



ABOVE: Elizabeth Bernal, who works for food service at City High, attends a meeting at the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa on February 4th. Bernal has been a proponent for immigrant rights, and advocated on behalf of Iowa City becoming a sanctuary city at a City Council meeting. PHOTO BY SOFIE LIE

## Iowa City Reaffirms Immigration Stance

By Lucy McGehee & Molly Liu

As the Trump Administration rolls out promised immigration regulations, the Iowa City community has reaffirmed and emphasized their own stance. The City Council has passed a resolution that clarifies the city's current immigration policies, as requested by fearful members in the community.

"In light of public concerns, we are explicitly reaffirming that the focus of our law enforcement efforts will be on ensuring the safety of our residents and visitors, and that the city's law enforcement resources will not be used for immigration enforcement except as necessary for public safety, or as otherwise required by state or federal law," said Jim Throgmorton, Mayor of Iowa City, regarding the recent resolution.

The exceptions are highlighted explicitly in the resolution.

The 'Sanctuary City' issue traces back to the period after the presidential election, when groups of Iowa Citians requested a discussion regarding the adoption of the title. The City Council voted to reject the label in January. The

**"Iowa City is, and will continue to be, a safe and welcoming city for all of its residents and visitors."**

—Mayor Jim Throgmorton

term has come up many times following remarks by President Donald Trump. He threatened to pull federal funds from cities that have decided to label themselves as Sanctuary Cities as part of a heavily regulated immigration plan proposed during his campaign. Eleanor Dilkes, city attorney, does not believe that his remarks factored into Iowa City's decision to reject the title.

"I think that if there is any follow through on those remarks by the Trump Administration, they won't direct any legislation directed at a city that's labeled a sanctuary city," said Dilkes. "They will define what actual policies or laws at the city level will result in some kind of federal consequence."

Though the term 'Sanctuary City' bears no

legal weight, cities such as Los Angeles and New York who have generally inclusive immigration policies have adopted the label. The council instead passed a resolution which ensured that Iowa City Police will leave immigration enforcement to federal forces, such as ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

"I think prior to the resolution and after the election when there was a lot of fear expressed to us by members of our community and in turn there was a number of city statements released about Iowa City continuing to be a welcoming community to all," said Dilkes.

Historically, Iowa City has left immigration law to the federal government. By passing the resolution, the council sought to reaffirm this rule.

"Immigration enforcement and law is a federal matter, not a state or city matter," Dilkes said. "The function of our police and other resources are to ensure safety."

Elizabeth Bernal, a lunch lady at City High, spoke in favor of the label of a Sanctuary City at the January council meeting.

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## National Teacher Shortage Brings Challenges to Iowa

*State and local officials are looking for a solution for a shortage of willing and qualified teachers in a number of subjects.*

By Rasmus Schlutter & Eden Knoop

John Bacon, the principal of Iowa City High School, flips through dozens of applications for a new teacher opening. Whether it be in English, chemistry, or calculus, the time and consideration that goes into his final selection is immense. For Bacon, the hiring process is at the core to his role at City High.

"When you have a truly great teacher, everything just snaps into place," Bacon said. "Hiring is my most important duty. It is sacred to me, and being able to have a great pool of people to choose from is always going to make the process better for me and for all of City High."

City High is in a rare position, with applicants exceeding available openings by significant margins. On average, there are over 80 applications for a new teaching position, a number that many school districts in Iowa would envy. Over the past six years, it has become increasingly difficult for many Iowa schools to find qualified teachers to fill open positions. Cultural shifts in attitudes toward teaching and cuts in state funding have contributed to this growing problem, but the issue is complex and constantly changing.

"There have been shortages of teachers almost as long as there have been schools," said Larry Bice, an Administrative Consultant in Educator Preparation at the Iowa Department of Education. "There are a number of reasons [for the shortages], a major one being that education changes. We see new subject areas and populations growing quickly, requiring new schools and more teachers."

The shortage in Iowa reflects a larger trend across the nation, one which experts have been warning about for years. However, City High and the Iowa City Community School District, or ICCSD, have remained mostly insulated from this emerging problem.

