

1 AN ACT in relation to education.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Grow  
5 Our Own Teacher Education Act.

6 Section 5. Purpose. The Grow Our Own Teacher preparation  
7 programs established under this Act shall comprise a major new  
8 statewide initiative, known as the Grow Our Own Teacher  
9 Education Initiative, to prepare highly skilled, committed  
10 teachers who will teach in hard-to-staff schools and  
11 hard-to-staff teaching positions and who will remain in these  
12 schools for substantial periods of time.

13 The Grow Our Own Teacher Education Initiative shall  
14 effectively recruit and prepare parent and community leaders  
15 and paraeducators to become effective teachers and teacher  
16 leaders statewide in hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-staff  
17 teaching positions in schools serving a substantial percentage  
18 of low-income students. Further, the Initiative shall increase  
19 the diversity of teachers, including diversity based on race,  
20 ethnicity, and disability.

21 The Grow Our Own Teacher Education Initiative shall ensure  
22 educational rigor by effectively preparing students in  
23 accredited bachelor's degree programs in teaching, through  
24 which graduates shall meet the requirements to secure an  
25 Illinois standard teaching certificate.

26 The goal of the Grow Our Own Teacher Education Initiative  
27 is to add 1,000 teachers to low-income and other hard-to-staff  
28 Illinois schools by 2016 with an average retention period of 7  
29 years, as opposed to the current rate of 2.5 years for new  
30 teachers in such areas.

31 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

1 "Accredited teacher preparation program" means a State or  
2 regionally accredited higher education program authorized to  
3 prepare individuals to fulfill all of the requirements to  
4 receive an Illinois standard teaching certificate.

5 "Hard-to-staff school" means an elementary or secondary  
6 school that, based on data compiled by the State Board of  
7 Education, ranks in the upper third of schools in this State on  
8 a combined index measuring the percentage of the school's  
9 teachers who are not fully certified and the percentage of the  
10 school's teachers who leave their positions annually.

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

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

19 "Paraeducators" means individuals 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 serving a substantial  
23 percentage of low-income students.

24 "Parent and community leaders" means individuals with a  
25 significant history of involvement in improving schools  
26 serving a substantial percentage of low-income students,  
27 including membership in a community organization.

28 "Community organization" means a nonprofit organization  
29 that has a demonstrated capacity to train, develop, and  
30 organize parents and community leaders into a constituency that  
31 will hold the school and the school district accountable for  
32 achieving high academic standards; in addition to  
33 organizations with a geographic focus, "community  
34 organization" includes general parent organizations,  
35 organizations of special education or bilingual education  
36 parents, and school employee unions.

1 "Program" means a Grow Our Own Teacher preparation program  
2 established by a consortium under this Act.

3 "Schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income  
4 students" means schools whose percentage of students receiving  
5 free or reduced-price lunches is at or above the  
6 district-average percentage.

7 "State Board" means the State Board of Education.

8 Section 15. Creation of Initiative. The Grow Our Own  
9 Teacher Education Initiative is created. The State Board shall  
10 administer the Initiative as a grant competition to fund  
11 consortia that will carry out Grow Our Own Teacher preparation  
12 programs.

13 Section 20. Selection of grantees. The State Board shall  
14 award grants to up to 10 qualified consortia that reflect the  
15 distribution and diversity of target hard-to-staff schools  
16 across this State. In awarding grants, the State Board shall  
17 select programs that successfully address Initiative criteria  
18 and that reflect a diversity of strategies in terms of serving  
19 urban areas, serving rural areas, the nature of the  
20 participating institutions of higher education, whether  
21 participants will be trained at the baccalaureate or master's  
22 level, and the nature of hard-to-staff teaching positions on  
23 which a program is focused.

24 The State Board shall select consortia that meet the  
25 following requirements:

26 (1) A consortium shall be composed of at least one  
27 4-year institution of higher education with an accredited  
28 teacher preparation program, at least one school district  
29 or group of schools, and one or more community  
30 organizations. The consortium may also include a 2-year  
31 institution of higher education or a school employee union  
32 or both.

33 (2) The 4-year institution of higher education  
34 participating in the consortium shall have past,

1 demonstrated success in preparing teachers for elementary  
2 or secondary schools serving a substantial percentage of  
3 low-income students.

4 (3) The consortium shall focus on a clearly defined set  
5 of target schools serving a substantial percentage of  
6 low-income students that will be the primary focus of the  
7 program. The consortium shall articulate the steps that it  
8 will carry out in preparing teachers for its target  
9 hard-to-staff schools and in preparing teachers for one or  
10 more hard-to-staff teaching positions in its target  
11 schools.

12 (4) Student participants in a program under the  
13 Initiative must hold a high school diploma or its  
14 equivalent and must meet either the definition of "parent  
15 and community leaders" or the definition of  
16 "paraeducators" contained in Section 10 of this Act.

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

22 (6) The consortium shall offer the program to cohorts  
23 of students who begin by moving through the program  
24 together. The program shall be offered on a schedule that  
25 enables students to work full time while participating in  
26 the program and allows paraeducators to continue in their  
27 current positions. The consortium shall guarantee that  
28 support will be available to an admitted cohort through the  
29 cohort's full period of training. At the beginning of the  
30 Initiative, programs that are already operating and  
31 existing cohorts of students under this model shall be  
32 eligible for funding.

