**Agenda Topic:** Alignment of the System of Support: Designation System, System of Support, Academic Early Warning List

**Materials:**
- School Designation Matrix
- Prototype of the School Designation Report
- History of School Improvement

**Staff Contact(s):**
- Michael Dunn
- Carmen Chapman-Pfeiffer
- Xavier Botana
- Donald Full
- Sheryl Poggi
- Eunice Greer

**Purpose of Agenda Item**

1. To present the final staff recommendations regarding the School Designation System.
2. To review the purpose of the System of Support and its integration with the School Designation System.
3. To review and describe the qualification process for the Academic Early Warning List.
4. To list the schools that qualify for the Academic Early Warning List based on current rules and regulations.

**Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item**

1. Members of the Illinois State Board of Education will understand the purpose of the System of Support and its integration with the School Designation System.
2. Members of the Illinois State Board of Education will approve the Academic Warning List for K-8 schools.
**Background Information**

**Designation System**

At the October 2000 board meeting the Illinois State Board of Education received the recommendations of the Designation System Task Force. During that meeting board members asked that focus groups representing a variety of stakeholders review the recommendations. The purpose of the focus groups was to solicit reactions to the recommendations of the task force in order to make meaningful improvements. A wide variety groups responded and the chart below list the key comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Key Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators Focus Group</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Six levels of designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting districts with schools below the 50% level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Predicted score for effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elimination of the focus on stars and bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DuPage County Administrators</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion of a continuous improvement component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elimination of the focus on stars and bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitor cohort improvement (requires yearly testing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IASB Regional Meeting</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion of a continuous improvement component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elimination of the focus on stars and bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elimination of the focus on test security as a major component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bie-IN Education Committee</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emphasis on student results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion of a continuous improvement component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addition of a voluntary Customer Satisfaction Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on composite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Support the following concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| IASA Advisory Board                             | • Focus on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishments  
• Designation ratings appear as part of the report card versus a separate document  
• Emphasis on predicted scores  
• Focus on school level information versus district level information  
• Supporting schools below the 50% level  |
| Education to Careers Steering Committee (Private Sector, Union Representatives, PTA, and Higher Education) | • Focus on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishments  
• Based on easily recognized performance characteristics  |
| LAQA Board of Directors                         | • Focus on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishments  
• Accomplishments should focus on activities that enhance student learning  
• Six levels of designation  
• Improvement component to support the emphasis on trend data  |
| Superintendents and Board Members-Mt. Vernon Area | • Focus on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishmentsv
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrators-Shawnee Community College</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Six levels of designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting schools below the 50% level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognizing high poverty/high achieving schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendents from Madison County</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting schools below the 50% level with adequate resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on improvement over time using trend data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ability to chart progress against standards over a period of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title I Conference-Committee of Practitioners (Included School Board Members and Community College Administrators)</th>
<th>Support for the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on improvement over time using trend data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continued use of the same definition of “Adequate Yearly Progress”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Six levels of designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integration of the System of Support with Title I requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title I Conference</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting schools below the 50% level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assisting districts in supporting schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Common standards for all students in the state of Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognizing high poverty/high achievement schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendents Conference</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on composite performance rating,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
improvement rating, and accomplishments
- Recognizing improvement and effort
- Assisting districts in supporting schools
- Eliminating focus on test security as a major component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFAB</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focusing on composite performance rating, improvement rating, and accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adopting the system as soon as possible in order to use it as the basis for the construction of funding formulas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IASB</th>
<th>Support the following concepts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focusing on improvement component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assisting districts in supporting schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Predicted score for effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The original Task Force recommendations and enhancements recommended by the focus groups results in the following recommendations:

1. Composite Performance Rating. All public schools in the state of Illinois will receive a rating based on the composite performance of their students on the Illinois Prairie State Achievement Test and/or Prairie State Achievement Test. (See Appendices I Matrix and II Sample Report)

   - The combined percentage of scores that meet or exceed standards on all state tests will be the basis for computing the absolute performance component.
   - Schools will place in one of six categories/levels of performance. The categories/levels include the following:
     - Exceeds Standards—83%-100% of the student scores meet or exceed standards
     - Meet Standards at a High Level—82.9%-67% of the student scores meet or exceed standards
     - Meet Standards—66.9%-50% of the student scores meet or exceed standards
     - Approaching Standards—49.9%-33% of the student scores meet or exceed standards
Limited Success in Meeting Standards—32.9%-17% of the student scores meet or exceed standards
Little Success in Meeting Standards—16.9%-0% of the student scores meets or exceeds standards
- A System of Support will be provided to those districts, which have schools placing below the 50% level of student scores that meet or exceed state standards.

