Illinois Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative:
2011-2012 Policy and Program Recommendations

Prepared for Illinois Board of Higher Education by

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Executive Summary

The Illinois Grow Your Own (GYO) Teacher Education Initiative is a consortium of partnerships between colleges of education, public schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations that recruit and develop a pipeline of community-based teachers who come from the community in which they will one day teach. The focus of Illinois GYO, according to the Illinois Grow Your Own Teacher Act, IL P.A. 93-802 of 2005, is to prepare highly skilled, committed teachers who will teach in hard-to-staff schools in hard-to-staff teaching positions and who will remain in these schools for substantial periods of time. The Illinois GYO initiative began with Chicago’s Logan Square Neighborhood Association through a U.S. Department of Education grant. From this beginning, the statewide initiative evolved through legislation passed in 2004 into the current statewide initiative. At one point including 16 GYO consortia statewide, there are currently 12 active consortium preparing 247 GYO teacher education candidates. To date, there are 68 GYO graduates, and another 71 candidates who have been admitted to Colleges of Education for teacher preparation.

The Center for the Study of Education Policy (CSEP) at Illinois State University has had a contract with Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) since August 2010 to serve as the statewide evaluation arm of the GYO initiative. In the initial year of the evaluation, CSEP’s evaluation work primarily focused on better understanding the statewide GYO program and the individual consortia. The final report from last year’s evaluation can be found at: http://www.ibhe.org/grants/grantprg/GYO.htm Case studies for each of the consortia were also completed to gain a better understanding of the uniqueness and complexity of each GYO consortium. This year’s work – which occurred over a period extending from October 2011 through October 2012 – has probed deeper into case-specific research questions designed to help IBHE, GYO Illinois, and the individual consortia make decisions that will strengthen the GYO program overall.

Based on the data presented in this formative evaluation report, several program and policy recommendations are made, which have been designed to help GYO projects and the GYO initiative statewide to meet its challenges with matriculating candidates through the program and assuring teacher placement and effectiveness.

GYO Consortia Program Recommendations

1. Amend GYO statute to change the eligibility criteria to allow recent high school graduates into the GYO program.
2. Amend the GYO statute to allow GYO funding for master’s degree programs (e.g. Masters of Art in Teaching).
3. Establish an IBHE policy that requires all IL GYO consortia to adopt a standardized candidate selection tool to serve as the foundation for recruitment, but will also allow individual consortia to add additional requirements specific to their local needs.
4. Establish an IBHE policy that requires all future GYO applicants to be screened, interviewed, and selected by a committee that is made of up of representatives of all of the GYO consortia partners.
5. Establish an IBHE policy that encourages partner school districts to place paraprofessional GYO candidates in the schools where they are employed during student teaching and explores strategies that can be taken by the district and university to ease hardships of candidates during their student teaching.

6. Establish an IBHE policy that includes specific criteria for the selection of the supervising teacher for GYO candidates during student teaching and stipulates minimum requirements for communication and feedback between the candidate, clinical supervisor, and the supervising teacher.

7. Establish an IBHE policy that encourages partner school districts to reserve a specified number of positions for GYO candidates upon completion of the program.

8. Establish an IBHE policy that requires GYO consortia to convene a committee of its partners that will collect data on and provide feedback and support to GYO graduates in their first years of teaching. Data will then be used to inform the program improvement process.

These policy recommendations were generated by CSEP staff and were triangulated by Delphi survey responses, a GYO candidate survey, and IBHE candidate data. Ultimately, these policy recommendations push for change in recruitment strategies, eligibility criteria, and school district relationships. Candidate retention and progress emerged as a very significant challenge to GYO Illinois. Despite a tremendous investment in the non-traditional pool of candidates, attrition rates have remained very high. In light of the significant reductions in funding (and consequent reductions to student supportive services), candidates will no longer receive the level of support previously available to them. This means programs and candidates will be expected to do more with less. Diversifying the pool of potential GYO candidates to include recent high school graduates and people who hold a bachelor’s degree in a non-education field and engaging all GYO consortia partners in recruitment decisions and evaluative feedback will strengthen the viability of teacher candidates and the partners’ commitment to them. These recommendations are intended to strengthen GYO Illinois as an effective and significant diverse teacher pipeline.
Overview of 2011-2012 Final Report

CSEP staff have worked with IBHE since 2003 as the statewide evaluators of the Illinois Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grant Program. The meta-evaluation methodology and designs used for (ITQ) evaluation received recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as an exemplary practice model for capacity building among grant-funded projects in the IBHE portfolio. CSEP has employed the same research designs for the evaluation of the Illinois GYO initiative that has been utilized since 2003 with the ITQ partnership sites. The methodology used by CSEP for GYO and ITQ initiatives employs evaluation capacity building strategies through a formative evaluation process.

This is reported in two ways. First, individual case studies compiled through site visits and revised in collaboration with project leaders and constituents were prepared. The individual case studies will not be made public but rather shared by the IBHE with the project directors around the state for use in program improvement. Second, this report, *Illinois Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative: Formative Evaluation and Preliminary Recommendations*, presents the findings by CSEP from the formative evaluation of the Illinois GYO initiative and individual GYO consortia. An overview and background of Illinois GYO, evaluation research designs and methods used are presented, followed by a review of relevant literature, data summary of project accomplishments, and cross case analysis from the GYO Illinois Teacher Education Initiative Database. New this year, staff issued two surveys - a Delphi survey and a GYO candidate survey in their collection of data. The results of both surveys are presented in the report. The report concludes with policy recommendations.

**Evaluation and Evaluation Capacity Building in Illinois Grow Your Own Consortia**

For the 2011-2012 year, CSEP staff continued their systematic investigation of the 12 statewide GYO consortia that were awarded funding by IBHE for the 2013 fiscal year. Last year’s site visits were conducted mainly for the purpose of understanding each consortia and to make initial recommendations regarding program improvement (Figure 1 shows the CSEP GYO Evaluation Logic Model). This occurred through the development of individual case studies on each of the consortia and cross case summaries (using statewide and site visit data and documents). This year, site visits explored more statewide-specific research questions and updates were made to last year’s case studies with the additional data collected. CSEP staff also conducted two surveys – a GYO candidate survey issued to all active GYO candidates and a GYO Delphi survey issued to GYO project partners.
The next stage in the evaluation focused individually and collectively on GYO consortia to investigate what was working and not working with their GYO cohorts and what policy and program changes should occur to assist with strategies not working. This report will do this by presenting a literature review of the policy context around recruiting and retaining diverse teachers. Following that, the report presents an overview of Illinois GYO through the cross case analysis of the GYO individual consortia and using the IBHE database. Next, the results of the GYO candidate survey and Delphi survey are presented. Lastly, the report concludes with policy and program recommendations for strengthening the GYO pipeline in Illinois based on the data collected for this report.

The Importance of Diverse Teacher Pipelines In a Policy Context

The changing demographic makeup of Illinois’ public schools assures the need now more than ever for the state to be successful at recruiting, placing, and retaining a greater number of
effective teachers of color in our schools. With a rapidly changing demographic makeup of public schools students in Illinois and across the country, addressing the “teacher diversity gap” in public schools has generated widespread interest and concern. In the fall of 2010, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, expressed his concern that “increasingly, our teachers don’t reflect the great diversity of our nation’s young people, and so making sure we have more teachers of color . . . coming into education is going to be significant.” Duncan’s comment reflects an almost two-decade long effort to increase the number of teachers of color in our schools. To that end, by 2005, 36 states had enacted minority teacher recruitment policies, including early recruitment programs, paraprofessional-to-teacher programs, two- and four-year college partnerships, and alternative certification programs (Villegas, 2008; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Raising attention to this issue is the widening demographic gap between teachers and their students. Over the next ten years, the national student body will no longer have a clear racial or ethnic majority (Frey, 2011). This trend is foreshadowed by recent U.S. Census Bureau data that reported 49.9 percent of all three-year-olds are white (Fulwood, 2011). Nationally, people of color represent 46 percent of the student population in public schools, but only 17 percent of public school teachers are people of color.

Within Illinois, white students account for slightly over half of the student population, at 51 percent. African American, Latino, and Asian students account for 18 percent, 23 percent, and 4 percent of the student population, respectively (ISBE, 2011). Among the Illinois teacher workforce, 82 percent of teachers are white, 6 percent are African American, and 5 percent are Latino (ibid.). According to a 2011 report, Teacher Diversity Matters, published by the Center for American Progress, Illinois was ranked among the lowest—48th—in the state teacher diversity index (Boser, 2011). Despite concerted efforts to promote teacher diversity, Illinois’s teacher workforce has not kept pace with the rapid demographic transformation among the state’s students, and as a result it has one of the highest teacher diversity gaps in the country.

