



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB2470

Introduced 2/4/2025, by Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 48/20  
110 ILCS 48/25  
110 ILCS 48/35.5 new

Amends the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act. In a provision regarding the selection of grantees, provides that: State appropriations shall be allocated with the intention of providing direct candidate support through consortia; and Grown Your Own Illinois may use no more than 5% of State appropriations for operational expenditures, but may supplement its operational expenditures with private funds. In a provision regarding expenditures under the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative: requires grants to be distributed to consortia from Grow Your Own Illinois in an equitable manner based on candidate needs and in such a way as to provide the required support for a cohort of candidates; and provides that site-based cohort coordinators shall indicate to Grow Your Own Illinois the needs of candidates and shall have the authority to inform the development and operations of the cohort pertaining to certain topics. Allows the Board of Higher Education to create a process to allow cohorts to communicate operational or funding challenges pertaining to the implementation of the Grow Your Own Illinois program. Allows the Board to adopt rules to establish a complaint process. Makes other changes.

LRB104 03463 LNS 13486 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

4 Section 5. The Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act is  
5 amended by changing Sections 20 and 25 and by adding Section  
6 35.5 as follows:

7 (110 ILCS 48/20)

8 Sec. 20. Selection of grantees. The Board of Higher  
9 Education shall, subject to appropriation, allocate funds to  
10 Grow Your Own Illinois for the purpose of administering the  
11 program and awarding grants as needed to qualified consortia  
12 that reflect the distribution and diversity of hard-to-staff  
13 schools and hard-to-staff positions across this State. In  
14 awarding grants, Grow Your Own Illinois shall select programs  
15 that successfully address Initiative criteria and that reflect  
16 a diversity of strategies in terms of serving urban areas,  
17 serving rural areas, the nature of the participating  
18 institutions of higher education, and the nature of  
19 hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-staff teaching positions on  
20 which a program is focused. State appropriations shall be  
21 allocated with the intention of providing direct candidate  
22 support through consortia. Grow Your Own Illinois may use no  
23 more than 5% of State appropriations for operational

1 expenditures; however, Grow Your Own Illinois may supplement  
2 its operational expenditures with private funds.

3 Grow Your Own Illinois shall select, ~~manage,~~ and oversee  
4 consortia that meet the following requirements:

5 (1) A consortium shall be composed of at least one  
6 4-year institution of higher education with an Illinois  
7 approved teacher preparation program, at least one school  
8 district or group of schools, and one or more community  
9 organizations. The consortium membership may also include  
10 a 2-year institution of higher education, a school  
11 employee union, or a regional office of education.

12 (2) The 4-year institution of higher education  
13 participating in the consortium shall have past,  
14 demonstrated success in preparing teachers for elementary  
15 or secondary schools serving a substantial percentage of  
16 low-income students.

17 (3) The consortium shall focus on a clearly defined  
18 set of eligible schools that will participate in the  
19 program. The consortium shall articulate the steps that it  
20 will carry out in preparing teachers for its participating  
21 schools and in preparing teachers for one or more  
22 hard-to-staff teaching positions in those schools.

23 (4) The consortium shall recruit potential candidates  
24 for the program and shall take into consideration when  
25 selecting a candidate whether the candidate:

26 (A) holds a high school diploma or its equivalent

1 or is a high school student enrolled in a dual credit  
2 course offered by a participating institution of  
3 higher education;

4 (B) meets either the definition of "parent and  
5 community leader" or the definition of "para educator"  
6 contained in Section 10 of this Act;

7 (C) (blank);

8 (D) exhibits a willingness to be a teacher in a  
9 hard-to-staff school with the goal of maintaining  
10 academic excellence;

11 (E) shows an interest in postsecondary education  
12 and may hold an associate's degree, a bachelor's  
13 degree, or another postsecondary degree, but a  
14 postsecondary education is not required;

15 (F) is a parent, a para educator, a community  
16 leader, or any other individual from a community with  
17 a hard-to-staff school;

18 (G) commits to completing and passing all State  
19 standards, including the licensure test to obtain an  
20 educator license;

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

23 (I) demonstrates commitment to the program by:

24 (i) maintaining a cumulative grade point  
25 average of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (or the  
26 equivalent as determined by the Board of Higher

1 Education);

2 (ii) attending monthly cohort meetings; and

3 (iii) applying for financial aid from all  
4 other financial aid resources before applying for  
5 assistance from the program.

6 (5) The consortium shall employ effective procedures  
7 for teaching the skills and knowledge needed to prepare  
8 highly competent teachers. Professional preparation shall  
9 include on-going direct experience in target schools and  
10 evaluation of this experience.

11 (6) The consortium shall offer the program to cohorts  
12 of candidates, as defined in Section 10 of this Act, on a  
13 schedule that enables candidates to work full time while  
14 participating in the program and allows para educators to  
15 continue in their current positions. In any fiscal year in  
16 which an appropriation for the Initiative is made, the  
17 consortium shall guarantee that support will be available  
18 to an admitted cohort for the cohort's education for that  
19 fiscal year. At the beginning of the Initiative, programs  
20 that are already operating and existing cohorts of  
21 candidates under this model shall be eligible for funding.

22 (7) The institutions of higher education participating  
23 in the consortium shall document and agree to expend the  
24 same amount of funds in implementing the program that  
25 these institutions spend per student on similar  
26 educational programs. Grants received by the consortium

1 shall supplement and not supplant these amounts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (F) The qualifications of the person or persons  
25 designated by the 4-year institution of higher  
26 education to be responsible for cohort support and the

1 development of a shared learning and social  
2 environment among candidates.

