



Trends in the Use of Emergency Credentials in Wisconsin Public Schools

Region 10 Comprehensive Center

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Executive Summary

This policy brief, produced by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as part of the Region 10 Comprehensive Center, is one in a series examining selected topics related to Wisconsin’s educator workforce. The goal of this brief is to summarize key trends in the use of emergency credentials within Wisconsin’s public schools in recent years, which is a topic of interest for at least two reasons. A first reason is that increased reliance by Wisconsin school districts on emergency credentials as a strategy for filling vacant positions would serve as a meaningful indicator that widely-reported shortages of educators are worsening. A second policy implication associated with emergency credentials is a potential equity issue. To the extent that emergency credentials are being used by some districts and schools more than others, particularly for teaching positions and by districts and schools with higher shares of traditionally marginalized students, state and local policymakers should question whether additional supports and resources may be necessary to ensure that all students have access to highly-qualified educators.

Specific questions addressed in this brief are as follows:

1. How has the overall use of emergency credentials in Wisconsin public schools changed in recent years, and for which specific types of positions?
2. How frequently are educators who are working under emergency credentials “extending their stay” (by working past the intended one-year period) and “doing double duty” (by working concurrently during the same school year under emergency certification, either in multiple districts or multiple roles within the same district)?
3. How widespread is the use of emergency credentials (particularly for teaching) across Wisconsin school districts (at a statewide, regional, and local level, and among the state’s largest districts), and how has this changed over time?
4. To what extent is the use of emergency credentials (for teaching in particular) associated with selected district characteristics such as geographic locale type (city, suburb, town, rural) and poverty rate?

Key findings include the following:

- Wisconsin districts’ use of emergency credentials has increased steadily and dramatically for two of the three major credential types (teaching and pupil services), with a 206.5% increase in the number of teaching emergency credentials and an 864.7% increase in the number of pupil services emergency credentials.
- By far the highest number of emergency credentials for teaching positions was in Special Education, which increased by 305.8% between 2012-13 and 2020-21. While much smaller in numerical terms, large percentage increases in emergency teaching credentials are also observed for Math (270.4%), Bilingual-Bicultural (72.9%), Science (89.7%), and Foreign Language (67.3%).
- Within the Pupil Services category, significant increases in emergency credentials have been observed for all three sub-categories (500.0% for School Counselors, 2666.7% for School Psychologists, and 428.6% for School Social Workers).

- For all three categories (teachers, administrators, and pupil services), the percentage of individual educators who have “extended their stay” by working in the same district and role under emergency credentials beyond the intended one-year period has increased considerably. Among teachers working under emergency credentials, nearly half (43.3%, excluding those working under three-year license with stipulations) were still working in the same district and role the following year.
- At least 4% of emergency-credentialed teachers have been working in multiple districts concurrently each year, with as many as 13.5% doing so in 2016-17.
- The percentage of Wisconsin’s local school districts and independent charter schools employing at least one emergency-certified teacher increased from 52.4% in 2012-13 to 86.5% in 2020-21.
- Reliance on emergency-credentialed teachers has particularly increased among the state’s rural school districts: while less than half (44.2%) of Wisconsin’s rural districts had at least one emergency-certified teacher in 2012-13, more than three-fourths (81.8%) did in 2020-21.
- Nearly all of Wisconsin’s 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) had more than a 100% increase in teaching emergency credentials between 2012-13 and 2020-21, and 7 of the 12 CESAs had increases of more than 200%. CESA 1 and CESA 2 had the highest reliance on emergency-credentialed teachers, both in an absolute sense (the total number of emergency-certified teachers in 2020-21) and as a percentage of all teachers.
- Collectively, the five largest districts in Wisconsin (in descending order of enrollment: Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, and Racine) employed 1017 emergency-credentialed teachers in 2020-21, compared to 323 in 2012-13. This represented an increase of 214.9%.
- In 2020-21, emergency-credentialed teachers represented 9.3% of all teachers working in Wisconsin’s five largest districts combined. This percentage was up considerably from just 3.0% of all teachers in these same districts in 2012-13 (and nearly twice as high as the 5.3% of all teachers statewide working under emergency credentials in 2020-21).
- Wisconsin school districts with the highest poverty rates had the highest percentages of all teachers working under emergency certification every year, a trend which highlights the equity implications inherent in having students with the highest level of need taught more frequently by emergency-credentialed instructors.

With increased attention in Wisconsin (and nationwide) to educator shortages, districts’ use of emergency credentials offers one important indicator of how widespread staffing challenges have become, both overall as well as for specific positions and districts or regions of the state. Increased reliance on emergency-certified teachers, finally, raises important questions about equity, to the extent that some districts (most notably, the largest in Wisconsin, and those enrolling higher shares of students from lower-income families) are using teachers with emergency credentials more frequently than other districts.

Introduction and Guiding Questions

This policy brief, produced by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as part of the Region 10 Comprehensive Center, is one in a series that examines selected topics related to Wisconsin’s educator workforce. The goal of this brief is to summarize trends in the use of emergency (short-term) credentials within Wisconsin’s public schools in recent years. As

schools in Wisconsin (and across the country) struggle with increasing shortages of educators (see, for example, Podolsky, et al., 2016)¹ – particularly in hard-to-staff licensure areas² and in rural and urban schools – the use of short-term licensure options for filling educator vacancies has emerged as both an important policy topic (see, for example, Carver-Thomas, et al., 2017³ and Espinoza, et al., 2018⁴) and as an important indicator of whether educator shortages may in fact be worsening.

Specific questions addressed in this brief are as follows:

1. How has the overall use of emergency credentials in Wisconsin public schools changed in recent years, and for which specific types of positions?
2. How frequently are educators who are working under emergency credentials “extending their stay” (by working past the intended one-year period) and “doing double duty” (by working concurrently during the same school year under emergency certification, either in multiple districts or multiple roles within the same district)?
3. How widespread is the use of emergency credentials (particularly for teaching) across Wisconsin school districts (at a statewide, regional, and local level, and among the state’s largest districts), and how has this changed over time?
4. To what extent is the use of emergency credentials (for teaching in particular) associated with selected district characteristics such as geographic locale type (city, suburb, town, rural) and poverty rate?

About the Data

The data used to produce this brief come from a set of publicly-available files maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).⁵ Specifically, DPI produces data files each year for all licensed staff working within Wisconsin schools, including those working under emergency credentials in traditional public school districts, independent (non-district) charter schools, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), and (in some years) private schools. Emergency credential data are available as of this writing (March 2022) in comparable formats for the school years 2012-13 through 2020-21, so that nine-year time frame was used as the basis for this brief.

¹ Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators. *Learning Policy Institute*.

