

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

For Immediate Release
Oct. 11, 2019

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District 200 to establish teacher residency program

A grant recently acquired by Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 will help merge the gap between people who want to teach but lack the certification and teaching jobs that are difficult to fill because of specific requirements.

Through a collaboration with Aurora University, District 200 is launching a teacher residency program for individuals who have bachelor's degrees in subjects other than education and don't possess an Illinois Professional Educator License.

Keely Krueger, District 200 assistant superintendent for early childhood and elementary education, wrote the grant in response to a McHenry County-wide and Illinois shortage of teachers who have bilingual education credentials. Last year, there were 118 bilingual education openings across Illinois.

About one third of District 200 students participate in the dual language program and similar programs are growing in popularity at surrounding school districts. Bilingual education and special education are two of the areas with the greatest need for teachers throughout the state.

District 200 received \$50,000 and \$200,000 for next year from the Illinois State Board of Education to fund a teacher residency program where candidates will be paired with a mentor teacher during the school year while they take their teaching license coursework during the evenings. The resident trainees will receive a stipend and financial aid for their tuition.

"This is a way to expedite the process of getting their teacher's license as well as allowing them to get teaching experience with a mentor for a full school year," Krueger said. "It's job-imbedded professional development. Things they're learning in college will be reinforced as they're learning in their mentor classrooms."

Residents will be placed in one of District 200's six elementary schools and receive their teaching license with an endorsement in elementary education upon successful completion of the program. The 15-month program will begin in June 2020.

Krueger said people who successfully complete the program will get priority consideration for full-time teaching positions in the district.

Two informational sessions are scheduled for later this month. The first will be held from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24 at Olson Elementary School, 720 W. Judd St. The second will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28 at Aurora University Woodstock Center, 222 E. Church St.

"We want people to learn more about this opportunity. Bring your college transcripts when you come," Krueger said.