

Quick Takes

from the SEPI Student Voices Evaluation

This Quick Take is based on results from a recent evaluation of [Scaling Education Pathways in Illinois \(SEPI\)](#), which focused on the [perspective of students](#) participating in education pathways in participating SEPI school districts.

SEPI is an effort to build streamlined teacher career pathways that begin in high school, extend into postsecondary, and allow students to efficiently move along a path to a teaching license. SEPI has a special focus on helping students from diverse backgrounds become educators to create a workforce which reflects the diversity of the communities served. Support for SEPI collaboratives includes providing access to best practices, convening communities of practice which include annual summits, and guiding participants through the College and Career Pathway Endorsement process. The evaluation focused on understanding the perspectives of high school students who were enrolled in the program.

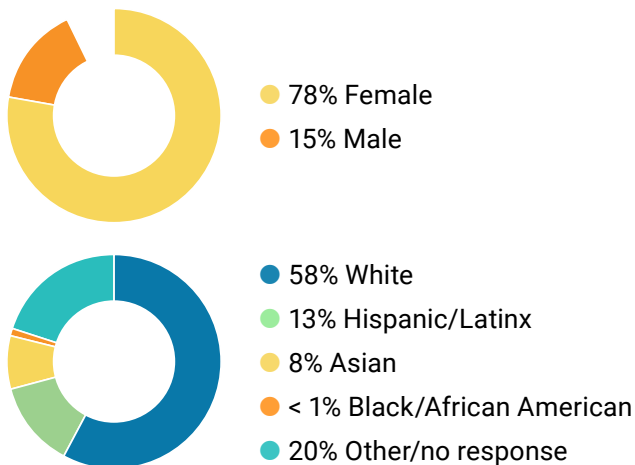


RESOURCE

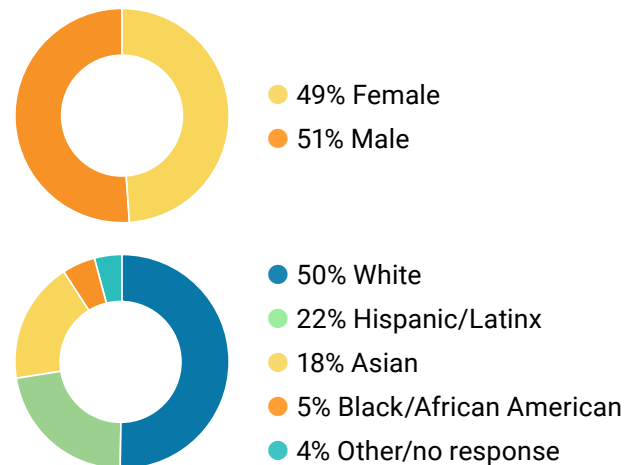
Download the SEPI
Student Voices Evaluation

Who is part of SEPI?

Demographics of Respondents*



Demographics of Schools



*As self-identified



KEY TAKEAWAY

Having an education pathway available is not enough to have an education pathway reflective of the student body.

Why do students enter the pathway?



- 58% Inspirational teacher
- 20% Family, other significant adults
- 20% Want to help young people
- 10% Harmful teacher

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“I want to be that teacher that my 4th grade teacher was for me.”

“My mom is a teacher and I have grown up around teachers...I want to be what my mom is to her students.”

“My mom would take me and my brother to a [neighborhood] group and a lady would teach us English. I feel like looking at her she would help not only us but a bunch of neighborhood kids...There really are people who want to help and I want to do that too.”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Students become interested in education pathways through inspirational teachers.

Students want to give back and help others be successful in school.

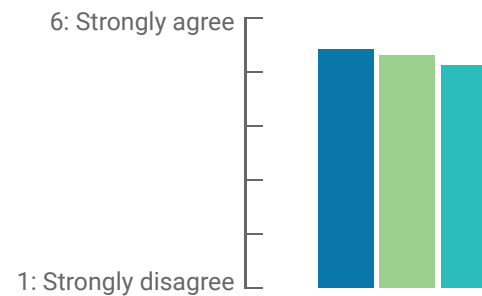


What do students think about the education pathway?

Expect to successfully complete the pathway

5.26 Total Average:

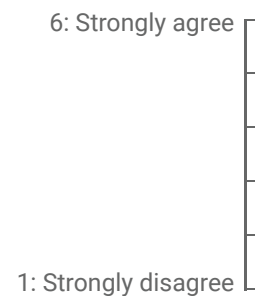
- 5.42 White
- 5.28 Hispanic/Latinx
- 5.06 Non-White, Non-Hispanic/Latinx



Find value in completing the pathway

5.36 Total Average:

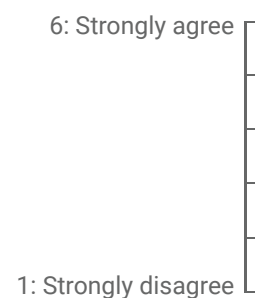
- 5.44 Female
- 5.26 Male



Find the costs of participating in the pathway high (time, other commitments)

2.61 Total Average:

- 2.53 Female
- 2.92 Male



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Most students think they can complete the pathway and find it valuable, but are concerned about how much time it takes.