Increasing the diverse teacher pipeline in Illinois is a policy priority for the state for two main reasons:

**Reason One: Students Perform Better With Teachers Who Share Cultural Backgrounds.**

Teachers who share similar cultural backgrounds/contexts with their students and align their teaching and texts to these backgrounds more effectively engage students in the classroom. Villegas & Irvine (2010) have identified five practices that promote academic outcomes among same-race teachers: (a) having high expectations of students; (b) using culturally relevant teaching; (c) developing caring and trusting relationships with students; (d) confronting issues of racism. In a meta-analysis of outcomes-based research, Villegas & Irvine (2010) also summarized the types of benefits resulting from these practices.

Studies have found that racial pairing of teachers and students significantly increased the reading and math achievement scores of African American students by three to four percentage points (Dee, 2004). The race effects were especially strong among poor African American students in racially segregated schools. Similar effects were reported of same-race teachers on student
performance that found that Hispanic fourth and sixth graders taught by Hispanic teachers had significantly higher test score gains in math than those taught by racially-dissimilar teachers (Clewell, 2005). The same effect was noted in reading, but only at the fourth grade level. The effects for Black students with Black teachers were somewhat weaker, although Black fourth graders had significantly higher score gains in mathematics when taught by a same-race teacher (ibid.). Finally, students of color had a significantly higher passing rate for high school graduation exams in school districts where the racial/ethnic distribution of the teaching population approximated that of the student population (Pitts, 2007).

**Reason Two: Schools and students do better with stability of teaching staff.**

High rates of teacher attrition are a major impediment to school stability and student achievement; and the effects of teacher turnover are most acutely felt in America’s hard-to-staff schools. Nationally, teacher attrition is estimated at 30 percent in the first three years, and that number increases to 50 percent for teachers in their first five years of teaching (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007).

High teacher turnover is detrimental to school stability in that it undermines fundamental organizational aspects of schools; namely, the structural, relational, cognitive, and intellectual components that form the foundation of well-functioning schools (Holme & Rangel, 2011). A large body of education scholarship has documented the harmful effect of teacher attrition on school stability and student performance (e.g. Allensworth et al., 2009; Fuller & Young, 2009; Clotfelter et al., 2006). The schools most vulnerable to teacher and leadership turnover are the most socially and economically disadvantaged (i.e. low-income, non-White, older facilities, low performing). Research indicates that higher rates of teacher turnover are associated with higher proportions of low-income students and students of color (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

The vacancies resulting from teacher attrition in hard-to-staff schools are oftentimes filled on a temporary and revolving basis (either through direct district hiring or by national recruitment services), which recruit teachers most likely to exit the teaching profession within three to five years (i.e. inexperienced and underprepared teachers in the first five years of their teaching careers). Such temporary placements further contribute to the overall destabilization and deterioration of these schools, as they promote continuous attrition among teachers and undermine the organizational integrity of schools. What’s more, for students attending these hard-to-staff schools, and for African American students, in particular, high rates of teacher turnover have a more pronounced negative impact on student performance (Ronfeldt et al., 2011).

Given the increased vulnerability of socially and economically disadvantaged schools to high teacher turnover, combined with the increased vulnerability of students who attend these schools to be severely and negatively impacted by teacher attrition, recruiting teachers who will contribute to the overall stability of hard-to-staff schools is of utmost importance from a policy perspective. Those teachers who have a demonstrated commitment to their communities, especially teachers of color, have significantly lower attrition rates in hard-to-staff schools as compared to their White counterparts (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Sexton, 2010). This is likely due to the fact that teachers tend to leave more distant schools to move to schools closer to the communities where they were raised (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005).
Conversely, teachers of color are more likely to work and remain in hard-to-staff schools compared to their White counterparts, which suggests that the stability and quality of the teacher workforce and school environment in hard-to-staff schools might be enhanced by increasing the number of teachers of color (Achinstein et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, Dilworth, & Bullmaster, 1996; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

**Challenges to Diversifying the Teacher Workforce**

While the advantages of increasing the racial and economic diversity among the teacher corps in Illinois’ schools is apparent, the challenges of recruiting and retaining non-traditional candidates into the teacher profession make this a difficult task. The diverse teacher shortage is the product of many deterrents and barriers that occur along the teacher pipeline. Potential teacher candidates emerging from hard-to-staff schools, themselves, are at an acute disadvantage in pursuing a career in teaching in that the quality and continuity of their own educations were compromised. Because students of color are disproportionately located in hard-to-staff schools, the disenfranchisement and underachievement of students of color in elementary and secondary education has resulted in fewer minority students who matriculate to post-secondary education and lower graduation among those who do (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). High school graduation rates among African American, Latino, and Native American students are very low at 56%, 54%, and 51%, respectively (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2010). The number of African American (56%) and Latino (64%) high school graduates who then matriculate to college is similarly low. The reduced numbers of students of color who successfully complete high school and matriculate to college immediately reduces the pool of potential teacher candidates of color.

However, even among those who do matriculate to college, teacher education is not a widely sought after academic track for students of color. As career and employment options available to minorities have broadened, a shrinking share of this shrinking number of minority college graduates has entered teaching. As an example, a United Negro College Fund (UNCF) study recently reported Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) produce significantly fewer teachers now than in the past due to the expansion of other career opportunities for minority graduates and their own negative encounters with teachers throughout their schooling (Eliot, Terao, Mbyirukira, Marshall-Bradley, & Witty, 2007). Even among those students who choose to pursue a career in education, a lack of academic preparedness oftentimes prevents them from successfully completing teacher education coursework or pass the requisite tests. Students of color are more likely than their white counterparts to have attended poorly funded and staffed schools, which creates greater school instability, poorer instructional quality, and lower student achievement (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Economic exclusion creates a significant barrier for low-income and minority teacher candidates. Low-income students are at a serious disadvantage in accessing post-secondary education. College admissions policies emphasize rigorous coursework, high grade point averages and test scores, and extracurricular activities—expectations that often prove to be unrealistic for low-income students (Reille & Kezar, 2010). Low-income students are more likely to attend schools that do not offer rigorous coursework, like advanced placement courses. Furthermore, economic
constraints make it difficult for low-income students to engage in unpaid extracurricular activities (ibid). According to NCES data in 2007, 55 percent of low-income students attend college; and those who do attend college are more likely to attend part-time, more likely to work part-time, and less likely to complete their degrees (Choy & Carroll, 2003; Wei & Horn, 2009).

Teacher education programs pose particular challenges to low-income students. The cost of tuition, the loss of wages during student teaching, and the fees associated with college applications, tutoring, testing, and fingerprinting effectively bar access to the teaching profession for most low-income people (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Moreover, the costs associated with post-secondary education and the increasing reliance on financial aid packages to cover educational expenses acts as a major deterrent to low-income students choosing a career in a relatively poorly paid profession, like teaching, since many of these students already have considerable financial responsibilities at home (Dilworth, 1990). The costs associated with pursuing a career in teaching are especially prohibitive to people of color. Given that the median asset value of white families is ten times greater than African American or Latino families (Shapiro, Meschede, & Sullivan, 2010), the expenses associated with pursuing a career in teaching act as a serious deterrent to prospective teacher candidates of color (Rogers-Ard, 2012).

The challenge to diversifying the teacher workforce is not exclusively a problem of recruitment, however. Despite the challenges discussed above, the commitment to recruit teachers of color has been successful. There was a 96 percent increase in the number of minority teachers over the past 20 years, compared with a 41 percent increase in white teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Nonetheless, the teacher diversity gap persists across the country and within Illinois. This data suggests the teacher diversity gap may be more closely related to problems in the retention of teachers of color than their recruitment. Recent studies have revealed a “revolving door” through which large numbers of teachers of color leave their jobs before retirement (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Retirement accounts for only 12 percent of turnover among teachers of color nationally (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 2003) concluded that shortages in the teacher workforce were primarily caused by attrition.

To address the teacher diversity gap, close attention must be paid to the experiences of teachers of color, particularly during their first few years in the field. A recent national study revealed that teachers of color suffered greater job dissatisfaction and higher turnover than did White teachers (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). This is due, in large part, to the fact that teachers of color are more likely to be placed in low-income and high-need schools that lack adequate support. Thus, the retention of teachers of color, with a particular focus on new teachers, in conjunction with ongoing recruitment activities, is critical to increasing their representation in the teacher workforce.

**Strategies for Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline**

Clearly, the challenges experienced by non-traditional minority and low-income teacher candidates and early career teachers are monumental, as evidenced by the significant teacher diversity gap that exists nationwide and in Illinois. In an attempt to increase teacher diversity, states have enacted various recruitment strategies to help ameliorate the barriers non-traditional students face in pursuing careers in teaching. In a comprehensive review of policy initiatives
aimed at diversifying the teacher workforce, Villegas (2008) identified four main strategies: (1) targeting middle and high school students to pursue careers in teaching; (2) creating ladder programs for paraprofessionals; (3) ensuring clear and strong articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges; and (4) recruiting individuals from other professions to the teaching field. What follows is a brief description of each of these programs.

