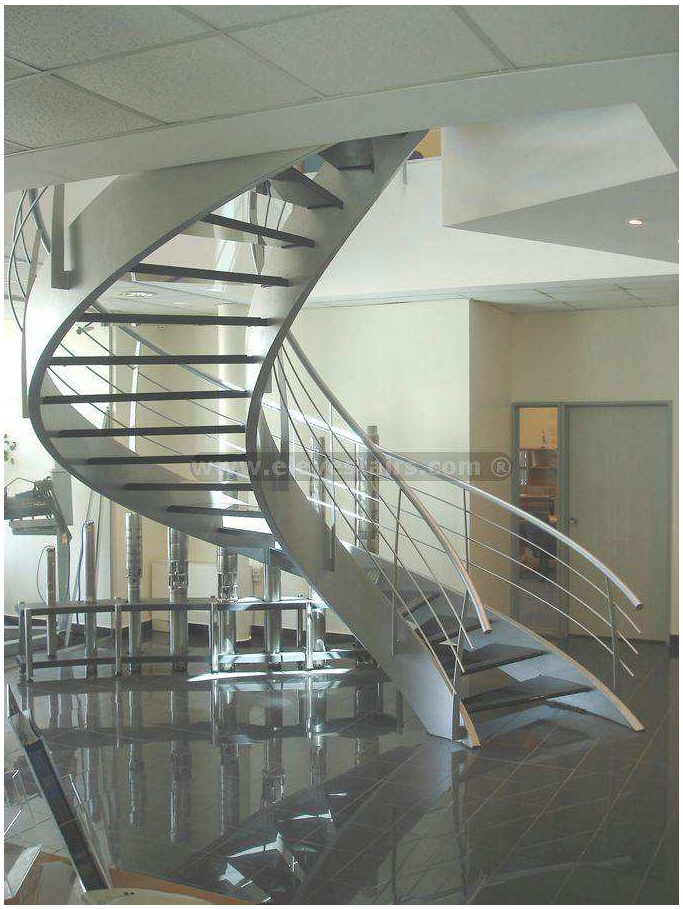


ILLINOIS EDUCATOR SHORTAGE CRISIS: SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE IARSS

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
ROE|ISC
COMMITMENT AND SERVICE TO EDUCATION
IARSS

GOSHEN EDUCATION
CONSULTING

Contents

The Illinois Association of Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) conducted this survey in response to concerns expressed by school districts across the state regarding the increasing challenges of filling licensed teaching positions due to a decreasing number of applicants, as well as the concerns regarding the perceived quality across the pool of applicants. These are concerns that must be addressed to continue providing students across the state equitable educational opportunities no matter where they reside.

Executive Summary

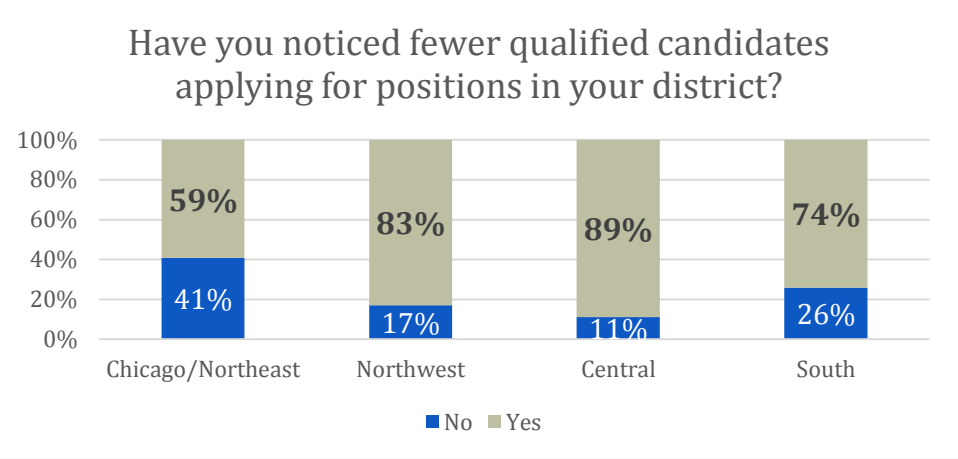
Respondents to the Teacher Shortage Survey broadly believed that there are issues with teacher recruitment and placement. Sixty percent of the responding districts had difficulty with staffing positions and 76% reported that they had fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in their districts.