² The U.S. Department of Education (<https://tsa.ed.gov/#/home/>) maintains annual records of hard-to-staff licensure areas as reported by each state education agency (SEA). For 2017-18 (and most prior years), DPI reported several types of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Special Education licenses, along with English as a Second Language/Bilingual, Foreign Language, Library Media, Mathematics, Music, Reading, and Science.

³ Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do about It. *Learning Policy Institute*.

⁴ Espinoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). Taking the Long View: State Efforts to Solve Teacher Shortages by Strengthening the Profession. *Learning Policy Institute*.

⁵ See <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/programs/talent-dev-framework>.

Emergency credentials are issued for three main types of educator positions: teachers, administrators, and pupil services personnel. In accordance with state guidelines,⁶ educators may apply for short-term licensure to work in Wisconsin public schools “...when they are employed in an assignment prior to being eligible for full licensure in that grade, subject or position.” Prior to 2018-19, teaching and pupil services licenses were known as *emergency licenses*, which were issued to applicants holding a valid Wisconsin teaching license but were requesting to teach outside the subject and/or grade level of their license. *Emergency permits* were issued to applicants holding a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university but without a teaching certification.

Beginning in 2018-19, educators could apply for a one-year license with stipulations for teaching or pupil services positions for one of the following reasons:

- *Out-of-State program*: For teachers or pupil services staff prepared in another state who have not yet met Wisconsin testing requirements; OR
- *Wisconsin-approved program*: Teachers with a bachelor’s degree who have completed all coursework in a Wisconsin-approved program, but who have not met all Wisconsin-approved program requirements; OR
- *School district need*: Individuals with a bachelor’s degree hired by a district that cannot find a fully licensed educator.

Wisconsin school districts may also request one-year licenses for administrators that can be renewed for a second year,⁷ and/or a three-year, district-sponsored license with stipulations (LWS3) if certain criteria are met.⁸

The goal of short-term licensure options is to fill vacancies while an educator works to obtain full licensure. In order to advance to the next stage of provisional licensure for teaching positions, the following steps must be taken for each of the above three categories:

- *Out-of-State program*: Pass the required Wisconsin licensure tests by August 31 of the year the license expires so that DPI can consider the candidate for a Provisional License (Tier II).
- *Wisconsin-approved program*: Finish the requirements of a Wisconsin-approved program so that an applicant’s preparation program can endorse them for a license.
- *School district need*: Enroll in an educator preparation program and complete at least 6 semester credits toward a licensure program by August 31 of the year the license expires.

In analyzing these three emergency licensure types, some modifications to data were necessary. 2020-21 emergency licensure data posted on the DPI website contained duplicate records, which have been removed for purposes of cross-year analysis. Specifically, emergency license applications were cross-listed under the same educators’ names for the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and St. Charles Youth and Family Services (a provider of specialized services to MPS students). Since this duplication did not appear in the data for any other year, nor (as far as we can tell) did any other district in the state submit duplicate records like this for any other year, we have removed the 552 duplicates and only counted these educators once in the MPS and statewide totals.

⁶ See <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/apply-educator-license/one-year-stip>.

⁷ <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/apply-educator-license/emergency-admin-extension>

⁸ <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/apply-educator-license/lws-threeyear>.

Key Findings

Question 1: How has the overall use of emergency credentials in Wisconsin public schools changed in recent years, and for which specific types of positions?

Figure A and Table 1 show the number of emergency credentials issued by DPI for use in Wisconsin public schools from 2012-13 through 2020-21. These credentials are listed for the three main categories (teacher, administrator, and pupil services) which are requested by districts and approved by DPI, along with a count of unduplicated individuals working under teaching emergency credentials. **One clear trend is that Wisconsin districts’ use of emergency credentials has increased steadily for two of the three major credential types (teaching and pupil services). Emergency teaching licenses saw a 206.5% increase, while pupil services emergency credentials saw an increase of 864.7%.** Administrator emergency credentials, interestingly, increased steadily from 2012-13 through 2016-17 before dropping back to 2012-13 levels for the four most recent years of data (2017-18 through 2020-21), and overall are down slightly (-15.9%) between 2012-13 and 2020-21. **The number of unique (unduplicated) individuals teaching under emergency credentials is up 164.5% over the past nine years. The fact that this count has increased less than the total number of emergency credentials for teaching positions suggests that more individuals may be doing “double duty” by working under multiple sets of emergency credentials in the same year, either in multiple districts or in multiple roles within the same district.** We examine this trend in more detail below.

Figure A: Emergency Credentials in Wisconsin Public Schools

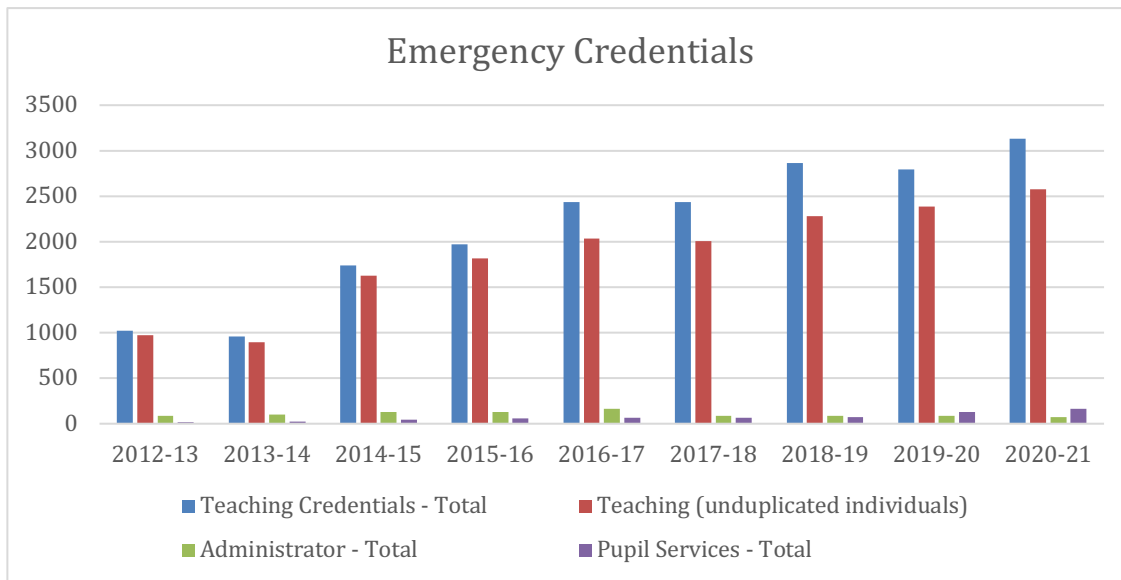


Table 1: Emergency Credentials by Category, 2012-13 through 2020-21

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Increase
Teacher Credentials	1021	957	1741	1969	2435	2432	2863	2795	3129	206.5%
Teacher (unduplicated individuals)	975	898	1630	1815	2037	2004	2279	2386	2579	164.5%
Administrator Credentials	88	98	126	129	162	84	89	85	74	-15.9%
Pupil Services Credentials	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>164</u>	864.7%
Total	1126	1075	1913	2149	2659	2581	3022	3008	3367	199.0%