3 (G) The consortium's plan for collective  
4 consortium decision-making, involving all consortium  
5 members, including mechanisms for candidate input.

6 (H) The consortium's plan for direct impact of the  
7 program on the quality of education in the eligible  
8 schools.

9 (I) The relevance of the curriculum to the needs  
10 of the eligible schools and positions, and the use in  
11 curriculum and instructional planning of principles  
12 for effective education for adults.

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

15 (K) Provision of a level of performance to be  
16 maintained by candidates as a condition of continuing  
17 in the program.

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

22 (M) The availability of supportive services,  
23 including, but not limited to, counseling, tutoring,  
24 transportation, technology and technology support, and  
25 child care.

26 (N) A plan for continued participation of

1 graduates of the program in a program of support for at  
2 least 2 years, including mentoring and group meetings.

3 (O) A plan for testing and qualitative evaluation  
4 of candidates' teaching skills that ensures that  
5 graduates of the program are as prepared for teaching  
6 as other individuals completing the institution of  
7 higher education's preparation program for the  
8 certificate sought.

9 (P) A plan for internal evaluation that provides  
10 reports at least yearly on the progress of candidates  
11 towards graduation and the impact of the program on  
12 the target schools and their communities.

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

16 (R) Consortium commitment for sustaining the  
17 program over time, as evidenced by plans for reduced  
18 requirements for external funding, in subsequent  
19 cycles.

20 (S) The inclusion in the planned program of  
21 strategies derived from community organizing that will  
22 help candidates develop tools for working with parents  
23 and other community members.

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

1           The Board of Higher Education may not adopt rules  
2 regarding candidate eligibility that are more restrictive than  
3 this Section.

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

5           (110 ILCS 48/25)

6           Sec. 25. Expenditures under the Initiative.

7           (a) Every program under the Initiative shall implement a  
8 program of forgivable loans to cover any portion of tuition,  
9 books, and fees of candidates under the program in excess of  
10 the candidates' grants-in-aid. All students admitted to a  
11 cohort shall be eligible for a forgivable student loan. Loans  
12 shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes 5 years of  
13 service in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching  
14 positions, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of  
15 service. Grow Your Own Illinois shall establish standards for  
16 the approval of requests for waivers or deferrals from  
17 individuals to waive this obligation and shall also define  
18 standards for the fiscal management of these loan funds.

19           (b) Grants ~~Grow Your Own Illinois shall award grants~~ under  
20 the Initiative shall be distributed to consortia from Grow  
21 Your Own Illinois in an equitable manner based on candidate  
22 needs as described by the site-based cohort coordinator and in  
23 such a way as to provide the required support for a cohort of  
24 candidates for any fiscal year in which an appropriation for  
25 the Initiative is made. Program budgets must show expenditures

1 and needed funds for the entire period that candidates are  
2 expected to be enrolled.

3 (b-5) Site-based cohort coordinators shall indicate to  
4 Grow Your Own Illinois the needs of candidates and shall have  
5 the authority to inform the development and operations of the  
6 cohort pertaining to:

7 (1) site needs, including budget requests related to  
8 child care and other indirect expenses, such as  
9 transportation, tutoring, technology, and technology  
10 support necessary to maintain class schedules;

11 (2) cohort size, including the number of candidates  
12 the site can support;

13 (3) whether the site-based cohort is applying for a  
14 planning, implementation, or continuation grant;

15 (4) partnerships with other schools or community-based  
16 organizations;

17 (5) participation in research studies and surveys; and

18 (6) local marketing and outreach.

19 (c) No funds under the Initiative may be used to supplant  
20 the average per-capita expenditures by the institution of  
21 higher education for candidates.

22 ~~(d) Where necessary, program budgets shall include the~~  
23 ~~costs of child care and other indirect expenses, such as~~  
24 ~~transportation, tutoring, technology, and technology support,~~  
25 ~~necessary to permit candidates to maintain their class~~  
26 ~~schedules.~~ Grant funds may be used by any member of a

1 consortium to offset such costs, and the services may be  
2 provided by the community organization or organizations, by  
3 any other member of the consortium, or by independent  
4 contractors.

5 (e) The institution of higher education may expend grant  
6 funds to cover the additional costs of offering classes in  
7 community settings and for tutoring services.

8 (f) The community organization or organizations may  
9 receive a portion of the grant money for the expenses of  
10 recruitment, community orientation, and counseling of  
11 potential candidates, for providing space in the community,  
12 and for working with school personnel to facilitate individual  
13 work experiences and support of candidates.

14 (g) The school district or school employee union or both  
15 may receive a portion of the grant money for expenses of  
16 supporting the work experiences of candidates and providing  
17 mentors for graduates. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
18 Section 10-20.15 of the School Code, school districts may also  
19 use these or other applicable public funds to pay participants  
20 in programs under the Initiative for student teaching required  
21 by an accredited teacher preparation program.

22 (h) One or more members of the consortium may expend funds  
23 to cover the salary of a site-based cohort coordinator.

24 (i) Grant funds may also be expended to pay directly for  
25 required developmental classes for candidates beginning a  
26 program.

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

2 (110 ILCS 48/35.5 new)

3 Sec. 35.5. Complaint process. The Board of Higher  
4 Education may create a process to allow cohorts to communicate  
5 operational or funding challenges pertaining to the  
6 implementation of the Grow Your Own Illinois program. The  
7 Board of Higher Education may adopt rules to establish a  
8 complaint process.