



## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB5437

Introduced 2/9/2024, by Rep. Tony M. McCombie

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 48/10  
110 ILCS 48/13-1 new  
110 ILCS 48/20  
110 ILCS 48/35  
110 ILCS 48/90  
110 ILCS 48/13 rep.

Amends the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act. Transfers the powers and duties under the Act from the Board of Higher Education to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. Replaces the requirement that the Board of Higher Education must contract annually for an independent evaluation of program implementation with the requirement that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission monitor and evaluate the implementation of the program. Provides that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission may elect to contract for an independent evaluation with an outside entity. Effective immediately.

LRB103 38232 RJT 68366 b

1 AN ACT concerning higher education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act is  
5 amended by changing Sections 10, 20, 35, and 90 and by adding  
6 Section 13-1 as follows:

7 (110 ILCS 48/10)

8 Sec. 10. Definitions. In this Act:

9 "Accredited teacher preparation program" means a  
10 regionally accredited, Illinois approved teacher education  
11 program authorized to prepare individuals to fulfill all of  
12 the requirements to receive an Illinois initial teaching  
13 certificate.

14 "Cohort" means a group of teacher education candidates who  
15 are enrolled in and share experiences in the same program and  
16 are linked by their desire to become Illinois teachers in  
17 hard-to-staff schools and by their need for the services and  
18 supports offered by the Initiative. A cohort may include a  
19 high school student enrolled in a dual credit course offered  
20 by a participating institution of higher education.

21 "Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance  
22 Commission.

23 "Community organization" means a nonprofit organization

1 that has a demonstrated capacity to train, develop, and  
2 organize parents and community leaders into a constituency  
3 that will hold the school and the school district accountable  
4 for achieving high academic standards; in addition to  
5 organizations with a geographic focus, "community  
6 organization" includes general parent organizations,  
7 organizations of special education or bilingual education  
8 parents, and school employee unions.

9 "Developmental classes" means classes in basic skill  
10 areas, such as mathematics and language arts that are  
11 prerequisite to, but not counted towards, degree requirements  
12 of a teacher preparation program.

13 "Dual credit course" has the meaning given to that term  
14 under the Dual Credit Quality Act.

15 "Eligible school" means an early childhood program  
16 licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services in  
17 which no less than 40% of the children it serves are receiving  
18 subsidized care under the Department of Human Services' Child  
19 Care Assistance Program, a Head Start or Early Head Start  
20 Program, a Preschool for All Program, or a prevention  
21 initiative or a public elementary, middle, or secondary school  
22 in this State that serves a substantial percentage of  
23 low-income students and that is either hard to staff or has  
24 hard-to-staff teaching positions.

25 "Hard-to-staff school" means an early childhood program  
26 licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services in

1 which no less than 40% of the children it serves are receiving  
2 subsidized care under the Department of Human Services' Child  
3 Care Assistance Program, a Head Start or Early Head Start  
4 Program, a Preschool for All Program, or a prevention  
5 initiative or a public elementary, middle, or secondary school  
6 in this State that, based on data compiled by the State Board  
7 of Education in conjunction with the Board of Higher  
8 Education, serves a substantial percentage of low-income  
9 students, as defined by the Board of Higher Education.

10 "Hard-to-staff teaching position" means a teaching  
11 category (such as special education, bilingual education,  
12 mathematics, or science) in which statewide data compiled by  
13 the State Board of Education in conjunction with the Board of  
14 Higher Education indicates a multi-year pattern of substantial  
15 teacher shortage or that has been identified as a critical  
16 need by the local school board.

17 "Initiative" means the Grow Your Own Teacher Education  
18 Initiative created under this Act.

19 "Para educator" means an individual with a history of  
20 demonstrated accomplishments in school staff positions (such  
21 as teacher assistants, school-community liaisons, school  
22 clerks, and security aides) in schools that meet the  
23 definition of a hard-to-staff school under this Section.