In terms of subject areas emergency *teaching* credentials have most often been used to fill, Table 2 summarizes this information across the last nine years. For this analysis, we combined several types of teaching licenses into categories in order to show trend data, as explained in the footnotes beneath Table 2. **By far the highest number of emergency credentials for teaching positions was for Special Education, which increased by 305.8% between 2012-13 and 2020-21. While much smaller in numerical terms, large percentage increases in emergency teaching credentials are also observed for the subject areas of Math (270.4%), Bilingual-Bicultural (72.9%), Science (89.7%), and Foreign Language (67.3%).**

Table 2: Most Common Emergency Credentials for Teaching Positions

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Increase
Special Education*	312	310	580	618	796	844	1273	1187	1266	305.8%
Science**	68	77	101	101	148	137	119	71	129	89.7%
Bilingual-Bicultural	96	103	250	244	242	212	178	176	166	72.9%
ESL***	63	37	72	104	114	117	104	87	81	28.6%
Mathematics	27	19	49	55	73	62	93	93	100	270.4%
Foreign Language****	49	40	59	71	93	111	99	88	82	67.3%

*Special Education is a combined category that includes the following teaching emergency credential types (not all of which had emergency credentials issued in the years analyzed): Adaptive Physical Education, American Sign Language, Cognitive Disability, Cross-Categorical, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Early Childhood Special Education, Emotional/Behavioral Disability, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Specific Learning Disability, Speech and Language Pathology, and Visual Impairment.

**Science is another combined category developed for this analysis, including Biology, Broad Field Science, Chemistry, Earth and Space Science, Environmental Studies, Physical Science, Physics, and Science.

***ESL = English as a Second Language

****Foreign Language includes Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Latin, Other Foreign Language, and Spanish.

Table 3 includes the breakout of emergency credentials within the *Administrator* and *Pupil Services* categories, both of which are much smaller numerically than the number of emergency credentials for teaching positions. Within the Administrator category, the two largest sub-categories of emergency credentials are for principals and Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, although the data for both (and for principals in particular) fluctuate considerably across years. A particularly large number of emergency credentials for principals was observed in 2016-17. **Within the Pupil Services category, very large increases in the percent of emergency credentials have been observed for all three sub-categories (500.0% for School Counselors, 2666.7% for School Psychologists, and 428.6% for School Social Workers).**

Table 3: Emergency Credentials for Administrator and Pupil Services Positions

	2012 -13	2013 -14	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019- 20	2020- 21	% Increase
Administrator:										
Career & Tech Ed Dir.	1	1	7	4	5	0	5	4	3	200.0%
Director of Instruction	12	17	15	18	12	7	8	8	7	-41.7%
Dir. of SpEd/Pupil Svcs	14	15	25	31	36	23	25	19	18	28.6%
IT Coordinator	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100.0%
Principal	29	37	53	42	70	41	35	30	26	-10.3%
Reading Specialist	11	10	10	16	14	5	9	12	8	-27.3%
School Business Admin	3	1	1	3	4	0	3	5	2	-33.3%
Superintendent	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>-41.2%</u>
<i>Administrator Total</i>	88	98	126	129	162	84	89	85	74	-15.9%
Pupil Services:										
School Counselor	7	7	19	20	27	26	21	30	42	500.0%
School Psychologist	3	6	5	9	12	10	22	68	83	2666.7 %
School Social Worker	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>428.6%</u>
<i>Pupil Services Total</i>	17	20	46	60	62	65	70	128	162	852.9%

Question 2: How frequently are educators who are working under emergency credentials “extending their stay” (by working past the intended one-year period) and “doing double duty” (by working concurrently during the same school year under emergency certification, either in multiple districts or multiple roles within the same district)?

Most types of emergency credentials are intended to be used for one year only. Anecdotal accounts of educators (and teachers in particular) working in consecutive years under emergency status, however, led us to wonder how often educators are “extending their stay” by working under emergency credentials across multiple years? This question was informed by the longitudinal data shown below in Table 4, which shows the percentage of emergency-credentialed educators (individuals) in each of the three main categories (teachers, administrators, pupil services) from each “base” (starting) year who were still working under emergency credentials in the same position and within the same district the next year (i.e., over *two consecutive years*) and the next two years (i.e., over *three consecutive years*). We exclude from these calculations teachers and pupil services staff working under three-year licenses with stipulations beginning in 2017-18, and focus instead on those working under either one-year

emergency permits or licenses (through 2018-19) or under one-year license with stipulations or one-year administrator licenses (2018-19 and thereafter).

For all three categories (teachers, administrators, and pupil services), the percentage of individual educators who have “extended their stay” by working in the same district and role under emergency credentials beyond the intended one-year period has increased considerably. Among *teachers* working under emergency credentials, nearly half (43.3%, excluding those working under three-year license with stipulations) were still working in the same district and role the following year.

Comparable, albeit slightly lower, figures are observed for individuals working under emergency credentials as *administrators* and in *pupil services* roles (same district, same role) in a second consecutive year. The data also show (particularly for teachers, and again beginning in 2014-15) a significant number remaining in the same district and same role for a *third* consecutive year.

Table 4: Wisconsin Educators Working Under Emergency Credentials by Category across Multiple Years

Category	Base Year	Number of E-Cert Individuals in Base Year	% in Same District and Role One Year Later (Two Consecutive Years)	% in Same District and Role One and Two Years Later (Three Consecutive Years)
Teacher	2012-13	975	3.3%	0.1%
Teacher	2013-14	898	3.9%	1.2%
Teacher	2014-15	1630	31.2%	12.5%
Teacher	2015-16	1815	38.2%	13.2%
Teacher	2016-17	2037	37.6%	12.1%
Teacher	2017-18	1911*	37.2%	13.9%
Teacher	2018-19	2112*	39.3%	15.2%
Teacher	2019-20	2235*	43.3%	n/a
Administrator	2012-13	85	0.0%	0.0%
Administrator	2013-14	92	9.8%	0.0%
Administrator	2014-15	125	4.8%	0.0%
Administrator	2015-16	124	27.4%	0.0%
Administrator	2016-17	152	32.9%	1.3%
Administrator	2017-18	79	20.3%	0.0%
Administrator	2018-19	86	15.1%	1.2%
Administrator	2019-20	80	8.8%	n/a
Pupil Services	2012-13	17	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2013-14	19	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2014-15	46	32.6%	10.9%
Pupil Services	2015-16	60	33.3%	13.3%
Pupil Services	2016-17	61	37.7%	8.2%
Pupil Services	2017-18	61	24.6%	8.2%
Pupil Services	2018-19	64	23.4%	4.7%
Pupil Services	2019-20	123	30.9%	n/a

*Counts of teachers working under emergency certification starting in 2017-18 exclude those working under a three-year license with stipulations.

