

Spanish as a heritage language in Illinois: High schools that offer it, universities that prepare teachers for it, and a proposal

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Fast facts:

Illinois state population	18% Latino
Number of counties with populations that are 10% Latino or greater	17 See Appendix 1
Number of high schools in these 17 counties that offer Spanish as a heritage language courses	158 out of 306 (48%) See Appendix 2 and Appendix 3
Number of additional high schools with a student body that is 10% Latino or greater but located in counties that are <10% Latino	22 Only 1 offers Spanish as a heritage language See Appendix 4
Number of Illinois colleges/universities that license high school Spanish teachers	35 See Appendix 5
Number of Illinois colleges/universities that offer a course on teaching Spanish to heritage speakers	1 The University of Illinois at Chicago

What do we know about high school Spanish teachers around Illinois who are teaching SHL?

In 2019, a survey was completed by 190 teachers in 18 different counties. 20% were themselves heritage Spanish speakers, 40% were L2 Spanish speakers, and 40% were raised in Latin America or Spain. The vast majority ($n=179$, or 94%) were teaching in counties that have a 10% or greater Latino population.

The majority of teachers reported feeling “highly unprepared” to work with heritage speakers when they began their positions. Only 18 teachers (9% of the sample) had taken a university course on SHL. Many had attended a yearly conference hosted by the Network for Illinois Educators of Spanish as a Heritage Language (NIESHL). Others cited the Chicago Heritage Spanish Teachers network that hosts free meetings as their sole source of professional development in SHL.

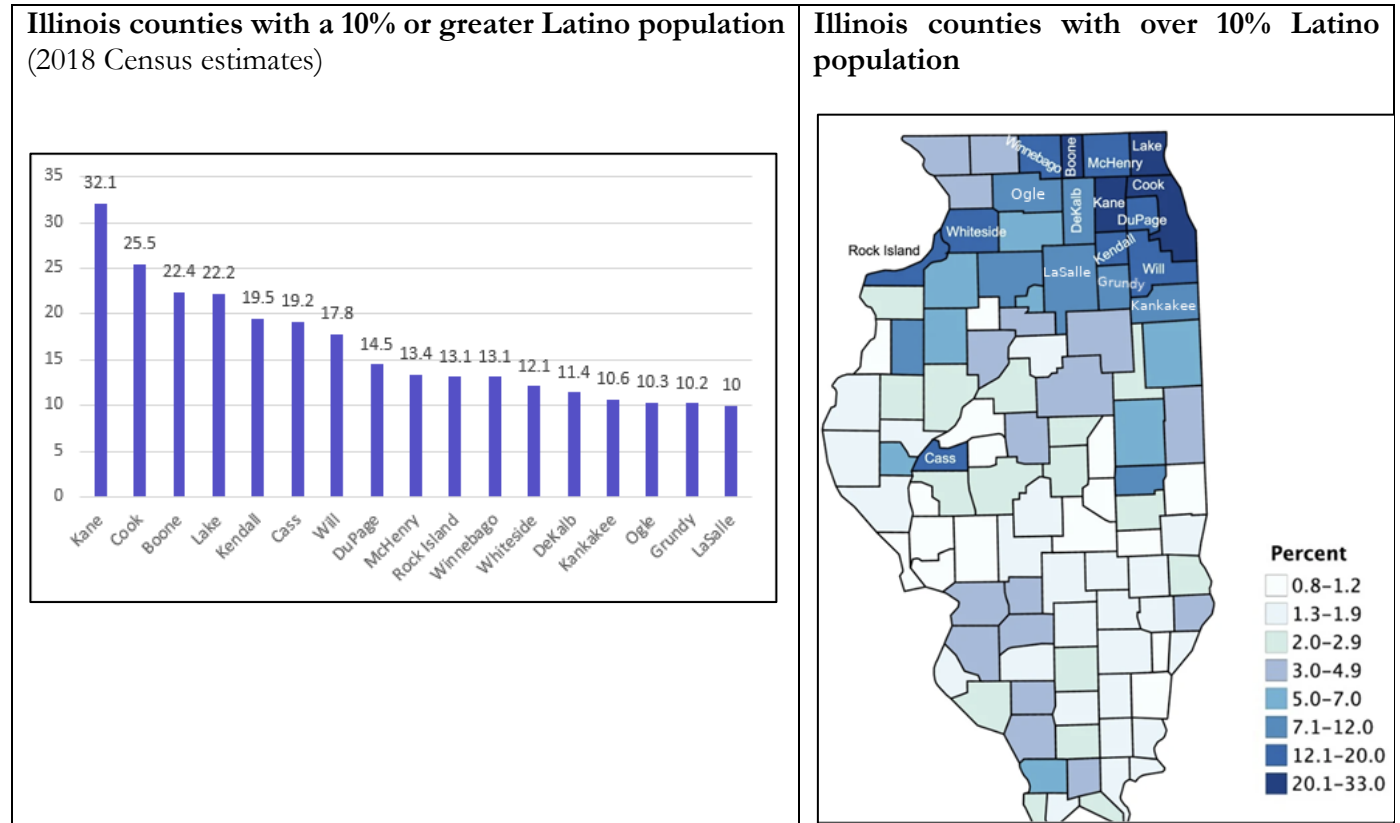
High schools with a 10% or greater Latino student population very likely have a heritage speaker population large enough to merit at least one separate SHL class. Even if a separate class is not offered, there will likely be heritage speakers mixed into the L2 Spanish classes. Thus, one or more teachers in such districts should receive pre-service coursework in SHL. **This is an area in which Illinois universities need to increase our offerings.** In the state of Illinois, there are 35 universities that grant teaching licensure (listed in Appendix 4). A search of all of their course catalogs revealed that only one of them, the University of Illinois at Chicago, lists a methods course on teaching heritage speakers (Illinois State University used to offer one but hasn’t for several years).