24 "Parent and community leader" means an individual who has  
25 or had a child enrolled in a school or schools that meet the  
26 definition of a hard-to-staff school under this Section and

1 who has a history of active involvement in the school or who  
2 has a history of working to improve schools serving a  
3 substantial percentage of low-income students, including  
4 membership in a community organization.

5 "Program" means a Grow Your Own Teacher preparation  
6 program established by a consortium under this Act.

7 "Schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income  
8 students" means schools that maintain any of grades  
9 pre-kindergarten through 8, in which at least 35% of the  
10 students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches  
11 and schools that maintain any of grades 9 through 12, in which  
12 at least 25% of the students are eligible to receive free or  
13 reduced price lunches.

14 (Source: P.A. 101-122, eff. 7-26-19.)

15 (110 ILCS 48/13-1 new)

16 Sec. 13-1. Transfer of powers and duties to the Illinois  
17 Student Assistance Commission. On July 1, 2024, all powers and  
18 duties of the Board of Higher Education under this Act are to  
19 be transferred to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.  
20 The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student  
21 Assistance Commission shall assist in transferring these  
22 duties; however, no rules shall be adopted regarding candidate  
23 eligibility that are more restrictive than Section 20.

24 (110 ILCS 48/20)

1           Sec. 20. Selection of grantees. The Commission ~~Board of~~  
2 ~~Higher Education~~ shall, subject to appropriation, allocate  
3 funds to Grow Your Own Illinois for the purpose of  
4 administering the program and awarding grants as needed to  
5 qualified consortia that reflect the distribution and  
6 diversity of hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-staff positions  
7 across this State. In awarding grants, Grow Your Own Illinois  
8 shall select programs that successfully address Initiative  
9 criteria and that reflect a diversity of strategies in terms  
10 of serving urban areas, serving rural areas, the nature of the  
11 participating institutions of higher education, and the nature  
12 of hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-staff teaching positions  
13 on which a program is focused.

14           Grow Your Own Illinois shall select, manage, and oversee  
15 consortia that meet the following requirements:

16           (1) A consortium shall be composed of at least one  
17 4-year institution of higher education with an Illinois  
18 approved teacher preparation program, at least one school  
19 district or group of schools, and one or more community  
20 organizations. The consortium membership may also include  
21 a 2-year institution of higher education, a school  
22 employee union, or a regional office of education.

23           (2) The 4-year institution of higher education  
24 participating in the consortium shall have past,  
25 demonstrated success in preparing teachers for elementary  
26 or secondary schools serving a substantial percentage of

1 low-income students.

2 (3) The consortium shall focus on a clearly defined  
3 set of eligible schools that will participate in the  
4 program. The consortium shall articulate the steps that it  
5 will carry out in preparing teachers for its participating  
6 schools and in preparing teachers for one or more  
7 hard-to-staff teaching positions in those schools.

8 (4) The consortium shall recruit potential candidates  
9 for the program and shall take into consideration when  
10 selecting a candidate whether the candidate:

11 (A) holds a high school diploma or its equivalent  
12 or is a high school student enrolled in a dual credit  
13 course offered by a participating institution of  
14 higher education;

15 (B) meets either the definition of "parent and  
16 community leader" or the definition of "para educator"  
17 contained in Section 10 of this Act;

18 (C) (blank);

19 (D) exhibits a willingness to be a teacher in a  
20 hard-to-staff school with the goal of maintaining  
21 academic excellence;

22 (E) shows an interest in postsecondary education  
23 and may hold an associate's degree, a bachelor's  
24 degree, or another postsecondary degree, but a  
25 postsecondary education is not required;

26 (F) is a parent, a para educator, a community

1 leader, or any other individual from a community with  
2 a hard-to-staff school;

3 (G) commits to completing and passing all State  
4 standards, including the licensure test to obtain an  
5 educator license;

6 (H) shows a willingness to set high standards of  
7 performance for himself or herself and students; and

8 (I) demonstrates commitment to the program by:

9 (i) maintaining a cumulative grade point  
10 average of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (or the  
11 equivalent as determined by the Board of Higher  
12 Education);

13 (ii) attending monthly cohort meetings; and

14 (iii) applying for financial aid from all  
15 other financial aid resources before applying for  
16 assistance from the program.

