An Initiative of Governor George H. Ryan

IVHS January 2001 Board Report

Based upon IVHS Policy Framework adopted by the Board at the August 2000 meeting

The mission of the Illinois Virtual High School is to use new and emerging technologies that expand the boundaries of space and time to provide Illinois students and their teachers with increased equity and access to the highest quality educational opportunities.

Status: Adopted and included on the welcome page of www.ivhs.org, information packet materials and marketing materials produced to date.

The Illinois Virtual High School (IVHS) should be designed to serve three primary purposes:

1. Assure equitable access to rich and varied learning opportunities for Illinois students, with emphasis on curricular areas needed to ensure that all students can meet the Illinois Learning Standards and succeed in higher education and the workplace

Status: 16 courses and 10 Advanced Placement Review courses were selected for the pilot semester that cover a wide array of subject topics ranging from English as a Second Language and Information Technology/Business to Advanced Placement Macro, Micro Economics and U.S. Government. See either www.ivhs.org or www.ivhs.k12.il.us for detailed descriptions. These pilot semester courses will serve from LEP to AP students and those in between. Cost will be $300 per course paid by the district, the student or available scholarships, based on local policy, ADA reimbursement, and low-income status for students pursuing Advanced Placement and review courses.

2. Expand high-quality professional development opportunities for Illinois teachers and other educators

Status: Invitations were sent to Presidential Award winners in Math and Science, Teacher of the Year winners and finalists and other award winning Illinois teachers to attend an IVHS training December 15-16 to received on-line training and specialized orientation to online classes to be taught during the IVHS pilot phase. Twenty-eight outstanding educators attended. All workshop evaluations rated the training as outstanding.

On January 5 and 6, 2001, 6 Illinois teachers chosen to become IVHS online instructors received training in Orlando, Florida for Florida Online High School developed courses licensed to the IVHS, while 3 Illinois IVHS online instructors received virtual web based instruction on Apex Learning Advanced Placement offerings, and 2 Illinois IVHS online learning instructors received training on Learningstation.com/Aidex IT courses at the Aidex corporate office in northern Illinois.

General professional development for teachers through the IVHS is planned to be phased in beginning with school year 2001-02 and will focus initially on online learning and technology in the classroom progressing to discipline specific trainings/courses that will bring credits for recertification.
3. Support schools in integrating technology into teaching and learning.

**Status:** IVHS Information packets and participation contact forms were mailed to all public and private Illinois high schools, districts and Regional Offices of Education. Email transmissions were sent to Illinois high school and college guidance counselors.

A live Satellite teleconference and Internet cybercast was organized and delivered on December 19. All Superintendents and Principals were invited to attend at any of 20 different downlink sites. An archive of the teleconference can be accessed from the ISBE web page as well as the IVHS web pages. We received many positive responses from viewers across the state.

The IVHS should be designed to supplement and complement local efforts. It should not be a degree-granting high school.

**Status:** This has been clearly communicated in all IVHS communications and press releases. Local control is recognized and has been respected. Each district makes the determination if it will participate in the IVHS and how it will grant credit for IVHS offered courses.

The IVHS should begin operation no later than January 2001, with programs and services phased-in to reflect ongoing assessment of needs and the availability of resources.

**Status:** The IVHS has met all its timelines and successfully opened January 8, 2001. Governor George H. Ryan personally cut the virtual ribbon and opened the first day of IVHS classes at Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School. A virtual press conference was held and video footage of the event was uplinked and sent to media outlets statewide. A streaming video cybercast is archived on the ISBE and IVHS web pages.

The Statewide needs assessment for online learning carried out by the Center for Governmental Studies is being prepared for publication next month. Preliminary drafts were available and used in course selections for the pilot period and those to be offered in school year 2001-02. It will set priorities for IVHS course development to be carried out this summer.

All students should have access to the IVHS curriculum, regardless of whether they attend public, private or home schools. However, students must be registered through a local public school district.