"[Iowa City] is such a desirable place to live and a destination school district so I don't know if this has hit us as hard as some places," Bacon said.

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## ICCSD Changes Approach to Inclusivity With Student Advisory Panel

By Addy Smith & Victor Kalil

*The school district released a non-discriminatory statement and assembled a student advisory panel to promote diversity within the ICCSD.*

With the increase of discriminatory rhetoric in the United States in the past several weeks, the ICCSD School Board has issued a non-discriminatory statement to ensure safe and accepting school environments.

"I believe our school is a kind, inclusive, supportive place," Principal John Bacon said. "However, we can and we must continue to improve."

In addition to releasing a non-discrimination statement to all of its schools, the ICCSD School Board has ordered for the assembly of a student advisory panel at each ICCSD school, from the elementary to secondary level.

"It is both an honor and responsibility to be selected into the group," Ava Otoadese '18, a member of City High's student panel, said. "I think the formation of the advisory board was an awesome idea, and we have a really great group of students who are committed to the cause."

The Board's first "assignment" for this new student-driven panel was to hold an assembly where the Board's statement would be disseminated. Instead, the City High Administration made the executive decision to make a video to be shared during the advisory period.

"Our goal [when making this video] was to both remind students that harassment will not be accepted at City, and to give students the confidence to speak up if they witness discrimination or harassment," Otoadese said.

After the election, the ICCSD School Board was prompted to reiterate this message of anti-bullying and harassment after receiving information from students and staff about students receiving hurtful comments regarding potential policies that the President-Elect had called for.

"The Board released the anti-discriminatory

**"I think the formation of the advisory board was an awesome idea, and we have a really great group of students who are committed to the cause."**

—Ava Otoadese '18

statement after a Sudanese family had hate mail written on their car and door, and because of the subsequent events that occurred in response at West High," City High's student advisory panel's faculty advisor and iJAG [position], Elizabeth Rook, said. "Because of the election, students are feeling like [they] 'don't know what to do, [they] don't feel like [the School board has their] backs'. This [initiative] is the School board saying, 'We have your back.'"

Efforts to continue to promoting diversity and inclusiveness within the ICCSD have not just risen in response to the recent presidential election.

"ICCSD schools have been working on trying to become more equitable every year. It is an ongoing issue not just for our district but across the country," School Board Vice President LaTasha DeLoach said. "I believe we need to infuse our discussions throughout our school year with a culturally responsive curriculum and discussion. We need to teach our children to not just notice that people are different but to actively engage with [different] cultures and people who are different."

Although these efforts are not fresh, the presidential election has provided a renewed motivation for action and a desire to improve acceptance in our schools.

"With the recent election there has been a lot of backlash across the country. Many people seem to be less inhibited about expressing prejudices, and it is important to make sure that this stays as far away as possible from our school and district," Otoadese '18 said. "We have a great school full of great students, and we need to remember that recent events cannot justify a deterioration of social decency."

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# Teacher Shortage *continued from A1*

“I think rural Iowa experiences far greater challenges.”

While Bacon is optimistic for the Iowa City schools, statistics on patterns in teaching employment reveal an alarming trend. In the past five years, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has decreased by over 230,000 students, or more than 35%, nationwide. For certain parts of the country, the decrease has been much more dramatic. In California, teacher preparation enrollment dropped by 74% over a ten year period. Today, Iowa colleges graduate 16% fewer educational administrators, counselors, and teachers than they did in 2013.

The shortage has left some school districts in Iowa struggling to even get applicants. In Iowa City, special education, English Language Learners, or ELL, and foreign language programs have had the most difficulty hiring new staff.

“Currently in Iowa, the greatest shortage need is in the several areas of special education, at all grade levels,” Bice said. “Following that we have shortages in high school shortage areas such as physics, family and consumer science, industrial technology, business, librarian staffing, and agriculture education.”

For City High, however, the most pressing issue is not full-time teachers at all, but substitutes.

“We have dealt with a shortage in being able to keep in demand with substitute teacher and long-term substituted teachers,” Bacon explained. “We’ve struggled to find qualified teachers that are able and willing to step into that role.”