Increases in educators working under emergency credentials beyond the intended one-year period may be explained by at least two factors. First, which cuts across all three categories of emergency licensure, is Wisconsin districts face increased challenges filling these positions on a permanent basis, so they rely on short-term strategies such as emergency licensure that sometimes turn into longer-term strategies.

Second, for at least some teaching positions, the difficulty of passing required licensure assessments, in particular the Foundations of Reading Test which has been required for many types of teacher licensure in Wisconsin (including elementary, special education, and reading) since 2014.⁹ Anecdotal accounts of teacher candidates having difficulty passing the FoRT are common in Wisconsin, and passing rates for graduates of Wisconsin's 40+ educator preparation programs (EPPs) confirm that this step may serve as a much bigger barrier for entry into the teaching profession than other required licensure exams.¹⁰ While research thus far is limited in terms of associations between FoRT scores and subsequent teacher ratings, Jones and Bales (2019) found that not only is FoRT a greater impediment to certification for prospective teachers of color than to white candidates, but also that FoRT scores did not contribute significantly to statistical predictions of teacher effective ratings. These results were found in Wisconsin data after controlling for teachers' undergraduate GPA, race/ethnicity, and gender, and after controlling for the size and student demographics of districts that completers from Wisconsin's educator preparation programs wound up being hired by.¹¹

We were also interested in the question of how often emergency-certified educators are doing "double duty" during the same academic year in the following scenarios:

- Working concurrently under emergency credentials in *multiple districts*
- Working concurrently under emergency credentials in *multiple roles/positions within the same district*

Table 5 presents a summary of these trends in recent years. On the first measure (the percentage of educators working concurrently under emergency credentials in *multiple districts during the same year*), data for all three categories of school personnel (teachers, administrators, pupil services) show very few (if any) such instances for the first four years of data (2012-13 through 2016-17), then modest increases (to around 1-3%) for the next set of years (2016-17 through 2019-20). For the second "double duty" measure, however - how many educators are working under emergency credentials in *multiple roles/positions within the same district during the same year* - there were much higher numbers for teachers. **At least 4% of emergency-credentialed teachers worked in multiple districts concurrently each year, with as many as 13.5% doing so in 2016-17.**

⁹ See <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/edu-licensing/testing-requirements>.

¹⁰ DPI's 2020 EPP Annual Report, for example, indicates that passing rates on the FoRT among 2018-19 EPP completers were just 59% on the first attempt and 65% on any attempt – which are both lower than for previous years since FoRT became a state-required licensure assessment. As one point of comparison, pass rates for the Praxis II subject-area assessments are much higher (in the 80-100% range) for most subjects, although significant variation is observed by subject. See <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/licensing/pdf/2020-WI-EPP-Annual-Report-Dec-2021.pdf>.

¹¹ See <https://uwm.edu/sreed/wp-content/uploads/sites/502/2020/03/Research-Brief-The-Utility-and-Cost-of-Requiring-Wisconsin-Teachers-Pass-the-FoRT-and-edTPA-assessments.pdf>.

Table 5: Individuals Working Under Emergency Credentials in Multiple Districts or in Multiple Roles in the Same District in the Same Year, by Category

Category	Year	Number of E-Cert Individuals	% Working in Multiple Districts in the Same Year	% Working in Multiple Roles Within the Same District in the Same Year
Teacher	2012-13	975	0.1%	4.1%
Teacher	2013-14	898	0.0%	5.6%
Teacher	2014-15	1630	0.1%	5.6%
Teacher	2015-16	1815	0.0%	6.8%
Teacher	2016-17	2037	3.4%	13.5%
Teacher	2017-18	2004	3.2%	11.9%
Teacher	2018-19	2279	3.0%	10.8%
Teacher	2019-20	2386	3.3%	9.5%
Administrator	2012-13	85	0.0%	2.4%
Administrator	2013-14	92	0.0%	5.4%
Administrator	2014-15	125	0.0%	0.8%
Administrator	2015-16	124	0.0%	4.0%
Administrator	2016-17	152	0.0%	2.6%
Administrator	2017-18	79	2.5%	1.3%
Administrator	2018-19	86	1.2%	1.2%
Administrator	2019-20	80	0.0%	3.8%
Pupil Services	2012-13	17	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2013-14	19	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2014-15	46	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2015-16	60	0.0%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2016-17	61	0.0%	1.6%
Pupil Services	2017-18	61	3.3%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2018-19	64	3.1%	0.0%
Pupil Services	2019-20	123	1.6%	0.0%

Question 3: How widespread is the use of emergency credentials (particularly for teaching) across Wisconsin school districts (at a statewide, regional, and local level, and among the state’s largest districts), and how has this changed over time?

Several measures can be utilized to provide a sense of how widespread the use of teaching emergency credentials has been in Wisconsin public schools in recent years. A useful starting point is tracking the number (and percentage) of Wisconsin school districts and independent (non-district) charter schools having at least one emergency-credentialed teacher each year. Table 6 shows this information for each year from 2012-13 to 2020-21, and a dramatic increase is observed: **in 2012-13, 232 of the state’s 443 districts and independent charters (52.4%) employed at least one emergency-certified teacher, compared with 384 of 444 (86.5%) in 2020-21.**

Table 6: Number and Percentage of Districts/Independent Charters with 1+ Emergency-Credentialed Teachers, by Year

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
# of School Districts	424	424	424	424	422	422	421	421	421
# Independent Charters	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
Total # Entities	443	444	445	445	442	443	444	443	444
# of Entities with 1+ E-Cert Teacher	232	240	300	350	357	356	374	381	384
% of Entities with 1+ E-Cert Teacher	52.4%	54.1%	67.4%	78.7%	80.8%	80.4%	84.2%	86.0%	86.5%

