safety matters.*

Indiana has no central database to report on-the-job injuries caused by students on staff. Access to accurate, relevant data is a must to give teachers and other school personnel confidence that they are working in a safe environment. It is a first step in understanding the breadth of the problem. The types of incidences included in the data should include any incident for which a worker's compensation claim is made, that causes the employee to miss all or a part of at least one school day or is otherwise required to be reported based upon the public school's reporting requirements.

According to a National Teacher and Principal [survey](#), 10% of teachers indicated that they had been threatened with injury by students during the prior 12 months and 6% of teachers noted that they had been physically attacked during the same period.

In 2021, WRTV-Channel 6 in Indianapolis filed requests for information from 24 school districts in central Indiana on teacher and staff injuries involving students. By their count, more than 1,590 incidents occurred from teachers being hit, punched, kicked, headbutted and hair pulled.





It is important to note that these studies (national and in central Indiana) were conducted pre-pandemic. One can reasonably presume that the levels of stress, trauma and mental health issues, post-COVID have put further pressure on the school climate.

While under current law, reporting threats, intimidation, and various batteries are required and immunity is statutorily granted, there is no penalty for failure to report.

Including professional training in de-escalation techniques and other similar strategies at the pre-service higher education level and embedding such trainings in existing professional development for active teachers is a warranted preventative policy.

Kids cannot learn if the school climate is compromised. Teachers cannot effectively teach, and staff cannot serve, if there is the belief that little support exists to protect them.

# Increase Educator Voice, Respect and Professional Autonomy



## ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Give teachers a seat at the table by expanding collective bargaining.*

When teachers have a voice in school conditions, student learning improves. Educators should be permitted to work together through their union to manage the professional issues they face and under which students learn. Chief among those issues are class sizes, time for class preparation and health and safety issues.

In 2021, ISTA conducted a statewide poll of Hoosier voters that overwhelmingly revealed (80%) their belief in educators having bargaining rights not only for salary and wage issues, but also to negotiate health & safety issues (air and water quality, student disciplinary, curricular issues), maximum class sizes and time to prepare and grade student work.

In that same poll, 83% of voters understood that Indiana is facing both a shortage of teachers but that it would be easier to attract good people to the job if they could negotiate better working conditions with their co-workers.

Under Indiana law, collective bargaining is restricted to salary and wage issues only.

Indiana’s teacher shortage is the result of just a few factors: salary level and potential for meaningful salary growth, workplace satisfaction, and outside support and appreciation. A incremental expansion in collective bargaining rights, buttressed by data demonstrating that the public supports such outreach, is relevant to both workplace satisfaction and outside supports.



## ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- *Ensure professional autonomy by supporting continued authority for educators to make classroom/student curricular decisions.*
- *Embed culturally responsive teaching in Indiana’s curriculum at every grade level in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.*

Once the state took over the funding of public schools in 2008, the state also took over more control of what occurs inside the classroom. From statewide student testing to state accountability based upon student test scores, to teacher evaluations based upon student test scores, to a narrowing of the curriculum to align with state tests, and to implementation of uniformly-paced instruction as opposed to individualized attention—each of these policy decisions have chipped away at the professional judgment of the qualified teacher.

Over the years, these policies have tied the hands of educators, often-times at the expense of student learning. These policies failed to recognize what teachers know – that every classroom is different, each having a range of students with differing needs. It is time for these interventions to end.

A Stand for Children [survey](#) found that 37% of teachers said they are more likely to leave the profession at the end of this school year if a push for laws that “prevent honest teaching and conversations” reaches their classrooms. Lawmakers

should resist the temptation to further interfere with the professional balance that qualified teachers are able to create within their classes and among their students relative to teaching and learning.

Teachers certainly understand that working with parents is a critical part of working with their students. In fact, testimony offered in House and Senate hearings during the 2022 General Assembly reflected this notion. Time and time again, parents testifying in committee about concerns over specific curriculum and/or materials were satisfactorily addressed locally through conversations between teachers and parents. Policies that foster animosity among the key stakeholders are counterproductive and remain solutions searching for a problem.

With regard to cultural responsiveness, Indiana laws call for the IDOE to develop and make available to school districts and nonpublic schools materials to assist teachers, administrators, and staff in a school in developing cultural competency for use in providing professional and staff development programs (IC 20-31-6-1).