2. **Improvement Rating.** All public schools in the state of Illinois will be given an improvement rating determined by comparing the three year average percent of student scores meeting and exceeding standards with the scores of the current years.

   Schools will place in one of three categories that include the following:
   - Improving
   - Stable
   - Decreasing

3. **Accomplishments:** Schools and Districts will be recognized for three categories of special accomplishments:
   - Accomplishments from ISBE Data:
     - Significant increase in attendance rate
     - Significant decrease in dropout rate
     - Increased graduation rate
     - Excellence in Effort – Predicted Score
     - 90% of the students at a grade meet or exceed state standards in a content area tested
     - Excellence in Customer Satisfaction. District Improvement Plan that incorporates customer satisfaction data. Evidence of administrating a customer service satisfaction survey and developing a plan for improvement
     - Maintains a full day kindergarten for all students
     - Supports an effective early reading intervention tutorial on extended learning program
     - Break the Mold winner
     - Illinois Teacher of the Year
     - NBPTS teacher certification
   - Accomplishments from the District:
     - After School Program/Extended Year
     - Early Childhood Education Program
     - School Breakfast Program
     - Internet Connections in all Classrooms
     - Education to Careers
- Character Counts or other Character Education Program
- Induction and Mentoring

- Special Recognition:
  - Lincoln-Baldrige
  - North Central Accreditation
  - International Reading Association: Exemplary Reading Program Award
  - Milken Award Winner
  - Golden Apple Award
  - Recognitions given by other professional/business organizations

4. **Assessment compliance requirements:** The following requirements will be applied to all schools. Schools will receive a check mark on the School Report Card for compliance or non-compliance for the following:

- Schools having at least 50% of low-income students met or exceed standards.
- District officials will sign and certify that test security regulations were followed.
- District officials will account for all students within the testing continuum.
- Schools testing fewer than 90% of eligible students in the regular state-testing program will receive follow-up monitoring.

5. **Adequate Yearly Progress** Adequate Yearly Progress is defined as the increase in student scores that meet or exceed the Illinois Learning Standards by 20 percent annually to reach the 50 percent level in five years.

If a school makes adequate yearly progress but it does not have at least 50% of its students meeting standards it remains on the AEWL. If it does not make adequate yearly progress it moves toward placement on the Academic Watch List.

6. **Rewards**

The original task force recommended the following rewards:
- Public reporting to the media
- Annual Report to the General Assembly by legislative district
- Posting of recognition on the ILSI website along with school data
- Relief from selected mandates (automatic waivers)
- Eligibility for discretionary grant funds

In addition to these, other recommendations included posting highway signs outside of schools similar to team sports recognition, letters and framed awards signed by state leaders for posting in school buildings, and special award presentations at
future school house or similar type of meetings. No groups favored monetary rewards of any kind for high achieving schools.

7. **Beginning the Revised Designation System**

It is recommended that the revised Designation System take effect in September of 2002 for elementary schools and September 2003 for high schools.

If the revised school designation system were in effect in the 2001 school year, Chart I indicates the distribution of elementary and high schools that would place in each of the six levels. The chart indicates that the percentage of elementary schools placing below the 50% line is smaller than high schools placing below the 50% line. Sixteen percent of the elementary schools place in Level Six, the highest category in the new designation system versus two percent of the high schools. There are 594 elementary schools below the 50% line representing 65 school districts. There are 193 high schools below the 50% line. Additional focus on high schools will be required as the system of support continues to evolve.

![Distribution Of Elementary and High Schools by Percentage In Each Level Based On 2001 Data](image)

**Financial Watch List**

Members of the Illinois State Board of Education requested that a link be considered between the Academic and Financial Watch lists. It is important to focus on two distinctions between the two lists:

- The Academic Watch List results in a school designation; while the Final Watch results in a district designation, and
• The Academic Watch List is composed of six levels of designation: while the Financial Watch List is composed of five levels of designation.

However, the designation for the Financial Watch List can be included on the School Designation Report. Staff members will continue to determine how information from both lists can be effectively coordinated.

The System of Support

Background of the System of Support
ISBE has been providing assistance to districts with schools on the Academic Early Warning List since 1996. Originally, this support was focused on individual schools. Assistance took the form of targeted interventions to improve student performance in areas identified jointly by school administrators and ISBE. The goal was to assist students to make quick achievement gains at the target schools and move on to other schools. This initiative was aptly named “Project Jumpstart.”

Over time administrators recognized that short-term gains were not easily achieved and were negligible without a focus on sustaining those gains. The support continued to be concentrated on school level improvement, but began to incorporate elements of professional development. Schools were assigned exemplary educators as mentors and models. (Educators in Residence)

Parallel to these efforts, ISBE implemented a series of programs through state or federal initiatives (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration, Partnership Academies, Scientific Literacy Grants, Technology Grants, 21st Century Learning Communities). These programs aimed to improve schools through specific interventions that included many of the same components of ISBE’s interventions for schools on the academic early warning list. These efforts, although promising in many instances, remained somewhat disconnected. In some instances, they overlapped the same schools; in other cases, entire districts were not included.

