

Blackburn College Receives \$250,000 Grant for Establishing Residency Program to Address Statewide Teacher Shortage

April 13 2022 1:28 PM



CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has been awarded a \$250,000 two-year Teacher Residency Grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (IBSE) to help address the state's teacher shortage. The funds will be used to accelerate Blackburn's established Teacher Licensure Program (TLP) which the College launched in 2020. Blackburn's

fully-online licensure program provides the opportunity for individuals with bachelor's degrees in other fields of study to pursue new careers in teaching.

Dr. Michelle Stacy, Professor of Education and Teacher Licensure Program Coordinator, explained that these funds will allow Blackburn to provide additional resources to continue to address the teacher shortage in Illinois. She noted, "Our Teacher Licensure Program was originally designed to train high-quality teachers for areas most in need. It's very popular because it is a fast-track licensure program that can build a ton of essential training and first-hand classroom experience in just three semesters."

She continued, "We are thrilled to work through our established program and build on our partnerships with the area school districts. The Education Department faculty and staff at Blackburn are dedicated to supporting these future educators as they prepare to make an enormous impact and change lives through teaching."

Dr. Karla McCain, Blackburn College Provost, stated, "I love that the Teacher Licensure Program honors Blackburn's mission as a work college by making the work experience of students in the program central to their education. It also is part of what makes the program accessible."

The IBSE grant provides Blackburn the opportunity to partner with five regional school districts, including Carlinville, Greenfield, North Mac, Northwestern, Panhandle, and Southwestern, to develop residency programs to prepare teacher candidates. These teacher residents will complete licensure coursework at Blackburn while working in participating school districts. Students in the program will be matched with mentor teachers within each participating district. Grant funding also will be used to provide support and training for mentor teachers in each school district.

The Teacher Residency Planning Grant is a critical tool to combat the teacher shortage. Research shows that residency programs are more successful than traditional programs in recruiting diverse candidates and in retaining teachers once in the profession. The generous grant comes from the third round of funding of Governor J.B. Pritzker's Teacher Residency Planning initiative. This round prioritized programs that would serve rural areas or that would focus on preparing teachers in early childhood, bilingual education, or special education.

An informational session will be held at Blackburn on Wednesday, April 27 from 7-8 p. m. in the Demuzio Campus Center. Anyone interested in more information on the Teacher Licensure Program and participation in the grant is welcome to attend. Contact michelle.stacy@blackburn.edu or call 217.854.5505 for more information.

About Blackburn College

Founded in 1837, Blackburn College is a four-year, Presbyterian-related, co-educational liberal arts college located in Carlinville, IL. One of only ten federally-recognized Work Colleges, Blackburn has the only program in the nation fully managed by students. Balancing academic rigor and experiential learning, each student at Blackburn gains tangible experience and develops critical skills by contributing to their community, all while building a resume and earning their degree. U.S. News & World Report recognized Blackburn College as one of the top Liberal Arts Colleges in the Nation for Social Mobility in their Best Colleges lists for 2020, 2021, and 2022. The Center for Education & the Workforce at Georgetown University ranked Blackburn as a top performer for Earnings-Price Return - 209% (#1 in IL, #10 in the U.S.) and Net Price (#1 in IL; #11 in the U.S.). The Washington Monthly twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.