

# ELEVATE TEACHING SUMMIT

## ENSURING AN EXCELLENT EDUCATOR FOR EVERY ILLINOIS CLASSROOM



Irving Elementary School in Oak Park morphed into an idea generation factory recently, when scores of teachers, principals, advocates and district leaders gathered for the “Elevate Teaching Summit.”

The group spent hours generating policy recommendations aimed at elevating the teaching profession and ensuring an excellent educator for every Illinois classroom. The policy ideas will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education to inform its “Teach Illinois” effort – a year of study on the teaching profession. The suggestions spread across the educator continuum: teacher recruitment, preparation and licensure, career ladders, and retention.



### KEY SUGGESTIONS EMERGED:

- Launch a statewide campaign to elevate the profession, build respect for teachers, & attract diverse talent to the field
- Lengthen the clinical experience in teacher preparation
- Train teachers on social & emotional learning and trauma-informed instruction
- Spur teacher leadership/teacher career ladders efforts that allow teachers to take on leadership roles
- Ensure principals know how to create schools that provide a strong culture and positive climate



### A DAY OF LEARNING AND CREATING

On June 2nd, the Teaching Summit kicked off with a welcome by Advance Illinois and the Joyce Foundation, 80 participants, and several presentations by experts in the field. Lillian Lowery, vice president for pre-K policy, research and practice at Education Trust, focused on building a diverse, high-quality workforce. Jason Helfer, deputy superintendent for teaching and learning at the Illinois State Board of Education, gave details of the Teach Illinois effort. Julie Stephenson, an architect of Louisiana’s Believe and Prepare teacher residency effort, shared details of the work. Matt Zediker, chief human resource officer at Rockford Public Schools, detailed the district’s pathway into teaching program. And Ricky Castro, 2017 Illinois Teacher of the Year, talked about his own pathway into the profession. Audrey Soglin, executive director of the Illinois Education Association, wrapped up the day’s event. The presentations sparked thoughtful discussions.

### HERE IS WHAT WE HEARD

Participants shared personal stories of classroom preparation and talked about challenges they face on the job. They talked about ensuring students, especially those of color and those who are low-income, have top-notch educators. They worked together to devise solutions. Their ideas will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education:

#### TEACHER RECRUITMENT

- Launch a marketing campaign to elevate the teaching profession and tap into the idealism of young people
- Develop forward-thinking core competencies for aspiring teachers
- Empower teachers to “market” the positives of teaching
- Provide varied opportunities for aspiring teachers to mentor students starting in high school and stretching into post-secondary
- Create more career pathways from high school into the teaching profession

#### TEACHER PREP/DAY ONE READINESS

- Ensure more diverse field experience in varied school settings
- Mandate teacher prep programs be more intentional about recruiting a cadre of high-quality, diverse candidates and ensure they focus on graduating them
- Push universities & districts to create year-long residencies for aspiring teachers
- Encourage partnerships between schools, districts and prep programs to better align supply and demand and create consistency for the teacher-in-training
- Ensure mentor teachers are highly trained
- Ensure teachers are trained on social & emotional learning and trauma-informed instruction
- Train teachers in developing a mindset towards cultural competency and advocacy for all learners

#### TEACHER DEVELOPMENT & ADVANCEMENT

- Urge districts/state to adopt teacher career ladders that give teachers the opportunity to take on more responsibility for more pay
- Launch distributive leadership models that let teachers help lead their schools
- Develop teacher leadership micro-credentials
- Improve professional development to ensure it is more intentional
- Develop networking structures in schools to increase access to colleagues
- Create resources and develop learning networks that connect teachers with professional development opportunities outside of the school

#### TEACHER RETENTION

- Increase pay
- Create state-funded teacher induction and teacher mentorship programs
- Improve working conditions: allow more time for teacher collaboration

#### ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

- Ensure principals have high-quality training on how to manage teachers/staff and on proper time management & staff allocation
- Establish internal and external methods to communicate and execute the needs of the school
- Urge principals to explore distributive leadership models by building school level systems and structures that support teacher leaders
- Add courses in principal prep programs that help principals develop more positive and inclusive climates in schools