For the purpose of examining emergency teaching credential use by *region*, Wisconsin’s 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) provide a useful proxy for different regions of the state. **Figure E shows the percent increase between 2012-13 and 2020-21 for each CESA in terms of the total number of teaching emergency credentials issued by DPI, with nearly every CESA showing at least a 100% increase, and seven having increases of more than 200%.** Table 7, meanwhile, shows the percentage of all teachers within each CESA working under emergency certification in 2020-21. **CESAs 1 and 2 had the highest reliance on emergency-credentialed teachers, both in an absolute sense (number of emergency-certified teachers in 2020-21) and as a percentage of all teachers.**

Figure E: Percent Increase in Emergency-Credentialed Teachers (2012-13 to 2020-21), by CESA

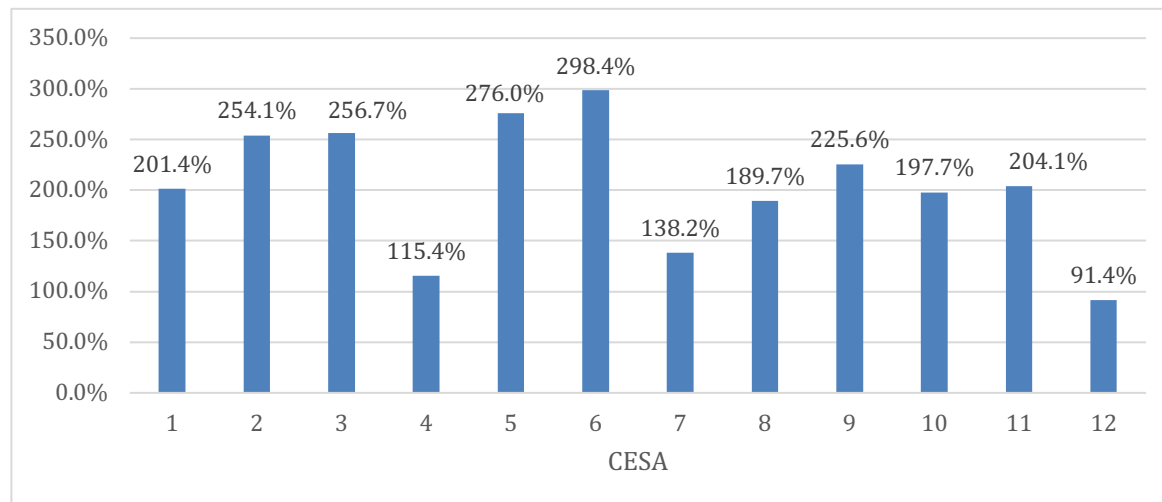


Table 7: Percentage of All Teachers in 2020-21 Working Under Emergency Credentials, by CESA*

CESA	Total # Teachers	# Emergency Credentials for Teaching Positions	% of Teachers Working Under Emergency Credentials
1	16,959	1046	6.2%
2	9923	602	6.1%
3	1808	107	5.9%
4	2666	140	5.3%
5	4058	188	4.6%
6	6437	247	3.8%
7	5686	243	4.3%
8	1814	84	4.6%
9	2568	127	4.9%
10	2741	128	4.7%
11	3249	149	4.6%
12	<u>1307</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>5.1%</u>
Total	59216	3128	5.3%

It is also useful to look at how frequently Wisconsin’s largest school districts use emergency-credentialed teachers, since this statistic has equity implications because these districts enroll a large share of the state’s most marginalized students. Collectively, the state’s five largest districts (in descending order of student enrollment: Milwaukee, Madison, Kenosha, Green Bay, and Racine) enrolled 149,675 of Wisconsin’s 829,143 public school students (18.1% of the state total) in 2021-22 and a much higher proportion of most of the state’s marginalized student populations:

- Students of color: 47.7% of 2021-22 state total enrolled in the five largest districts combined
- Students from low-income families: 30.8% of state total
- English Learners: 44.4% of state total
- Students with disabilities: 22.8% of state total

Table 8 below shows the total number of teachers working under emergency credentials in each year for each of Wisconsin’s five largest districts, along with the percentage of each district’s total teaching workforce utilizing emergency credentials each year. **Collectively, the five largest districts employed 1017 emergency-credentialed teachers in 2020-21, compared to 323 in 2012-13, representing an average increase of 214.9%. Increases of more than 200% were observed for Madison, Milwaukee, and Racine, with Green Bay not far behind (157.15) and a relatively modest increase in Kenosha (78.1%).**

Emergency-credentialed teachers represented 9.3% of all teachers working in the five largest districts combined in 2020-21, up considerably from just 3.0% of all teachers in these same districts in 2012-13 (and nearly twice as high as the 5.3% of all teachers statewide working under emergency credentials in 2020-21). More than 12% of teachers in Milwaukee were working under emergency credentials in 2020-21, and nearly 10% each in Madison and Racine, with much smaller shares (less than 5%) in Green Bay and Kenosha. Racine and Kenosha, which are located in close proximity are fairly similar in terms of

enrollment (and presumably focus much of their teacher recruitment efforts on the same localized labor market) had similar numbers of emergency-credentialed teachers in the first two years of data (2012-13 and 2013-14), but in subsequent years Racine has used 2-4 times more teachers working under emergency certification each year compared to Kenosha.

Table 8: Emergency-Credentialed Teachers in Wisconsin’s Largest School Districts, by Year

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Increase
Green Bay:										
Enrollment	20,685	21,006	21,013	20,953	21,149	20,663	20,391	20,248	19,171	-7.3%
# of E-Cert Teachers	28	26	75	72	71	64	59	50	72	157.1%
% of All Teachers	2.0%	1.8%	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	4.3%	3.9%	3.4%	4.8%	
Kenosha:										
Enrollment	22,570	22,602	22,439	22,160	21,825	21,636	21,233	20,759	19,244	-14.7%
# of E-Cert Teachers	32	30	34	33	43	31	35	35	57	78.1%
% of All Teachers	2.6%	2.2%	2.7%	2.3%	3.0%	2.2%	2.5%	2.4%	4.0%	
Madison:										
Enrollment	27,112	27,185	27,274	27,112	26,999	26,968	26,917	26,842	26,151	-3.5%
# of E-Cert Teachers	58	79	160	147	248	262	246	225	212	265.5%
% of All Teachers	2.6%	3.6%	6.9%	6.7%	11.3%	11.5%	10.6%	9.8%	9.6%	
Milwaukee:										
Enrollment	78,363	78,516	77,316	75,749	76,207	75,539	75,431	74,683	71,510	-8.7%
# of E-Cert Teachers	170	164	374	335	433	302	477	526	552	224.7%
% of All Teachers	3.7%	3.6%	8.0%	8.3%	9.1%	6.8%	10.7%	11.7%	12.4%	
Racine:										
Enrollment	20,577	20,301	19,819	19,184	19,109	18,128	17,862	17,529	16,254	
# of E-Cert Teachers	35	32	71	69	136	139	155	135	124	254.3%
% of All Teachers	2.6%	1.6%	5.2%	4.9%	9.7%	10.0%	11.0%	10.0%	9.5%	
Urban Districts (total):										
Enrollment	169,307	169,610	167,861	165,158	165,289	162,934	161,834	160,061	152,330	
# of E-Cert Teachers	323	322	714	656	931	798	972	971	1017	214.9%
% of All Teachers	3.0%	2.9%	6.5%	6.2%	8.3%	7.2%	8.7%	8.8%	9.3%	

Question 4: To what extent is the use of emergency teaching credentials associated with selected district characteristics, such as geographic locale type (city, suburb, town, rural) and poverty rate?