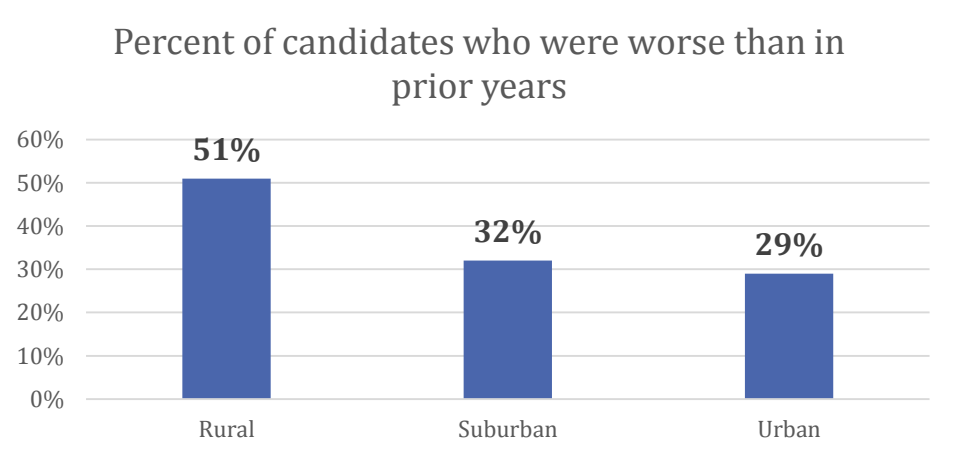
Among the different district locations throughout the state, 89% of the districts in Central Illinois and 83% in Northwest Illinois noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in their districts. Rural districts also reported difficulties. Among all rural districts, 83% reported fewer qualified teacher candidates had applied for positions.

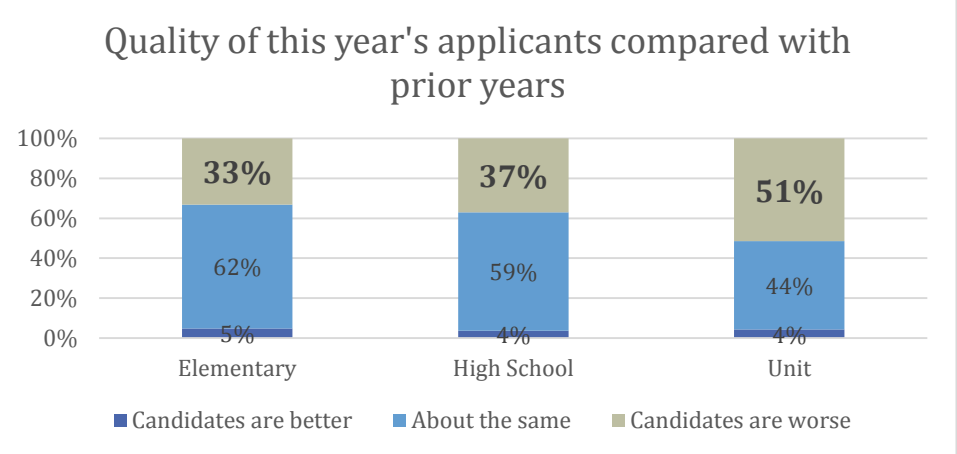
The data also showed that the teacher shortages are particularly problematic for secondary schools. Eighty percent of High School Districts and 87% of Unit School Districts noticed fewer qualified candidates had applied for positions in their districts.

The districts in all regions identified a need for qualified teachers in self-contained general education, special education, reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Comments supported these survey findings and identified structural issues that impact students' interests in teaching as a career.


Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
59%
41%
83%
17%
89%
11%
74%
26%
Chicago/Northeast
Northwest
Central
South
No
Yes


Percent of candidates who were worse than in prior years
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
51%
32%
29%
Rural
Suburban
Urban


Quality of this year's applicants compared with prior years
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
33%
62%
5%
37%
59%
4%
51%
44%
4%
Elementary
High School
Unit
Candidates are better
About the same
Candidates are worse

60% of the districts had difficulty with staffing positions

Overall Findings

Summary

Broadly, 60% of the districts across the state indicated that they had difficulty with staffing positions. While 16% had to cancel classes due to shortages of teachers with appropriate qualifications, 76% reported that they had fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in their districts. Within all the districts, 43% reported that the individuals applying were "worse" than those applicants from previous years. District leaders believed the teacher shortages were most pronounced among self-contained general education, special education, reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science.

More than half of the respondents provided a comment about their situation. The district leaders reported it was hardest to recruit special education, mathematics, and science teachers. Further they believed there were a series of structural issues that prohibited students from being interested in teaching and for existing teachers to transfer in from out of state. The following is typical comment that covers many of the themes found among respondent comments to the survey:

> "New candidates are fewer due to cuts/prorations in state funding over the last several years causing competition between three years of college grads and three years of RIFed teachers - now fewer college grads are getting teaching degrees…"

This report considers five key questions from the survey that was conducted by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools concerning a teacher shortage:

- Difficulty with staffing - Have you had difficulties this year staffing positions with educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject areas?
- Cancelled classes - Have you had to cancel classes or programs due to shortages of qualified applicants (Illinois Licensed and endorsed)?
- Frequency of candidate application - Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?
- Quality of applicants - How would you compare the quality of applicants this year from prior years?
- Content Shortage Areas - Indicate the number of educators in your district who are not properly Illinois licensed or endorsed within the following [subject areas].

Findings

Q1. Have you had difficulties this year staffing positions with educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject areas?

Response	Percent	n
No	40%	216
Yes	60%	322
Grand Total	**100%**	**538**

Q2. Have you had to cancel classes or programs due to shortages of qualified applicants (Illinois Licensed and endorsed)?

Response	Percent	N
No	84%	454
Yes	16%	84
Grand Total	**100%**	**538**

Q3. Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?

Response	Percent	n
No	24%	130
Yes	76%	408
Grand Total	**100%**	**538**

Q4. How would you compare the quality of applicants this year from prior years?

Response	Percent	n
Candidates are worse	43%	231
About the same	53%	283
Candidates are better	4%	24
Grand Total	**100%**	**538**

Q5. Please indicate the number of educators in your district who are not properly Illinois licensed or endorsed within the following areas?

Discipline	Raw #	Rank
Self-Contained General Education	817	1
Special Education	680	2
Reading/English Language Arts	261	3
Mathematics	229	4
Science	222	5
Physical Education	202	6
Social Science	179	7
Career & Technical Education	164	8
English as Second Language	117	9
Speech & Language Pathologists	114	10
Other	113	11
Art	100	12
School Nurses	99	13
Music	93	14
Foreign Language	92	15
Health	90	16
Social Workers	80	17
School Psychologists	71	18
School Counselors	65	19
Drivers Education	41	20

District Completer Demographics

The survey was completed by 62% of the school districts in the state, or 538 districts. The initial response yielded 777 raw responses, but 145 of these responses were duplicates. Of the remaining 632 unique responses only 538 were complete and usable responses; ninety-four of the unique responses only included responses to the first demographic questions.

Among the regions, the highest response rate (77%) was from the Northwest region. Among district types (e.g., Unit or elementary), the Unit Districts had the largest number of respondents (276) and the highest response rate (73%).[1]

This robust sample had a margin of error of +/- 3.5% and a confidence level of 99%.

63% or 538 school districts (out of 857) provided usable responses to the survey

Responding Districts by District Type

	District Type[2]			Total
	Elementary	High School	Unit	
n	208	54	276	538
N	380	98	379	857
%	55%	56%	73%	63%

Note: The table includes the (n) - Number responding, the (N) - Total Number of districts, and the (%) - Percentage of districts responding.

