



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Darren Reisberg
Chairman

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

June 28, 2019

TO: The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor
The Honorable John J. Cullerton, Senate President
The Honorable Bill Brady, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Minority Leader

FROM: Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: 2019 Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary
Education Progress Report

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) respectfully submits this progress report to the Governor and the General Assembly in fulfillment of the requirements of Public Act 93-1036.

ISBE first developed and submitted its Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education in 2005. The State Board amended its strategic plan in September 2015 to reflect a new vision for public education, establish a new mission, and identify refocused and measurable goals. ISBE submits an annual update to the plan by July 1 each year, per statute.

This “Strategic Plan Progress Report” provides a blueprint for how the agency concentrated its efforts and resources in the preceding year to serve Illinois’ students and families and advance toward meeting its goals. The report also includes examples of how Illinois schools and districts are utilizing the funds appropriated and programs enacted by Illinois lawmakers to strengthen the state’s civic and economic future.

The 2019 Strategic Plan Progress Report largely addresses work initiated under the agency’s previous administration, as the majority of the current Board members and the current State Superintendent of Education assumed their roles in February 2019.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Amanda Elliott, Executive Director of Legislative Affairs at (217) 782-6510.

Enclosure

cc: Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the House
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center



Illinois
State Board of
Education

2019

PROGRESS REPORT

Comprehensive Strategic Plan for
Elementary and Secondary Education



Darren Reisberg, Chairman
Dr. Carmen I. Ayala, State Superintendent

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent
of Education



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The State Board of Education consists of nine members who are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

Board members serve four-year terms, with membership limited to two consecutive terms.

The Board appoints the State Superintendent of Education, who may be recommended by the Governor.



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Policy Planning Committee
Carlinville



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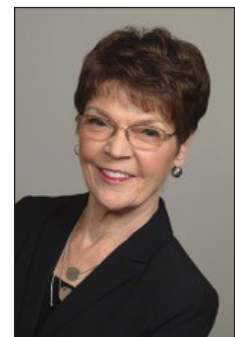
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Illinois State Board of Education

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Darren Reisberg
Chairman

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

June 30, 2019

The Honorable Governor JB Pritzker
The Honorable Members of the Illinois General Assembly
Illinois Statehouse
Springfield, Illinois

Re: Illinois State Board of Education Comprehensive Strategic Plan – July 2019 Progress Report

Dear Governor Pritzker and Members of the General Assembly:

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) updates its Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education each year, as required by Public Act 93-1036 (the Education Reform and Accountability Act of 2004). This annual "Strategic Plan Progress Report" details actions the agency is taking to fulfill our Board's mission, vision, and goals.

The 2019 Strategic Plan Progress Report largely addresses work initiated under the agency's previous administration, as the majority of the current Board and the current State Superintendent of Education assumed their roles in February 2019.

As the agency's new leadership, we are excited to build on the progress that is being made to ensure all students have equitable supports and opportunities to achieve excellence. We are working with ISBE staff to learn where efforts can be strengthened.

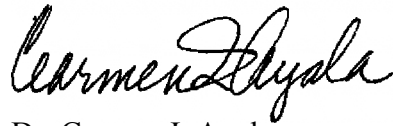
The State's investments in Evidence-Based Funding have begun to level the playing field for Illinois' 852 school districts. ISBE's new support system for schools, IL-EMPOWER, and other tools are shifting mindsets and enhancing collaboration within districts and ISBE so that resources are most effectively spent for transformative and sustainable improvement.

As American engineer W. Edwards Deming said, "Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." ISBE is continuing to reshape adult systems to produce better results for children. Equity is the cornerstone of ISBE's approach, which means that the needs of students, families, and communities must determine our strategies and our investments.

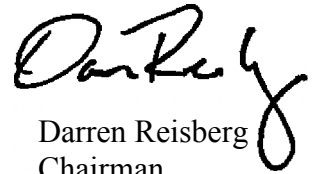
Illinois' education system is facing challenges that are national in scope, such as the teacher shortage and development of accountability assessments that work for teachers and families. We intend for Illinois to be a leader in solving these issues.

We deeply value your efforts and assistance as we address these challenges and move toward a culture of equity and excellence in all of our schools. We look forward to continuing our collaboration to support the agency's mission and to ensure every Illinois student succeeds.

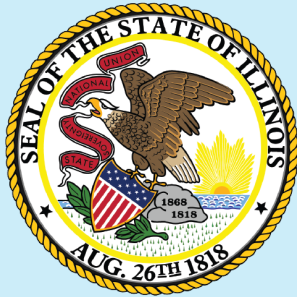
Sincerely,



Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education



Darren Reisberg
Chairman



Illinois State Board of Education

Progress Report

Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education

June 2019

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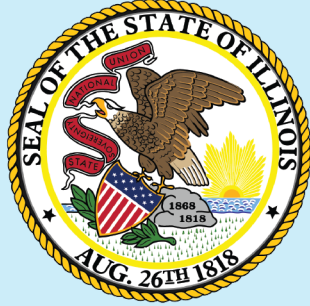
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Illinois State Board of Education

Executive Summary

2019

Executive Summary

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) develops and maintains a continuing five-year comprehensive strategic plan for elementary and secondary education, in accordance with Public Act 93-1036. Agency staff revisit the plan each spring to review accomplishments made during the past year and refine the agency's strategies moving forward. The State Board amended its strategic plan in September 2015 to reflect a new vision for public education, establish a new mission, and identify refocused and measurable goals and key areas of concentration.

ISBE'S VISION

Illinois is a state of whole, healthy children nested in whole, healthy systems supporting communities wherein all citizens are socially and economically secure.

ISBE'S MISSION

Provide leadership and resources to achieve excellence across all Illinois districts through engaging

legislators, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders in formulating and advocating for policies that enhance education, empower districts, and ensure equitable outcomes for all students.

ISBE'S GOALS

Every child in each public school system in the state of Illinois deserves to attend a system wherein...

- All kindergartners are assessed for readiness.
- Ninety percent or more of third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.
- Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
- Ninety percent or more of ninth-graders are on track to graduate with their cohort.
- Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.
- All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.



ISBE's Student Advisory Council took a tour of the Governor's Mansion in September 2018 to kick off their first meeting of the school year.

ISBE'S KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

ISBE's five key areas of focus are the strategies the agency is employing to make progress toward its goals.

- Money: Establish an adequate and equitable education finance system
- Quality: Common definition of, and fair access to, quality education
- Autonomy: Maximize district autonomy to provide quality education to all families
- Competency: Encourage competency-based learning
- Community: Districts and schools as centers of healthy communities

MONEY

The State of Illinois overhauled school funding in 2017, directing the greatest share of newly available state resources to schools in the greatest need. In the two fiscal years that the new Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula has been in place, the state has distributed \$667 million in new funding to districts furthest from reaching their adequate funding targets.

EBF organizes districts into four tiers according to their percentages of adequacy, or how close they are to meeting their individual funding targets. Tier 4 districts meet or exceed their adequacy targets, while Tier 1 districts are furthest from their adequacy targets. These tiers serve as a proxy for financial need that ISBE can use to more equitably distribute other grants.

ISBE and its advisory group of superintendents, school business officials, and other stakeholders have continued to work toward implementing site-based expenditure reporting on the Illinois Report Card in fall 2019, as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For the first time ever, Illinois communities, lawmakers, and educators will be able to explore resource allocation to each school within a single district.

ISBE also works closely with three districts that have Financial Oversight Panels to support their efforts to regain financial health.

QUALITY

ISBE began developing a new support and accountability system after ESSA became federal law in December 2015. The new accountability system establishes a multiple-indicator framework for measuring school quality. The new support system, called IL-EMPOWER, puts schools in the driver's seat and promotes systemic inquiry and transformation to ensure equity and excellence for all students. The new support and accountability system launched statewide in October 2018.

Every school in the state now receives an annual summative designation based on multiple indicators and the performance of each student group. ISBE engaged in a six-week dynamic communications campaign prior to the statewide launch to ensure all schools had the information they needed to understand and communicate to their own stakeholders about their designations and IL-EMPOWER.

A total of 204 schools received a designation identifying them for comprehensive supports, and another 561 schools received a designation identifying them for targeted supports. ISBE distributed additional federal funding, launched an equity-driven needs assessment, and deployed school support managers as the agency implemented the IL-EMPOWER school improvement process.

ISBE embarked on a statewide listening tour in May 2019 to inform the creation of an amendment to the accountability system. The amendment process is part of the agency's commitment to continuous engagement and improvement.

Spring 2019 also saw improvements to Illinois' assessment system. Students in the ninth and tenth grades began taking the PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10, respectively. These assessments, along with the SAT in the 11th grade, provide a measure of academic growth for students in high school. Students in grades 3-8 took the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, which maintains the rigor and content of the previous accountability assessment while reducing testing time by one-third.

AUTONOMY

ISBE also supports districts' autonomy with improved tools and efficient technology to streamline planning and reporting processes and to support holistic service to students. The ISBE-developed data dashboard Ed360 delivers near-real time metrics to school districts in an easy-to-use and secure interface. Ed360 supports districts in making autonomous, evidence-based decisions to identify and meet students' needs. More than 700 districts statewide had opted into using Ed360 as of May 2019.

Ed360 will expand to include financial data related to the 12 federal formula grants as part of the IL ePlan. ISBE launched the first phase of the IL ePlan, the Consolidated District Plan, in February 2019. The IL ePlan reduces the burden on grantees and promotes collaboration across grant areas.

ISBE also offered a series of three Results Driven Accountability Cohort seminars over a 12-month period to build districts' local capacity to improve their special education programs in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The seminars led participants through an improvement

planning process focused on a specific problem. The seminars not only received positive feedback from participants, but also resulted in measurable gains in targeted outcomes.

COMPETENCY

Illinois' venture into competency-based education began in earnest in 2016 when ISBE launched the Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirement Pilot Program as authorized by Public Act 99-0674, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (110 ILCS 148). Competency-based education asks students to demonstrate their mastery of skills aligned with state standards and to incorporate their knowledge, abilities, and social-emotional capabilities. Students learn, then demonstrate what they know in creative and individualized ways. This approach allows apprenticeships, internships, and community service, as well as what students learn in the classroom, to count toward graduation.

The pilot program started with 10 school districts. Stories of success from Chicago, Kankakee, and Peoria, produced by ISBE's storytellers and available at www.isbe.net/stories, fueled the growth of the



Student Advisory Council member Zaporah Price, a senior at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy in Chicago Public Schools, testifies at a House Appropriations Committee hearing about competency-based education.

competency-based education movement in Illinois. As of April 2019, 45 school districts across the state were participating as part of a learning community in the pilot program.

COMMUNITY

Research shows that parent, family, and community involvement in education correlates to higher academic performance and school improvement. ISBE’s internal Parent and Family Engagement Workgroup is also developing a framework for parent and family engagement to support the efforts of ISBE and districts. ISBE’s Division of English Learners models proactive family engagement. The division hosts a Bilingual Parent Summit each year, providing a rich mix of information about issues of critical importance to parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. More than 1,300 bilingual parents, educators, administrators, and other advocates attended the 14th annual summit on May 11, 2019.

Students benefit when strong partnerships between families and education systems start early. The Illinois Early Learning Project provides evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for families, caregivers, and teachers of young children. The Illinois Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project is a multi-year initiative that seeks to enhance awareness of the mental health needs of young children and their families. This project enables stable and continued enrollment of children with social and emotional challenges in child care settings from birth to 7 years old. The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map provides comprehensive early childhood data and maps to local and state agencies and other stakeholders to improve outcomes for Illinois children.

GOAL: ALL KINDERGARTNERS ARE ASSESSED FOR READINESS.

ISBE recognizes that kindergarten is a critical milestone in a child’s long-term educational journey. Research shows that children demonstrating higher levels of school readiness at age 5 are generally more successful in grade school, are less likely to drop out of high school, and even earn higher salaries as adults. Before 2017, Illinois did not have a common measure of students’ math and literacy skills until the third grade. Illinois teachers statewide began using the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)

in the fall of 2017 to observe and document students’ math, literacy, and social-emotional development. KIDS provides a data snapshot that can support the state in understanding where communities may or may not have adequate resources for high-quality early learning programs.

More than 99 percent of districts statewide with kindergarten students implemented KIDS in 2018, the second year of mandatory statewide data collection. ISBE released preliminary district-level data from the fall 2018 KIDS collection to school districts in March 2019, along with guidance on data usage and framing, a template infographic to support local communications planning, learning opportunities with KIDS coaches, and other supports. ISBE will release the final statewide report at the end of June 2019.

GOAL: NINETY PERCENT OR MORE OF THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS ARE READING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL.

Third grade is a pivotal level in a student’s development; it is often described as the year when students shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Children begin developing literacy skills well before they enter kindergarten and need high-quality early learning opportunities in order to build the foundation to achieve literacy by third grade. The percentage of third-grade students who met or exceeded standards in English language arts on the state’s assessment held steady at approximately 31 percent in the 2017-18 school year.

ISBE used 2015 federal Preschool Development Grant-Expansion funding to partner with Illinois State University to create the Birth-to-Third Grade Continuity Project, a comprehensive system of supports for the birth-to-third grade alignment. ISBE’s fiscal year 2020 budget request includes a \$100 million increase in funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant, which ISBE estimates would serve approximately 14,000 additional children in high-quality Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion programs.