(1) Early recruitment programs: These programs identify potential candidates of color in middle or high school and engage them in interventions to create interest in teaching and promote college readiness. These programs entail a partnership between teacher education programs and partnering school districts to bring teacher mentors and organizations, like Future Teachers of America or Future Educators, into schools.

(2) Paraeducator-to-teacher programs: These programs also rely on a strong relationship between teacher education programs and partnering school districts. In this model, paraprofessionals continue their employment with school districts and simultaneously enroll in courses to fulfill the requirements for teaching certification.

(3) Two-year and four-year college partnerships: College partnership programs develop a strong partnership and articulation between two- and four-year education institutions. Because non-traditional, low-income, and minority individuals are more likely to initially matriculate to a two-year institution, dual admissions systems between junior and senior institutions are essential to ensure seamless transition.

(4) Alternative certification programs: These programs recruit individuals who already possess a bachelor’s degree in a non-education field, including substitute teachers, retirees, and career changers.

The strategies listed above vary considerably, but they demonstrate the importance of alternative teacher preparation to diversifying the teacher workforce. Alternative preparation programs create pipelines into the teaching profession for non-traditional students that (at least partially) circumvent the many challenges and barriers commonly experienced in traditional teacher preparation programs. Alternative teacher preparation strategies recognize the diverse needs and demands non-traditional students experience. The emphasis in strategies recruiting non-traditional candidates has been to create seamless and swift paths to certification, thereby minimizing the amount of time spent with reduced or foregone wages. This is particularly important to non-traditional students in that they are more likely to have family demands and expenses that make traditional teacher preparation programs unfeasible.

The accommodations and flexibility offered through alternative teacher preparation programs have successfully recruited large numbers of non-traditional teacher candidates. Based on a random multi-state sample of new teachers, research suggests that anywhere between 33 and 48 percent of those currently entering the teaching profession do so from another line of work (Johnson & Kardos, 2005). Teachers of color enter the teaching profession through alternate teacher preparation routes at significantly higher rates than their White counterparts. While only 13 percent of teachers who have entered the profession through traditional teacher preparation programs are people of color, 30 percent of teachers entering through alternative teacher preparation programs are people of color (Feistritzer, Griffin, & Linnajarvi, 2011).
Although alternative teacher preparation has been successful overall in recruiting non-traditional teachers, several models stand out as exemplars. In 2011, the Center for American Progress published an extensive report on *Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce*. In this report, Bireda and Chait (2011) highlight several successful models for diverse teacher pipelines. In what follows, two of these models will be discussed as examples of highly successful strategies for recruiting and retaining non-traditional teachers.

(1) **Teach Tomorrow in Oakland**

Teach Tomorrow in Oakland (TTO) is a partnership between the Oakland, CA Mayor’s Office and the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), with strong collaborative relationships with the community and university partners. TTO’s mission is to “develop a recruiting strategy focused on local, diverse applicants [who are] community members in various stages of the pipeline: high school, college undergraduates, paraprofessionals, community members and student teachers” (TTO website). Through the strong school district partnership, OUSD reserves a specified number of slots each year for TTO candidates, or “teacher interns.” Teacher interns complete their pre-service training at a partnering university from May to July. Following this, they participate in a two-week intensive training in August to help prepare them for classroom experience. Participants then continue their coursework toward certification while teaching.

TTO does not directly pay tuition, but it connects candidates with state and federal grants to offset or cover tuition. TTO supports teacher candidates by paying for all fees associated with becoming a teacher (e.g. fingerprinting and credential fees, etc.), and it offers intensive pre-service and post-placement coaching and support. TTO candidates attend monthly professional development workshops to deepen pedagogical knowledge. TTO participants must teach in OUSD for five years. TTO operates on a combination of federal and state grants (e.g. Transition to Teaching grant), donations, and fundraising activities.

TTO is strongly committed to supporting its candidates and nourishing its partnerships, ensuring all partners’ voices are heard in decision making and planning activities. TTO maintains a very strong commitment to its candidates’ success by employing a screening and evaluation process that engages all TTO stakeholders to ensure candidate selection is a collaborative and sound decision. Candidates within the TTO program receive comprehensive and ongoing support from pre-service academic support through the first few years of teaching. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, TTO has implemented a “360 degree evaluation system” that tracks candidate growth throughout their education and into their first years teaching. TTO candidates are assigned a mentor/coach to promote teacher effectiveness.

TTO is deeply committed to a socially just vision of education. Its emphasis is on building collaborative relationships with its stakeholders, candidates, and community partners. At the beginning of its third year, TTO had placed 43 local and diverse teachers in OUSD.

(2) **Urban Teacher Enhancement**

In 2004, the Urban Teacher Enhancement Program (UTEP) was established to recruit and retain highly-effective teachers in urban schools. UTEP is a partnership between the University of
Alabama at Birmingham and three high-needs school districts in the Birmingham, Alabama metropolitan area. UTEP recruits a variety of non-traditional candidates, including mid-career professionals, recent (non-education) college graduates, paraprofessionals, and other school staff. UTEP is another recipient of the Transition to Teaching Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. These funds are used to pay a portion of participants’ tuition (up to $5,000 per candidate) and pay expenses of mentors and co-teachers. The program takes two to three years for part-time students to complete.

What distinguishes this program is its commitment to preparing teachers to work in hard-to-staff urban schools. UTEP’s curriculum is focused on helping teacher candidates develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to effectively teach in hard-to-staff urban schools. It accomplishes this, in part, through its collaborative approach to teacher education. UTEP coursework is co-taught by university faculty and master teachers from the partnering school districts. In its commitment to prepare teachers for urban classrooms, UTEP curriculum emphasizes competencies in four areas: affirming attitude, socio-cultural competence, collaborative skills, and pedagogy for diversity. As part of the UTEP program, candidates are paired with a mentor after placement within a school to support them in their first few years of teaching.

UTEP has a selective screening process. It only accepts candidates who are already accepted into the Teacher Education Program (for undergraduates) or the Alternate Masters Program or Traditional Masters Program (for graduates). As a program committed to recruiting and retaining non-traditional teachers to fill vacancies in hard-to-staff urban schools, UTEP has been remarkably successful. Ninety percent of UTEP participants successfully complete the program.

**Promising Strategies for Diverse Teacher Pipelines**

The CAP report on diversifying the teacher workforce highlights the fact that there are many ways to construct diverse teacher pipelines; however, the most successful programs employ the following strategies: 1) developing strong collaborative partnerships (with school districts serving as one of the primary partnerships); 2) recruiting a diverse pool of applicants from different points along the pipeline (e.g. recent high school graduates, undergraduates, recent graduates, paraprofessional, career-changers); 3) fostering and assessing highly-effective and culturally relevant teaching capacities; and 4) implementing thorough program evaluation systems to provide information for continuous program improvement. These distinct components of successful diverse teacher pipelines may produce countless and varied permutations. Yet, at their cores, these programs will share a vision for more socially just and efficacious schools that can be sustained for the long-run.

**Illinois Grow Your Own Initiative**

The Illinois Grow Your Own (GYO) Teacher Education Initiative is a consortium of partnerships between colleges of education, public schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations that recruit and develop a pipeline of community-based teachers who come from the community in which they will one day teach. The focus of Illinois GYO, according to the Illinois Grow Your Own Teacher Act, IL P.A. 93-802 of 2005, is to prepare highly skilled,
committed teachers who will teach in hard-to-staff schools in hard-to-staff teaching positions and who will remain in these schools for substantial periods of time.

The Illinois GYO initiative began with Chicago’s Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) through a U.S. Department of Education grant. LSNA piloted the first Grow Your Own teacher initiative through the Nueva Generacion (Next Generation) Teacher Training Program, a partnership between LSNA and Chicago State University that received federal funding from 2000-2005 to support two cohorts with 50 students total.

GYO Illinois was developed to address Illinois’s large teacher diversity gap and high teacher turnover at hard-to-staff schools. Specifically, GYO Illinois was established to meet four education needs within Illinois: (1) create a pipeline of highly effective teachers of color; (2) improve teacher retention in low-income schools; (3) improve cultural competence and community connections of teachers; and (4) improve academic achievement of low-income students. The statewide program evolved through legislation passed in 2004 into the current statewide initiative that serves 247 teacher education candidates in 12 consortium in the state, serving Chicago, the South Suburbs, Southernmost Illinois, East St. Louis, Quad Cities, Rockford, and Springfield.

GYO Illinois is poised to play an important role in diversifying Illinois’ teacher workforce in the coming years. GYO Illinois has successfully graduated 68 candidates from teacher education programs since its inception. Over half of these graduates are teaching on either a full-time or part-time basis. Another 71 candidates have been admitted to colleges of education and are making steady progress toward degree completion.