Responding Districts by Urban/Rural Classification

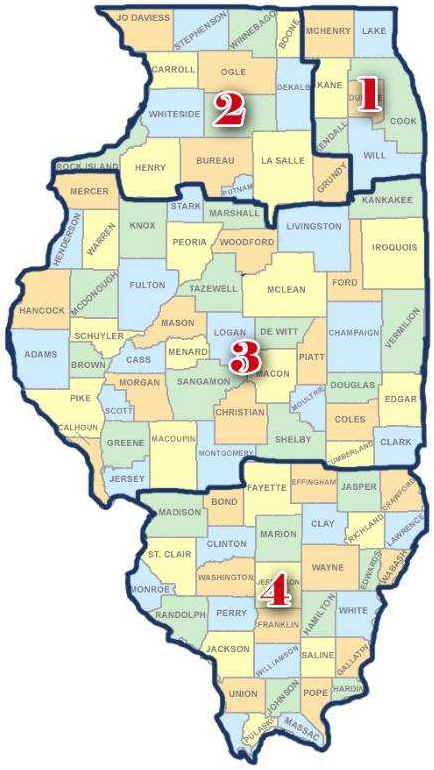
	District Type			Total
	Rural	Suburban	Urban	
n	324	183	31	538

[1] It should be noted that the survey was anonymous, so any demographic was disclosed by the respondent on the survey. There is no way to verify the accuracy of the responses.

[2] Response rates for district types and regions were identified using ISBE's Directory of Illinois Educational Districts for the 2014-2015 school year. See http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/directories.htm.

Note: The table includes the (n) - Number responding, the (N) - Total Number of districts, and the (%) - Percentage of districts responding.

Responding Districts by Illinois Region



	Region				Total
	Chicago/ Northeast Area	Northwest	Central	Southern	
n	164	100	170	104	538
N	298	130	245	184	857
%	55%	77%	69%	56%	62%

Note 1: The table includes the (n) - Number responding, the (N) - Total Number of districts, and the (%) - Percentage of districts responding.
Note 2: Chicago Public Schools are not reflected in this survey.

Differences by District Type

Summary

The data appear to show that the teacher shortages are particularly problematic for secondary schools. The differences by district type were the most pronounced among High School Districts and Unit Districts. Through a review of comments, districts particularly had difficulty with identifying special education, mathematics, and science teachers. One district leader wrote, "There are virtually no math or special education teachers available for hire."

Unit school districts had the most difficulties with staffing positions; seventy-two percent agreed that it was difficult to hire and place educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject area.

Elementary school districts had the least problems with cancelling classes due to shortages of qualified candidates. Among these districts only 6% indicated having to cancel classes or programs.

It was reported that 80% of High School districts and 87% of Unit districts indicated that they had fewer qualified candidates applying for positions.

Districts generally identified self-contained general education, special education, reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science as the areas with the most educators who are underqualified. When considered as a sub-group, elementary districts had a high need for physical education and English as a second language teachers.

80% of the High School districts and 87% of Unit districts indicated that they had fewer qualified candidates applying for positions.

Findings

Q1. Have you had difficulties this year staffing positions with educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject areas?

	District Type		
Response	Elementary	High School	Unit
No	55%	44%	28%
Yes	45%	56%	72%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q2. Have you had to cancel classes or programs due to shortages of qualified applicants (Illinois Licensed and endorsed)?

	District Type		
Response	Elementary	High School	Unit
No	94%	80%	78%
Yes	6%	20%	22%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q3. Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?

	District Type		
Response	Elementary	High School	Unit
No	39%	20%	13%
Yes	61%	80%	87%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q4. How would you compare the quality of applicants this year from prior years?

	District Type		
Response	**Elementary**	**High School**	**Unit**
Candidates are worse	33%	37%	51%
About the same	62%	59%	44%
Candidates are better	5%	4%	4%
Grand Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Q5. Please indicate the number of educators in your district who are not properly Illinois licensed or endorsed within the following areas?