Maine South High School student Lydia Cruz won first place in the statewide poster contest celebrating the 37th Illinois Arts Education Week. All public and private schools and libraries in the state received a poster with her design. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum displayed her artwork for a full year. Cruz also designed the pattern for an egg representing the State of Illinois in the annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

GOAL: NINETY PERCENT OR MORE OF FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS MEET OR EXCEED EXPECTATIONS IN MATHEMATICS.

The percentage of fifth-grade students who met or exceeded standards in math on the state’s assessment held steady at approximately 36 percent in the 2017-18 school year. Research from the University of California-Irvine School of Education demonstrates that consistent participation in after-school programs during the elementary school years is linked to narrowing the gap in math achievement by grade 5. Schools use federal Title I funds to supplement educational services and programming for students from homes with limited resources, including through after-school programs.

Federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center grants also support a wide range of services and activities designed to reinforce and complement regular academic programs outside of the school day. Sixty-one percent of elementary students and 70 percent of middle and high school students

participating in the 21st Century Community Learning Center programs improved academically, according to teachers surveyed.

GOAL: NINETY PERCENT OR MORE OF NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS ARE ON TRACK TO GRADUATE WITH THEIR COHORT.

Research shows that a student who finishes ninth grade “on track” is almost four times more likely to graduate from high school than a student who does not. The statewide percentage of ninth-grade students on track to graduate at the end of the 2017-18 school year held steady at 86.6 percent. Students facing special challenges to accessing educational opportunities need equitable supports to stay on track to graduation.

The federally funded Migrant Education Program provides supplemental education and supportive services to children of migrant workers and youth who fall under the definition of migrant workers

themselves. Results of the 2017-18 Migrant Education Program annual evaluation showed that the program helped students attain statistically significant progress in reading, literacy, and math. The McKinney-Vento homeless education program addresses the challenges that children and youth with inconsistent housing often face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Just over 67 percent of homeless students identified statewide who started ninth grade in 2015 graduated within four years. The Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) ensures that students experiencing attendance challenges have equitable access to an education. TAOEP served 25,844 students in 74 programs statewide during 2018.

Career and technical education (CTE) supports students in mastering state standards and staying engaged in school through hands-on learning that is connected to concrete career opportunities. Middle and high school CTE programs serve more than 283,000 students. ISBE continues to improve and expand the state's CTE offerings through both the Illinois Association for CTE grant and the state planning requirement included in the reauthorization of the federal CTE law.

GOAL: NINETY PERCENT OR MORE OF STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER.

ISBE continues to implement the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act to address key barriers to the successful transition of high school students into college and careers. The PWR Act includes transitional math, college and career pathways endorsements, the Postsecondary and Career Expectations framework, and competency-based education.

All 39 community college districts are working collaboratively with high schools on implementation plans for implementing transitional math. Transitional math offers new opportunities for students to take and complete courses during their senior year of high school that guarantee placement into credit-bearing math courses at any Illinois community college and accepting Illinois universities.

Taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes and exams prepares students for the rigor of college-level instruction. Scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam can



Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala joined students and staff at Lyons Township High School for La Dama: Women's Showcase, a celebratory event hosted by the school's National Hispanic Institute in honor of National Women's Month.

earn students early college credit. More than 40 percent of Illinois students in the Class of 2018 took an AP exam during high school – up from 22.5 percent in 2008. Illinois now ranks fifth in the nation for growth over the past 10 years in the percentage of graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school.

ISBE also supports college and career preparation through the Seal of Biliteracy, which encourages and recognizes students' efforts to learn multiple languages. Robust agricultural education programs across the state also prepare students for success after graduation in one of Illinois' major industries.

GOAL: ALL STUDENTS ARE SUPPORTED BY HIGHLY PREPARED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS.

ISBE's annual unfilled positions survey showed more than 1,400 vacant teaching positions across the state during the 2017-18 school year. ISBE is implementing a multi-pronged approach to strengthening the educator workforce and teacher pipeline in Illinois, including releasing two Requests for Proposals for \$1 million in state funds to expand teacher leadership and teacher residencies.

Unfilled positions for bilingual educators make up 12 percent of all teacher vacancies. ISBE continues to support the Visiting Teacher Exchange Program, which brings dozens of teachers from Spain to teach in Illinois schools. ISBE launched the Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Network in February 2019 to strengthen the capacities of Illinois' teacher workforce to engage students of all cultural backgrounds. This network of 24 education leaders from across the state is working to create standards for culturally responsive teaching and to develop recommendations for increasing teacher diversity.

ISBE also supports the quality of Illinois' teacher workforce through efforts in teacher preparation. ISBE's Partnership for Educator Preparation uses data to support educator preparation programs in exploring their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. All 58 Illinois institutions of higher education that have educator, administrator, or school support preparation programs are submitting data to ISBE about their candidates. ISBE's Continuous

Improvement Communities of Practice bring educator preparation providers and their district partners together to better recruit, train, and retain teachers in high-need subjects and in high-need schools.

GOAL: EVERY SCHOOL OFFERS A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.

ISBE supports school districts in administering the Illinois 5Essentials Survey – or an approved alternative survey – annually on school culture and climate indicators. ISBE's partner for the 5Essentials, UChicago Impact, launched a new data reporting website in March 2018 that allows schools to track data over time, see how they compare to similar schools, disaggregate their own data based on student populations, and connect to research that supports growth in the five culture and climate indicators.

ISBE specifically supports a safe and healthy learning environment for students in Chicago Public Schools by serving in the role of the district's Regional Office of Education. ISBE undertook the state's first ever Public Inquiry during the 2017-18 school year, analyzing Chicago Public Schools' special education services, policies, and procedures. Following the findings of the Public Inquiry, ISBE issued a Corrective Action Report and appointed a monitor to oversee and implement improvements to special education in the district through 2021.

Ensuring a healthy learning environment for all students includes meeting students' nutritional needs so their brains and bodies have the fuel they need to grow. ISBE awarded more than \$1.3 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service grants during FY 2018 to help districts purchase equipment to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and expand access to more students. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program increased the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in nearly 300 elementary schools during the 2018-19 school year.

Section One:

Key Areas of Focus

Money:

Establish an adequate and equitable education finance system.

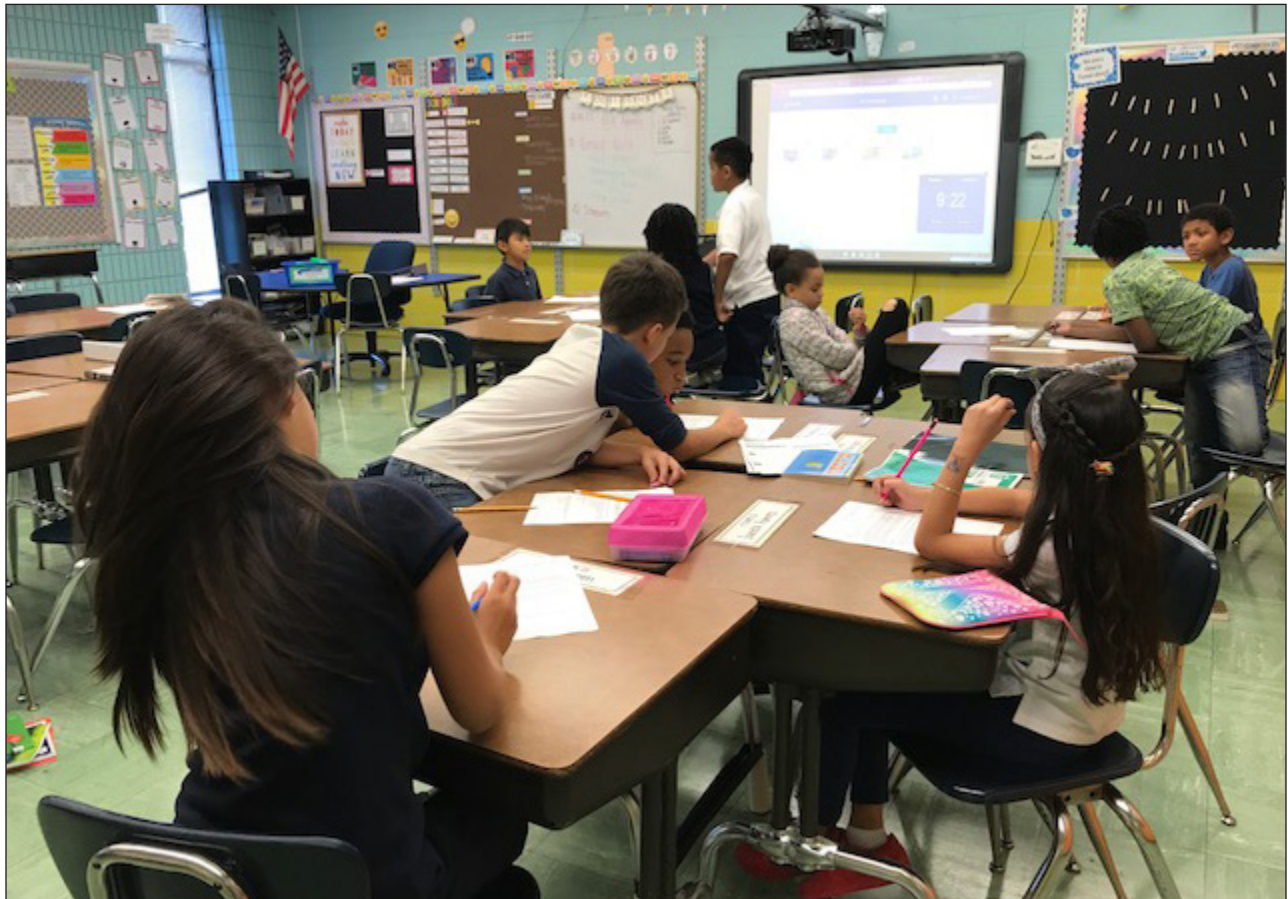
The State of Illinois overhauled its school funding formula in 2017 so that the schools in the greatest need would receive the greatest share of newly available state resources. The state has distributed \$667 million in new funding in the two fiscal years that the formula has been operational. This investment has significantly increased districts' capacity to care for the whole child.

The Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) for Student Success Act distributes almost all newly appropriated education funding to the districts furthest from their funding targets. Each district's funding target considers the cost of providing low student-teacher ratios, technology, and other staffing and supports that are essential for a quality education. Each district's funding target also considers the additional

supports schools provide for English Learners, students with disabilities, and students from homes with limited resources.

Eighty-one percent of Illinois students attend schools in districts funded at less than 90 percent of their Adequacy Targets. The formula needs an additional investment of \$4.9 billion in order for the state to reach its goal of adequate and equitable funding for all students. ISBE continues to advocate for this increased investment.

ISBE created two EBF user tools for district staff to better understand the mechanics of the new primary state funding distribution system. The EBF Data Impact Calculator allows a district administrator to alter enrollment or tax data and observe how it would



The implementation of a Financial Oversight Panel and an Independent Authority has enabled North Chicago School District to improve its academic offerings to students.

have affected fiscal year 2019 EBF calculations. The other tool is the Adequacy Target Gap Analysis, which allows a district administrator to enter actual and hypothetical staffing and funding levels, then compare those to EBF-recommended levels to make budgeting decisions.

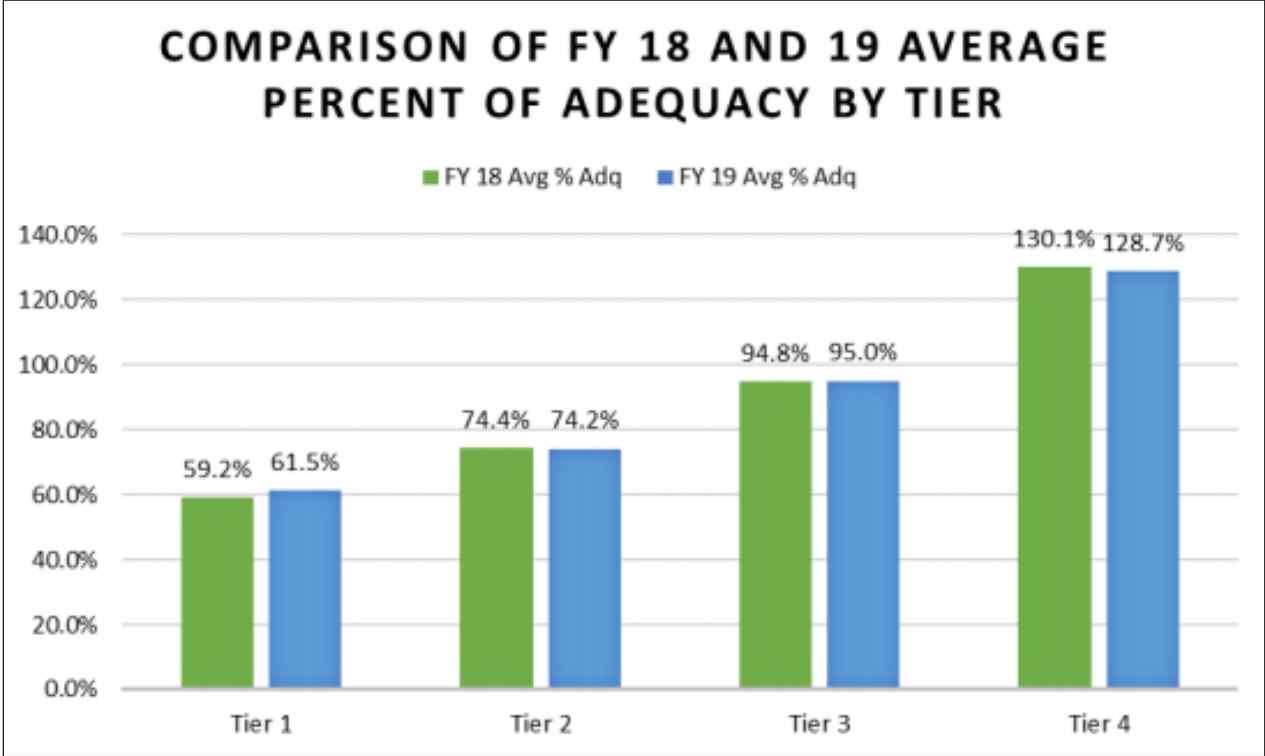
The new funding law requires that each district submit an EBF Spending Plan, indicating how it will utilize its EBF. School districts' largest focus was on recruiting and retaining educators. Additionally, 85 percent of Illinois school districts planned to invest more money, time, people, and programs in FY 2019 to ensure that every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

The FY 2019 EBF Spending Plan asked districts to choose academic growth strategies. Seventy-six percent of districts expected to achieve academic growth by improving programs, curriculum, and/or learning tools. Seventy-three percent of districts expected to achieve academic growth by focusing increased time and attention on specified populations, including English Learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION

Rock Falls High School 301 was the first district eligible for the Property Tax Relief Grant to provide documentation of local abatement of property taxes. Rock Falls was eligible to abate \$507,000 in local property taxes and to receive a grant of \$488,000 from the state in return. The amount will be added to the district's Base Funding Minimum in FY 2020 and on, further increasing the benefit of participating in this new grant program.