The Illinois GYO initiative contributes to both the state and national imperatives regarding the need for diverse teaching force in three main ways:

**Reason One: GYO has the potential to help improve Illinois’ diversity index ranking.**

As a diverse teacher pipeline, GYO Illinois can help to address the significant teacher diversity gap that exists in the state. Within Illinois, white students account for slightly over half of the student population, at 51 percent. African American, Latino, and Asian students account for 18 percent, 23 percent, and 4 percent of the student population, respectively (ISBE, 2011). Among the Illinois teacher workforce, 82 percent of teachers are white, 6 percent are African American, and 5 percent are Latino (ibid). Illinois is ranked among the lowest in the nation—48th—in the state teacher diversity index (Boser, 2011). Despite concerted efforts to promote teacher diversity, Illinois’ teacher workforce has not kept pace with the rapid demographic transformation among the state’s students. This means GYO Illinois is poised to fill a very significant need within the state to diversify the teacher workforce.

**Reason Two: GYO teachers reflect the culture of their communities within schools since they come from those communities.**

Improving the overall diversity index is an important goal for equity in Illinois; however, it is important this diversity is also reflective of schools’ families and communities. Research has
consistently demonstrated that students have improved academic outcomes when paired with culturally similar and/or competent teachers. This is, in part, a function of crafting culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum that more effectively engages students. However, research also suggests that teachers of color have markedly higher expectations of students of color than their white counterparts. GYO Illinois serves an important function in ensuring greater alignment among teachers, school, and community culture.

**Reason Three: GYO teachers will remain as teachers in the schools they serve since they come from these communities.**

Teachers typically return to their home (or similar types of) communities to live and work after college. As a teacher pipeline that recruits teacher candidates directly from the communities they will eventually serve, GYO Illinois is ensuring their candidates will directly fill vacancies within their communities. Moreover, GYO IL recruits candidates who are paraprofessionals, non-instructional school staff, and community leaders, which ensures its candidates are deeply invested in their communities and schools.

Ensuring greater diversity among the Illinois teacher workforce, greater performance among low-income students, and greater investment in schools and communities by teachers is extraordinarily important because, ultimately, these contribute to improved learning opportunities for low-income students and students of color. These three components are the foundation of a successful diverse teacher pipeline, and successful pipelines like these improve academic outcomes for students and improve school stability and culture (see literature review section for more). For these reasons, GYO Illinois serves a crucial function to Illinois as a diverse teacher pipeline.

**Where GYO Illinois Is Falling Short**

**Reason One: GYO has the potential to help improve Illinois’ diversity index ranking, but with the high attrition rate, hundreds of candidates have exited out.**

Over half of all candidates (368) recruited into GYO Illinois have exited, 303 of which exited after receiving some type of funding. Almost half of those who exited the program were counseled out, while many others cited family, health, work, or academic reasons for their exit.

The new Basic Skills test or Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) has proven to be a significant challenge to candidate progress and factor in the high attrition rate among candidates. Among those who reported taking the new Basic Skills test, only about 13% have passed all sections. This is consistent with the scholarly literature on non-traditional students and standardized exams that demonstrates non-traditional, low-income, and minority students often perform lower on standardized exams than their white/middle-class counterparts. Given the amount of time they have been away from the classroom, the likelihood that the candidates, themselves, attended hard-to-staff schools in which instructional quality was likely low, and the increased expectations from the Basic Skills test, non-traditional candidates are seriously struggling to pass all components of TAP.

The challenges and demands non-traditional students face in pursuing post-secondary degrees are not merely academic, however. Eighty-five percent of candidates work part-time or full-time.
In addition, over half of active candidates are married, and almost 75% have dependents. Work, life, and family demands create a very challenging environment for non-traditional students pursuing degrees in teaching. To provide the level of support necessary to fully support non-traditional students would require an extraordinary amount of resources; and, in a context of shrinking budgets, this may ultimately prove to be unsustainable.

**Reason Two: GYO teachers reflect the communities in which they serve, though lack of jobs in the certification areas are preventing them from securing permanent full-time positions in those communities.**

Only 38% of teachers are being prepared to teach in hard-to-staff positions through GYO Illinois, despite the explicit goal stated in IL P.A. 93-802 (hard-to-staff positions are defined in statute as Special Education, Bilingual Education, Math, and Science). This is evidenced by the number of GYO graduates who have not secured permanent full-time positions in their community/partnering school districts. Thirty-nine graduates (57%) are teaching on either a full-time, part-time, or substitute basis, meaning slightly less than half are either unemployed or employed, but not in a teaching position. Although this data indicates many graduates are successfully placed in teaching roles, these figures are also troubling given the tremendous investment of time and resources on the part of candidates, as well as GYO Illinois, in graduating candidates and point to the extreme importance of preparing candidates to fill hard-to-staff positions.

**Reason Three: GYO programs are not all targeting the highest need neighborhoods in the state. Some of these neighborhoods do not have high teacher attrition levels.**

Ultimately, GYO Illinois is intended to construct an effective diverse teaching pipeline to bring non-traditional teachers into hard-to-staff positions within hard-to-staff schools. Data show that GYO Illinois is only fulfilling this mandate with marginal success, in part because most GYO IL consortia are not thoroughly tracking teacher attrition. To fully determine the geographic areas in which GYO Illinois may be of most influence, it is very important to conduct a thorough needs assessment at the state-level. Compiling a state-wide needs assessment would help to identify those areas within Illinois most in need of GYO Illinois.

In sum, GYO Illinois is poised to fill a very real and imminent need within the State of Illinois; however, many factors have mitigated its efficacy in doing so. Recruiting and retaining diverse teacher candidates is a challenging task, particularly for non-traditional candidates. To adequately support non-traditional candidates such as those recruited by GYO Illinois requires extraordinary resources. Moreover, because non-traditional students work full- or part-time, they take significantly longer to complete their teacher education programs. Given the high attrition rates among GYO candidates, the reduced budget allocated to GYO Illinois, and the immediacy of Illinois’ need of a highly effective diverse teacher pipeline, GYO Illinois has some fundamental challenges that undermine its efficacy and efficiency.

**Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative: Cross Consortia Summary**

As part of its ongoing evaluative work for GYO Illinois, CSEP staff updated the case studies of the 12 active GYO consortia in Illinois. Staff visited each consortium and asked a series of questions related to changes, challenges, and successes the consortia experienced over the past
year (see Appendix A for interview protocol). Through project site visits, CSEP staff identified several strengths and challenges within the GYO consortia, as well as many important opportunities for strengthening partnerships and helping to resolve ongoing challenges.

(1) Budget Reductions

Many of the consortia reported notable changes that have taken place over the past year. The significant decrease to GYO Illinois funding has been chief among them. The consortia reported serious challenges that have emerged as a result of funding decreases, including loss of student supportive services like child care, transportation, mentoring, and tutoring; loss of personnel; reduced tuition coverage; reductions in funding for books, technology, and other materials; suspended recruitment activity; and low morale.

As a result of the decreases in funding and student supportive services, many consortia reported slowed or stalled candidate progress, as the pool of candidates recruited by GYO Illinois heavily rely on these ancillary services to continue to progress. As candidates have completed their general education coursework and would like to enter into their respective colleges of education, many are stalled on account of their inability to successfully pass the Test of Academic Proficiency. With fewer resources to provide tutoring, test preparation, and pay exam fees, consortia are struggling to usher their candidates through the program.

(2) Strengthening Partnerships

There have been some positive outcomes as a result of the current fiscal situation. Many consortia reported changes in partners, which indicate the consortia continue to strive to integrate the most committed partners into their projects, and many consortia also reported renewed investment in their existing partnerships. Without funding to continue providing many of the needed services previously offered to candidates, consortia have reached out to their partners to help supplement these services through coordination and volunteer work. This is particularly evident in the partnership between consortia and their community college and university partners. Higher education partners are able to offer essential academic services to candidates, such as tutoring and test preparation. Many consortia reported a strengthened relationship with their higher education partners as candidates have come to rely more on opportunities and services offered on campus. Not only does this ensure that GYO consortia are not duplicating services already available to candidates, but some consortia also reported this resulted in greater integration of candidates into campus life at their higher education institution.

Many consortia also reported their relationships with their community-based partners have been bolstered in this climate of fiscal tightening. The role of many community-based organizations has become increasingly relevant and indispensable to the GYO consortia as many consortia reported relying on the volunteer services provided by their CBO partners. Many, but not all, consortia reported their CBOs are offering volunteer tutoring and mentoring services where the consortia cannot afford to compensate for these services.

Site visits revealed that many consortia still need to develop greater investment in their school district partnerships. School districts are key partners to the Grow Your Own Teacher model in
assessing projected vacancies, placing candidates for clinical experiences, and ultimately acting as a consumer in selecting and placing GYO candidates in permanent, full-time positions.