Proposal

ISBE should create an **Endorsement in Teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language**. If one (1) approved SHL methods course could fulfill this Endorsement, that would be ideal for teachers to **add to their K-12 license**. If this were to happen and principals begin asking for endorsed SHL teachers, then more universities will feel encouraged to offer the required course (or to grant program credit to their students for taking the course at another campus). This in turn creates jobs at universities for SHL scholars, many of whom are Latino heritage speakers themselves, thus creating a potential pipeline for ‘homegrown’ Illinois Latino undergraduates into teaching positions as well as into higher ed (see [Bustamante & Novella 2019](#) on encouraging heritage speaker high school students to become Spanish teachers).

Appendix 1

Latino population in Illinois counties



Appendix 2

Illinois high schools, ranges of Latino student population
(Source: Illinois Report Card Public Data Set 2019)

Name of county (% Latino)	# of high schools			
	10-49% Latino	50-100% Latino	10-100% Latino	Total in county
Kane (32.1%)	8	6	14	16
Cook (25.5%)	63	49	112	148
Boone (22.4%)	3	0	3	3
Lake (22.2%)	13	3	16	21
Kendall (19.5%)	4	0	4	5
Cass (19.2%)	0	1	1	3
Will (17.8%)	13	1	14	17
Dupage (14.5%)	17	3	20	23
McHenry (13.4%)	10	1	11	14
Rock Island (13.1%)	3	0	3	6
Winnebago (13.1%)	7	0	7	11
Whiteside (12.1%)	2	0	2	6
Dekalb (11.4%)	4	0	4	8
Kankakee (10.6%)	5	0	5	7
Ogle (10.3%)	2	0	2	6
Grundy (10.2%)	2	0	2	4
LaSalle (10.0%)	6	0	6	8
Total	162	64	226	306

Appendix 3

Counties with high schools that offer SHL programs

Counties shaded in grey also appear in Appendix 1 because they have 10%+ Latino populations

Name of county (% Latino)	# of schools in the county that are:		Total # of high schools in the county	# that offer SHL
	10-49% Latino	50-100% Latino		
Kane (32.2%)	8	6	16	8
Cook (25.5%)	63	49	148	89
Boone (22.4%)	3	0	3	2
Lake (22.2%)	13	3	21	15
Kendall (19.5%)	4	0	5	4
Cass (19.2%)	0	1	3	1
Will (17.8%)	13	1	17	7
Dupage (14.5%)	17	3	23	13
McHenry (13.4%)	10	1	14	3
Rock Island (13.1%)	3	0	6	2
Winnebago (13.1%)	7	0	11	2
Whiteside (12.1%)	2	0	6	1
Dekalb (11.4%)	4	0	8	2
Hancock (1.6%)	0	0	4	1
Kankakee (10.6%)	5	0	7	1
La Salle (10%)	6	0	8	2
McLean (5.1%)	1	0	10	2
Ogle (10.3%)	2	0	6	1
St. Clair (4.2%)	0	0	12	1
Warren (9.7%)	1	0	2	1
Total	162	64	330	158

