

Belt Supports Measures To Improve Illinois' Teacher Shortage

March 7 2022 11:26 AM



SPRINGFIELD – To address the teacher shortage, State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Swansea) supported the passage of a package of legislative measures to help recruit substitute teachers, teacher assistants, and support educators in the classroom.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, there are more than 4,000 unfilled positions in schools.

“As chair of the Senate Education Committee and a former school board member, I know how essential it is that we address the shortage head-on,” Belt said. “My colleagues and I have been working to combat the teacher shortage to ensure our children are getting the best educational experience and opportunities for their futures.”

Belt supported the following legislative measures:

- [Senate Bill 3915](#) – Would waive the application fee for short-term substitute teaching licensees when the governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency.
- [Senate Bill 3988](#) – Would lower the age requirement for teacher assistants from 19 to 18 for those who work in pre-K to eighth-grade classrooms.
- [Senate Bill 3893](#) – Would extend the number of days substitute teachers can teach from 90 to 120 days for the next two years.
- [Senate Bill 3914](#) – Would allow teachers to use two of their days off as mental health days, and that if a teacher needs three or more mental health days, the school district would require a note from a mental health professional.

“The teacher shortage is a complex issue,” Belt said. “These measures are vital as we fight for the teachers who support and give our students every opportunity they deserve.”

These legislative measures passed the Senate with bipartisan support and are in the House of Representatives for further consideration.