(3) Candidate Recruitment and Selection

Budget tightening has meant that the consortia have had to be more selective in terms of whom they admit to the program. Some consortia have chosen to suspend recruitment activities and invest exclusively in the candidates they have already admitted to the program. Among those who continue to recruit new candidates, most consortia have reported enacting (either formally or informally) more stringent standards for selection. Given that fewer resources are available to candidates to help them overcome obstacles, like the new Basic Skills test, some consortia are focusing on admitting only those candidates who are most likely to be able to pass the Basic Skills test with little remediation and preparation. Many consortia reported their openness to amending eligibility criteria to include candidates who recently graduated from high school or already hold a bachelor’s degree in a non-education field to increase the ease with which they can progress through the program.

Several consortia expressed mixed sentiments about amending the statute to broaden eligibility, as they contend it would undermine the intent of GYO Illinois. As a diverse teacher pipeline designed specifically to recruit non-traditional teacher candidates, they expressed fears that broadening the eligibility criteria would displace the candidate pool the legislation has been intended to serve. Others, however, strongly supported such measures as they are interested in filling vacancies with a diverse candidate pool as quickly as possible, and broadened eligibility would likely expedite the education process.

There was general support among the consortia to adopt a more standardized candidate screening tool, developed by IBHE, but also tailored to the local needs of the consortia. Many consortia reported using such a tool would provide a greater sense of confidence in recruiting new candidates, as a standardized tool would help ensure a minimum level of qualification and thereby promote greater candidate viability. Some consortia cautioned against adopting too stringent a standardized screening tool, however, as it may disqualify candidates who could become excellent teachers.

Regardless of their response to the proposal to amend the statute to broaden eligibility, nearly all consortia have reported adopting a more cautious approach to recruitment, admitting fewer candidates and/or candidates with more credit hours, to ensure limited dollars are invested wisely.

IBHE Candidate Data

In addition to site visits, CSEP staff track the GYO consortia through the candidate database managed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Candidate data is updated quarterly, and provides up-to-date information regarding candidates’ progress through the program. The data available in the IBHE database is invaluable to developing a better understanding of the administration, successes, and challenges of GYO Illinois, both at the policy level and at the level of the individual consortia.
Table 1. Candidate Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Element</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Total 247</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflects active candidates only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90% of all active candidates in the GYO initiative are minorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o African American</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>This aligns with the intended purpose to increase the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>diversity of teachers throughout IL, as stated in IL P.A. 93-802.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o White</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Multiracial/Ethnic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o American Indian/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Am.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Asian Pacific/Islander</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 80% of candidates are under the age of 50, which allows for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Female</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>more years of service to the district prior to retirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 80% of candidates are under the age of 50, which allows for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 20-30</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>more years of service to the district prior to retirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 31-40</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 41-50</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 51 or older</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over ¾ of active candidates have dependents, indicating the need for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Married</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>child care assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Single</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dependents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over ¾ of active candidates have dependents, indicating the need for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o With dependents</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>child care assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o No dependents</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearly 85% of candidates are working full or part time indicating a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Full time</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>need for flexible scheduling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Part time</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Not Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Not Employed-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Parent Volunteer</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Over 95% of candidates have experience working in schools, in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Paraprofessional</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>community or as parent volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Non-Parent Volunteer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Non-Instructional School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Community Leader</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-GYO Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Tables 1, 2, and 3 include data in the aggregate for the current 12 active GYO consortia.
Table 2. Candidate Progress Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Element</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate Program Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The exit rate of candidates leaving the program is high at 44%. This results in a substantial cost for the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exited with funding</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exited without funding</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Graduated</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit Reason</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearly 50% of all candidates that exited the program prior to completion were counseled out. Exploration in this area could improve selection criteria and support services provided to active candidates. A quarter of candidates reported “other” for the reason for their exit. It may be worthwhile to explore this in greater depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Counseled out</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Too difficult</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The high percentage of students enrolled in 4-year programs indicates that students are progressing in the accumulation of credit hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4-year program</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community College</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dual Enrollment</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COE Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>While 65% attend 4-year programs, only 29% percent have been admitted to COEs. This disconnect could be explained by the lower number of students that have passed the TAP test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Admitted to COE</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not yet admitted</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificate Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Only 38% of teachers are being prepared to teach in hard-to-staff positions through GYO, despite the explicit goal stated in IL P.A. 93-802 (hard-to-staff positions are defined in statute as Special Ed, Bilingual Ed, Math and Science).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Education</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Math</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. Lang. Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. Social Science</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. Business Ed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. Career/Tech</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, candidate progress has slowed significantly compared with projected graduation dates from last year’s report; although 40% of active candidates are projected to complete their degrees in the next two academic years.

Over 75% of candidates have earned 21 or more credit hours since admittance to the GYO program, indicating continued advancement through the program; although only 38% have earned 61 or more hours.

There has been a sharp increase in the number of candidates who have taken the new Basic Skills Test (TAP) (from 10% of active candidates to 38%), although few have achieved a passing score on all sections.

85% of those that took the content test achieved a passing score. However, only 10% of the total active candidates have taken the content test.
GYO Illinois Research

To help identify the root causes of the challenges presented in the data, CSEP staffed surveyed GYO candidates as well as GYO consortium partners. The purpose of the candidate survey was to collect data regarding the unique challenges candidates experience in the program to better understand how best to support them and strengthen the diverse teacher pipeline. The purpose of the Delphi survey was to collect data to craft solutions to persistent challenges to GYO Illinois. The description and results of both surveys are detailed below.

Survey of GYO Candidates

As part of the Illinois Grow Your Own Teachers evaluation, CSEP conducted a survey of participants in the GYO program. The survey was designed to collect data regarding participants’ experiences in GYO, including participants’ progress through the program, their utilization of supportive services, their level of community engagement, and common challenges they have experienced. Survey data yielded valuable information regarding the needs of participants and the extent to which these needs are currently being met by the GYO program.

Participant Profile:

The Grow your Own Teachers Program participant survey had 130 respondents from all but one of the Illinois consortia\(^2\). The demographic characteristics of respondents is consistent with IBHE GYO data, with 39% African American respondents, 46% Latino/a respondents, and 12% White respondents. Females accounted for 82% of respondents. The vast majority (79%) of participants live in the neighborhood served by the GYO community-based partners. Participants generally have a strong relationship with their neighborhood schools, with 82% of participants reporting they have either worked or volunteered in their neighborhood school and 51% reporting having a child who attended a school in the neighborhood served by their community based organization.

Participant Progress:

On the whole, participants’ responses suggest slow and steady progress through the program. Almost all participants (94%) have been enrolled for six years or less. Eighty percent of participants have been continuously enrolled in coursework leading to teacher certification since entering the GYO program, and over half (53%) of participants report anticipated graduation dates within the next two academic years (fall 2012-spring 2014).

GYO Services:

A variety of supports are offered to participants by the GYO consortia, including academic support (e.g. tutoring), academic workshops (e.g. study skills), logistical support (e.g. transportation, child care, etc.), financial support (e.g. tuition assistance), financial aid support (e.g. assistance applying for financial aid), technical support (e.g. provide computer), moral/emotional support, creating a network through connections with other GYO students in your consortium, creating a network through connections with other GYO consortia, and creating

\(^2\) East St. Louis did not participate in the survey.
connections with partnership schools to assist with employment opportunities. Among those supports received, participants were asked to identify which services were most instrumental in enabling them to continue in the program and progress toward degree completion. The most widely utilized sources of support utilized by participants are financial support (85%), academic support (78%), creating networks through connections with other GYO students within a consortium (75%), moral/emotional support (75%), and academic workshops (71%).

Financial support was identified as the most instrumental factor in enabling participant progress, with academic support, logistical support, technical support, and creating a network with other students also identified as being very instrumental. Participants identified financial aid assistance and academic workshops as the least instrumental sources of support. Eighty-three percent of the participants reported that needed supports were offered at a site close to home or work. Among those who could not access supports near work or home, 80% reported closer supports would assist in progress through the program.

Community Engagement:

GYO participants reported feeling largely connected as a member of her/his cohort group, with about 9% reporting they feel disconnected. Participants reported engaging in a variety of activities, such as attending a GYO rally in Springfield (46%), participating in a local rally for education issues (51%), participating in a local rally for non-education issues (29%), distributing literature on GYO programs in the community (39%), assisting with community-based organization programming related to GYO (52%), assisting with CBO programming outside of GYO (28%), and additional fundraising and community activities (17%). Over 90% of respondents believe their community engagement activities have been beneficial to their preparation to teach at a high-needs school.