Indiana law also requires school improvement committees to consider methods to improve the cultural competency of the school's teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students and to:

1. Identify the racial, ethnic, language-minority, cultural, exceptional learning, and socioeconomic groups that are included in the school's student population;

2. Incorporate culturally appropriate strategies for increasing educational opportunities and educational performance for each group in the school's plan; and
3. Recommend areas in which additional professional development is necessary to increase cultural competency in the school's educational environment. (IC 20-31-6-2).

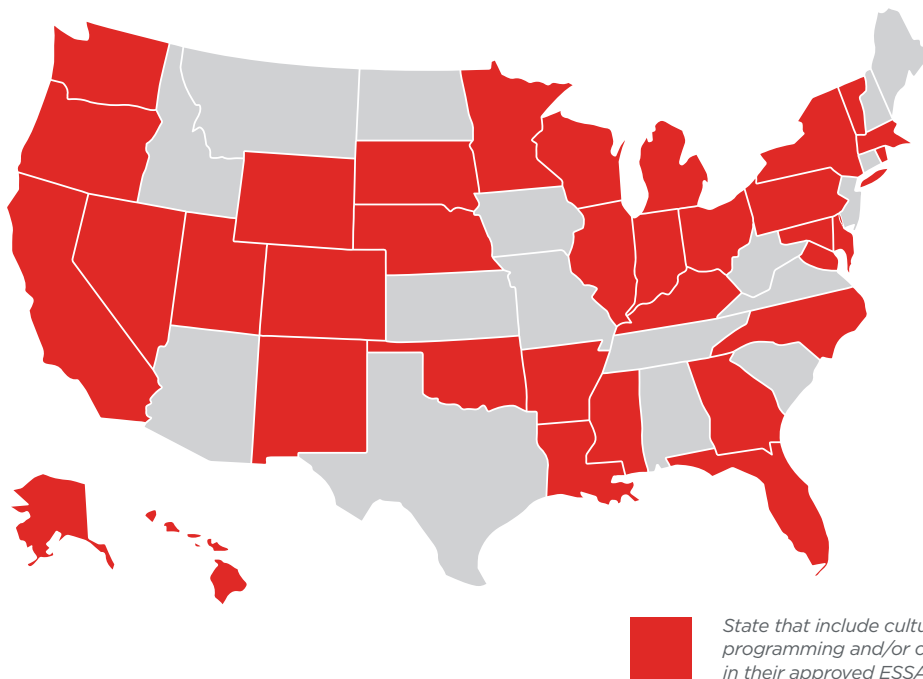
These efforts began as early as 2005 and are certainly positive steps but fall short of real student-centered cultural responsiveness interventions.

Additionally, since 2019, many [states](#), including Indiana, have [included](#) in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plans with the federal government reference to goals for teaching and learning that go beyond standardized test scores and in several cases, include a re-thinking about accountability that considers the role that culture plays in schools and classrooms.

As stipulated in Indiana's ESSA plan, "Indiana's vision for a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is to provide academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support, grounded in culturally responsive practices to all students."

It is time for Indiana's laws to reflect that clear vision and to be strengthened regarding requiring the integration of cultural competency/responsiveness at every grade and in every subject of the curriculum as developmentally appropriate.

## Culturally responsive education included in ESSA state plans



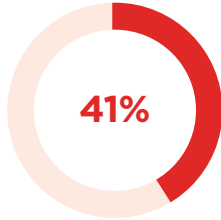


# Inspire and Prepare the Next Generation of Educators

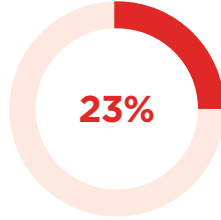
## Teaching Pipeline



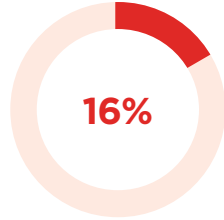
All Education Degree Seeking Students: 2010 and 2012



Graduates with BA or Higher



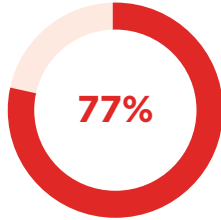
Credentialed with Education License



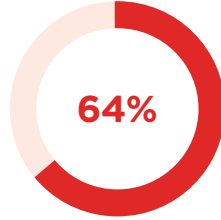
Teaching at Indiana Public School Corps



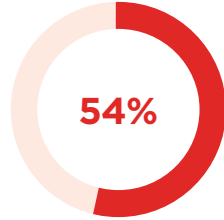
Teaching Scholarship and Stipend Recipients: 2011 to 2016



Graduates with BA or Higher



Credentialed with Education License



Teaching at Indiana Public School Corps.