We also examined the use of emergency credentials for teaching positions by the four “locale codes” that are used by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to designate district types (City, Suburb, Town, Rural).¹² As locale codes are not readily available from NCES at the district level prior to 2015-16, we retroactively applied the 2015-16 locale codes to all prior years (2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15) since very few districts change locale code from year to year.

Figure H shows, not surprisingly (given their size), that 100% of the state’s City districts (n=17 in 2020-21) have had at least one teacher working under emergency credentials in each of the nine available years of data. Most of the state’s Suburban (n=76), Town (n=91), and Rural (n=236) districts have also used at least one emergency-credentialed teacher in recent years, with a particularly large increase observed among Rural districts. **While less than half (44.2%) of Wisconsin’s Rural districts had at least one emergency-certified teacher in 2012-13, more than three-fourths (81.8%) did in 2020-21.**

Figure H: Percentage of Wisconsin Districts with 1+ Emergency-Credentialed Teacher, by Locale Type

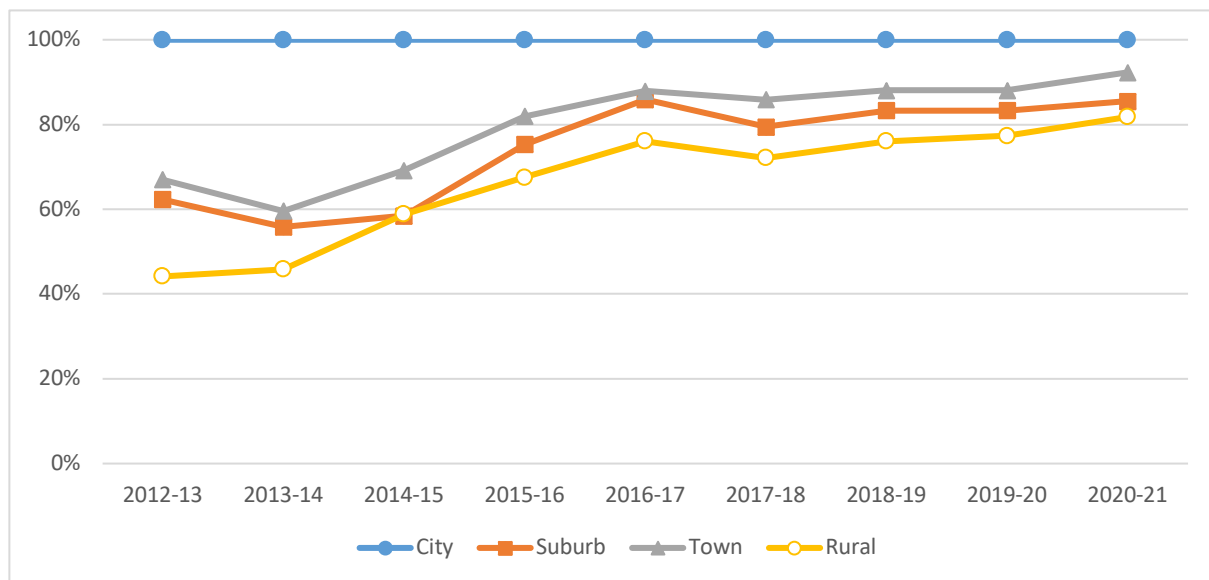
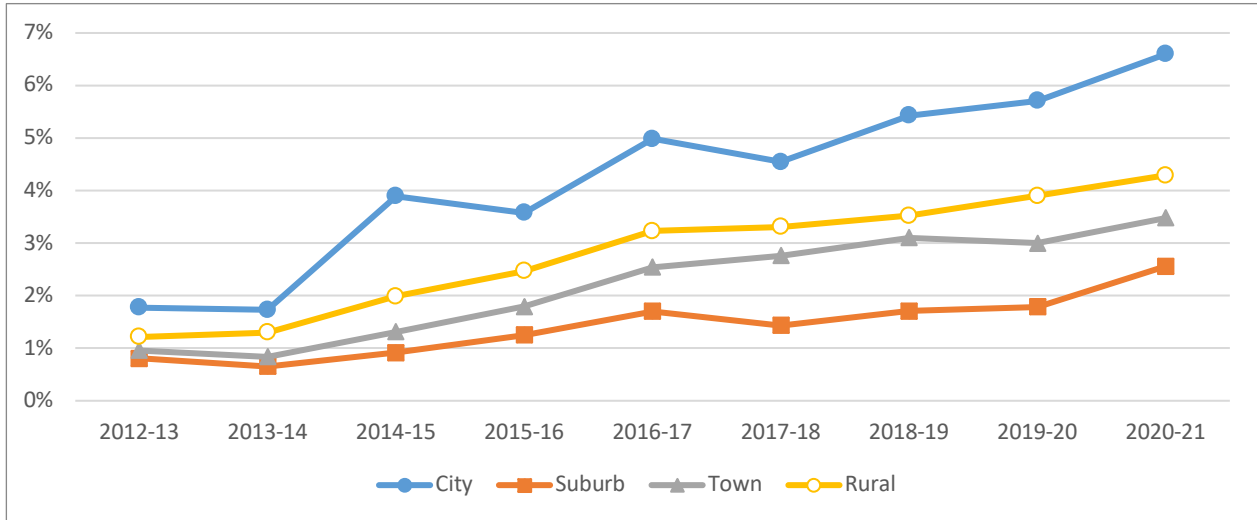


Figure I shows the percentage of all teachers working under emergency credentials over time by locale type. Across all years of data (2012-13 to 2020-21), Wisconsin’s City districts had the highest percentage of emergency-certified teachers (ranging from approximately 2-7% of these districts’ total teaching workforce). The data also show a substantial increase in City districts’ reliance on emergency credentials as a staffing strategy. In 2012-13, only 1.8% of all teachers in City districts were emergency-certified, but by 2020-21 this figure had increased to 6.6%. Rural districts had the next-highest share of teachers

¹² More detailed information on the NCES locale codes can be found at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/docs/LOCALE_CLASSIFICATIONS.pdf.

working under emergency credentials (with an increased share each year over time), while fewer than 3% of teachers in Suburban districts have been emergency-certified. This is important from an equity standpoint because City districts enroll a much higher share of students from low-income families (61.4% in 2020-21 compared to 29.1% for Suburban districts, 39.0% for Town districts, and 40.9% for Rural districts).