A lack of substitute teacher provides a challenge that is very different from that of finding qualified full-time candidates, but nonetheless has emerged as a challenge for ICCSD in the past years. But similar issues exist in different regions of Iowa , with often great consequences to the learning environment of a school or distrct.

“The teacher shortages often mirror populations,” Bice said. “We have a number of school

districts in Iowa with fewer than 1,000 students in the entire district. The shortages in these districts are generally more severe than in urban areas. “

In rural districts, shortage in full-time teacher staffing can have a serious impact on these districts’ abilities to provide a consistently quality education.

“There is a definite negative impact for schools that are not able to find teachers to teach certain subjects,” Bice explained. “The students are impacted by either not being able to take courses they want, or being in a class with a large number of students.”

As shortages develop and often remain, rural districts have been working more with officials at both the state and local level to alleviate teacher shortages in whatever ways they can.

“The Department of Education is limited in its authority to make changes directly. We work closely with others, however,” Bice said. “One agency, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, has the authority to award money to teachers who teach in shortage areas. We work with them to help identify teachers eligible to receive money.”

Even as the Department of Education moves to address the issues where they can, the variables that contribute to shortages of full-time and substitute teachers can vary

—Principal John Bacon

est number in 25 years.

Jennifer Brinkmeyer, a City High English teacher and the ICCSD Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator works to ensure that the core language arts education offered by ICCSD is uniform across the district and compliant with state standards. Operating between City High and ICCSD, while remaining in dialogue with the state, Brinkmeyer has seen many variables of the shortage at play.

“[The substitute shortage] doesn’t really have to do to much with funding,” Brinkmeyer said. “Few people want to do the job. You have to find someone who is available to work a flexible schedule and doesn’t need healthcare, which is a tall order. And they need to have at least a bachelor’s degree in something and not actually be doing something with it.”

But even with a locale such as Iowa City, reductions in state funding always loom as a potential threat to staffing, one that

more greatly affect a school’s atmosphere than shortages in substitute teachers.

“A few years ago we had to cut money from our budget, and City and West had to both lose six teachers. Now, the district has set goals so that nobody will actually have to lose a job,” Brinkmeyer said. “They might be transitioned into a different role that is not necessarily in the classroom so they can at least still have a job.”

Districts like ICCSD often appear immune to teacher shortages generally associated with rural areas, but cuts in state funding can have serious consequences and threaten the wide selection of qualified applicants.

“Some of those positions we lost have never been filled back in, and this year our district is facing a one million dollar budget shortfall,” Brinkmeyer said. “It remains to be seen if staffing will be affected by this.”

At the Iowa Department of Education, some solutions have emerged, but the complexity of the shortages make them difficult to address in single sweeps of policy.