Program Services:

Participants generally reported satisfaction with the services they have received through GYO. When asked to rate GYO program services for their consortium, almost all respondents (98%) reported tuition assistance services as “excellent” or “good.” Tutoring/skill development and program admission were also highly rated by participants, while services like recruiting, providing information before starting the program, and financial support for transportation received somewhat lower average ratings. When asked what additional services would be beneficial to support participant through the program, respondents discussed the importance of mentoring (particularly during student teaching and initial placement in a classroom), flexible schedules for coursework to accommodate the work schedules and childcare responsibilities, test preparation and tutoring, and professional development.

Challenges to Program Participation:

Over half of participants (55%) responded they have experienced challenges to their success in the GYO program over the past year. When asked to elaborate about the nature of their problems, many participants discussed the challenges of balancing academic responsibilities and requirements with work, family, and personal needs and discussed the need for greater accommodations to their schedules. Other issues emerged as well, that challenged GYO participants’ success, such as preparing for and passing the requisite tests (e.g. TAP) and
securing adequate funding to cover the costs of fringe expenses associated with education (e.g. books).

When asked to identify the most likely challenge a teacher candidate would experience that would cause a teacher candidate to leave the program, responses varied, but often referenced feelings of stress and overwhelm in trying to manage the academic rigor of the program, as well as family caretaking responsibilities and work obligations. Inadequate funding, failure to pass TAP, the length of the program, and foregone wages during student teaching were also identified as significant barriers.

**Program Participation Results:**

Sixty-four percent of candidates believe it is “very likely” they will get teaching jobs after completing the GYO program, and 32% believe it is “likely.” Participants cited numerous reasons for their confidence in obtaining jobs following program completion, such as solid academic preparation and training, extensive classroom experience (particularly for paraprofessionals), GYO support and networking, and strong relationships with school districts.

Participants’ responses varied as to the extent to which administrators of the GYO consortia provide adequate support to help candidates secure teaching positions after graduation. Thirty-five percent reported receiving “more than adequate support,” 40% reported “adequate support,” and 24% reported “minimal support” or “no support.” However, when asked if they believe they are being adequately prepared to become highly effective teachers (e.g. content areas, pedagogy, etc.), 93% of participants report “adequate” or “more than adequate” preparation.

**GYO Graduates:**

Among GYO graduates, 59% report full-time employment, 21% report part-time employment, and 27% report unemployment. Among employed GYO graduates, 62% are employed in a school that serves a high-needs population, 12% are employed in another education setting (e.g. private/non-profit/profit childcare provider or tutoring center), 8% are employed in a public school, and 3.8% are employed in private schools. Fifteen percent of GYO graduates report employment in non-education settings.

GYO graduates identified the need for a stronger working relationship between GYO and school districts/principals to promote the likelihood of securing a teaching position after program completion. They also identified the importance of GYO representatives in notifying participants of vacancies and advocating for them during the application process. GYO graduates also expressed an interest in continued support after graduation in applying for jobs (particularly within partner school districts), teacher mentorship (after placement), and continued evaluation and feedback.

**Delphi Survey Results**

A Delphi Survey consists of a series of questionnaires that allow people in specific roles or with specific knowledge to develop recommendations about potential future developments around specific issues involving a program. The Delphi Survey technique was used with the GYO consortium partners for the purposes of getting their solicited responses to questions related to
policy and program recommendations for GYO. The Delphi survey for GYO consisted of three rounds of surveys for GYO consortium partners.

**Delphi Round One**

The first round questionnaire was designed to be purposefully broad and invite participation from those involved with the management and implementation of the initiative. The questions were focused generally on the organizational structure and maintenance of the GYO IL consortia. The intent of the first questionnaire was to develop a deeper understanding of the various partners’ roles and partnerships within the consortia. Thus, participants were asked to describe the role each partner should play within the consortia and then asked to describe the extent to which that partner is currently filling that role. This question was asked of school districts, community colleges, four-year colleges, community-based organizations, and GYO Illinois. The questionnaire concluded with a few broad questions regarding if and how GYO Illinois policies strengthen and/or weaken the consortia’s progress.

Responses to the first round questionnaire helped to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the partners and partnerships, as well as identify opportunities for improvement in the collaboration and communication among partners. Responses revealed a great deal of variance in the organizational structure and maintenance of the GYO IL consortia. The nature and depth of the partnerships varied by consortia and were largely dependent upon the partner(s) that administered the program. Generally, participants were very satisfied with their relationships with their community college and four-year college partners, citing their deep commitment to candidates and willingness to collaborate to ensure seamless articulation between the two institutions. Participants also reported being generally satisfied by their community-based partnerships, but the roles community-based partners play in each consortium varies considerably in terms of the scope of their investment and the types of services they provide.

All consortia reported some interruptions or weaknesses in their partnerships, citing challenges in scheduling, proximity, flexibility, and investment as significant barriers. A concerning gap revealed in the first round questionnaire was the relationship between the school districts and the consortia. While some of the consortia are quite intimately involved with their partnering school districts, with some actually administered through the school district, others reported a very tenuous relationship with their school district partners, citing little or no communication with their school district partner. This is particularly problematic in that school districts are the ultimate consumer for GYO IL, and poor communication and collaboration with the school districts weakens candidates’ likelihood of securing permanent teaching placement in their districts.

**Delphi Round Two**

The goal of round two of the Delphi Survey was to synthesize the amount of information that has been shared by the respondents and to develop the second set of questions based on the responses to the first set. The first questionnaire provided a basic overview of how the consortia are structured and interact among internal and external partners. From this information, the second round questionnaire probed deeper into some of the strengths and weaknesses identified as
significant components to GYO candidate success. Questions were designed to identify how to maximize partnerships that were identified as very important and how to strengthen partnerships identified as weak. The second round also delved deeper into some of the technical and logistical challenges identified in the first round questionnaire (e.g. student teaching experience, student support services, etc.).

Responses indicated a general need to reinvigorate the partnerships within the consortia. As partner roles have become solidified, collaboration and communication have diminished. This also appears to the result, in part, to funding cuts which were identified as undermining collaboration and communication among partners. The second round questionnaire also confirmed the need to bolster the school district partnership, as identified in the first round. Participants identified engaged school district partnerships as a missing component to their consortia, suggesting school districts need to be engaged in conducting an in-depth needs assessment and should be, in turn, kept abreast of candidate information, progress, anticipated graduation dates, certifications, etc.

The second round questionnaire also indicated a need for greater communication across consortia. Consortia could likely make significant improvements to the logistical challenges participants identified, such as TAP preparation, student teaching placement and funding, recruitment and screening procedures, and evaluation strategies, by sharing best practices across consortia. Participants expressed a desire to learn about other consortia’s best practices and share their own through low-cost opportunities, such as webinars. Improving communication and sharing best practices among consortia would be an important asset to GYO Illinois.

**Delphi Round Three**

In the third questionnaire, the respondents were asked to answer questions that verify the summarization of their previous responses, or to change their answers or comment further to clarify. The themes that emerged in the first two questionnaire rounds were used to develop a set of policy recommendations for review and comment by survey participants. These policy recommendations were generated based on the responses to the preceding questionnaires regarding the weaknesses and strengths of the consortia.

Arguably the most significant challenge GYO consortia face is recruiting and retaining viable non-traditional candidates. Very high attrition rates throughout the life of the GYO program, combined with reductions in funding, suggest changes may be necessary in the recruitment policies to diversify the candidate pool. Thus, the policy recommendations developed by CSEP focus on strengthening the candidate pool and meaningfully supporting those candidates throughout their coursework, clinical experiences, and first few years of teaching.

Many of the policy recommendations put to participants for review include statutory changes to eligibility and recruitment policies, as well as recommendations designed to ensure those candidates who have been selected to participate in GYO Illinois are competitive and successful in securing placement. Several policy recommendations promote stronger school district partnerships to ensure candidates are more competitive when seeking job placements. Ultimately, CSEP staff have developed policy recommendations to improve recruitment,
retention, and placement strategies to ensure GYO Illinois functions as an effective diverse teacher pipeline.

Policy Recommendations

After carefully assessing the ongoing challenges to the GYO consortia identified by participants, CSEP staff developed policy recommendations designed to ameliorate challenges/weaknesses shared among GYO IL consortia. The policy recommendations are:

1. Amend GYO statute to change the eligibility criteria to allow recent high school graduates into the GYO program.
2. Amend the GYO statute to allow GYO funding for master’s degree programs (e.g. Masters of Art in Teaching).
3. Establish an IBHE policy that requires all IL GYO consortia to adopt a standardized candidate selection tool to serve as the foundation for recruitment, but will also allow individual consortia to add additional requirements specific to their local needs.
4. Establish an IBHE policy that requires all future GYO applicants to be screened, interviewed, and selected by a committee that is made of up of representatives of all of the GYO consortia partners.
5. Establish an IBHE policy that encourages partner school districts to place paraprofessional GYO candidates in the schools where they are employed during student teaching and explores strategies that can be taken by the district and university to ease hardships of candidates during their student teaching.
6. Establish an IBHE policy that includes specific criteria for the selection of the supervising teacher for GYO candidates during student teaching and stipulates minimum requirements for communication and feedback between the candidate, clinical supervisor, and the supervising teacher.
7. Establish an IBHE policy that encourages partner school districts to reserve a specified number of positions for GYO candidates upon completion of the program.
8. Establish an IBHE policy that requires GYO consortia to convene a committee of its partners that will collect data on and provide feedback and support to GYO graduates in their first years of teaching. Data will then be used to inform the program improvement process.