17 (5) The consortium shall employ effective procedures  
18 for teaching the skills and knowledge needed to prepare  
19 highly competent teachers. Professional preparation shall  
20 include on-going direct experience in target schools and  
21 evaluation of this experience.

22 (6) The consortium shall offer the program to cohorts  
23 of candidates, as defined in Section 10 of this Act, on a  
24 schedule that enables candidates to work full time while  
25 participating in the program and allows para educators to  
26 continue in their current positions. In any fiscal year in



1           which an appropriation for the Initiative is made, the  
2           consortium shall guarantee that support will be available  
3           to an admitted cohort for the cohort's education for that  
4           fiscal year. At the beginning of the Initiative, programs  
5           that are already operating and existing cohorts of  
6           candidates under this model shall be eligible for funding.

7           (7) The institutions of higher education participating  
8           in the consortium shall document and agree to expend the  
9           same amount of funds in implementing the program that  
10          these institutions spend per student on similar  
11          educational programs. Grants received by the consortium  
12          shall supplement and not supplant these amounts.

13          (8) Grow Your Own Illinois shall establish and oversee  
14          additional criteria for review of proposals, including  
15          criteria that address the following issues:

16                 (A) Previous experience of the institutions of  
17                 higher education in preparing candidates for  
18                 hard-to-staff schools and positions and in working  
19                 with students with non-traditional backgrounds.

20                 (B) The quality of the implementation plan,  
21                 including strategies for overcoming institutional  
22                 barriers to the progress of non-traditional  
23                 candidates.

24                 (C) If a community college is a participant, the  
25                 nature and extent of existing articulation agreements  
26                 and guarantees between the community college and the

1 4-year institution of higher education.

2 (D) The number of candidates to be educated in the  
3 planned cohort or cohorts and the capacity of the  
4 consortium for adding cohorts in future cycles.

5 (E) Experience of the community organization or  
6 organizations in organizing parents and community  
7 leaders to achieve school improvement and a strong  
8 relational school culture.

9 (F) The qualifications of the person or persons  
10 designated by the 4-year institution of higher  
11 education to be responsible for cohort support and the  
12 development of a shared learning and social  
13 environment among candidates.

14 (G) The consortium's plan for collective  
15 consortium decision-making, involving all consortium  
16 members, including mechanisms for candidate input.

17 (H) The consortium's plan for direct impact of the  
18 program on the quality of education in the eligible  
19 schools.

20 (I) The relevance of the curriculum to the needs  
21 of the eligible schools and positions, and the use in  
22 curriculum and instructional planning of principles  
23 for effective education for adults.

24 (J) The availability of classes under the program  
25 in places and times accessible to the candidates.

26 (K) Provision of a level of performance to be

1 maintained by candidates as a condition of continuing  
2 in the program.

3 (L) The plan of the 4-year institution of higher  
4 education to ensure that candidates take advantage of  
5 existing financial aid resources before using the loan  
6 funds described in Section 25 of this Act.

7 (M) The availability of supportive services,  
8 including, but not limited to, counseling, tutoring,  
9 transportation, technology and technology support, and  
10 child care.

11 (N) A plan for continued participation of  
12 graduates of the program in a program of support for at  
13 least 2 years, including mentoring and group meetings.

14 (O) A plan for testing and qualitative evaluation  
15 of candidates' teaching skills that ensures that  
16 graduates of the program are as prepared for teaching  
17 as other individuals completing the institution of  
18 higher education's preparation program for the  
19 certificate sought.

20 (P) A plan for internal evaluation that provides  
21 reports at least yearly on the progress of candidates  
22 towards graduation and the impact of the program on  
23 the target schools and their communities.