**Status:** All communications have carried this policy. Some schools have asked whether they have to register private or home school students or if they can levy a fee or surcharge for such registrar services. Participating in IVHS is not mandated, however to participate a school must agree to serve as a registrar for private and home school as well as its own students or it may not participate at all. No surcharge for enrolling non-public students will be allowed.
The curriculum of the IVHS should meet specified criteria and include both IVHS-designed courses and courses that are available through commercial or other sources. Partnerships and linkages should be developed to expand the resources and opportunities available to Illinois students.

Status: The curriculum/courses have been competitively procured, reviewed and evaluated by qualified proposal readers and members of the IVHS steering committee. Courses are aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, national standards, scans and occupational skill standards as applicable. Class.com, Apex Learning, Florida On-line High School, Learningstation.com and Aidex.com were selected and contracts were negotiated and executed in a timely manner. Kentucky Virtual High School licensed to IVHS a course for its use in exchange for future IVHS developed content, as the beginning of a bi-state partnership to leverage resources and jointly develop high quality online courses.


Teachers for IVHS courses should be well qualified in the subject or area in which they are teaching and have knowledge and skills specific to teaching on-line or through other technologies.

Status: 25 Illinois certified instructors, many of whom are award-winning educators at the pinnacle of their disciplines, have been selected, trained and contracted by the ISBE to serve as online instructors for the pilot course offerings. One to two instructors have been assigned 1 section for each of the 16 courses to be offered by the IVHS. Additionally, highly-qualified and certified instructors under contract to Class.com and Apex Learning will also teach Illinois students and offer transfer credit to participating Illinois districts. Partners are fully accredited by their regional equivalent to the North Central Association Accreditation.

Local school districts and IVHS should share responsibility for the success of student participants. Local school districts should provide support for the student and ensure access to technical support as needed.

Status: To participate in the IVHS a local district must form an IVHS team that includes a registrar, student services coordinator and tech specialist. The Registrar is empowered to make final approval for enrollment and handle administration duties; the Student Services Coordinator provides guidance, identifies a mentor for each student, and provides and coordinates student assistance; the technology specialist is the point of contact for local network specifications, trouble shooting and pre-approval of off-site technology specs for accessing IVHS courses.
The technology platform for the IVHS should meet identified criteria and provide technical assistance and support twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

**Status:** eCollege of Denver, Colorado was selected competitively from among 5 bidders to develop and support the IVHS portal platform. eCollege [NASDAQ: ECLG] is a leading developer of complete eLearning solutions. Comprised of educators and technologists, eCollege partners with colleges, universities, schools and corporations to design, build and support high quality learning communities. eCollege educational partners include such institutions as Seton Hall University, University of Colorado, National University, DeVry Institutes, Kentucky Virtual High School, and Microsoft Faculty Center. The company was founded in 1996 and is headquartered in Denver. For more information, visit www.eCollege.com.

The eCollege/IVHS help desk is available 24 hours –7 days a week. Additional support is available through ICN Tech regional centers and local district network tech specialists.

Funding for IVHS should come from multiple sources and meet standards of adequacy, sustainability and legality.

**Status:** Funding for the IVHS planning and pilot implementation has come from the Board of Higher Education through HECA grants to Lake Land College ($90,000) and The Illinois State Board of Education Technology line item, Scientific Literacy program and The Federal Illinois Advanced Placement Incentive 2000 program. ($575,000)

State funding requirements for local school districts (i.e. Average Daily Attendance) should be modified to ensure that school districts are not harmed by student participation in the IVHS.

**Status:** A preliminary review of all pertinent statutes, rules and regulations suggest that during the pilot period, a district may claim ADA reimbursement for courses taken and counted during the 5-hour clock day that have been paid for by the district. Courses taken beyond the 5-hour clock day will not affect state aid. Upon pilot evaluation and district recommendations the IVHS/ISBE will determine what changes to the school code may be necessary to optimize the use of IVHS technology and provide financial incentives to districts for significant participation.

State Board staff should provide monthly progress reports on the development of the IVHS and present policy, legislative and budget recommendations as additional decisions are needed.

**Status:** The State Superintendent and/or ISBE staff have provided monthly updates to the Board and prepared a budget recommendation for FY 2002 IVHS operations.