Source: REL Midwest Study, Wan, Pardo, & XIA, 2021; and OFMA Analysis of CHE and DOE program data as provided by MPH.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- Increase scholarships focused on attracting and retaining more teachers, with an intentional focus on increasing the number of BIPOC teachers.
- Provide stipends for student teaching candidates who have agreed to teach in Indiana schools for the expenses incurred in taking on a student teaching assignment.
- Increase funding for the Earline S. Rogers student teacher stipend for minorities program and the Student Teacher Stipend for High Need Fields program..

The data and research in Indiana, and nationally, point to the need to not only encourage students who have an interest and the disposition to teach to enter teacher preparation programs, but to complete and enter the profession through licensure attainment.

When compared to all education degree seeking students at the front end who become teachers at the back end, the existence of teaching scholarships and stipends matter. Specifically, only one in six who pursued a four-year degree in education became a teacher in Indiana (data from 2010 and 2012) and that dropped to only one in 20 for Black students. There is a higher rate of degree completion, licensure attainment, and actual employment as teachers across the board when the individual has received a teaching scholarship and/or stipend.

Indiana’s student teachers are not paid for their work as student teachers (and this includes any work with extracurricular programs). The one exception is when the supervising teacher is absent, a student teacher that has



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That said, a teacher candidate is not considered an employee of the school nor under any contract. As such, student teachers are prohibited from receiving a salary from the school during the student teaching experience (including for extracurricular programs).

Certain student teachers currently may apply for a stipend through the Indiana Commission for Higher Education specifically as a student teacher. Stipends under this program are limited to high-need fields, require the recipient to agree to teach in an Indiana accredited school following certification for at least three years, and are capped at \$4,000. The total annual appropriation for this stipend is \$900,000, essentially funding 225 student teachers at \$4,000.

The biennial funding for the both student teaching stipends and the William A Crawford Minority Teacher Scholarship program total just \$1.8 million. Increasing funding to these program is warranted.

Last year, the number of initial licenses issued to new teachers coming from traditional programs was 3,472. Nearly all of them would have student taught in the fall of 2021 or spring of 2022.

In this era of the proliferation of alternative certification pathways to teaching, the paraprofessional remains uniquely positioned to take on the challenge of becoming a certified teacher. What exceptional paraprofessionals may lack in academic degrees or teaching credentialing, they likely possess in disposition and management skills due to their real-world experience.

Indiana should follow the lead of Washington State by establishing a grant for which exceptional paraprofessionals who have attained associates degrees can further their credentialing. This is a logical step in removing an obvious barrier to teaching.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

- *Increase funding and access to mentoring programs to retain educators of color who already face a higher rate of turnover in school environments with additional challenges.*
- *Increase opportunities for teacher residencies, leadership pathways and career ladders.*
- *Increase statewide funding for professional development to assist beginning teachers with a particular focus on BIPOC educators and their needs and challenges.*
- *Increase comprehensive induction programs to acclimate beginning educators to their new school settings.*

Research shows that beginning teachers are positively impacted by a range of professional growth opportunities and resources. Educators of color particularly benefit from early profession supports to encourage leadership pathways and professional growth.

A strong body of research also indicates that early educators are the most likely to leave the profession within the first three to five years. The turnover rate is particularly alarming for BIPOC educators who staff more challenging schools and require additional supports.

Clearly, policies that embrace and provide supports to new teachers increase the likelihood of staying in the profession. Effective policies include providing resources for meaningful mentoring and induction as well as new opportunities for growth through residencies and career ladders.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Support paraprofessionals to transform to become licensed teachers by providing opportunities, funding and resources.*



The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) program statute is contained in Title II of the Higher Education Act, as amended on August 14, 2008, by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315) (HEA). The law provides grants for partnerships between higher education and k-12 to improve student achievement; improve the quality of prospective and new teachers by improving the preparation of prospective teachers and enhancing professional development activities for new teachers and in many states helps fund teacher residency programs.

Some states have taken advantage of leveraging dollars from the TQP program. In fact, Indiana has its own history with TQP.

In 2019, Purdue University, Marian University and South Bend Community Schools (SBCS) each were awarded grants to establish residency programs: Purdue University with the Indianapolis Public Schools, Marian University with Perry Township, Decatur Township, and Beech Grove Schools (Indianapolis), and SBCS together with IU-South Bend for SBCS.