24 (Q) Contributions from schools, school districts,  
25 and other consortia members to the program, including  
26 stipends for candidates during their student teaching.

1           (R) Consortium commitment for sustaining the  
2 program over time, as evidenced by plans for reduced  
3 requirements for external funding, in subsequent  
4 cycles.

5           (S) The inclusion in the planned program of  
6 strategies derived from community organizing that will  
7 help candidates develop tools for working with parents  
8 and other community members.

9           Subject to the requirements under the Dual Credit Quality  
10 Act, a participating institution of higher education may offer  
11 a high school student a dual credit course under the program.

12           The Board of Higher Education may not adopt rules  
13 regarding candidate eligibility that are more restrictive than  
14 this Section.

15           (Source: P.A. 101-122, eff. 7-26-19.)

16           (110 ILCS 48/35)

17           Sec. 35. Annual ~~Independent~~ program evaluation.

18           (a) Annually, at a time determined by the Commission in  
19 consultation with Grow Your Own Illinois (GYO-IL), GYO-IL  
20 shall submit a report to assist the Commission in monitoring  
21 GYO-IL's, and each of its participating consortia, performance  
22 and grant activities. The report shall describe the following:

23           (1) GYO-IL's anticipated expenditures for the next  
24 fiscal year;

25           (2) the number of qualified students receiving grant

1 assistance at each institution of higher learning during  
2 the previous fiscal year;

3 (3) the total monetary value of grant funds paid to  
4 each institution of higher learning at which a qualified  
5 student was enrolled during the previous fiscal year;

6 (4) the number of grant recipients who completed a  
7 baccalaureate degree during the previous fiscal year;

8 (5) the number of grant recipients who fulfilled their  
9 teaching obligation by completing 5 years of service in  
10 hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching positions  
11 during the previous fiscal year;

12 (6) the number of grant recipients who failed to  
13 fulfill their teaching obligation during the previous  
14 fiscal year;

15 (7) the number of grant recipients granted a waiver or  
16 deferral to waive the 5 years of service requirement  
17 described in subsection (a) of Section 25 during the  
18 previous fiscal year; and

19 (8) other information that the Commission may  
20 reasonably request.

21 (b) The Commission may elect to contract for an  
22 independent evaluation of program implementation with an  
23 outside entity if the Commission so chooses. The independent  
24 evaluation must consider and collect all of the information  
25 outlined in this Section.

26 (c) The Auditor General shall prepare an annual audit of

1 the operations and finances of the Grow Your Own Illinois and  
2 each consortium that received any State funds in the previous  
3 fiscal year. This audit shall be provided to the Governor, the  
4 General Assembly, and the Commission.

5 ~~The Board of Higher Education shall contract for an~~  
6 ~~independent evaluation of program implementation by each of~~  
7 ~~its participating consortia and of the impact of each program,~~  
8 ~~including the extent of candidate persistence in program~~  
9 ~~enrollment, acceptance as an education major in a 4 year~~  
10 ~~institution of higher education, completion of a bachelor's~~  
11 ~~degree in teaching, obtaining a teaching position in a target~~  
12 ~~school or similar school, subsequent effectiveness as a~~  
13 ~~teacher, and persistence in teaching in a target school or~~  
14 ~~similar school. The evaluation shall assess the Initiative's~~  
15 ~~overall effectiveness and shall identify particular program~~  
16 ~~strategies that are especially effective.~~

17 (Source: P.A. 98-1036, eff. 1-1-15.)

18 (110 ILCS 48/90)

19 Sec. 90. Rules. The Commission ~~Board of Higher Education~~  
20 may adopt any rules necessary to carry out its  
21 responsibilities under this Act.

22 (Source: P.A. 98-1036, eff. 1-1-15.)

23 (110 ILCS 48/13 rep.)

24 Section 10. The Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act is

1 amended by repealing Section 13.

2 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
3 becoming law.