Many participants expressed support for broadening the eligibility criteria to allow recent high school graduates, people who already possess a bachelor’s degree in a non-education field, and graduate coursework. However, there was some concern expressed about stretching already reduced funds too thin, and participants recommended non-traditional candidates (as defined by GYO IL statute) be given first priority in funding.

Participants expressed strong support for strengthening school district partnerships, including clinical placement policies, teacher mentoring, and reserving a specified number of slots for GYO candidates. Participants did suggest, however, that these policies should be used to improve teacher effectiveness and competitiveness, rather than lower expectations.

Recommendations intended to strengthen collaboration and communication among consortia partners were also strongly supported, particularly in recruitment and evaluation activities.
Participants noted the importance of such strategies in strengthening the overall partnerships among consortia stakeholders and ensuring each partner is meaningfully invested in candidate progress and success.

Recommendations aimed at requiring potential candidates to pass certain benchmarks (e.g. passing TAP, admittance to teacher education program) were not widely supported. Participants noted the importance of GYO supportive services to preparing non-traditional students to reach these benchmarks, without which it would be unlikely that candidates would progress. Based on this feedback, the recommendation that candidates pass TAP prior to admittance to GYO Illinois was removed.

The three rounds of questions helped bring staff in the Center of the Study of Education Policy closer to understanding operational aspects of the statewide Grow Your Own Teacher Initiative, including challenges and opportunities that should be considered in the statewide evaluation and future recommendations.

**Conclusion**

Through a thorough literature review, project site visits, a candidate survey, and three rounds of Delphi surveys, CSEP staff identified three policy strengths of GYO Illinois: 1) GYO has the potential to improve Illinois’ teacher diversity index; 2) GYO teachers reflect the culture of the communities in which they serve; and 3) GYO teachers will likely remain as teachers in the schools they serve since they come from these communities.

CSEP staff also identified three primary challenges to GYO Illinois: 1) GYO has the potential to help improve Illinois’ diversity index ranking, but with the high attrition rate, hundreds of candidates have exited out; 2) GYO teachers reflect the communities in which they serve, though lack of jobs matching the certification areas they completed may prevent them from securing permanent full-time positions in those communities; and 3) GYO programs are not all targeting the highest need neighborhoods in the state or highest demand certifications. After an in-depth analysis of these strengths and challenges, a thorough literature review of diverse teacher pipelines, as well as data triangulation from the candidate survey, Delphi surveys, and IBHE candidate data, CSEP staff have made several policy recommendations to ensure the viability, efficacy, and efficiency of GYO Illinois.

GYO Illinois is poised to fill a very real and immediate need in Illinois; however, ongoing challenges to the program require strong policy action to amend the program in such a way that it can be successful and accountable—to its candidates, communities, and State. To create an effective and efficient diverse teacher pipeline for the State of Illinois will require significant changes to the program; however, these changes will ultimately strengthen the statewide initiative to ensure it can fulfill its legislative mandate. By implementing these policy recommendations, GYO Illinois will be better able to bring a diverse pool of candidates into hard-to-staff positions at hard-to-staff schools, thereby renewing its commitment to its students and communities and filling a very serious void in Illinois teacher workforce.
References


Appendix A
Site Visit Interview Protocol

1. Since our last site visits—please describe any changes to the programs’ policies and practices, particularly in light of this year’s dramatic funding decrease.
   a. Recruitment and selection criteria processes
   b. Supports for candidates
   c. Changes in partners (did any partners leave the program, or any new partners join the program)
   d. Changes in partners roles and responsibilities

2. How do you feel your candidates will progress this year?
   a. What do you believe will be the needs and challenges that your candidates will face in the program, particularly in light of the changes you have had to make to the program due to the budget tightening?
   b. How did you prioritize which supports to offer in light of the budget changes? Are there some program supports and activities that are essential to GYO candidates’ success? Did you reach out to other organizations to offer supports when your consortium could not offer them anymore?

3. What kinds of pre-service development activities do you plan to offer candidates this year?
   a. Pre-service professional development around teaching and student learning
   b. Community engagement activities
   c. Personal development (e.g., time management, social-emotional well-being)
   d. Others?

4. The role of the school districts, and the level of collaboration in the consortium came up repeatedly in the candidate and Delphi surveys, as well as in past discussions with consortia representatives.
   a. Are schools and districts as involved in your consortia as other partners (e.g., universities, community colleges, and community–based organizations)?
      i. If no, what are the challenges that keep schools or districts from being an engaged partner in this program?
      ii. If yes, what are some effective strategies that your consortium has used to engage schools and districts in the GYO program?

   b. Are there any plans to collaborate with schools/districts to:
      i. Conduct a needs assessment?
      ii. Place candidates in student teaching assignments and assess candidate performance in their student teaching experience?
      iii. Serve on an advisory group to participate in a continuous improvement process?
c. Are there any promising strategies to further engage schools and districts that consortia are implementing now that we might learn from?

5. What is your consortium’s policy for candidates in finding financial support?
   a. Is it mandatory that candidates complete a FAFSA? Do they have to provide evidence of that to you?
   b. What policies are in place for candidates to secure additional tuition support outside of the GYO program’s tuition support? Do many of your candidates receive additional tuition support from other programs (e.g., Pell Grants)?
   c. Approximately what percentage of your candidates take out student loans to pay for their tuitions, fees, books, and other related expenses?

6. All consortia are required to provide data on candidate progress in the IBHE database. How do you track candidate progress? Do you manage an external database separate from IBHE’s?
   a. Who has primary responsibility for entering data into the databases?
   b. How is this data checked for accuracy?
   c. Does your consortium have a systematic plan for using these data in a continuous improvement process? If so, please describe it.

7. There have been some discussions about policy changes that might support the effectiveness of this program. What are your thoughts about policy changes related to:
   a. Eligibility requirements for candidates and allowing recent high school graduates into the program
   b. Using funds to support graduate level work
   c. Allowing people who have already earned a bachelor’s degree into the program
   d. Requiring passage of TAP (i.e., the Basic Skills Test) prior to admittance to the GYO program
   e. Others?

Looking to the future:

8. For the upcoming statewide learning network and program year, how can the evaluation team provide technical assistance to support your program, particularly in developing a continuous improvement process for evaluating and improving your program?
   - Conducting a needs assessment
   - Developing contingency plans for an uncertain funding future
   - Logic modeling
   - Developing and Conducting a continuous improvement process
   - Other
# Appendix B
Candidate Survey

Questions

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## Grow Your Own Program Participant Survey

### Information about You

**2. Your GYO Consortium**

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**3. Gender?**

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

**4. Race/Ethnicity?**

- [ ] African American
- [ ] Hispanic/Latino
- [ ] Caucasian
- [ ] Multiracial/Ethnic
- [ ] American Indian/Native American
- [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander
- [ ] Other (please specify)

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**5. Do you currently live in the neighborhood served by your GYO community partner?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**6. Have you ever worked or volunteered in a school in the neighborhood served by your GYO community partner?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**7. Have you ever had a child who attended a school in the neighborhood served by your GYO?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
8. How many years have you been in the GYO program (in years)?
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - Other (please specify)

9. Have you been enrolled in coursework leading to teacher certification each semester since you entered GYO?
   - Yes
   - No

10. If no, how many total semesters were you not enrolled?
    - 1-3
    - 4-6
    - 7 or more

11. What prevented your enrollment?

12. When do you anticipate graduating from the program with a teaching certificate?
    - fall 2012
    - spring 2013
    - fall 2013
    - spring 2014
    - fall 2014
    - spring 2015
    - fall 2015
    - Other (please specify)
**13. Which of the following types of support have you received from your GYO program?**

*(Check all that apply.)*

- [ ] Academic support (e.g., tutoring, help with assignments, course selection, etc.)
- [ ] Academic workshops (e.g., study skills, workshops on effective teaching strategies)
- [ ] Logistical support (e.g., transportation, child care, etc.)
- [ ] Financial support (e.g., tuition assistance)
- [ ] Financial aid support (e.g., assistance applying for other types of aid or scholarships)
- [ ] Technical support (e.g., provide computer or computer support)
- [ ] Moral/emotional support
- [ ] Creating a network through connections with other GYO students in your consortium
- [ ] Creating a network through connections with other GYO consortia
- [ ] Creating connections with partnership schools to assist with employment opportunities

*Other (please specify)*

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**Grow Your Own Program Participant Survey**

*14. Of the support you have received from your GYO program, which has been most instrumental in enabling you to continue in the program and progress toward degree completion?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Most Instrumental</th>
<th>Very Instrumental</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Somewhat Instrumental</th>
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<td>Academic support (tutoring, help with assignments, course selection,</td>
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<td>basic skills test support, etc.)</td>
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<td>Academic workshops</td>
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<td>Logistical support (transportation, child care, etc.)</td>
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<td>Financial support (tuition assistance)</td>
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<td>Financial aid support (assistance with applying for other types of aid</td>
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<td>or scholarships)</td>
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<td>Technical support (provide computer or computer support)</td>
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<td>Moral/Emotional support</td>
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<td>your consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating connections with partnership schools</td>
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15. Were the supports you needed for your program offered at a site close to your home or work?