Figure I: Percentage of All Teachers Working Under Emergency Credentials, by Locale Type*

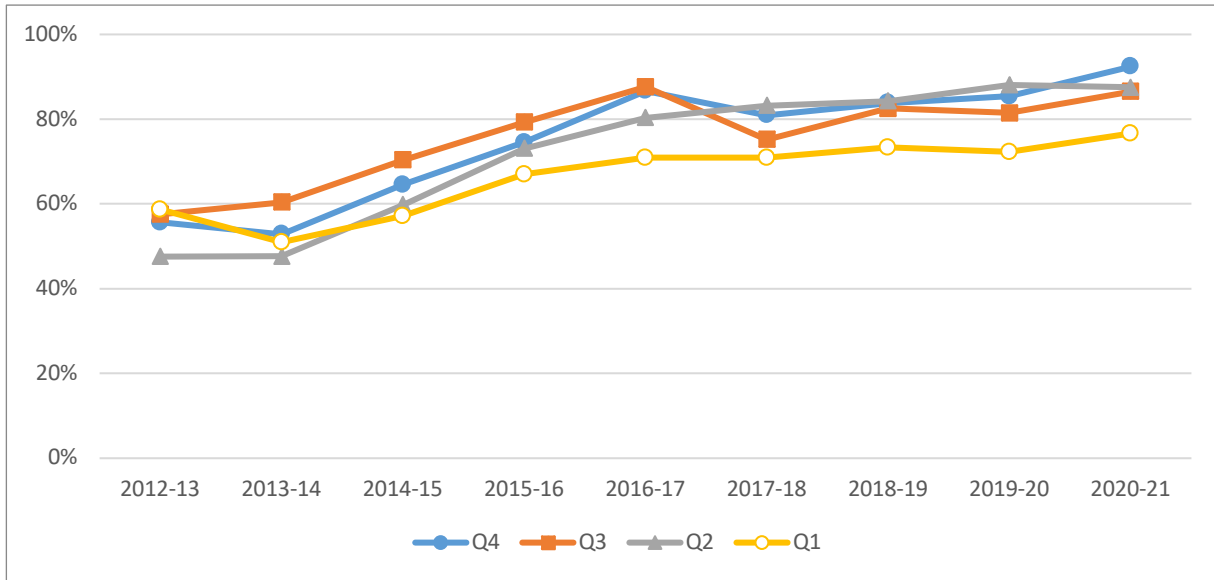


*Results were weighted at the locale level. The numerator for each percentage in this figure is *all emergency-credentialed teachers* in each locale, and the denominator is *all teachers* in each locale, for all years.

We also looked at several measures of the association between emergency credentials usage and district poverty rate, as measured by the share of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches (FRPL). Figure J shows the percentage of Wisconsin districts by poverty quartile¹³ that employed at least one emergency-certified teacher over time. **We see some evidence of an association in the sense that the less economically disadvantaged a district's students are, the less likely the district is to employ emergency-certified teachers. At the same time, the differences across FRPL quartiles are not particularly large in recent years.** In 2020-21, for example, approximately 76% of the lowest-poverty districts employed emergency-credentialed teachers, compared to approximately 92% of the highest-poverty districts – thus supporting a conclusion that **difficulties in filling vacant teaching positions have become an increasing challenge for most, if not all, Wisconsin districts in recent years, regardless of student poverty levels.**

¹³ Poverty quartile cutoffs vary somewhat by year across the years of available emergency certification data (2012-13 to 2020-21): the 25th percentile ranged from 22.4% to 28.1%; the 50th percentile ranged from 34.6% to 40.8%; and the 75th percentile ranged from 44.1% to 52.1%.

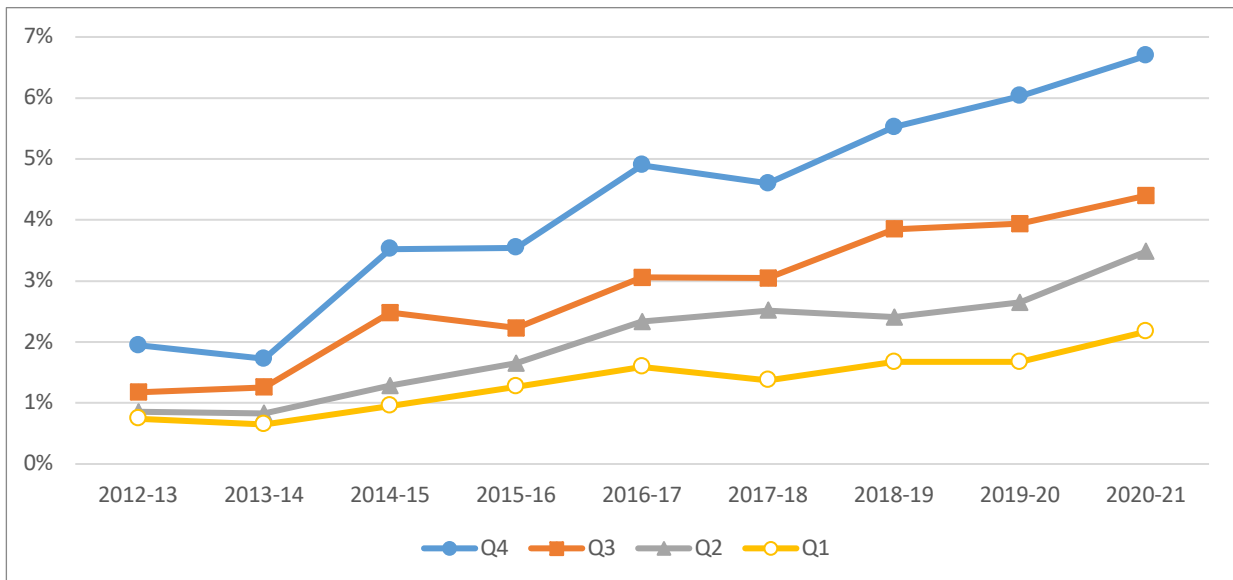
Figure J: Percentage of Districts with 1+ Emergency-Certified Teacher, by Poverty (FRPL) Quartile*



*FRPL=Free/Reduced Price Lunch. Quartile 4 (Q4) includes districts with the highest percentages of economically disadvantaged students; Quartile 1 (Q1) includes districts with the lowest percentages.