EBF organizes districts into four tiers according to their percentages of adequacy or how close they are to meeting their individual funding targets. Tier 4 districts' funding meets or exceeds their adequacy targets, while Tier 1 districts are furthest away from their adequacy targets. These tiers serve as a proxy for financial need that ISBE can use to more equitably distribute other grants.



The Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act became law in 2017. The Evidence-Based Funding formula provides a clear picture of what each district needs to enable student success and continues to prioritize funding for districts furthest from their adequacy targets.



Evidence-Based Funding has changed the trajectory of entire communities across Illinois. Galesburg Community Unit School District 205 lowered class sizes and hired 10 instructional coaches, in addition to recruiting more paraprofessionals and nurses.

The Early Childhood Block Grant increases access to early health and learning services for children from birth to age 5. ISBE's Request for Proposals for the FY 2020 grant gave priority to awardable proposals from entities that proposed to offer services to children who reside within EBF Tier 1 or Tier 2 district boundaries and that could document a local gap in service provision in their area.

The site-based expenditure reporting requirement in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act will further deepen Illinois' understanding of resource allocation within districts when ISBE begins reporting data on expenditures at the school level in October 2019. For the first time ever, Illinois communities, lawmakers, and educators will be able to explore resource allocation within a single district, asking questions related to financial transparency, equity, student outcomes, best practices, and opportunities for innovation. Districts can use site-based expenditure data to make programmatic and fiscal decisions more deeply rooted in student needs and student outcomes.

ISBE convened an advisory group of Illinois superintendents, school business officials, and other statewide representatives to shape the implementation of site-based expenditure reporting. The group grounded itself in what value this data could have for districts and their communities. The

group returned to this value proposition frequently as it made recommendations regarding data visualization on the State Report Card, data collection, and further training for peers in the field. The Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, and the Edonomics Lab at Georgetown University have highlighted Illinois as a national model for its process in initiating this work.

Illinois school districts still generate the bulk of their revenue through local property taxes. ISBE administered the first Property Tax Relief Grant in FY 2019, as part of the agency's implementation of the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act. Twenty-eight districts of the 373 that applied were deemed eligible to abate an estimated \$68 million in local property taxes and receive a total of \$50 million in return from the state, in accordance with the formula and appropriations in statute.

ISBE has pursued more equitable funding distribution beyond EBF. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Programs, including National School Lunch and School Breakfast, serve more than a million Illinois students each day. The federal government shutdown in February 2019 put funding for these nutrition programs at risk. ISBE proactively developed an equitable cash disbursement plan to ensure districts most at risk could continue to provide

Child Nutrition Programs, even in the event that federal funding ceased.

Part of ISBE's efforts to promote fiscal and academic equity includes working closely with school districts that have Financial Oversight Panels to support their efforts to regain financial health. A district qualifies for a Financial Oversight Panel after meeting criteria for financial difficulty, as defined in statute. Three school districts currently have Financial Oversight Panels:

- The North Chicago School District Financial Oversight Panel and Independent Authority were established in May and June, respectively, of 2012. Since that time, the district has improved its academic offerings to students and financial position. Eighty percent of the ninth-graders in the 2018-19 school year and 87.5 percent of students participating in career and technical education pathways were on track to graduate. Enrollment in postsecondary opportunities increased 13 percent in the last year to 60 percent of the graduating class. The district also implemented a dual language program in the early grades. The district had deficit spending of \$6 million in operational funds in FY 2012. By the end of FY 2018, the district realized an operational surplus of \$1.3 million.
- The East St. Louis School District Financial Oversight Panel was established in April 2012. Since that time, the district has improved its academic offerings to students and its financial position. The percentage of ninth-graders on track to graduate increased to 80 percent for the 2016-17 school year – up from 69 percent the previous year. Enrollment in Advanced Placement classes has increased from 30 in 2012 to 325 in 2018. The value of scholarships earned by the graduating class increased to more than \$12.4 million in 2018 from \$389,000 in 2014. The district had deficit spending of \$2.6 million in operational funds in 2014. By the end of FY 2017, the district realized an operational surplus of \$2.2 million.
- The current Proviso School District Financial Oversight Panel was established in June 2012, at which time the district was sustaining operations through incurred debt. Currently, the district is incurring debt only for facility health, life, and safety needs. A \$25 million facilities need

was still not being addressed, so the Financial Oversight Panel helped the district develop a financial plan that incorporates funding required for facility needs. This was done while also increasing staff and educational programs to enhance programming for students.

ISBE's electronic Grants Management System team also implemented improvements to reduce the reporting burden on grantees. The team developed new functionality to pre-populate key grant information for more than 60 state and federal grants from final FY 2018 submission into initial FY 2019 grant applications. The team created functionality that allows Local Education Agencies to upload grant data from a formatted Excel file directly into the grant system.

ISBE also maintained its commitment to accountability and transparency by establishing program objectives aligned to the seven agency-wide goals for all agency programs. ISBE selected 53 of those measures to serve as the agency's public facing performance measures for use in the state's Budgeting for Results and Public Accountability reporting.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



EBF Spending Plans show districts working to better meet the health and wellness needs of students. Districts statewide have hired more than 30 social workers to help support students' social and emotional needs – positions that districts would not have been able to afford without Evidence-Based Funding. Iroquois County is an area that has been hit hard by natural disasters, with devastating flooding during two of the past five years. That puts the district on the front lines of trying to meet basic needs for families, including food and mental health support. District leaders say those essential supports would not have been possible without the additional money they received from EBF. Pikeland is a rural community with few health resources, so administrators hired a guidance counselor and a nurse to serve students. Similarly, Belleville Township added mental health resources for students, and Freeport hired behavioral support staff and a family resource coordinator. Chicago Ridge expanded physical education to four days a week rather than three.

Quality:

Common definition of, and fair access to, quality education.

ISBE's new system of support and accountability establishes a multiple-indicator framework for measuring school quality. The system helps ISBE identify which schools need the greatest assistance to meet the state's shared goals. ISBE began developing the new support and accountability system after the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) became law in December 2015 and replaced the previous federal education law, No Child Left Behind. ISBE developed the Illinois ESSA Plan, which detailed the new support and accountability system, through robust engagement with administrators, educators, advocates, and other stakeholders.

In the new system, every school in the state receives an annual summative designation based on multiple indicators, including graduation rates, students' growth and proficiency in math and English language arts, chronic absenteeism, and culture and climate surveys. The four summative designations are:

- **Exemplary:** A school performing in the top 10 percent of schools statewide with no underperforming student groups.
- **Commendable:** A school that has no underperforming student groups, a graduation rate greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.
- **Underperforming:** A school in which one or more student groups is performing at or below the level of the "all students" group in the lowest performing 5 percent of schools.
- **Lowest-Performing:** A school that is in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in Illinois and any high school with a graduation rate of 67 percent or less.

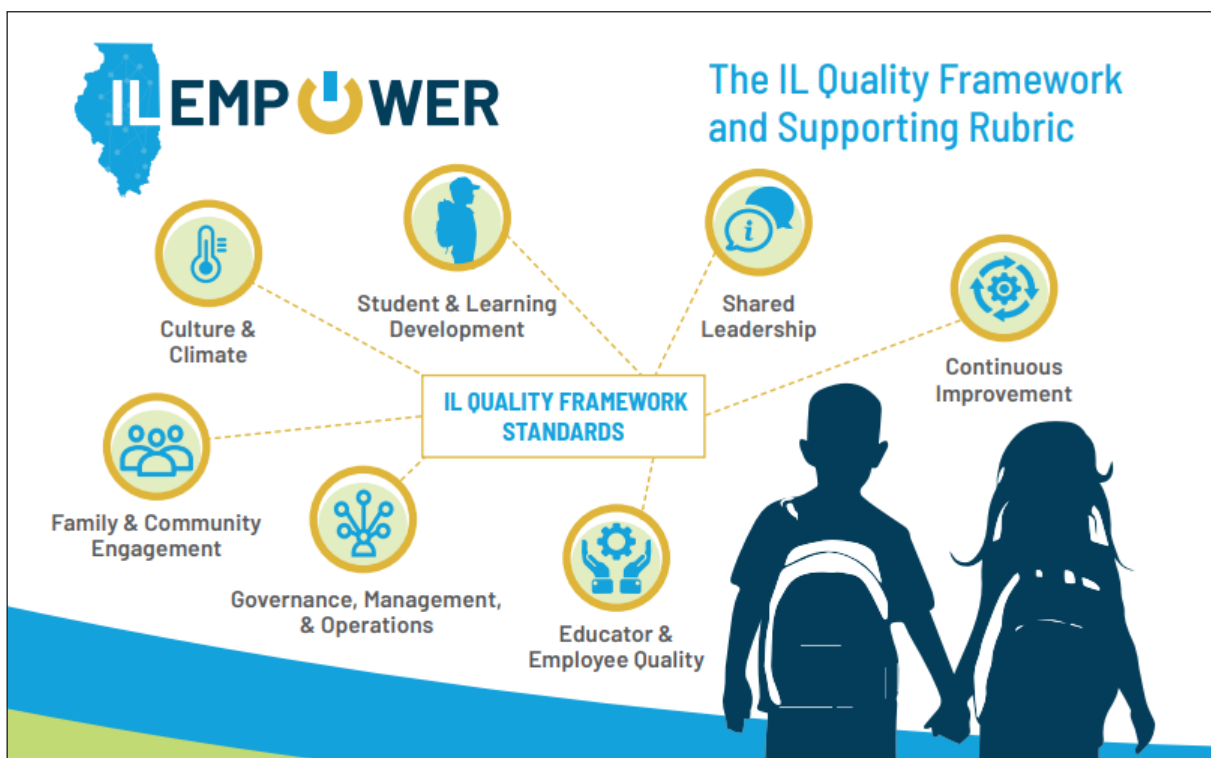
The Underperforming and Lowest-Performing designations identify schools to receive additional funding and supports through IL-EMPOWER. ISBE issued preliminary summative designations in June 2018. The system launched statewide with final designations on the 2018 Illinois Report Card on October 30, 2018.

ISBE is committed to engaging in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders about the Illinois ESSA Plan and to updating the plan every three years, as needed. ISBE conducted a Support and Accountability Listening Tour in May 2019 to gather feedback to inform the creation of an amendment to the plan by August 2020; changes will go into effect for the 2020-21 school year. The listening tour focused on gathering feedback on the designations, indicator weights, and the assessment policy for newly arrived English Learners. The amendment process is part of the agency's commitment to continuous engagement and improvement.

ISBE engaged in a six-week dynamic communications campaign prior to the statewide launch to ensure all schools had the information they needed to understand and communicate to their own stakeholders about their designations and IL-EMPOWER. The campaign included 11 graphically designed fact sheets emailed to a list of more than 6,000 stakeholders, a new comprehensive website landing page at www.isbe.net/support, social media, media engagement, template letters for districts to use in



State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala recognized superintendents and principals of distinction with Illinois Association of School Administrators Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark and Illinois Principals Association Executive Director Dr. Jason Leahy at a luncheon on May 9, 2019, in Springfield.



ISBE launched a six-week communications campaign before the release of the 2018 Illinois Report Card. The campaign included fact sheets and infographics focused on specific aspects of the new system of support and accountability, so districts had the information they needed to understand and communication with their local stakeholders about the new designations and supports.

local communications to families, and a roadshow with six in-person events for stakeholders to receive information and ask questions in person. The emails received an average open rate of 47.7 percent, which is almost double the national average for government industry email campaigns. Links within the emails received an average click rate of 8.8 percent, which is more than double the national average for government industry email campaigns.