A school summary has been developed to show the ISBE sponsored interventions that each school on the proposed AEWL received over time. This summary is a comprehensive picture of the existing programs.

Revised System of Support
The projected increase in the number of schools on the Academic Early Warning List from 70 schools to approximately 600 was an additional catalyst to reconfigure the System of Support from a school-based to a district-based process. In order for this to happen, resources need to be allocated in a way that focuses on the district capacity to develop an internal system of support for low performing schools. Members of the Education Center studied and researched this approach and identified specific elements that have the most promise of holding districts accountable for their low performing schools. These elements are:
• aligning curriculum, classroom instruction and professional development with high academic standards for all students;
• creating a cycle of continuous improvement;
• using performance data to inform decisions regarding district/school improvement plans;
• building a sense of teamwork and purpose among staff; and
• working in partnership with parents and the community.

Staff members of ISBE and identified districts will continue to analyze existing conditions to determine the extent to which a school district has developed and implemented a district improvement plan focusing on improving the instruction and achievement of low performing schools. This results in a performance agreement with the district. The agreement describes the technical and administrative support the district, school, and state provides to increase capacity for building instructional support for student achievement in the designated district. Such a system enables the school district to make maximum use of its human, material and financial resources in improving instruction and achievement of its lowest performing students. The district improvement plan is based on a continuous improvement model.

**Continuing Evolution, Issues and Opportunities**

Credible research in educational change shows that most system changes are not reflected in student achievement gains for 5 to 6 years. It is altogether likely that some schools will not demonstrate improvement in a short time span as required under current rules and regulations. Therefore, the system of support for low performing schools must be thought of as a continuing evolution. There are several areas that need to be addressed in order to improve support for low performing schools:

1. **Building a broad based partnership for supporting low performing schools**
   The stakes for improving student performance apply to everyone involved in education not just the schools and districts affected or ISBE. The Bie-IN Leadership Group recognizes this. They have proposed building a broad coalition involving educational partners, government and business partners to focus attention and resources on this effort. A series of conferences to address the issue and develop policy and practice strategies will begin this winter. The outcome of these conferences will likely mean further refinements of the system of support. These should not be seen as “breaks” in the system, but improvements borne from broader involvement and commitment.

2. **Evolving ways of measuring progress in low performing schools**
   External accountability requirements (i.e., federal requirements) will continue to cause changes in measurement. Annual testing may be implemented, coupled with disaggregated data requirements for specific student groups. There needs to be a refinement in the way achievement gains are analyzed in the System of Support interventions due to the broad and general nature of the data source. At the same time, there is a need to do better than anecdotal information or one-day audits of practice. As part of the evolution of the support for low performing schools, indicators of success that
are measurable and valid measures of progress (such as implementation benchmarks and improvements in climate) should be used to evaluate whether efforts are yielding results. These indicators will need to be factored into decision-making about which schools are improving for accountability purposes.

3. Improving our “toolkit”
The ability to broker interventions that work must continue to improve. Different approaches should be studied and piloted. Any intervention used should be evaluated regularly on valid and public indicators of success. Effective interventions must be leveraged into major program areas so that they can go to scale. For example, tested and effective approaches to improving literacy must be built into the requirements for Title I programs, particularly with low performing schools. ISBE must take a leadership role in developing or brokering effective extended learning opportunities.

4. Developing bold and aggressive interventions for districts and schools that do not make adequate progress.

ISBE has to be poised to provide more intensive intervention in districts with schools that do not make progress in the next two years. The Academic Watch List provisions in the statute must be clarified—particularly the section dealing with the composition of improvement teams. Also, the “end game” must be clear to all in advance. There needs to be a plan for what happens four years down the road to schools that fail to make progress.

Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications

The reliance on federal funds to support district improvement make it necessary for ISBE to identify additional state support for districts with low achieving schools. For this to happen, resources need to be reallocated in a way that focuses on the district capacity to develop an internal system of support for low achieving schools. The most obvious resource lies in the Quality Assurance program. Under the present proposal, external reviews for all schools will cease and resources currently invested in those efforts will be redirected to districts that have schools on the AEWL. Under this proposal, districts will be required to develop and implement a district improvement plan. The district’s plan will spell out desired outcomes for all low performing schools (Academic Early Warning List schools). The plan will be developed in consultation with assigned ISBE staff (presently Accountability division staff formerly working on Quality Assurance).
Superintendent’s Recommendation

To approve the Academic Early Warning List.

Next Steps

• To develop rules and regulations for the School Designation System

• To integrate a System of Support for Academic Early Warning List Schools