- White students have more confidence than their non-White peers that they can be successful in the education pathway.
- Female students find more value in the education pathway than male students.
- Male students are more concerned than female students about how much time it takes and what they have to give up to be in the pathway.

What do students find beneficial in a pathway?



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I can confidently say I want to be an elementary school teacher because I have been in the classroom. I know what I want to do... And it saves me time and money in the long run."

"In 8th grade I went to an [high school] open house...and was introduced to the Ed Pathway, so I joined as a freshman. I knew I wanted to be a teacher after that."

"We go to actual preschools and help. I think that's a resource... Getting used to being around kids and teaching kids."

"Observing teachers and seeing what they really do all day."

"The opportunity to go out and teach in the classrooms."

"I get to do a lot of hands-on stuff and am able to ask questions to real teachers."

"Experiences I am getting now are way more diverse...The class now is very diverse and I am glad...but when I was growing up it wasn't that way."

"We have been prepared by this class about how diversity learning experiences are important, but we haven't really had too many experiences where we can apply that, and we can go to classrooms that have high diversity numbers."

"I definitely feel like I lack that diversity...I feel like only having a White and Hispanic look on things just won't be enough."



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Work-based experiences are especially valuable to students.

Students value work-based experiences in racially diverse settings, and are eager for more of them.

What do students need to succeed in a pathway?

Participants were asked to identify what has helped them in the pathway and would likely to continue to help as they pursued an educational career. Two themes emerged: teachers and peers.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Definitely my teacher. She definitely helps to inform us.”

“Other teachers... Talking to them and hearing their experiences...”

“My old third grade teacher...She lets me and the other students come down and talk to her about the teaching career...She’s given us really good information.”

“Honestly having each other is the best resource.”

“We all have a group chat that we use...”

“Communicating ideas and lesson plans, having people experience the same thing is important.”

“The classmates here because we’re going through the same thing.”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Students need support from teachers and peers.

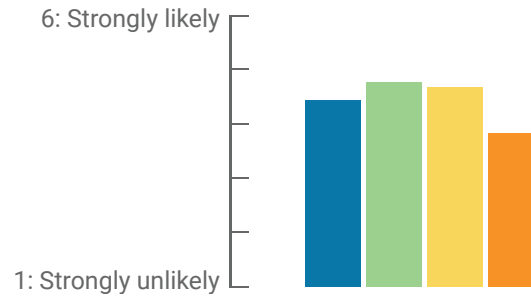


What do students think about teaching as a career?

Likely to enter the education profession

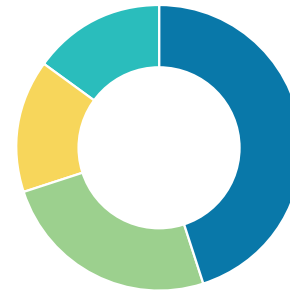
4.52 Total Average:

- 4.45 White
- 4.77 Hispanic/Latinx
- 4.67 Female
- 3.83 Male



Concerns about becoming a teacher

- 45% of students said their main concern is being successful
- 25% of students said their main concern is salary
- 15% of students said their main concern is teacher stress
- 15% of students said they might not become teachers



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“I worry most about the obstacles that will happen when I get into teaching...I watch on TikTok all these teachers that talk about people who don’t realize how hard it is.”

“I see teachers leave jobs because they didn’t realize what was coming and that kinda terrifies me.”

“I definitely feel like I lack that diversity...I feel like only having a White and Hispanic look on things just won’t be enough.”

“Will I be able to financially support myself if I do become a teacher?”

“The salary of teachers could be an obstacle.”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Most students intend to become teachers but they have concerns about being successful and about low pay.

Latinx pathway students are more interested than White students in entering the education profession.

Female pathway students are more interested than male students in entering the education profession.

Conclusion & Recommendations

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“I can confidently say I want to be an elementary school teacher because I have been in the classroom...I know what I want to do...And it saves me time and money in the long run.”

“Scholarships motivate you...you say to yourself, if I can have college paid for...It makes you want to be set on teaching.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers can play an important part in recruiting more diverse students into education pathways.
2. Districts should ensure the time commitment for pathways does not come at the expense of other aspects of the high school experience.
3. Pathway programs should prioritize time for teachers to mentor students and for students to engage with each other.
4. Pathway programs should ensure student experiences are robust, engaging, and in diverse settings.
5. State agencies should establish data tools to enable districts to follow their graduates into post-secondary institutions and careers.

NEXT STEPS

1. Future work is needed to follow students who have participated in SEPI as they matriculate into postsecondary institutions and begin their careers to understand the impacts education pathways have on the educator pipeline.
2. Future work investigating the decisions of students prior to enrolling in an education pathway can identify opportunities to get more students interested.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Pathways in schools supported by SEPI are working.