Currently, Indiana commits \$1 million each year of the biennium towards teacher residencies. Indiana policy should encourage applying for future rounds of the TQP federal grant through increased funding in teacher residency programs and with a focused eye on helping BIPOC teachers.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Support diversity practices in staffing decisions to include:*

- *Assess state licensing practices to determine whether bias exists in testing.*
- *Conduct a study to identify barriers for educators of color into the teacher workforce, including barriers to college completion (attainment of a degree and certification) and create efficient recruitment strategies.*
- *Develop partnerships with local communities and higher education institutions to identify and encourage potential BIPOC individuals to enter the profession of education.*
- *Fund and encourage districts with incentives to hire diversity coaches and trainers.*

Proposals under this section call for Indiana to become more intentional in its move to increase diversity in its teaching

### Why do candidates of color pass at lower rate than their white peers?

- Equivalent candidates of color still pass at lower rates
- Candidates of color may have unequal K-12 preparation
- The assessments may be culturally and racially biased

### How can we support candidates of color to pass the assessments?

- Offer test preparation classes and support
- Communicate with candidates and celebrate success
- Provide accommodations and evaluate passing scores for all candidates

force. Good policymaking requires solid data and strength in partnerships with broad community buy in. To date, Indiana lacks movement in all these factors.

In at least the last decade, questions nationwide have arisen over unfair bias embedded in teacher licensure examinations. Anecdotally, this is not a new topic for Indiana lawmakers. Going back as far as 1990, Rep. Vernon Smith (D-Gary) brought this issue to his colleagues in one form or another—each time seeking to provide a degree of flexibility in scoring for those who came close but could not overcome the testing hurdle after otherwise completing degree requirements.

Other states are grappling with this issue as well. Just this year, the New York City Board of Education decided to settle a case going back to 1996 for millions of dollars based upon biased teacher licensure examinations.

REL Northwest for the state of Washington's Professional Educator Standards Board Testing Barrier Work Group, issued a report with various findings and recommendations concerning candidates of color.

Commissioning a study on the degree to which cultural bias exists in Indiana's teacher licensure testing would be a proactive measure in which the state should invest before litigation would follow and enacting policies that ensure that a single test with no flexibility does not disqualify an otherwise qualified candidate from teaching.



### ISTA RECOMMENDATION

*Create a state fund to establish a pilot program centered around the Educators Rising's grow your own model and curriculum to promote the*

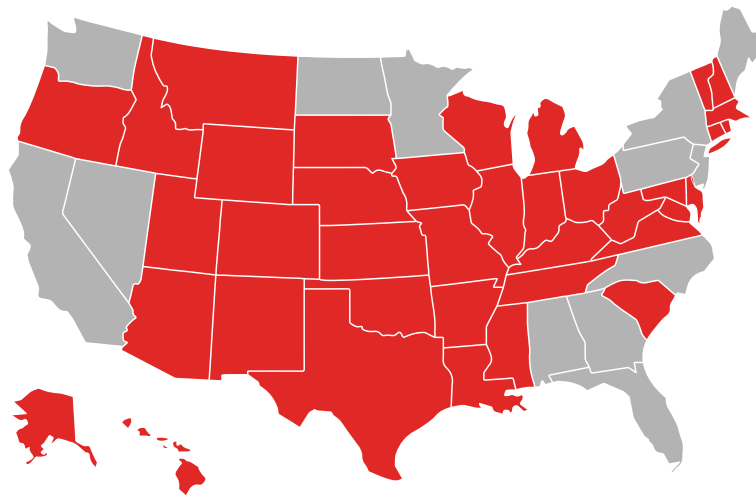


*profession of teaching at the high school level and to encourage current high schoolers to enter an educator pathway program partnering with teacher preparation programs.*

A longer-term strategy includes promoting the profession of teaching at the high school level and the way to best accomplish that is to enable students in high school to start their own pathway to teaching and be exposed to the science and art of teaching and learning prior to entering college.

[Educators Rising](#) is a national organization focusing on cultivating highly skilled educators beginning at the high school level who are passionate about serving their communities as teachers. Indiana is already a state affiliate of Educators Rising.

## Educators Rising



Official Educators Rising State Affiliates



Educators Rising Presence

## In Closing

Educators know what works to ensure students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead. They need supportive administrations, protected planning time, mental health supports and fully funded and safe schools that allow kids to thrive.

Our voices and our communities are stronger when we unite. Parents and educators are coming together to ensure all students get the high-quality schools and educators they need to thrive.

We join together so every student can thrive in public schools and every educator can inspire imagination, cultivate curiosity and critical thinking and to ensure our children are prepared for fulfilling lives. 🇺🇸



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**OUR KIDS.  
OUR SCHOOLS.  
OUR FUTURES.**