33 (7) The institutions of higher education participating  
34 in the consortium shall document and agree to expend the  
35 same amount of funds in implementing the program that these  
36 institutions spend per student on similar educational

1 programs. Grants received by the consortium shall  
2 supplement and not supplant these amounts.

3 (8) The State Board shall establish additional  
4 criteria for review of proposals, including criteria that  
5 address the following issues:

6 (A) Previous experience of the institutions of  
7 higher education in preparing students for  
8 hard-to-staff schools and positions and in working  
9 with students with non-traditional backgrounds.

10 (B) The quality of the implementation plan,  
11 including strategies for overcoming institutional  
12 barriers to the progress of non-traditional students.

13 (C) If a community college is a participant, the  
14 nature and extent of existing articulation agreements  
15 and guarantees between the community college and the  
16 4-year institution of higher education.

17 (D) The number of participants to be trained in the  
18 current cohort or cohorts and the capacity of the  
19 consortium for adding cohorts in future cycles.

20 (E) Experience of the community organization or  
21 organizations in organizing parents and community  
22 leaders to achieve school improvement and a strong  
23 relational school culture.

24 (F) The qualifications of the person or persons  
25 designated by the 4-year institution of higher  
26 education to be responsible for cohort support and the  
27 development of a shared learning and social  
28 environment among participants.

29 (G) The consortium's plan for collective  
30 consortium decision-making, including mechanisms for  
31 community and participant input.

32 (H) The consortium's plan for direct impact of the  
33 program on the quality of education in the target  
34 schools.

35 (I) The relevance of the curriculum to the needs of  
36 targeted schools and positions, and the use in

1 curriculum and instructional planning of principles  
2 for effective adult education.

3 (J) The availability of classes under the program  
4 in places and times accessible to the participants.

5 (K) Provision of a level of performance to be  
6 maintained by participants as a condition of  
7 continuing in the program.

8 (L) The plan of the 4-year institution of higher  
9 education to ensure that students take advantage of  
10 existing financial aid resources before using the loan  
11 funds described in Section 25 of this Act.

12 (M) The availability of supportive services,  
13 including counseling, tutoring, and child care.

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

17 (O) A plan for testing and qualitative evaluation  
18 of participants' teaching skills that ensures that  
19 graduates of the program are as prepared for teaching  
20 as those from the conventional teacher training  
21 program of the 4-year institution of higher education.

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

26 (Q) Contributions from schools, school districts,  
27 and other consortia members to the program, including  
28 stipends for participants during their student  
29 teaching.

30 (R) Consortium commitment for sustaining the  
31 program over time, as evidenced by plans for reduced  
32 requirements for external funding in subsequent  
33 cycles.

34 Section 25. Expenditures under the Initiative.

35 (a) Every program under the Initiative shall implement and

1 manage a program of forgivable loans to cover any portion of  
2 tuition and direct expenses of students under the program in  
3 excess of grants-in-aid and other forgivable loans received.  
4 All students admitted to a cohort shall be eligible for such  
5 loans. Loans shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes 5  
6 years of service in a hard-to-staff school or hard-to-staff  
7 teaching position.

8 (b) Grants under the Initiative shall be awarded in such a  
9 way as to provide the required support for a cohort of students  
10 for the cohort's entire training period. Program budgets must  
11 show expenditures for the entire period that participants are  
12 expected to be enrolled.

13 (c) No funds under the Initiative may be used to supplant  
14 the average per-capita expenditures by the institution of  
15 higher education for students in regular education degree  
16 programs.

17 (d) Where necessary, program budgets shall include the  
18 costs of child care to permit parents to maintain a full class  
19 schedule. Child care may be provided by the community  
20 organization or organizations or be independently contracted  
21 for.

22 (e) The institution of higher education may expend grant  
23 funds to cover the salary of a site-based cohort coordinator  
24 and the additional costs of offering classes in community  
25 settings and for tutoring services.

26 (f) The community organization or organizations may  
27 receive a portion of the grant money for the expenses of  
28 recruitment, community orientation, and counseling of  
29 potential participants, for providing space in the community,  
30 and for working with school personnel to facilitate individual  
31 work experiences and support of participants.

32 (g) The school district or school employee union or both  
33 may receive a portion of the grant money for expenses of  
34 supporting the work experiences of participants and providing  
35 mentors for graduates.

1           Section 30. Implementation of Initiative. The State Board  
2 shall develop guidelines and application procedures for the  
3 Initiative in fiscal year 2005. The State Board may, if it  
4 chooses, award a small number of planning grants during fiscal  
5 year 2005 to potential consortia using existing resources. The  
6 first programs under the Initiative shall be awarded grants in  
7 such a way as to allow participants to begin their work at the  
8 beginning of the 2005-2006 school year.

9           Section 35. Independent program evaluation. The State  
10 Board shall contract for an independent evaluation of program  
11 implementation by each of its participating consortia and of  
12 the impact of each program, including the extent of student  
13 persistence in program enrollment, acceptance as an education  
14 major in a 4-year institution of higher education, completion  
15 of a bachelor's degree in teaching, obtaining a teaching  
16 position in a target school or similar school, subsequent  
17 effectiveness as a teacher, and persistence in teaching in a  
18 target school or similar school. The evaluation shall assess  
19 the Initiative's overall effectiveness and shall identify  
20 particular program strategies that are especially effective.

21           Section 40. Funding. Funding of the Initiative is subject  
22 to appropriation.

23           Section 90. Rules. The State Board may adopt any rules  
24 necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this Act.

25           Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January  
26 1, 2005.