Figure K, by contrast, shows the percentage of all teachers working under emergency credentials for each student poverty (FRPL) quartile over time. Some differences emerge across the quartiles. **Quartile 4 districts (those with the highest FRPL rates) had the highest percentages of all teachers working under emergency certification every year, followed (in order) by the quartiles with the next-highest FRPL rates. By this measure, the association between use of emergency teaching credentials tracks very closely with student poverty rates: higher poverty = more emergency-credentialed teachers.**

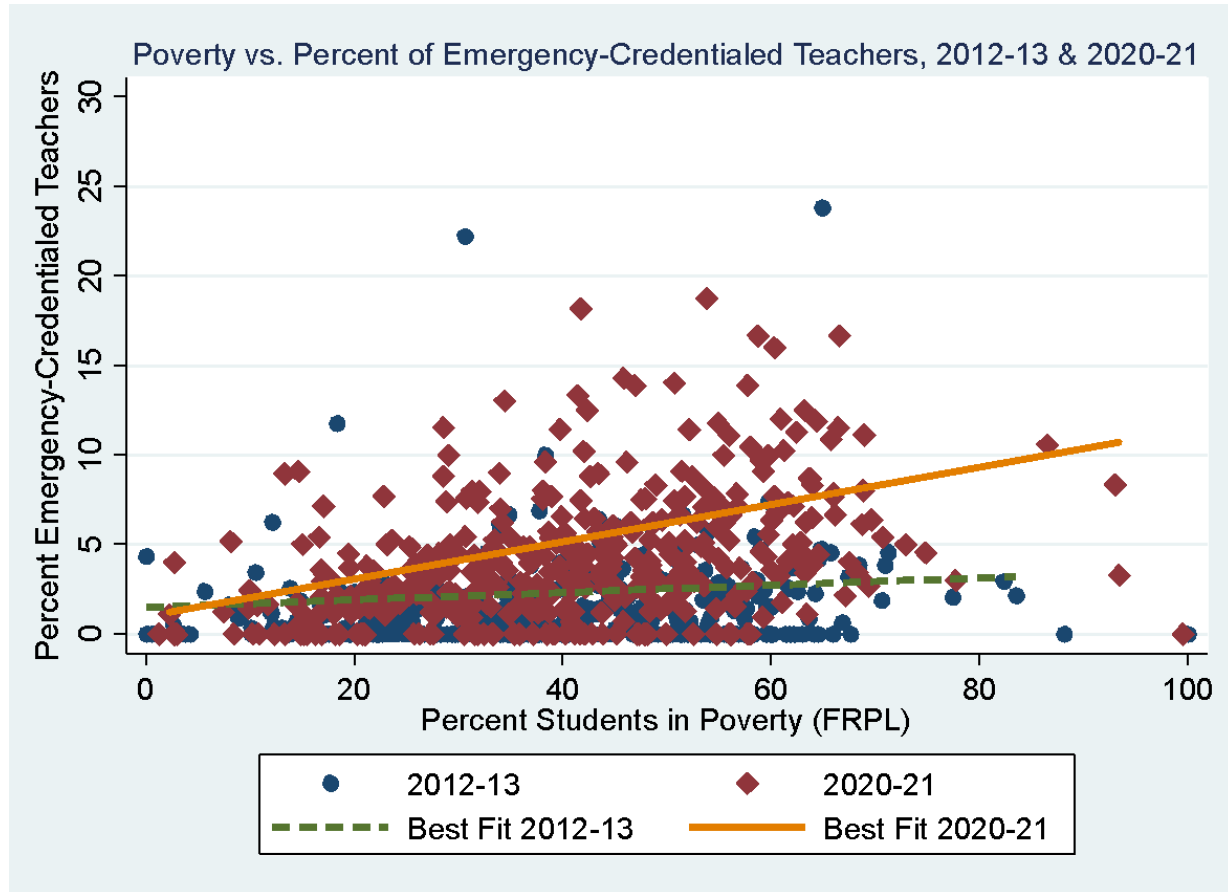
Figure K: Percentage of All Teachers Working Under Emergency Credentials, by Poverty (FRPL) Quartile*



*Results were weighted at the poverty quartile level. The numerator for each percentage in this figure is *all emergency-credentialed teachers* in each quartile, and the denominator is *all teachers* in each quartile, for all years.

As a final measure of the association between Wisconsin districts' use of emergency-certified teachers and their poverty rates, Figure L below provides a scatterplot of these two variables for the earliest (2012-13) and most recent (2020-21) years of available data, including lines of best fit. **In 2012-13, the data show a very modest relationship (correlation 0.02) between districts' FRPL rates and the percentage of teachers working under emergency credentials, while the slope of the line (and the corresponding strength of the correlation) increase notably by 2020-21 (correlation 0.10).**

Figure L: Scatterplot of District FRPL Percentage and District Percentage of Emergency-Credentialed Teachers, 2012-13 and 2020-21



Implications and Next Steps

Monitoring trends in the use of emergency teaching credentials within Wisconsin public schools is a useful exercise for at least two reasons. First, the emergency certification data provide one important signal of educator shortages and where those shortages are most pronounced. To the extent that Wisconsin districts are increasingly relying on emergency-credentialed teachers to fill vacant teaching positions, as is clearly the trend in the data, there is support for the notion that demand is exceeding supply. At the same time, a more nuanced review of the data suggests that demand for teachers is more of a challenge for some types of teaching positions (Special Education, Math/Science, etc.) than for

others, and for some districts more than others. This raises a second key point, that data on Wisconsin districts' reliance on emergency-certified teachers tells an important story related to equity. The state's largest districts, which enroll a disproportionate share of students of color, students with disabilities, English Learners, and students from lower-income families, and districts with the highest rates of poverty, appear to use emergency-certified teachers at higher rates than districts enrolling lower numbers of these student subgroups.

In terms of potential next steps, we could imagine updating the figures and tables in this report on an annual or bi-annual basis, and could include comparisons with other states (especially those in the Midwest) and nationwide. It might also be informative to augment the descriptive data in this brief with probability estimates that further investigate the relationship between district and school poverty levels and their use of emergency teaching credentials. It could be useful, for example, to estimate the probability that a student eligible for free/reduced price lunch (FRPL) attends a school with a disproportionate (for its size) number of emergency-certified teachers, compared to the probability of an otherwise-similar, but non-FRPL, student. With robust student-teacher linkage data, it might also be possible to estimate differences in the probability that FRPL and non-FRPL students are *actually taught* by emergency-credentialed teachers as well, as opposed to simply attending schools with higher reliance on teachers who hold emergency certification.