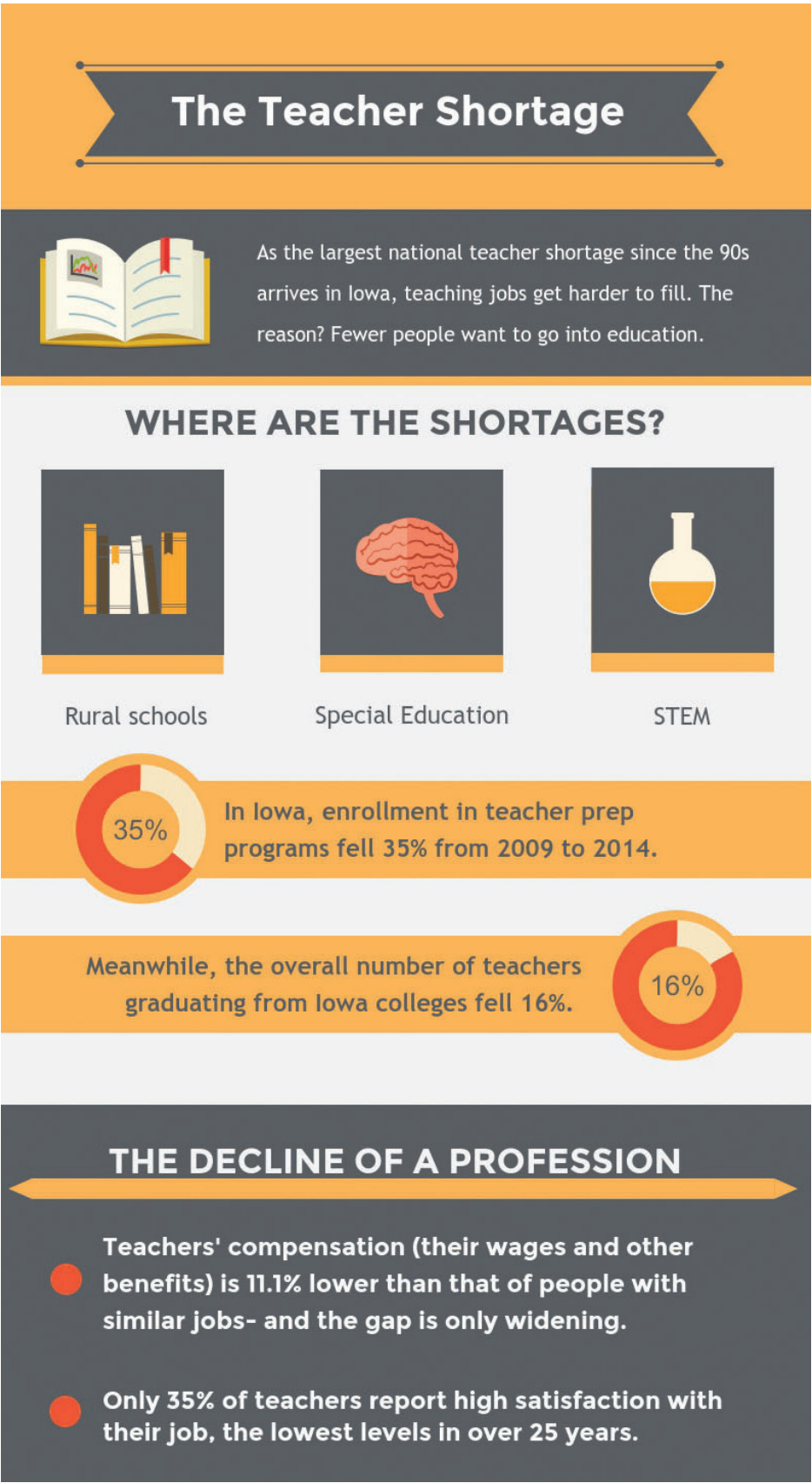
“Recently, the Iowa legislature passed a law to award money to new teachers who finished in the top 25% of their college graduating class and teach in shortage areas,” Bice said. “Another agency, the School Administrators of Iowa, used our shortage information and our help to bring together school administrators from across Iowa to meet with teacher preparation faculty across Iowa to work together to reduce shortages.”

Back in his office, Mr. Bacon is still looking through applications. He’s conferred with district official and school faculty and much deliberation, is ready to make a decision. Quickly, an official announcement follows and a new teacher is welcomed to the staff of City High. But that luxury of competition and choice is not a one shared across Iowa, and as potential challenges emerge, Bacon continues to work towards hiring and retaining the qualified teaching staff at Iowa City High School.

“Anytime we get a new member it is an awesome responsibility,” Bacon said. “Teaching is such a critically important profession and being able to attract the best and brightest to education is an investment that pays off in so many ways.”

**“The teacher shortages often mirror populations,” Bice said. “We have a number of school districts in Iowa with fewer than 1,000 students in the entire district.”**

—Larry Bice



INFOGRAPHIC BY EDEN KNOOP

greater and be difficult to approach.

“There are a lot of suspected causes being discussed and researched. Some are cultural: Do we hold teachers in the esteem that we should? Some are financial: Do we pay teachers what we should?” Bice said. “Others are geographic: How do we draw teachers to relocate to rural communities? It is not easy to become a teacher. Some shortage areas, such as special education, require even more learning.”

The decline in interest and importance placed on teaching has been increasingly well-documented. The average pay of teachers is over 11% less than jobs with similar requirements, and today, only 35% of teachers report satisfaction with their jobs, the low-



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