A total of 204 schools received the Lowest-Performing designation and began the IL-EMPOWER school improvement process in October 2018. Another 561 schools received the Underperforming designation and began the IL-EMPOWER process. Some schools chose to utilize their first year in the process as a planning year and begin formal implementation in the 2019-20 school year. The identified schools and districts received a total of \$68 million in federal dollars and \$1 million in state dollars to support their improvement efforts.

IL-EMPOWER gives schools more choice and voice in school improvement. Schools engage in a needs

assessment in collaboration with their local stakeholders to determine their areas of improvement. The Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee developed the two-part needs assessment, called the Illinois Quality Framework and Supporting Rubric. The framework identifies seven standards of successful schools and guides schools through a process of gathering evidence to self-determine gaps in their performance. Schools submit their evidence and ratings through the online rubric.

ISBE's approach to school improvement aims to support schools and districts in making systemic shifts in resource allocation and pedagogy to close gaps in equity, opportunity, and achievement.

School support managers are assigned to all Lowest-Performing schools as thought partners and coaches, helping them navigate IL-EMPOWER resources to build work plans for continuous school improvement. Identified schools also select a learning partner from a vetted network of vendors and peer schools that offer services aligned to meet the school's improvement needs in curriculum and instruction, governance

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Posen-Robbins Elementary School District 143.5 has been actively engaged in the IL-EMPOWER school improvement process with a specific focus on improving the equity of services to English Learners.

“Specifically, we have placed a firmer concentration on unpacking the Common Core Standards and our delivery of the standards within daily lessons,” said Dr. Anthony Edison, the district’s superintendent.

The additional Evidence-Based Funding Posen-Robbins received allowed the district to enhance overall programming, including Saturday school; expand after-school and summer school programming; focus on data analysis; and improve teacher and administrator training through Learning Partners.

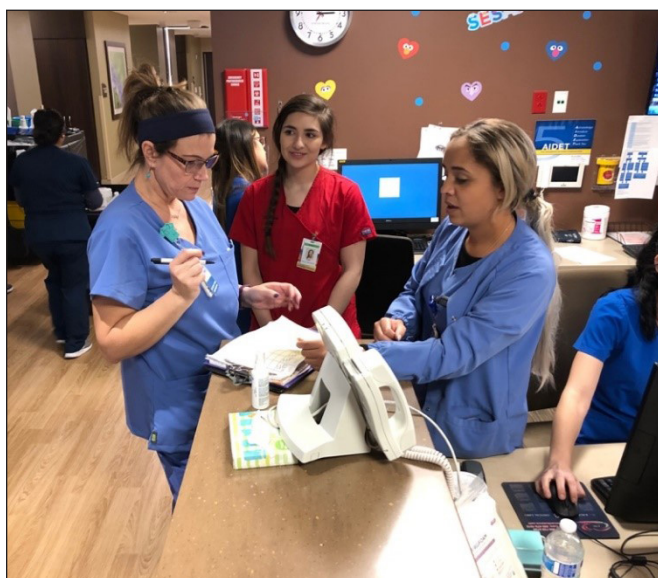
“It is our wish that as we move upward in our designations, that the funding that provides critical assistance continues,” said Dr. Edison.

and management, or culture and climate. The peer school learning partners are schools with either the Commendable or Exemplary designation that have proven success in school improvement strategies or programming. It is the belief of the agency that some of the best professional development happens when schools work alongside a peer that has faced and overcame a similar challenge.

IL-EMPOWER also includes two storytellers. The storytellers initiative, called *Illinois Sparks: Case Studies in School Improvement*, stems from the same idea as the peer learning partners – that schools in Illinois have achieved incredible growth, other schools can benefit from what they have learned, and the state education agency is uniquely positioned to facilitate that peer-to-peer learning. The storytellers identify, produce, and share stories of effective and replicable practices. The most-viewed story thus far has attained more than 1,500 page views.

ISBE made additional improvements to the online and interactive Illinois Report Card to support districts’ and families’ understanding of school quality in Illinois. In 2018, the website received more than 8.2 million page views, up more than 150,000 page views from the total in 2017. ISBE works year-round to make the Illinois Report Card one of the best in the nation. The Education Data Campaign included Illinois in its 50-state analysis of school report cards as a Bright Spot for helping parents easily understand and gain meaningful use of school data.

The ability to identify students in the greatest need and to provide targeted supports requires common assessments of student performance. Spring 2019 saw improvements to Illinois’ assessment system. Students in the ninth and tenth grades began taking the PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10, respectively. These assessments, along with the SAT in the 11th grade, provide a measure of academic growth for students in high school. Students in grades 3-8 took the Illinois Assessment of Readiness. The 2019 administration of the Illinois Assessment of Readiness reduced testing time by about one-third to six hours or less, in response to feedback from the field. The Illinois Assessment of Readiness measures the same rigorous Illinois Learning Standards and includes the same high-quality test questions used the last four years. Using the same content and measuring the same standards ensures comparability from year to year, which is essential for including growth as an indicator in the support and accountability system.



ISBE launched *Illinois Sparks: Case Studies in School Improvement* to share effective, replicable practices from school districts across the state. ISBE shared a story about how Huntley High School’s implementation of blended learning allowed students to take advantage of hands-on learning experiences outside of the classroom and during the school day. In this photo, students in Huntley’s Medical Academy work in rotations with Centegra doctors and nurses in Care Coordination and the Cardiac Catheter Lab.

ISBE conducted a multi-week communications campaign to provide superintendents, principals, and assessment coordinators with information about the Illinois Assessment of Readiness. The campaign included template letters to send to families, social media videos and graphics, and emails with fact sheets addressing major topics.

ISBE is committed to continuing to make additional improvements thoughtfully over time and in collaboration with educators and administrators. ISBE requested \$3 million in FY 2020 for a holistic review of the state’s assessment system from pre-K through 12th grade.

All of ISBE’s efforts in support and accountability are grounded in equity – in ensuring that students with all different life experiences receive what they need to have a level playing field. ISBE believes leadership for equity must include internal inquiry and conversations at the agency. ISBE’s internal Equity Advisory Working Group (EAWG) began its work in 2018 with the long-term goal of building the capacity of all internal agency staff to understand inequities, integrate equitable practices, and sustain implementation. As part of its theory of action, the EAWG has committed to identifying meaningful learning opportunities for agency staff, as well as designing and implementing equity assessment tools for reflection and improvement at both the individual and divisional level.

The EAWG supported the State Board in developing a stated set of equity principles and beliefs to guide

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Brookwood School District 167 is immersed in the school improvement process to improve student outcomes. Brookwood has received ongoing individualized support through the IL-EMPOWER school improvement process. IL-EMPOWER provided the district in-depth information on the Illinois Quality Framework Rubric and how to use the rubric to identify areas of need through an analysis of demographics, perceptions, student learning, and school processes.

“Without this support, we feel we would be riding the same ‘treadmill’ and never getting to a place where change is really needed,” said Bethany A. Lindsay, the district’s superintendent. “Most importantly, the process has allowed us to not look for blame or to point fingers, but to positively focus on what can be done with an action plan in which to make it happen.”

the agency’s work. The EAWG also drafted and began distribution of an internal equity self-assessment tool and climate and culture assessment, as well as made available an Equity Resource Library for all agency employees to access. Other divisions at the agency have engaged the EAWG to review their work through an equity lens, including by reviewing ESSA State Conference proposals and the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Book.



ISBE staff lead a discussion about potential improvements to the Illinois Every Student Succeeds Act Plan during the agency’s 2019 Support and Accountability Listening Tour stop in Springfield on May 22, 2019. The tour gathered feedback on designations, indicator weights, and the state’s assessment policy for newly arrived English Learners.

Autonomy:

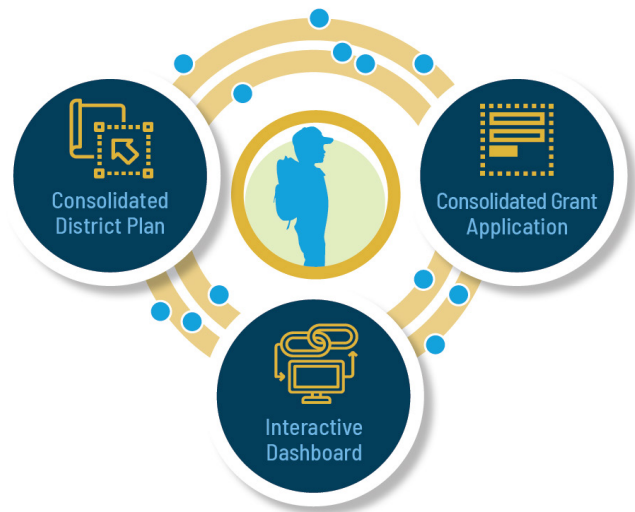
Maximize district autonomy to provide quality education to all families.

The people closest to the students in each community in Illinois are best situated to meet their unique needs. ISBE believes educators are most effective when they have autonomy, along with relevant and high-quality supports, and equitable resources. ISBE provides actionable data, tools, and training to support school districts in making evidence-based decisions to identify and meet students' needs.

ISBE continues to improve the Ed360 data dashboard and to expand its implementation statewide. Ed360, developed by ISBE with support from the federal Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, delivers near-real time metrics back to school districts in an easy-to-use interface that utilizes role-based security. Educators use Ed360 to make evidence-based instructional decisions and connect to professional development. ISBE crowdsources ideas for improvement and updates Ed360 regularly in response to educator feedback.

The Ed360 team surpassed its goal of reaching 700 district opt-ins by April 2019. The Ed360 outreach team makes presentations on the dashboard to school districts and Regional Offices of Education and conducts conference sessions to share updates to the data dashboard and to learn about educators' data needs. These personal interactions and the crowdsourced feedback are the building blocks of making Ed360 a dynamic and useful tool for educators.

IL ePlan



The IL ePlan consolidates and streamlines the federal grant application and management process to reduce the burden on grantees and support holistic service to students.

ISBE also supports districts' autonomy with tools and efficient technology that bring practitioners together for meaningful collaboration. ISBE launched the first phase of the IL ePlan, the Consolidated District Plan, in February 2019. The IL ePlan streamlines the federal grant management process to reduce the burden on grantees and support holistic service to students. These tools will support planning and grant management that takes multiple funding sources into

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Dr. Anthony Scarsella

"I would highly encourage my colleagues to take a look at Ed360 if they have not already done so," said Dr. Anthony Scarsella, superintendent of Palos Community Consolidated School District 118. "Palos 118 has been looking for a user-friendly platform that consolidates our assessment data in one place and that our teachers find easy to use. Ed360 is that platform. I commend ISBE for providing Ed360 free of charge to school districts."

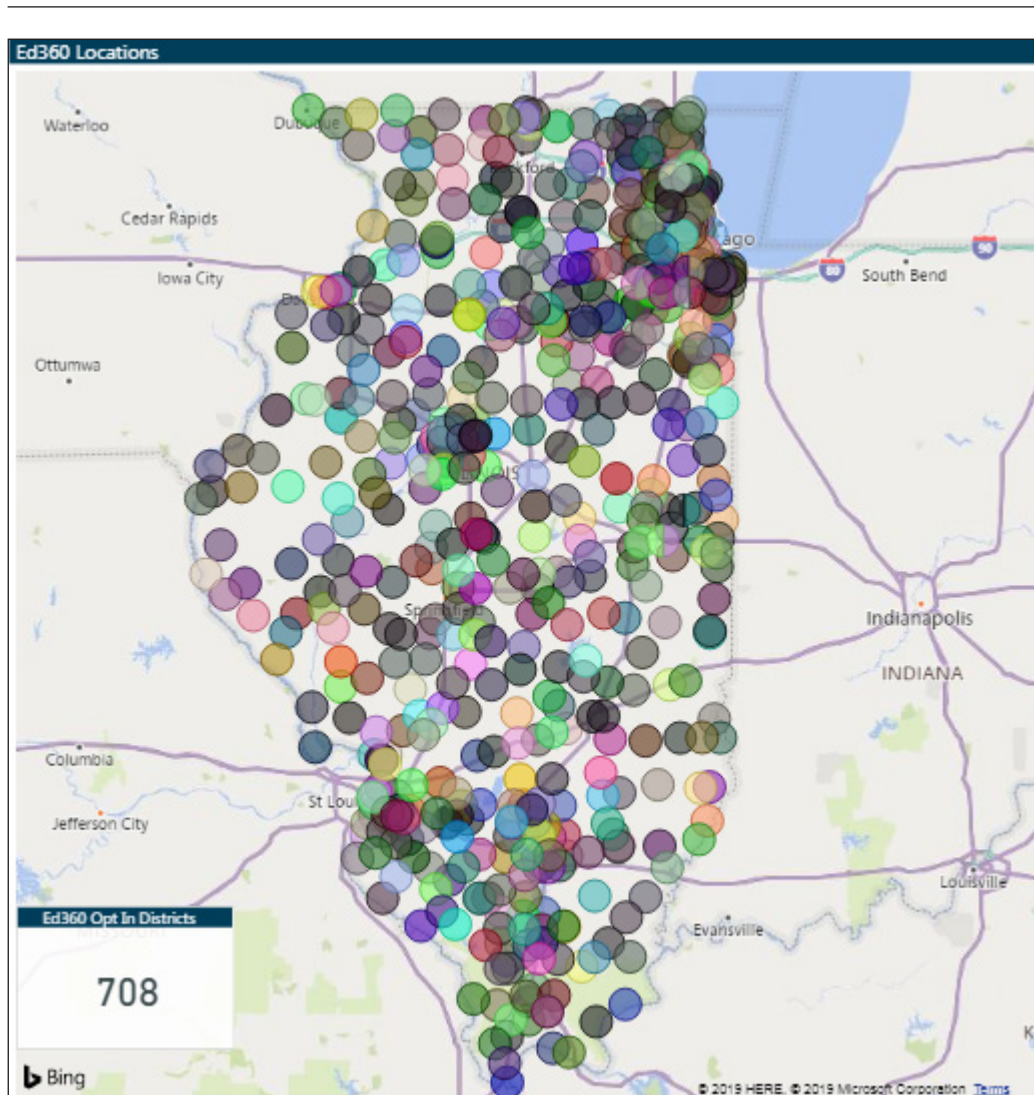
consideration to fully meet each student’s needs. The IL ePlan will also help ISBE understand each grantee holistically, so the agency can provide improved technical assistance to school districts that is rooted in equity.

