**Agenda Topic:** Update on Early Learning Birth to Eight

**Materials:**
- Board Priority Report (under separate cover)
- Universal Preschool National Trends, State Programs, and Implications for Illinois
- Universal Preschool Task Force press release (under separate cover)
- Early Learning Website RFSP (under separate cover)

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**Purpose of Agenda Item**
To update the Board on agency progress in the Board priority area of Early Learning Birth to Eight.

**Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item**
The Board will be aware of current status and future plans for implementing systems of early learning that support children ages birth to eight in academic success.

The Board will be aware of school-based and external partnerships that are evolving in Illinois as a result of this priority.

**Background Information**
Since 1985 the Illinois State Board of Education has provided grants to school districts for early childhood education programs that prepare young at-risk children to enter school ready to become successful learners. Recent growth in the population of young children who are at risk of school failure have led to increasing need for high quality early education and care programs that go beyond the traditional services provided by public schools.

This presentation will look at the current system of early education and care that is being designed to support young children who are at risk of not meeting the Illinois Learning Standards. Staff will highlight the collaborative work of Education, Head Start and Child Care in addressing the needs of this population of children and their families.
Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications

Work of the Task Force for Universal Preschool will possibly result in implications that are yet to be identified. In conjunction with key partners, policy considerations might include: 1) expanding eligibility for Pre-K funds to Head Start and Child Care providers; 2) adopting statewide procedures and definitions for determining “at risk” and “school readiness”; 3) adopting program models that include provisions for all children, including those eligible for early childhood special education services, at risk children, and those who are not currently eligible for publicly-funded preschool service; and 4) dealing with the ever-growing unmet needs during the planning period.

Superintendent’s Recommendation

To endorse work of the staff and task force to study and share implications associated with universal preschool and early learning, maintain current information on evolving issues, and consider relevant action as needed.

Next Steps

Regular updates at ISBE meetings.