	District Type		
Discipline	**Elementary**	**High School**	**Unit**
Art	50	15	35
Career & Technical Education	8	79	77
Drivers Education	0	15	26
English as Second Language	68	15	34
Foreign Language	12	41	39
Health	30	17	43
Mathematics	60	80	89
Music	38	15	40
Physical Education	71	50	81
Reading/English Language Arts	83	77	101
School Counselors	3	30	32
School Nurses	51	8	40
School Psychologists	31	12	28
Science	54	82	86
Self-Contained General Education	424	3	390
Social Science	53	55	71
Social Workers	34	10	36
Special Education	152	86	442
Speech & Language Pathologists	43	5	66
Other	55	13	45

Note: These are raw numbers listed by the responding districts and are only meant to identify the areas with greatest need. Not all districts responded to these questions.

Differences by Urban/Rural Classification

Summary

Rural districts had the most difficulty with teacher recruitment. One administrator wrote, "Even though we are rural, we typically had over 100 resumes (for elementary positions). This year I was lucky to get 20. "

A strong majority of districts in all areas believed that they had noticed fewer qualified teacher candidates. This was most evident in rural districts with 83% of the districts agreeing with the statement. Further, a majority (51%) of the rural districts believed that their candidates were "worse" from previous years.

All districts identified self-contained general education and special education. The urban districts identified a particular need for speech and language pathologists and English as a Second Language teachers. The suburban districts identified a need for qualified science teachers.

83% of the rural districts noticed fewer qualified candidates had applied for their teaching positions

Findings

Q1. Have you had difficulties this year staffing positions with educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject areas?

	Rural/Urban Classification		
Response	Rural	Suburban	Urban
No	38%	45%	29%
Yes	62%	55%	71%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q2. Have you had to cancel classes or programs due to shortages of qualified applicants (Illinois Licensed and endorsed)?

	Rural/Urban Classification		
Response	Rural	Suburban	Urban
No	81%	90%	87%
Yes	19%	10%	13%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q3. Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?

	Rural/Urban Classification		
Response	Rural	Suburban	Urban
No	17%	37%	29%
Yes	83%	63%	71%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Q4. How would you compare the quality of applicants this year from prior years?

	Rural/Urban Classification		
Response	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Candidates are worse	51%	32%	29%
About the same	45%	63%	71%
Candidates are better	5%	5%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

DIFFERENCES BY URBAN/RURAL CLASSIFICATION

Q5. Please indicate the number of educators in your district who are not properly Illinois licensed or endorsed within the following areas?

	Rural/Urban Classification		
Discipline	**Rural**	**Suburban**	**Urban**
Art	59	38	3
Career & Technical Education	129	27	8
Drivers Education	39	2	0
English as Second Language	24	70	23
Foreign Language	49	40	3
Health	58	29	3
Mathematics	129	95	5
Music	59	31	3
Physical Education	126	71	5
Reading/English Language Arts	141	117	3
School Counselors	41	24	0
School Nurses	46	48	5
School Psychologists	22	48	1
Science	120	98	4
Self-Contained General Education	473	322	22
Social Science	101	76	2
Social Workers	32	47	1
Special Education	236	421	23
Speech & Language Pathologists	45	62	7
Other	64	43	6

Note: These are raw numbers listed by the responding districts and are only meant to identify the areas with greatest need. Not all districts responded to these questions.

Differences by Illinois Region

Summary

Broadly, the districts in Suburban Cook County (Chicago Public Schools are not reflected in this survey) and Northeast Illinois reported the least difficulty with staffing, while the districts in Northwest Illinois and Central Illinois had pronounced issues. One Central Illinois administrator wrote, "Vocational, Media, Special Education, ESL, Science & Math are all EXTREMELY difficult to fill positions for us here in Central IL."

75% of the Central Illinois districts had issues with staffing positions with qualified candidates

While most regions had difficulties with staffing positions, Central Illinois, in particular, had issues with 75% of the respondents indicating they had difficulties. A majority of districts (57%) in Southern Illinois indicated that they did *not* have difficulties with staffing. Central Illinois districts had the highest rate with 22% of the districts needing to cancel classes.

A majority of districts believed that fewer qualified candidates were applying for positions. This was least evident in Chicago and Northeast Illinois with only 59% who agreed with the statement. In the other three regions, 74% or more of the districts believed that they had fewer qualified candidates applying for positions.

