

Greenville University, SIUE, Part Of Pilot Group To Develop Recruitment, Retention Plans For Future Teachers Of Color

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GREENVILLE - The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announced that 24 colleges and universities in Illinois have volunteered for a pilot to develop plans to recruit and retain future teachers of color. The pilot will help establish best practices ahead of ISBE requiring all 54 Illinois educator preparation programs to develop plans next year.

“Greenville University has a long tradition of preparing students for teaching in diverse classrooms and communities through our character and service-based programs,” said Katrina Lopez Liss, Chief Culture and Diversity Officer at GU. “We understand the critical need for more educators who represent students of color in the classroom and are committed to recruiting, supporting, and graduating more educators of color to be teachers of character who serve their students well. Partnering with other educators

across the state through this pilot program will add to our efforts in recruiting and preparing more students of color for thriving careers in the classroom.”

The recruitment and retention efforts are part of ISBE’s three-year strategic plan, which includes the goal of increasing teacher diversity in Illinois public schools. The recently released 2021 Illinois Report Card showed 82 percent of practicing Illinois teachers identify as White, whereas only 47 percent of Illinois public school students identify as White.

Research from the Learning Policy Institute shows that teachers of color boost the academic performance of students of color, including reading and math test scores, graduation rates, and aspirations to attend college. Studies also show that students taught by teachers of the same race are less likely to be chronically absent and less likely to experience exclusionary discipline.

“The diversity of Illinois is one of our state’s greatest strengths – including in our classrooms,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “By recruiting faculty of color who share their students’ lived experiences or expand their perspectives, our schools can empower more students to achieve their goals and pursue their passions. This pilot program is just the beginning of ISBE’s recruitment efforts and I commend the leadership of the 24 colleges and universities who have volunteered to spearhead this initiative with us.”

"I applaud the 24 colleges and universities that have volunteered to lead the way in breaking down barriers for people of color to join the teaching profession," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. "All students, and especially students of color, benefit from having diverse educators throughout their school experiences. My own mentors in my career have been people of color like me. When the role models and people in positions of authority in our lives look like us, that shapes our perception of our place in the world in a positive and powerful way."

The number of teachers of color in the profession has grown incrementally over the past three years. The pilot will help speed that progress by supporting programs in addressing their specific barriers to increasing candidate diversity. Pilot participants will draft their plans, receive feedback from a peer review committee composed primarily of Diverse and Learner Ready Teacher Network members, and meet to exchange ideas and collaborate. Pilot participants will finalize their plans by May 31 and reconvene in the future to dialogue about what strategies worked.

The colleges and universities that volunteered for ISBE’s pilot include:

Augustana College

Benedictine University

Blackburn College

Chicago State University

DePaul University

Dominican University

Eastern Illinois University

Eureka College

Governors State University

Greenville University

Illinois College

Illinois State University

Lewis University

National Louis University

Northeastern Illinois University

Northern Illinois University

Rockford University

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Trinity International University

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of St. Francis

VanderCook College of Music

Western Illinois University

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is the State Education Agency for Illinois. Its mission is to provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

Greenville University is an accredited Christian liberal arts university with more than 1,100 students, including traditional undergraduate, graduate, and adult degree completion students. Founded in 1892 and affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, the University is located in Greenville, Illinois, 45 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. Visit www.greenville.edu.