The Consolidated District Plan opened in February 2019 for fiscal year 2020 grants. This online form allows grantees to answer one set of planning questions to meet those requirements for all 12 of the federal formula grants. The Consolidated District Plan pre-populates with a grantee’s narrative responses from the previous years’ plans, where applicable. Collecting and coordinating this information up front will streamline individual FY 2020 grant applications.

ISBE will add information from the ISBE data warehouse relating to grants to Ed360 during the second phase of the IL ePlan, which is slated for release during FY 2020.

Beyond tools and technology, ISBE supports district’s autonomy by building local capacity through high-quality professional development and coaching. ISBE’s Results Driven Accountability Cohort supports districts in improving their special education programs in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

ISBE offered a series of three Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Cohort seminars over a



As of May 9, 2019, 708 districts have opted in to using Ed360, which offers districts the autonomy to make evidence-based instructional decisions connected to professional development.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



“Seriously, we could not have asked for anything more in a training. Even though it was a short amount of time, you managed to cover a ton of content in a very clear way. The updates in the PowerPoint presentation were excellent and will truly help us conceptualize transition planning differently,” said Rachel Merke, transition coordinator with the Lake County Transition Committee, after going through Indicator 13 transition training. She added, “Thank you for taking the time in answering our very complicated questions! We are now all excited to get together next month during our regular monthly meeting to review all that we have learned. I know personally, I don’t want to be known for writing a ‘bottom rung’ IEP. And I know that my principals do not as well. I’ve already put a plan into the works for us to hold a training this May to disseminate your information across all our buildings. I’m looking forward to combing through the PowerPoint again!”

12-month period to selected districts and schools in Chicago Public Schools District 299. These cohorts addressed district performance on the 17 indicators of the IDEA State Performance Plan, particularly Indicator 5, which addresses the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

During the first seminar, participants identified a problem, facilitated a root cause analysis, and developed a theory of action for implementation. During the second seminar, participants created an improvement plan and worked through action steps to achieve measurable results. In the final seminar, participants conducted an evaluation of early results and began considering a plan for sustainability of improved outcomes for students. Districts and schools also developed a community of practice and engaged in peer-to-peer learning with others in the regional cohort.

Participants provided positive feedback on the RDA Cohort. One participant said the RDA process “required us to look deeper into our overall curriculum, resources, and procedures as a district to work together among teacher and learning, and special education towards a common goal.” Another participant said the RDA process “increased collaboration between general education and special education teachers and allowed the time to analyze data with fidelity in order to make effective outcomes-based decisions.”

These efforts resulted in 52.5 percent of students with disabilities statewide participating in a general education setting for more than 80 percent of their school day. On average, schools in the RDA Cohort increased this percentage of students by approximately 18 percent.

Indicator 13 of the IDEA State Performance Plan focuses on improving the postsecondary and transition needs of students. ISBE provided many on-site presentations to regional groups, including the Lake County Transition Planning Committee, and provided webinars and training modules via the ISBE website. Agency staff collaborated with state vocational rehabilitation groups, including the Department of Human Services Secondary Transition Experience Program and the State Rehabilitation Council. Consistent efforts to improve Illinois’ performance on Indicator 13 has resulted in 99.17 percent compliance, up from 86.4 percent in 2010.

Competency:

Encourage competency-based learning.

The growing competency-based movement in Illinois is modernizing education for the 21st century. Illinois' students need a new approach that breaks away from the one-size-fits-all model of measuring success by the Carnegie unit. Competency-based education asks students to demonstrate mastery of learning targets that are aligned to state standards and incorporate knowledge, skills, and social-emotional capacities.

Students advance after demonstrating their mastery, rather than after completing requirements for “seat time” or assigned work. Students can learn and show what they know in creative, individualized ways. Competency-based education allows what students learn through apprenticeships, internships, and community service to count as well as what they learn in the classroom.

Scoring rubrics that clearly articulate expectations help students, families, and teachers better understand where each student is in their learning and what they need to work on to advance. Competency-based education's personalized approach allows students to move at their own pace, which ensures students progress once they have mastered the foundation for the next level. It allows students to move on without waiting for their peers, or they can obtain additional support, if needed.

Illinois' venture into competency-based education began in earnest in 2016 when ISBE launched the Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirement Pilot Program as authorized by Public Act 99-0674, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act (110 ILCS 148).

The pilot program started with 10 school districts. Stories of success from Chicago, Kankakee, and Peoria, produced by ISBE's storytellers and available at www.isbe.net/stories, fueled the growth of the competency-based education movement in Illinois.

An amendment to the PWR Act allowed multi-district collaboratives to apply for the pilot. Districts can utilize common frameworks and share resources by working together as a collaborative. Three collaboratives joined the pilot in December 2018. Forty-five school districts across the state are participating as part of the learning community in the pilot as of April 2019. ISBE released a Request for Applications in May 2019 to complete the third cohort of the pilot.

Participating in the pilot gives districts at all phases of implementation the opportunity to further strengthen their practices, learn from experts and peers, and share successes with other schools. ISBE hosts meetings for the pilot districts throughout the year that feature presentations, coaching, and networking.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Benito Juarez Community Academy in Chicago Public Schools joined Illinois' competency-based education pilot in April 2017. The school had used standards-based grading since 2008. Principal Juan Carlos Ocon wanted to take the school's transformation a step further. “Competency-based education has allowed our school to take a holistic approach to each student,” said Ocon. “The competency-based pilot was an affirmation that by shifting to a standards-based environment, we've been doing the right thing.”



Students at Benito Juarez Community Academy can participate on a robotics team.

Community:

Districts and schools as centers of healthy communities.



Pictured from left to right are Sam Aguirre, director of the ISBE Division of English Learners; Rosa Álvarez, a member of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Council and a parent of a Harvard CUSD 50 student; State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala; Soledad López, a member of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Council, a parent of a Sycamore CSD 427 student, and a participant in Universidad para Padres at Northern Illinois University; and ISBE Board member Dr. Christine Benson.

The whole community plays a role in the growth and development of its young people. Research shows that parent, family, and community involvement in education correlates to higher academic performance and school improvement. When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher level programs.

Effective parent engagement strengthens the relationship between the school and the community. ISBE's internal Parent and Family Engagement Workgroup is developing a framework for parent and family engagement to support the efforts of districts and ISBE.

ISBE's Division of English Learners models effective parent engagement. The division hosts an annual Bilingual Parent Summit that provides a rich mix of information about issues of critical importance to parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Top speakers are joined by experts and panels on such topics as pathways to academic success, enhanced parental participation in schools, immigration issues, U.S. citizenship, bilingual education programs, community college services, effective parenting techniques, health care alternatives, and much more. More than 1,300 bilingual parents, educators, administrators, and other advocates attended the 14th annual summit on May 11, 2019.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



School districts statewide use federal Title IV funding to support parent and family engagement programs. Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163 used its Title IV funding to develop parental involvement programs that foster support in academics and social-emotional learning for students in prekindergarten through eighth grade.

Students benefit when strong partnerships between families and education systems start early. The Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project provides evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for families, caregivers, and teachers of young children. Resources are available on the IEL website that include tip sheets, blogs, videos, and information about IEL and the project-based approach to learning for families and professionals to help support young children's well-being as well as their learning and school readiness. There were more than 3.9 million hits to the Illinois Early Learning [website](#) during fiscal year 2019.

The Illinois Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project is a multi-year initiative that seeks to enhance awareness of the mental health needs of young children and their families. This project enables stable and continued enrollment of children with social-emotional challenges in child care settings from birth to 7 years old, strengthening the capacity of individual agencies to address the needs of young children.

The project, which launched in September 2015, is built upon research-based findings that social and emotional development is the foundation for success in learning and in life, and can be supported by creating early partnerships among families, providers, programs, systems, and mental health professionals. State-funded preschool programs with access to Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services report significant decreases in expulsions rates -- 5.7 children per 1,000, compared to 10.8 children per 1,000 for programs with no consultation services.

ISBE also believes public systems must collaborate with each other to strengthen the capacity of each Illinois community to support its children. The Illinois Early

Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) is a partnership with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's College of Education Early Childhood Collective. IECAM provides comprehensive early childhood data and maps to local and state agencies and other stakeholders to improve outcomes for Illinois children. Data on the IECAM [website](#) can be used to make state resource allocation transparent, help communities plan for early childhood services, support early childhood research, assist grant writers, guide policy making, and provide a snapshot of the early childhood landscape in Illinois. In FY 2019, IECAM was involved in the following groups:

- **Illinois Opioid Crisis Response Advisory Council:** The IECAM project director is a member of this advisory council and, more specifically, the committee related to children and families. IECAM provides the council and committee data as requested to assist in addressing the opioid epidemic and helping more Illinois families.
- **Risk and Reach Project:** IECAM is part of the Core Partners team developing the Illinois Risk and Reach Report. The report examines risk factors affecting young children and their families through a set of data tools that explore the links to state investments in family stability, health, and early care and education. The report was released in March 2019 to help inform early childhood stakeholders who make policy and funding decisions.
- **Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF) Advisory Council:** The IECAM project director is a member of this newly formed advisory council that will advise the IFF study related to early care and education programs around the State of Illinois. The IFF report is due to be published during the second quarter of FY 2019.

Section Two:

Progress on Board Goals

Goal: All kindergartners are assessed for readiness.

RESULTS TO DATE

Kindergarten is a critical milestone in a child's longterm educational trajectory. Research shows that children demonstrating higher levels of school readiness at age 5 are generally more successful in grade school, are less likely to drop out of high school, and even earn more as adults.

Children enter kindergarten with a wide range of early childhood experiences, including in-home care, child care centers, family care, Head Start, prekindergarten, and privately run programs. Before 2017, Illinois did not have a common measure of students' math and literacy skills until the third grade. Understanding students' developmental readiness as they enter kindergarten will help the state align policy and investment with what children need for long-term academic and social success.

In the fall of 2017, teachers observed 106,670, or 81 percent, of the 132,378 children enrolled in kindergarten statewide using the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). KIDS is an observational tool designed to help teachers, administrators, families, and policymakers better

understand the developmental readiness of children entering kindergarten. Teachers observe and collect data for 14 measures and apply a rating for each measure based on evidence collected for each child. These ratings, entered into the KIDStech data system, provide a snapshot of development at kindergarten entry and indicate the students' level of development in three areas – language and literacy, math, and social and emotional development.

ISBE released the fall 2017 KIDS data in August 2018. The aggregate data reinforced the need statewide for increased investments in our early learners. The data showed that of the students rated on all 14 of the required measures:

- 23.6 percent demonstrated kindergarten readiness in all three developmental areas,
- 17.6 percent reached readiness in two developmental area,
- 17.2 percent reached readiness in one developmental area, and
- 41.6 percent did not reach readiness in any developmental areas.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Melissa Davidson, a kindergarten teacher at Morrisonville Elementary School, used KIDS data to determine that her students would benefit more from a play-based approach to instruction than from a traditional academic curriculum. Melissa started using the KIDS measures in 2015 and found that her students learned more through play than with the traditional coursework she'd been using for the previous three years. In the fall of 2018, she shifted her classroom to play-based learning, with daily mini math and reading lessons. Melissa says she's found that play-based instruction provides more opportunities to differentiate the learning to individual student needs. And she says her students have more confidence and fewer behavioral issues. Melissa evaluates her students using 29 KIDS measures twice a year, and she shared her experience with other districts during a KIDS networking day in January 2019.



This is Melissa Davidson's play-based kindergarten classroom at Morrisonville Elementary School.



Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten

KIDS tracks developmental progress of students in their current kindergarten class and provides data about student development as they approach first grade.

KIDS data supports the state in understanding where communities may or may not have adequate resources for high-quality early learning programs. Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist and University of Chicago Professor James Heckman found that for every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood programs, \$7 to \$13 is returned per child each year in improved education, economic, health, and social outcomes.

ISBE used free and reduced-price lunch eligibility as an indicator of students from homes with limited resources. The aggregate fall 2017 data showed that 16

percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch demonstrated kindergarten readiness in all three developmental areas, compared to 30 percent of students not eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The data both support the state's understanding of where communities may or may not have access to high-quality early learning opportunities and gives individual communities a powerful tool for advocacy.

ONGOING EFFORTS

More than 99 percent of all school districts with kindergarten students implemented KIDS in 2018, the second year of mandatory statewide data collection. ISBE released preliminary district-level data from the fall 2018 KIDS collection to school districts in March 2019. ISBE supported the March 2019 data release to districts with instructions on accessing the data, guidance on data usage, a template infographic to support local communications planning, guidance on framing the KIDS data, a webinar to support administrators, learning opportunities with KIDS coaches, a KIDS book list, and KIDS digital resources. ISBE will release the final statewide report at the end of June 2019.