○ Yes

○ No

16. If no, would having supports offered closer to home or work assist your progress in the program?

○ Yes

○ No
17. What was the most beneficial support you currently receive, or have received in the past, through your GYO program (does not have to be a support from the list above)? Please explain why this was the most beneficial.

*18. To what extent do you feel that you are connected as a member of your GYO cohort group?

- Very connected
- Somewhat connected
- Connected
- Somewhat disconnected
- Disconnected
Grow Your Own Program Participant Survey

GYO Community Engagement Activities

19. Which of the following community engagement activities have you participated?  
(Check all that apply)

☐ Attended a GYO rally in Springfield
☐ Participated in a local rally for education issues
☐ Participated in a local rally for non-education issues
☐ Distributed literature on GYO programs in the community
☐ Assisted the Community Based Organization with programming related to GYO
☐ Assisted the Community Based Organization with programming outside of GYO
☐ Other (please specify)  

20. Do you think the community engagement activities have been beneficial in your
preparation to teach at a high-needs school?

☐ Yes
☐ No

21. Please explain your yes or no answer. If yes, in what way were these community
engagement activities beneficial? If no, in what ways were these activities not beneficial?
**22. Rate the following GYO program services for your consortium.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Received no support in this area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
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<td>Information provided to you before</td>
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<td>you started the program</td>
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<td>Tutoring/skill development</td>
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<td>Financial support for tuition</td>
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<td>Financial support for transportation</td>
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<td>Academic advisement</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>

**23. Describe any additional types of support you feel would assist you in completing your course of study.**
**24. Over the past year, have there been any challenges to your success in the GYO program?**

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes

If yes, please describe these barriers

25. What do you think is the most likely challenge a teacher candidate would experience that would cause a teacher candidate to leave the program?
26. How likely do you think it is that you will get a teaching job after you complete the GYO program?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Not likely
- Not likely at all

Please explain

27. Are the administrators of your GYO Consortium providing adequate support to help you secure a teaching position when you graduate?

- No Support
- Minimal Support
- Adequate Support
- More than Adequate Support

Please explain your answer
28. Do you believe that you are receiving adequate preparation to become a highly effective teacher (e.g., content areas, pedagogy, etc.)?

- Not at All Adequate
- Somewhat Adequate
- Adequate
- More than Adequate

Please explain your answer.
29. Please provide your overall thoughts of the GYO program and your experiences in the program
30. FOR GRADUATES OF THE GYO PROGRAM ONLY (Please skip this question if you have not graduated from the program):
What is your current employment status?

- Unemployed
- Employed, part-time
- Employed, full-time

31. FOR GRADUATES OF THE GYO PROGRAM ONLY (Please skip this question if you have not graduated from the program):
If you are employed (part- or full-time), where are you employed?

- In a public school that serves a high needs student population (as defined by the GYO program)
- In a public school
- In a private school that serves a high need student population (as defined by the GYO program)
- In a private school
- In another education setting (e.g., private/non-profit/profit childcare provider or a tutoring center)
- In a non-education setting

Other (please specify):

32. FOR GRADUATES OF THE GYO PROGRAM ONLY (Please skip this question if you have not graduated from the program)
What supports were or would have been most beneficial to you in terms of securing a position with a partnering school or district?
33. FOR GRADUATES OF THE GYO PROGRAM ONLY (Please skip this question if you have not graduated from the program)
What supports have you received, or would you liked to have received, post-placement in a teaching position?
Appendix C
Delphi Survey Round 1 Questions

1. Role within the Consortia
   - Project Director
   - University Coordinator
   - Community Based Organization Partner
   - School District Partner
   - School Principal
   - Community College Partner

2. Describe the role that the partnering district or school(s) might play in your consortium.

3. Describe the role that the community college might play in your consortium.

4. Describe the role that the 4 year college might play in your consortium.

5. Describe the role that the community based organizations might play in your consortium.

6. Describe the role that GYO Illinois might play in helping your consortium develop a teacher pipeline.

7. What policies for GYO (through statute or rules) propose challenges or barriers to the work of your consortium?

8. What policies should be put into place (through statutory change or agency rules) that could strengthen the statewide GYO initiative and/or your local consortium?

9. What data is not currently collected in the GYO Illinois Teacher Education Initiative Database that should be included?

10. How can your consortium ensure that it recruits and selects viable teacher candidates?
Appendix D
Delphi Survey Round 2 Questions

1. What is your role within the consortia?

2. Some respondents identified the need for greater supportive services for GYO candidates, such as professional development opportunities, clinical experiences, and mentorship. What additional services do you feel should be provided to GYO candidates and who should be responsible for providing these services?

3. Some respondents addressed challenges to students during the student teaching experience, particularly for GYO candidates who are currently employed as staff by their partnering school districts. Several responses to the questionnaire noted district employees’ loss of health benefits and salary as extreme hardships for GYO candidates during their student teaching. What can districts, universities, and other project partners do to minimize the financial hardship to students during their student teaching experience?

4. Many respondents commented on the need for partnering districts or schools to play a greater role in helping with placement of candidates. What should school districts be doing to ensure the employability of the GYO candidates in the communities in which they are being prepared?

5. Candidate recruitment was commonly discussed by respondents. What are some strategies in which partners can work together to recruit, screen, and select GYO candidates?

6. Some respondents suggested amending and broadening GYO candidate recruitment criteria to allow recent high school graduates, college students, and individuals who have already completed a bachelor’s degree to apply. How would this strengthen or weaken the GYO program?

7. To ensure GYO candidates are prepared to fill high-need vacancies (e.g. ELL and special education), what are the pros and cons of permitting graduate coursework to qualify for GYO funding?

8. Many respondents suggested that the GYO program adopt a pre-GYO model requirement for all GYO consortia as an effort to better screen candidates. How does/could pre-GYO serve as a bridge program?

9. Some respondents recommended that GYO candidates must be admitted to colleges of education and already have passed TAP prior to admittance to the GYO program. What are the pros and cons to a policy requirement such as this?

10. Some responses suggested GYO Illinois should institute more uniformity among the GYO projects statewide. What are your suggestions for where there could be greater uniformity?
11. Community colleges were identified by respondents as a key partner in the GYO program. How can community colleges be better utilized as a partner in the GYO program?
Appendix E
Delphi Survey Round 3 Questions

Policy Recommendations: (Agree/Disagree and Comments)

1. Change eligibility criteria in GYO Statute to allow eligibility of recent high school graduates to GYO program.

2. Change criteria in GYO Statute to allow GYO funding for master degree programs (e.g., Masters of Art in Teaching (MAT) degrees).

3. Implement an IBHE policy that require all IL GYO consortia to adopt a standardized candidate screening tool to serve as the foundation for recruitment, but will also allow individual consortia to add additional requirements specific to their local needs.

4. Implement an IBHE policy that require all future GYO applicants to be screened, interviewed, and selected by a committee that is made up of representatives of all of the GYO consortia partners.

5. Implement an IBHE policy that requires potential candidates to pass the TAP exam prior to admission to GYO program.

6. Implement an IBHE policy that encourages partner school districts to place paraprofessional GYO candidates in the schools where they are employed during student teaching and explores strategies that can be taken by the district and university to ease hardships of candidates during student teaching.

7. Implement an IBHE policy that will develop criteria for the selection of the supervising teacher for GYO candidates during the student teaching and requirements for communication and feedback between the candidate, the clinical supervisor, and the supervising teacher. Implement an IBHE policy that requires partner school districts to reserve a specified slot of positions for GYO candidates upon completion of the program.

8. Implement an IBHE policy that requires GYO consortia to convene a committee of its partners that continues to following its teachers into their first years of teaching and provides feedback in which to improve the program.

9. On November 14th, the staff at the Center for the Study of Education Policy will be conducting an optional pre-conference workshop to attendees at the GYO symposium. What topics would you like to see Center staff cover at the workshop?