The Suburban Cook County and Northeast Illinois region also had the least concerns about the quality of the applicants. Seventy-four percent of the districts in this region believed their candidates to be about the same or better. In the other three regions 44% - 55% believed their candidates were worse.

The districts in all regions identified a need for qualified teachers in self-contained general education and special education. The Central Illinois districts had a particular need for career & technical education teachers.

Findings

Q1. Have you had difficulties this year staffing positions with educators that are Illinois licensed and endorsed for their assigned subject areas?

	Region			
Response	Chicago/ Northeast	Northwest	Central	South
No	45%	41%	25%	57%
Yes	55%	59%	75%	43%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q2. Have you had to cancel classes or programs due to shortages of qualified applicants (Illinois Licensed and endorsed)?

	Region			
Response	Chicago/ Northeast	Northwest	Central	South
No	90%	82%	78%	88%
Yes	10%	18%	22%	12%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q3. Have you noticed fewer qualified candidates applying for positions in your district?

	Region			
Response	Chicago/ Northeast	Northwest	Central	South
No	41%	17%	11%	26%
Yes	59%	83%	89%	74%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q4. How would you compare the quality of applicants this year from prior years?

	Region			
Response	Chicago/ Northeast	Northwest	Central	South
Candidates are worse	26%	49%	55%	44%
About the same	69%	47%	40%	53%
Candidates are better	5%	4%	5%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q5. Please indicate the number of educators in your district who are not properly Illinois licensed or endorsed within the following areas?

	Region			
Discipline	**Chicago/ Northeast**	**Northwest**	**Central**	**South**
Art	38	34	18	10
Career & Technical Education	32	39	61	32
Drivers Education	3	11	15	12
English as Second Language	89	9	16	3
Foreign Language	39	18	25	10
Health	28	20	26	16
Mathematics	100	48	47	34
Music	33	25	20	15
Physical Education	64	56	51	31
Reading/English Language Arts	124	52	47	38
School Counselors	26	12	17	10
School Nurses	46	21	23	9
School Psychologists	42	15	11	3
Science	100	41	50	31
Self-Contained General Education	267	197	188	165
Social Science	79	35	36	29
Social Workers	46	18	11	5
Special Education	423	81	120	56
Speech & Language Pathologists	58	19	26	11
Other	44	6	23	40

Note 1: These are raw numbers listed by the responding districts and are only meant to identify the areas with greatest need. Not all districts responded to these questions.
Note 2: Chicago Public Schools are not reflected in this survey.

Interpretation and Implications for Practice

The reduced candidate pool is likely caused by a combination of factors such as educators leaving Illinois, educators leaving the profession entirely, fewer students enrolled in Illinois approved programs leading to licensure, out-of-state educators choosing not to come to Illinois, and/or out-of-state educators unable to meet Illinois' licensure standards without substantial delays and additional requirements being met. These issues span across the entire state and are not isolated to rural or urban communities, a particular district type, or geographic location.

Although we must be careful to not overgeneralize the root causes based on these data, several critical areas must be addressed for both long-term and short-term solutions to the growing crisis.

- Simplify and expedite processes for applicants.
- Expand reciprocity that more closely honors other states' requirements when comparable to Illinois.
- Enhance Illinois recruitment of in-state and out-of-state candidates.
- Modify regulations to support educators as professionals.
- Explore possible alternative routes to licensure and/or obtaining endorsements not currently available.

Survey Method and Analysis

The Teacher Shortage Survey was developed by a committee from the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. The survey was administered by the Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education #45 through a web-based survey between August 25 and September 2, 2015. The survey analysis was completed by Matt Feldman, Ph.D. of Goshen Education Consulting, Inc.

Several questions were omitted from the analysis because they asked for respondents to provide the number of teachers in a certain condition. The questions concerning certain disciplines were included for the purposes of identifying the areas with the greatest need, though it is difficult to estimate the actual number of individuals for all districts statewide. The survey was anonymous and the number of teachers lost relevance without a reference to the total number of teachers in the district. Further, these questions were frequently skipped by the respondents.

The survey was downloaded into MS Excel and analyzed primarily through the use of pivot tables for the purposes of identifying sub-group frequencies.

The survey instrument is included in the following Appendix.