East Aurora School District 131's early childhood program supports kindergarten readiness not only through developmentally appropriate instruction but also through robust parent and family engagement.



East Aurora SD 131 received \$4,354,529 in total Early Childhood Block Grant funding, which amounts to \$5,443 per student. More than 3,000 children under the age of 5 reside within the district; however, its early childhood programs have capacity to serve only 838.

Ensuring KIDS data are collected and available to districts in the same academic year provides the greatest value to teachers and administrators. ISBE hopes the earlier release of the preliminary district-level KIDS data to districts will encourage more districts to consider administering KIDS again during the spring rating period, at the 170th day of attendance, to track developmental progress of students in their current kindergarten class and provide data about student development as they approach first grade. Conducting a second administration of KIDS in the spring is not a state requirement, but it is highly encouraged to add utility for teachers, schools, and districts. Once spring ratings are entered, teachers and administrators can produce classroom-, school- and district-level reports to gauge student and group developmental progress across the school year. Teachers have access to classroom-level KIDS data as soon as they enter ratings into KIDSTech, so there are also opportunities for KIDS data to inform instructional practice and focus curriculum based on the developmental strengths and areas of need that have been identified.

ISBE is committed to supporting the KIDS initiative, including by providing five years of funding for KIDS coaches across the state. KIDS coaches offer a range of services, including one-on-one technical assistance calls and visits, group coaching sessions, classroom walkthroughs, and support in interpreting and using data to improve classroom instruction. KIDS coaches are available to all districts, on demand, to support professional development at the classroom, school, district, or regional level.

ISBE also assesses students for English language proficiency when they enter kindergarten. School districts then offer students in need of assistance to reach English proficiency the appropriate English Learner services. ISBE continues to assess KIDS administration and is working to improve future data and usage, including aligning data with other ISBE assessments, improving professional development for teachers and administrators, and further examining how the tool is being implemented with English Learners.

Goal: Ninety percent or more of third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.

RESULTS TO DATE

Third grade is a pivotal level in a student’s development; it is often described as the year when students shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Students who do not meet grade-level reading expectations by third grade are four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than their peers who read proficiently, according to the American Educational Research Association.

The percentage of third-grade students who met or exceeded standards in English language arts on the state’s assessment held steady at approximately 31 percent in the 2017-18 school year, compared to 30 percent in the 2016-17 school year.

Children begin developing literacy skills well before they enter kindergarten. High-quality early learning opportunities are essential for students to develop the foundational literacy skills they need to be able to read at grade level by third grade. Data from the fall 2017 Kindergarten Individual Development Survey shows that 44 percent of kindergartners demonstrated readiness in language and literacy development. With the continued expansion of and emphasis on the importance of early childhood education, it is the hope that this focus on literacy development continues throughout the child’s education.

ISBE is committed to supporting the expansion of high-quality early childhood education programs to ensure that all Illinois children develop a strong foundation for literacy.

ONGOING EFFORTS

ISBE administers state and federal grants to expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities. The State Board’s fiscal year 2020 budget request includes a \$100 million increase in funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant. ISBE estimates that this increase would serve approximately 14,000 additional children. ISBE released its Request for Proposals for FY 2020 Early Childhood Block Grants on April 12.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Elgin School District U-46 is the second-largest district in Illinois. The community’s vibrant student population speaks more than 100 native languages; more than half of students are from Hispanic families who value their district’s nationally recognized English Learner programs. Elgin was awarded Preschool Expansion grants in 2014. District leaders worked to identify the hardest to reach families and have made many adaptations to their programs to serve their needs. Elgin may be the only district in the state with full-time transition facilitators – one for birth-to-3 home visiting programs, another for preschool into kindergarten and the early grades, and a pipeline committee to address systems that are not aligned. Elgin staff continue to work hard to identify changes they can implement districtwide to ensure that more of their community’s children and families have their best chance for success at school and in life.



Two students play and learn at Elgin School District U-46’s Independence Center for Early Learning.

Awarded grants will fund the expansion or creation of programs to serve children through Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion, prioritizing programs that propose to serve children in areas with fewer resources.

The Preschool for All program emphasizes the relationships among early childhood education, parenting education and involvement, and future success in school. Illinois' goal is for 80 percent of all children to be fully ready for kindergarten by 2021, setting them up for success as they continue through the critical third grade year.

In 2015, ISBE received federal Preschool Development Grant-Expansion funding and technical assistance to develop and implement birth-to-third grade alignment strategies. This grant allowed ISBE to partner with Illinois State University to establish and implement the Birth-to-Third Grade (B-3) Continuity Project, a comprehensive system of supports for the birth-to-third grade alignment. The B-3 Continuity Project released its findings from the first four years of the project in January 2019; the report's key findings include that:

- Adequate early care and education funding provides legitimacy for preschool education in the eyes of kindergarten through high school (K-12) administrators.
- B-3 strategies must be responsive to community context.
- Stable funding over time is necessary to support this work.
- Stakeholder commitment over time is key to sustaining momentum.
- A shared body of data helps to clarify community needs and make the case for needed services.
- Solid relationships form the foundation for change, which is the case with all systems-building work.
- Serving the most at-risk children and families, as opposed to serving a universal or less at-risk population, requires a different approach, additional staff competencies, and sets of services.
- Because of a lack of integration and coordination at the state level, communities and individual programs bear the burden of managing multiple, sometimes conflicting and redundant, requirements and procedures.

B-3 alignment requires multiple providers and stakeholders to work together to support a coherent educational experience from birth through age 8. ISBE continues to focus on eight core elements for B-3 alignment: community partnerships, comprehensive services, family engagement, supported transitions, joint professional development, aligned curriculum and instruction, aligned assessments, and data-driven improvements.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



The McLean County Unit District 5 early learning program provides a stimulating and nurturing environment for the district's youngest learners. McLean County is home to Illinois State University and the corporate headquarters of State Farm Insurance, yet nearly half of the community's population without a high school diploma lives in poverty. The needs-based early learning programs at two elementary school sites, Brigham and Sugar Creek, teach students how to work with others, acquire and use language for communicating thoughts and feelings, develop skills and knowledge needed for success, and love school. Unit 5 was one of 18 grantees selected to participate in the first phase of the Preschool Expansion in 2014. The district's administrators, teachers, and family engagement staff have since gained traction in developing birth-to-third grade systems and supports, while testing innovative and sustainable responses to some of the problems faced by families in the district. The district has implemented a five-year plan for improving families' transitions between programs and schools, focusing on collaboration, planning, and professional development to improve outcomes for children and families.



McLean County Unit District 5 engages parents through its Parent Advisory Board.

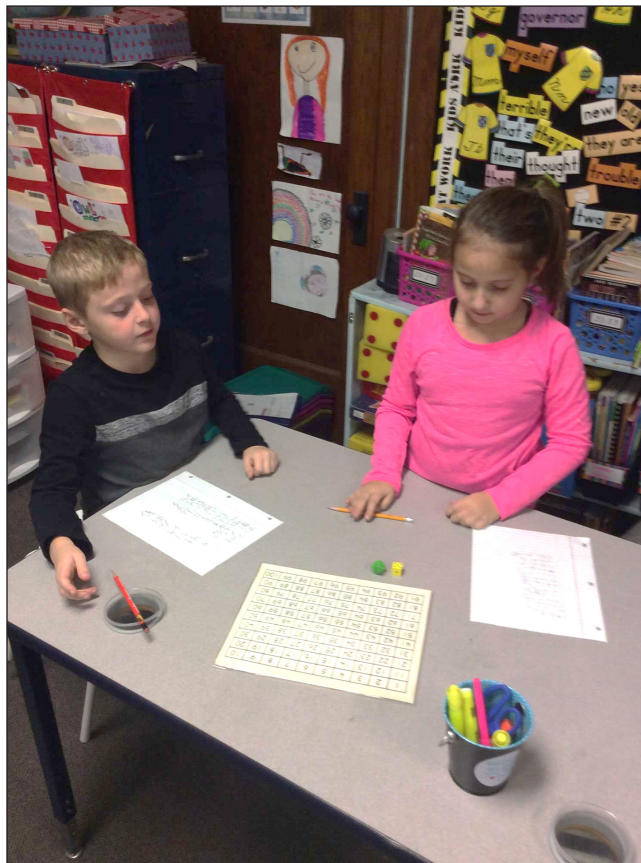
Goal: Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.

RESULTS TO DATE

As the world and its career paths become increasingly complex, students' success depends not only on what they know but also what they can do with that knowledge. It is more important than ever for Illinois students to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to solve tough problems, gather and evaluate evidence, and make sense of information. Ensuring that students are on track with math concepts as they enter middle school is key to preparing them for success well beyond high school.

Research from the University of California-Irvine School of Education demonstrates that consistent participation in after-school activities during the elementary school years is linked to narrowing the gap in math achievement by grade 5. Researchers found that:

- When after-school participation is highly consistent, there is no gap in low-income and high-income children's math achievement at grade 5.
- The more consistent the after-school participation, the narrower the gap in math achievement.
- The more rarely students participate in after-school activities, the wider the achievement gap.



Two students practice computational skills while playing a game with dice at the Cats Commitment after-school program at Galva Elementary School.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Cats Commitment is one of the 22 after-school sites that form the Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education 28 21st Century Community Learning Center program. Cats Commitment, which is located at Galva Elementary School, serves approximately 110 kindergarten-through-sixth grade students in the largely rural community in Henry County. In addition to snacks, homework help, tutoring, and outdoor recreation, students participate in a range of enrichment clubs that help them develop math and other academic skills in a fun, safe, and supportive learning environment.

Each year, ISBE disburses \$1.09 billion in federal Title I grants to school districts statewide. Schools use these Title I funds to supplement educational services and programming for students from homes with limited resources. Many districts opt to use Title I funds to provide additional support and opportunities for students in math, including through after-school programs.

The percentage of fifth-grade students who met or exceeded standards in math on the state's assessment held steady at approximately 36 percent in the 2017-18 school year, compared to 37 percent in the 2016-17 school year.

ONGOING EFFORTS

ISBE administers federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants to provide extended learning opportunities for students and families with the goal of improving academic achievement. These programs offer students a wide range of services and activities that are designed to reinforce and complement regular academic programs. There are currently 143 active grants for 21st CCLC programs provided to school districts, community-based organizations, and Regional Offices of Education across Illinois. Families of students served by these community learning centers also gain opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education.

The results show these programs are working. The 2016-17 21st Century Community Learning Centers

statewide evaluation showed that 56 percent of all reported student participants were regular attendees, meaning they attended programming for 30 or more days throughout the year. Sixty-seven percent of elementary school participants were regular attendees, compared with 44 percent of middle/high school students. According to teachers, the majority of regular 21st Century Community Learning Center participants in need of improvement did improve their academic achievement:

- 61 percent of elementary students improved academically, and 65 percent improved with regard to completing homework to teachers' satisfaction.
- 70 percent of middle/high school students improved academically, and 71 percent improved with regard to completing homework to teachers' satisfaction.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



The Collaboration for Healthy and Thriving Students grant supports 21st Century Community Learning Center programs to enhance integration of after-school community services, better align resources, and create a catalyst to bring partners together to serve the needs of the whole child. Two grants funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation were awarded in September 2018 – one to Quincy School District 172 and the other to Youth and Opportunity United.

Quincy SD 172 created a Hotspotting intervention program to provide supports to students who were chronically absent from school. As of December 2018, 19 students and families have received support, including therapeutic intervention sessions. A school attendance plan was also developed. The intervention sessions are an opportunity to ensure each student has basic needs met, including housing, food, and a sense of physical safety.

Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U.) created a program to increase science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and experiential learning programs, social-emotional learning, and family engagement. Y.O.U. provides twice-weekly workshops where students can explore gardening, sustainability, personal/health nutrition, and culinary arts. Y.O.U. collaborates with licensed clinical counselors to provide therapeutic support in neighborhood schools. Y.O.U. has increased parent/caregiver engagement by hosting 14 site-specific family engagement events and two community-specific events. Y.O.U. also executed a contract with a partnering school district to fund elements of Community Schools programs, such as parent engagement and health services.



Quincy SD 172 created a Hotspotting intervention program to provide supports to students who were chronically absent from school. As of December 2018, 19 students and families have received support, including therapeutic intervention sessions.

Goal: Ninety percent or more of ninth-grade students are on track to graduate with their cohort.

RESULTS TO DATE

ISBE measures the percentage of ninth-grade students on track to graduate using the metric developed by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. The consortium’s research showed that a student who finishes ninth grade “on track” is almost four times more likely to graduate from high school than the student who is not. The metric defines finishing “on track” as having earned at least five full-year course credits (10 semester credits) and no more than one semester “F” in a core subject. The research shows that students who do not meet this threshold have difficulties taking the more advanced courses required for graduation and are more likely to drop out of school.

The statewide percentage of ninth-grade students on track to graduate at the end of the 2017-18 school year held steady at 86.6 percent, compared to the 2016-17 school year.