Appendix 4

Illinois high schools with Latino populations higher than that of their county
(Source: Illinois Report Card Public Data Set 2019)

Name of high school	County, % Latino	School, % Latino	Heritage Spanish Class?
Centennial	Champaign, 6%	10%	No
Freeport	Stephenson, 4%	11%	No
Carbondale	Jackson, 5%	11%	No
West Carroll	Carroll, 4%	11%	No
Galesburg	Knox, 6%	13%	No
Bloomington	McLean, 5%	14%	No*
Urbana	Champaign, 6%	14%	No
Peoria	Peoria, 5%	14%	?**
Wethersfield	Henry, 6%	14%	No
Central	Champaign, 6%	15%	No
Galena	Jo Daviess, 3%	16%	No
Hoopeston	Vermilion, 5%	16%	No
Kewanee	Henry, 6%	17%	No
Manual	Peoria, 5%	18%	?
Collinsville	Madison, 3%	21%	?
Rantoul	Champaign, 6%	23%	No
Hall	Bureau, 9.5%	25%	No
Monmouth-Roseville	Warren, 9.7%	28%	Yes
Cobden	Union, 5%	32%	No
Iroquois West	Iroquois, 7%	36%	No
Arcola	Douglas, 7%	45%	No
DePue ¹	Bureau, 9.5%	84%	No

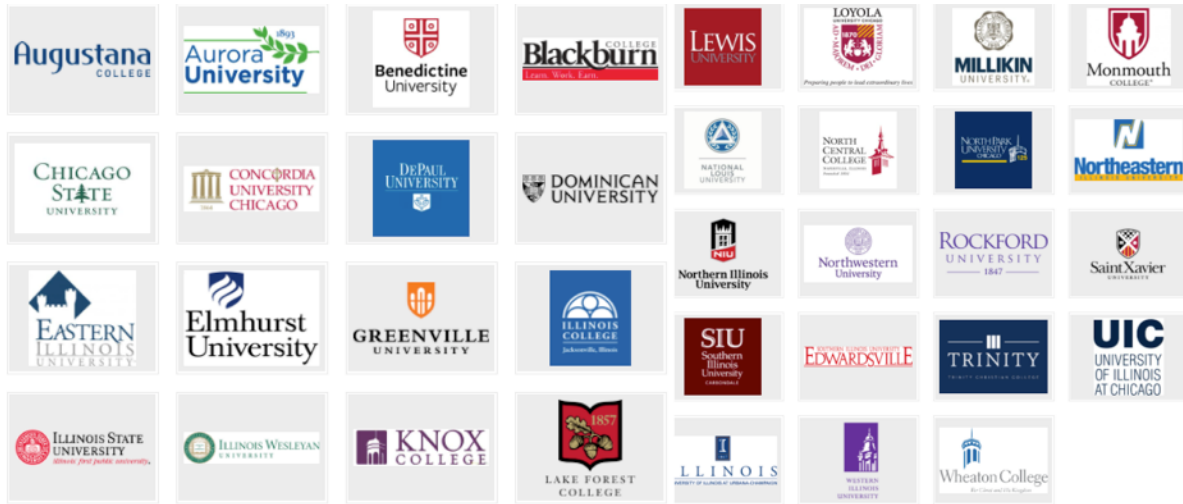
* Bloomington High School, the one high school in McClean with a higher Latino concentration than that of the county, does not offer an SHL course, while two other high schools in the county do offer SHL (as shown in Table 2).

** We found conflicting data about whether SHL is offered in these high schools.

¹ This school has a population of only 116 students.

Appendix 5

Illinois Universities that license K-12 Spanish teachers (<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/IHE.aspx>)



Locations of the Illinois universities that license K-12 Spanish teachers; % Latino of each county