Schools districts support students in staying on track to graduate through early interventions, equitable supports, and opportunities for them to engage in learning in different ways. The Migrant Education Program, McKinney-Vento homeless education program, and Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program serve as examples of statewide initiatives to provide students who face unique challenges with equitable opportunities to learn.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Adlai E. Stevenson High School’s Family and Consumer Sciences program has been instrumental in creating a Student + Teacher = Academic Responsibility (STAR) program for its students. The STAR model was a result of school-wide culture changes that focused on social-emotional learning in the classroom, curriculum, and assessment. The five areas of focus within the STAR design, which stem from the Illinois-adopted social-emotional learning standards, include emotional safety, growth mindset, meaning and purpose, belonging and structure, and student reflection. The STAR model is a framework for an academically responsible classroom blended with social and emotional learning. Student voice is another crucial component to the change in culture at Adlai E. Stevenson High School. Using an online data collection tool, teachers are encouraged to create personalized surveys that focus on social-emotional standards. Student voice surveys are given in the fall and spring, with social-emotional learning perception surveys being filled out by freshmen and juniors in the fall and spring as well.



Adlai E. Stevenson High School uses a Student + Teacher = Academic Responsibility (STAR) design based on the Illinois-adopted social-emotional learning standards.

The Migrant Education Program is federally funded and provides supplemental education and supportive services to children of migrant workers and youth who fall under the definition of migrant workers themselves. Migrant workers move from one place to another for seasonal or temporary agricultural work. ISBE serves as the grantee for the federal funds and oversees migrant education services in the state.

During the regular school year, the migrant program operates in support of, and in coordination with, regular school programs. There are currently seven summer grantees and five regular year grantees. Northern Illinois University works closely with ISBE to develop the workshops and trainings that prepare

program recruiters, data personnel, educators, and administrators for the implementation of the summer programs.

The results of the 2017-18 Migrant Education Program annual evaluation showed that the program met 11 of 13 of the Measurable Program Outcomes. Evidence showed that the program helped students attain statistically significant progress in reading and literacy, as well as math.

The McKinney-Vento homeless education program is designed to address the challenges that children and youth with inconsistent housing often face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. ISBE grants at

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



Dallas Terry went to college for one semester and decided it wasn't for him. He discontinued his higher education, but found a passion for training while working at a local auto body shop. Terry later obtained a degree in career and technical education that landed him a job at Carbondale Community High School. He started as a teacher and now leads the school's Career and Technical Education Department.

Terry piloted a program focusing on intangible skills that have transferability across fields, including responsibility, work ethic, communications, and project management, all concerns that local employers have said they wanted to see enhanced among the CCHS students they work with.

The Carbondale Boat Regatta is one example of how Terry helped students use these skills. He guided them through project management as they created timelines, managed communications, and stayed on track while making adjustments, as needed.

Terry said of the curriculum, "Every kid needs to know how to be career ready and sometimes we overshadow that, the fact that really we're preparing all of our kids for some career down the road."



Dallas Terry, a teacher and department chair at Carbondale Community High School, works with career and technical education students.

Story Credit: Stephanie Esters at Carbondale Community High School 165 in *The Southern Illinoisan*.

least 75 percent of allocated federal funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure homeless students are identified and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school. LEAs designate a local homeless liaison to coordinate services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in and attend school, so these students have the opportunity to succeed academically. Just over 67 percent of homeless students identified statewide who started ninth grade in 2015 graduated within four years.

The Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) ensures that students experiencing attendance challenges have equitable access to an education. TAOEP presents students and their parents with modified instructional programming and intervention services, offering part-time or full-time alternatives to regular school attendance. These services can provide assistance to help students stay on track to graduate from high school ready for college and career. During 2018, TAOEP served 25,844 students in 74 programs statewide through Regional Offices of Education, individual school districts, charter schools, and community colleges.

ONGOING EFFORTS

Offering students multiple pathways to success after high school and multiple ways to meet academic standards recognizes the diversity of Illinois' students and the diversity of Illinois' economy. ISBE continues to expand career and technical education (CTE), which prepares individuals for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand employment that furthers Illinois' global competitiveness. CTE programs provide learners with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to thrive in college and careers. All students benefit from career-connected learning that emphasizes real-world skills within a selected career focus. Students gain practical knowledge while discovering and preparing for success in potential careers. The reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins V) on July 31, 2018, aims to more fully develop students' academic knowledge and technical and employability skills through career-connected learning.

Middle and high school CTE programs serve more than 283,000 students. Students in CTE programs take specialized courses, in addition to the required core courses. Students also participate in work-based

learning, getting hands-on experience while still in school. CTE students often have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials and college credits while in high school. More than 30,000 students successfully completed dual credit CTE courses in 2018.

The Illinois Association for Career and Technical Education (IACTE) grant has improved CTE instruction across the state. The IACTE provides up-to-date professional development sessions through its annual conference. More than 200 attendees participated in 55 breakout sessions on a variety of topics, including pedagogy, working special population students, career planning, Illinois Learning Standards, evaluations, assessments, leadership and technology, industry certification, business partnerships, and more. The IACTE's annual conference received praise from attendees, with nine in 10 recommending it to a colleague and 99 percent of attendees reporting taking the information back to the classroom.

The IACTE also hosted seven sessions of its New and Nearly New Teacher Workshops. Attendees said the professional development was useful, with 100 percent saying it will impact their professional growth or student growth and 100 percent planning to incorporate what they learned in the classroom.

ISBE is engaging stakeholders in developing a four-year statewide plan for strengthening CTE in Illinois.

Goal: Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.

RESULTS TO DATE

Students have many different strengths and interests and deserve access to diverse opportunities in high school to support their learning and preparation for their next steps after graduation. ISBE's focus on programs that assist students in preparing to succeed in their chosen path after high school includes Advanced Placement (AP), career and technical education, and transitional math. ISBE partners with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission to share the Postsecondary and Career Expectations framework and career information with students

The state's investment in AP has significantly expanded access to college preparatory classes and the exams students can take to earn early college credit. Scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam can earn students college credit, potentially making college more affordable and allowing students to take a greater number of advanced or elective courses while

in college. Students can even graduate early, getting a head start on their careers. Illinois public universities guarantee college credits for students who achieve scores of 3 and higher on an AP exam, per Public Act 099-0358.

ISBE covered a portion of the AP exam fee in 2018 for all students from homes with limited resources as part of statewide efforts to increase AP access and success for historically under-enrolled students. Nearly one-third of all AP exam takers in the Class of 2018 received a fee reduction, up from 17.4 percent in 2007. Nearly one-quarter of all AP exam takers scoring a 3 or higher in the Class of 2018 received a fee reduction, up from 9.1 percent in 2007.

Illinois also partners with the national nonprofit organization Equal Opportunity Schools, which works with individual schools to support their efforts to enroll more students of color and students from homes with limited resources in AP classes and exams.



State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala observed students learning culinary arts at the Regional Alternative for Developing Youth (READY) Program in Champaign.

Other highlights from Illinois' AP successes include:

- College Board named Fenton High School District 100 in Bensenville the AP District of the Year among all small-sized districts in the United States and Canada, marking the sixth time in the past nine years that Illinois has had an AP District of the Year.
- Twenty-two Illinois school districts made the Class of 2018 AP District Honor Roll.
- Illinois ranks fifth in the nation for growth over the past 10 years in the percentage of graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school.
- 27.3 percent of the Class of 2018 scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school, compared to the national average of 23.5 percent. That's up from 15 percent in 2008.
- Illinois ranks 10th in the nation for the percentage of the Class of 2018 scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school.
- 40.8 percent of Illinois students in the Class of 2018 took an AP exam during high school – up from 22.5 percent in 2008.

A series of grants promote high-quality agricultural education in Illinois, ensuring this vital part of the Illinois economy continues to have a pipeline of innovative and highly trained talent. There are currently 334 agricultural education programs in Illinois, up from 327 last year. Ninety-four of those programs offer dual credit courses.

ISBE's grants for agricultural education include:

- Incentive Grants for Secondary Agricultural Education, which provide funding for teacher professional development, curricular enhancements and supplies, travel that is work-related, and extended day contracts and stipends related to FFA activities.
- Postsecondary Incentive Funding Grants, which are awarded to the four eligible agriculture teacher education programs in Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Illinois State University, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and Western Illinois University. The goal of this program is to ensure that high-quality programming is being provided by agriculture teacher preparation programs and to make efforts toward consistency across the institutions.

- The Growing Agricultural Science Teachers grant, which began in 2009 to help address the growing teacher shortage in Illinois and nationally in agricultural education. The grant provides funds to eligible universities with agricultural education programs and community colleges that have programs articulated with agricultural education teacher preparation programs. Funds are used to support professional development of agricultural education faculty, teacher recruitment, and mentoring activities.

ONGOING EFFORTS

The agency continues to implement the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act to address key barriers to the successful transition of Illinois high school students into college and careers. The PWR Act includes four aligned strategies that require coordinated efforts among school districts, postsecondary education institutions, employers, and other public and private organizations. These strategies were developed through an inclusive, multi-year process led by the P-20 Council's College and Career Readiness Committee. The strategies include:

1. Establish a Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) framework.
2. Develop a competency-based high school graduation requirements pilot program.
3. Define high school coursework and criteria that will place students into college credit-bearing work – transitional mathematics instruction.
4. Create college and career pathway endorsements on high school diplomas.

The PaCE framework assists students with career exploration and development, postsecondary education exploration, and financial literacy. The framework outlines what students should know about college, career, and financial aid each year from eighth to 12th grade. The PaCE framework was adopted in 2017 by ISBE, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. ISBE included the PaCE framework in a Career Pathways Guide designed to assist students in determining what courses to complete and which experiences to undergo in order to explore career possibilities that build on their talents and interests. The guide connects learning



State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala recognized the achievements of students being inducted into the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica and received the State Seal of Biliteracy at J. Sterling Morton High School East on May 2, 2019.

experiences with in-demand career opportunities in a range of industries in Illinois.

Transitional math increases college and career readiness by offering new opportunities for students during their senior year of high school that guarantee placement into credit-bearing math courses at any Illinois community college and accepting Illinois universities. All 39 community college districts are working collaboratively with high schools on plans and memorandums of understanding for implementation of transitional math. Partners have hosted 31 summits serving 37 community college districts with 645 attendees. Online and face-to-face events have resulted in 2,285 individuals being trained in transitional math.

College and career pathway endorsements offer a voluntary program for school districts that recognizes achievement of public high school graduates with a notice on their high school diploma beginning in

2020. The college and career pathway endorsement framework, which was adopted by ISBE in June 2017, requires an individualized learning plan, career-focused instruction, career exploration activities, and 60 hours of internships or similar experiences. The framework includes eight endorsement areas:

- Finance & Business Services
- Health Sciences & Technology
- Agriculture Food & Natural Resources
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology & Trades
- Human & Public Services
- Arts & Communications
- Multi-Disciplinary

In addition to the technical competencies for each college and career pathway endorsement, the framework includes 10 cross-sector essential employability competency statements that include teamwork, communication, problem-solving, decision-

making, critical thinking, flexibility, initiative, reliability, cultural competence, and planning/organizing.

Efforts to expand bilingual education have also proven successful. The State Seal of Biliteracy encourages and recognizes student' efforts to learn multiple languages. More than 100 districts have indicated their intention to participate in the program in the 2018-19 school

year. In the 2017-18 school year, 5,756 students received the Seal in 23 different languages and 3,057 students received the Commendation in 17 languages.

Read more about Illinois' work in career and technical education at <https://www.isbe.net/cte> and in competency-based education at www.isbe.net/competency.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



The College Board named Fenton High School District 100 in Bensenville the national AP District of the Year among all small-sized school districts in the United States and Canada, based on the district's increases in AP access and achievement.

More than a third of students at Fenton are enrolled in at least one of the 24 AP courses offered. The number of students at Fenton who took AP exams grew by 30 percent in three years.

The district focused on enrolling and supporting students of color and students from homes with limited resources – both growing populations at Fenton. The district's partnership with the nonprofit Equal Opportunity Schools helped Fenton identify students who showed promise and commitment but who previously were missing out on AP classes, exams, and opportunities.



Fenton High School District 100 was named the AP District of the Year among all small-sized districts in the United States and Canada, based on the district's increases in AP access and achievement.

Goal: All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.

RESULTS TO DATE

ISBE is implementing a multi-pronged approach to strengthening the educator workforce in Illinois. ISBE's efforts include supporting high-quality professional development, creating an initiative to increase teacher diversity, expanding opportunities for teacher leadership, and developing partnerships to improve teacher preparation. The existing teacher shortage in Illinois and across the nation did not occur overnight. Alleviating the shortage will require both short- and long-term solutions.

ISBE published a comprehensive suite of recommendations backed by state and national research and data in its "Teach Illinois: Strong Teachers, Strong Classrooms" report, released in September 2018. ISBE's annual unfilled positions survey showed more than 1,400 vacant teaching positions across the state during the 2017-18 school year, in addition to 1,299 unfilled positions for school support personnel and nearly 200 open administrative and other positions.

The data show the problem afflicts underfunded districts: 90 percent of teacher vacancies were in districts funded below adequacy. The "Teach Illinois" report highlighted effective practices being implemented in Illinois and across the country to develop and retain a highly effective teacher workforce; Illinois' hardest-hit school districts need additional resources to implement these models. ISBE advocated for a \$375 million increased investment in Evidence-Based Funding, as well as \$2.4 million for competitive grants to implement solutions to the teacher shortage.

ISBE released two Requests for Proposals for grants to support the teaching profession in the wake of the recommendations in the "Teach Illinois" report. The Teacher Residency Planning Grant makes \$750,000 available specifically for districts serving high rates of low-income students or students of color and districts that are experiencing chronic teacher shortages. The



ISBE launched "The First Year" blog series to share Illinois teachers' reflections on their early years in the classroom. First-grade teacher Liz Pimentel said a great mentor and workshops on restorative justice were the supports that helped her the most in her first year teaching.

grant provides funding for school districts in partnership with institutions of higher education with approved teacher preparation programs to develop their capacity to design, prepare for, and implement innovative approaches to fieldwork in the form of a teacher residency.

Teacher residencies place a teacher candidate in a classroom with a licensed teacher to learn alongside them, similar to the residency model in the field of medicine. The teacher residents gain rich and extended opportunities to work with and learn from practicing teachers as they hone their craft. "Research



ISBE's Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Network held its first meeting in Springfield on March 22, 2019.

suggests that well-designed and well-implemented teacher residency models can create long-term benefits for districts, for schools, and ultimately and most importantly, for the students they serve,” according to the Learning Policy Institute. ISBE will share the knowledge gained by Teacher Residency Planning Grant recipients with districts and stakeholders statewide to further support the growth of this practice.

The Teacher Leader Problems of Practice Grant makes \$250,000 available to support districts in addressing local challenges to developing and retaining teacher leaders. Teacher leaders model excellence in the classroom, coach and mentor colleagues, and work with principals to effect changes in school policies and culture that improve student outcomes. Nearly 500 candidates completed approved teacher leader programs across the state since ISBE updated the Teacher Leader endorsement in 2012. Exemplars across the country demonstrate that strong teacher leadership increases student achievement and growth, leads to broader use of effective teaching strategies, and strengthens school culture through the retention of highly effective teachers.

District applicants for the Teacher Leader Problems of Practice Grant will receive priority for improving

diversity and culturally responsive practices among teacher leaders. Underfunded school districts, defined as those in Evidence-Based Funding Tiers 1 and 2, will receive larger grants of up to \$75,000, while Tier 3 and 4 districts will receive up to \$50,000.

The Illinois student body has become more and more linguistically diverse, creating a greater demand for bilingual teachers. The number of students whose native language is something other than English increased from 4.4 percent in 2014 to 12 percent in 2018. Unfilled positions for bilingual educators make up 12 percent of all teacher vacancies.

ISBE continues to support the Visiting Teacher Exchange Program, which brings teachers from Spain to teach in Illinois schools. The program gives both the visiting teachers and their Illinois school communities the opportunity to learn from cultures different from their own, while helping to meet the need of Illinois' growing bilingual student population. ISBE's recruitment efforts in Spain resulted in 72 new teachers being confirmed to join Illinois classrooms in the 2019-20 school year. The support of the Spanish government makes the program possible. ISBE, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, is building relationships with other countries to potentially replicate this successful model.

ISBE’s professional development efforts seek to build the capacity of Illinois educators to meet the individual needs of each student in their care. Illinois, like many states, is faced with the challenges of narrowing an achievement gap between non-English Learner students and English Learners. Eighty-five percent of non-English Learners graduated high school in four years, compared to 77 percent of English Learners. Twelve percent of English Learners met or exceeded standards in math on the state assessment, compared to 32 percent of all students.

ISBE recently hosted a range of professional development opportunities for nearly 200 teachers of English Learners. Topics ranged from using the screener and English language proficiency assessment to appropriately place students, to collaborative methods in bilingual classrooms, to practices for supporting Spanish language development. ISBE also sponsored professional development focusing on dual language programs through the University of Colorado Boulder and workshops on effective practices for supporting multi-identified English Learners through the Illinois Resource Center.

ONGOING EFFORTS

Only 15 percent of teachers in Illinois’ public schools are teachers of color, compared to 52 percent of students. ISBE launched the Diverse and Learner-Ready

Teacher Network (DLRTN) in February 2019 to provide recommendations for increasing teacher diversity and to create standards for culturally responsive teaching. The network is composed of 24 leaders from across the state, including two members of ISBE’s Student Advisory Council. The DLRTN conducted its first meeting in late March in Springfield to begin its work of developing culturally responsive teaching standards and, eventually, to spearhead efforts to improve recruitment and retention of diverse candidates into the teaching pipeline. Illinois is one of nine states selected by the Council of Chief State School Officers to engage in the national Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Network initiative.

Illinois’ work to strengthen the teacher workforce also includes partnerships with institutions of higher education to ensure all new Illinois teachers are learner-ready on day one. The Partnership for Educator Preparation uses data to support educator preparation programs in exploring their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The project reached an important milestone in June 2018 by completing Year 1 of the two-year pilot. The pilot has expanded in its final year to include not only teacher but also school support and administrator preparation programs. All 58 Illinois institutions of higher education that have educator, administrator, or school support preparation programs are submitting data to ISBE about their candidates.



ISBE published a comprehensive suite of recommendations backed by state and national research and data in its “Teach Illinois: Strong Teachers, Strong Classrooms” report, which was released in September 2018. Stakeholder engagement continues to be important in implementing those recommendations.



Several administrators from Illinois districts were part of a delegation to Spain as part of the Visiting Teachers Program.

In 2018, the Partnership for Educator Preparation subcommittee began reviewing current principal preparation processes in Illinois against national standards in order to prioritize metrics specific to principal preparation. The subcommittee will recommend a set of metrics to support principal preparation program continuous improvement.

ISBE's regional Continuous Improvement Communities of Practice began in 2018. Participants include three university and district partnerships, each with their own problem of practice. This model leverages collaboration among educator preparation providers and their district partners to better recruit, train, and retain teachers in high-need subjects and in high-need schools. Cohort 1 includes:

- Illinois State University and Macon-Piatt Special Education District, focusing on aligning district teacher vacancy data to candidate interest data to drive the collaborative development of a special education endorsement for elementary education students that includes a recruitment pipeline;
- Governors State University and Crete-Monee 201-U, focusing on aligning the university's clinical observation rubrics with district teacher performance evaluation frameworks and calibrating the district and university evaluators to insure reliability; and

- Northern Illinois University and DeKalb District 428, focusing on examining demographic data across the P-16 pipeline to develop and implement a P-16 strategy for increasing the diversity of teacher candidates and, ultimately, the teacher workforce.

The cohort's work will wrap up in the summer of 2019.

ISBE continues to strengthen professional development opportunities for educators after they enter the classroom. ISBE partners with the Illinois Principals Association to connect practicing educators to high-quality professional development through the Ed Leaders Network. The website serves as a platform for teachers, principals, and superintendents to access, write, and assign high-quality professional development modules. The Ed Leaders Network also provides a social networking platform for educators to connect with each other.

ISBE is creating a single sign-on connection between Ed360 and Ed Leaders Network, so every educator in an Ed360-enabled district will enjoy a seamless connection to this on-demand learning library and networking site. ISBE and the Illinois Principals Association will launch the single sign-on service statewide later in 2019.

Goal: Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

RESULTS TO DATE

A safe and healthy environment is essential for children to reach their full potential. Research shows that schools are 10 times more likely to improve student outcomes when they focus on improving at least three out of five specific culture and climate indicators: effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments, and ambitious instruction. Improved student outcomes include better attendance and higher student achievement.

Each year, ISBE administers the Illinois 5Essentials Survey on school culture and climate indicators. The 2018-19 school year was the first year in which all districts were required to administer a climate and culture survey. Almost all school districts administered the 5Essentials Survey, which was developed and administered in partnership with the University of Chicago's UChicago Impact, while 3 percent of school

districts administered an approved alternate survey. Teachers, students, and parents completed the 5Essentials Survey from December through March. The 2018-19 version of the 5Essentials Survey incorporated several enhancements:

- Following a successful pilot program during the 2017-18 school year, ISBE rolled out a fourth- and fifth-grade 5Essentials Survey statewide.
- The early childhood survey, or Early Ed Essentials, was incorporated into the statewide 5Essentials Survey administration.
- Parent surveys were made available earlier in fall 2018 than in previous years so that parents could be informed of it during parent-teacher conferences as early as October.
- Professional learning to support understanding of the research behind the survey, data usage, and improvement efforts is being developed with stakeholders to build toward improving school climate and culture.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



East Leyden High School created a video to inform parents about the importance of completing the 5Essentials Survey. Principal Jason Markey, student school board member Joseph Sanchez, and teacher Areli Diaz were featured in the video, speaking to parents about how the district utilizes their input to make the school a better place for students. Parental participation rose statewide during the 2018-19 survey compared to previous years. ISBE credits schools and administrators for their hard work to engage parents in taking the survey.



East Leyden High School Principal Jason Markey is joined by student school board member Joseph Sanchez and teacher Areli Diaz in a video produced to encourage parents to take the 5Essentials Survey.

ISBE's partner, UChicago Impact, also launched a new data reporting website in March 2018 that allows schools to track data over time, see how they compare to similar schools, and connect to research that supports growth in the five indicators. This new tool allows districts to disaggregate the 5Essentials data based on student populations, so that school administrators can see if there are disparities existing among student groups and work to address those issues.

ONGOING EFFORTS

ISBE serves as the Regional Office of Education for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In this role, ISBE is responsible for building a structure to support and empower CPS to ensure children and families in the district receive robust, safe, and healthy educational opportunities.

ISBE undertook the state's first-ever Public Inquiry during the 2017-18 school year to analyze CPS' special education services, policies, and procedures. Per the findings of the Public Inquiry, ISBE issued a Corrective Action Report and appointed a monitor to oversee and implement improvements to special education in the district through 2021. The Corrective Action Report includes nine areas of directives and oversight: an ISBE-appointed monitor, special education budgeting, Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, stakeholder involvement, electronic IEP system access and use, additional training plan, data collection, student specific corrective action, and Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services procedural manual and guidance. The objectives of these corrective actions are:

- To create sustained positive change in CPS' system of special education;
- To provide technical assistance to CPS to implement the actions needed to change the culture of special education, both districtwide and in individual CPS schools; and
- To provide additional training, programmatic support, grants, or other technical assistance to ensure that CPS makes necessary reforms to ensure that students, parents, and families have the resources they need to guarantee appropriate services and supports.



State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala celebrated the life and legacy of American labor leader and activist César Chávez at the Joliet Central High School's fourth annual "Sí Se Puede (Yes We Can)" Kermés.

The ISBE-appointed monitor provides monthly reports outlining activities undertaken by CPS to address the corrective actions. The ultimate goal is to change the culture of special education in Chicago Public Schools and achieve systemic improvement in the quality of service provided to students with disabilities.

Early milestones in ISBE's work with CPS' special education program included training more than 25,000 CPS teachers in person and via webinar, receiving written guidance from the U.S. Department of Education on ISBE's proposed process for student-specific corrective action, supporting CPS in publishing an updated procedural manual, and training parents across the city through CPS' Parent University.

In addition, the ISBE-appointed monitor regularly attends IEP meetings (an average of one to three per week), meets with CPS' budgeting team to review special education staffing and budgeting, and meets with the advocates who brought the initial complaint to ISBE to hear their concerns and continue building a positive partnership focused on improving outcomes for students.

In CPS and in districts across the state, many students receive the majority of their meals at school. ISBE administers a range of programs statewide to meet students' nutrition needs. Students need access to healthy food to power their brains and bodies to learn.

PROGRAMS IN ACTION



ISBE created the School Nutrition Champion Award in 2017 to strengthen recognition efforts to celebrate best practices. The 2018 School Nutrition Champion was Sandy Voss, director of Food and Nutrition Services for Marquardt School District 15. She was nominated by Armie Gasbarro, assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations for the district. “Sandy goes above and beyond her role as director of Food and Nutrition, and she does so in some unique ways. For example, she started a Young Chefs Club to teach middle school students cooking skills in order to plan and prepare healthy meals,” Gasbarro wrote in his nominating letter. “This popular club has given students multiple opportunities to share their knowledge and skills at district events.” Voss also directs the nutrition programs in Glen Ellyn District 41, Queen Bee District 16, and St. Matthew School.



Sandy Voss, ISBE's 2018 School Nutrition Champion, helps students make healthy choices in her role as director of Food and Nutrition Services for Marquardt School District 15.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service provides grants to ISBE to help districts purchase equipment to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and expand access to more students. ISBE awarded \$1.365 million to 55 National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsors during fiscal year 2018. In March 2019, the USDA announced additional \$1.1 million funding for more NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program increases the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in elementary schools that participate in NSLP. Nearly 300 schools received total funding of \$4.9 million for this program during the 2018-19 school year. ISBE also hosted the School Nutrition Programs Back to School Conference, where more than 700 school nutrition professionals attended 23 breakout sessions, a general session with the State Superintendent and Lieutenant Governor, a

culinary demonstration, and an award presentation to the ISBE School Nutrition Champion.

ISBE also works to keep students safe online. Schools nationwide are under constant threat by malware, ransomware, phishing, and other types of cyber attacks. Understanding and acting on these threats is key to keeping our schools safe. ISBE partnered with the Illinois Principals Association and the state's Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to keep schools well-informed of the latest technology threats. These partnerships provide Cyber Security Awareness Training to our 852 public school districts; plans are also underway to use cyber security awareness content provided by DoIT to build online training for release within the Ed Leaders Network professional development platform. This is an ongoing effort to help school districts harden their defenses against a variety of cyber attacks.



Illinois State Board of Education

2019 Progress Report

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