**Agenda Topic:** Title II State Report Card

**Materials:**
- Summary Institutional Data Table
- State Board of Education Teacher Quality Reforms

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**Purposes of Agenda Item**

- To inform the Board about development and contents of the Title II State Report Card, which is due to the United States Department of Education on October 7, 2001; and
- To identify policy, budget and communication issues related to the Report Card.

**Expected Outcomes of Agenda Item**

- Board authorization to complete the State Report Card and submit it to the United States Department of Education; and
- Direction to staff regarding the issues raised in this report.

**Background Information**

Title II of the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Reauthorization Act imposes accountability expectations on institutions of higher education that prepare teachers and the states in which they operate. The law establishes a three-tier reporting system.

- Each teacher training institution is required to submit specific information about its programs and program assessment results to the state in which it is located and to various publics. The first annual reports were submitted in April 2001. (The institutional pass rate data and summary data can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/teachers/Title_II/T2Statepassrates1.xls](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/teachers/Title_II/T2Statepassrates1.xls) and [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/teachers/Title_II/T2Statepassrates2.xls](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/teachers/Title_II/T2Statepassrates2.xls))
• Each state must report to the U.S. Department of Education and to the citizens of the state regarding teacher education policies and results. The Illinois State Report Card is to be filed by October 7, 2001.

• The Secretary of Education must use the separate state responses in the development of a report to the Congress on teacher preparation. The congressional report is due in April 2002.

Although the State Board of Education is responsible for preparing and submitting the Illinois Report Card, its development has been shared among many partners. During the past two years, the Governor’s Office, the Board of Higher Education, the Community College Board, the State Board of Education, and representatives of the higher education community have engaged in numerous discussions about the purposes, content, design and definitions used in Title II Report Card. These discussions resulted in fundamental agreements on the Report Card, including a shared commitment to using the Report Card to support the continuous development and improvement of teacher education in the state.

The partners also agreed on “The Illinois Plan for Preparing State and Institutional Report Cards on the Quality of Teacher Preparation” (http://www.isbe.state.il.us/teachers/Title_II/tt2info.htm) that was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on October 7, 2000, as required by law. Predicated on agreements with teacher training institutions and state agency partners, the Plan detailed the procedures to be employed for data collection and the definitions for all but two of the required reporting elements.

In late fall, 2000, the partners developed definitions for the final two reporting elements: the designation of teacher preparation institutions as “at risk” and “low performing.” These definitions were endorsed by representatives of colleges and universities, the Governor’s Advisory Council on Teacher Quality, the Joint Education Committee, and the State Teacher Certification Board. The State Board of Education adopted the definitions in December 2000.

Since then, agency staff members have worked with the teacher preparation institutions, the state’s teacher assessment contractor and others to compile and verify the data for the Illinois Report Card. That process is in the final stages and will be complete before the due date.

Because a substantial amount of the narrative in the Report Card will reflect policies and procedures previously adopted by the State Board, this report will not include information already familiar (e.g., description of the state certification system). Instead, this report will identify the key elements to be included in the State Report Card and the issues associated with the process and findings.
Title II State Report Card Requirements

The Title II State Report Card requires narrative responses to a series of questions posed by the federal government, data on multiple accountability indicators and, whenever possible, a document reference or a web address. The information is organized as follows.

**Section I** - Descriptions of state teacher certification or licensure assessments and other requirements.

**Section II** - Description of state teacher standards, and the alignment between state teacher certification or licensure requirements and assessments and state student standards and assessments.

**Section III** - Data on statewide and institutional pass rates, including the following four tables.

- D1: State-Level Single-Assessment Pass-Rate Data for Regular Teacher Preparation Programs Within Institutions of Higher Education, by Institution
- D2: State-Level Aggregate and Summary Assessment Pass-Rate Data for Regular Teacher Preparation Programs Within Institutions of Higher Education, by Institution
- D3: State-Level Single-Assessment Pass-Rate Data for Regular Teacher Preparation Programs Outside of Institutions of Higher Education, by Program
- D4: State-Level Aggregate and Summary Assessment Pass-Rate Data for Regular Teacher Preparation Programs Outside of Institutions of Higher Education, by Program

(The institutional pass rate data and summary data that will be uploaded on to the above tables can be found at the web addresses noted previously.)

**Section IV** - Description of the criteria for assessing the performance of teacher training programs.

**Section V** - A listing of “low-performing” programs in the state, the criteria for identifying these programs, and the forms of technical assistance available to institutions determined to be in this condition.

**Section VI** - Information on waivers of State certification or licensure requirements.”
Section VII - Description of the state’s “alternative routes to teacher certification or licensure, and pass rates for program completers of alternative routes.” Two data tables are required in this section.

- D5: State-Level Assessment Pass-Rate Data for Alternative Route Teacher Preparation Programs, by Alternative Route
- D 6: State-Level Aggregate and Summary Pass-Rate Data for Alternative Route Teacher Preparation Programs, by Alternative Route

Section VIII - A listing and brief description of efforts by the state to improve teacher quality.

The template for the State Report Card limits narrative responses to fewer than 800 characters.

Discussion of Issues

Six issues related to the Illinois Title II State Report Card are presented for the Board’s information and discussion.

- Definitions of “At Risk” and “Low Performing” - The definitions of “at risk” and “low performing” were developed in consultation with a variety of partners and each was linked to institutional performance against the NCATE 2000 standards. They provide a continuum of consequences that extends over a period of 5 years.

An “at-risk” institution is one that has been placed on probation by the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. Probation means the program has not met one or more of the six NCATE standards and demonstrates severe weaknesses that can threaten the candidates’ opportunity to meet certification requirements.

An “at-risk” institution is declared to be “low performing” if it fails to demonstrate significant remediation of the unmet standard(s) and weaknesses over a period of three years. “Low-performing” preparation programs may have their accreditation revoked by the State Board in consultation with the Certification Board.

A “low-performing” institution that fails to evidence remediation of the unmet standard(s) and weaknesses for two years will be “decertified” (i.e., denied the opportunity to train educational personnel). This action will freeze recruitment and admission to teacher preparation programs and result in the immediate cessation of all training.
These definitions and procedures were adopted prior to development of the new and more stringent State Board timelines and procedures for institutional approval. Those rules, recently authorized by the Board for public comment, stipulate that an institution placed on probation (i.e., “at risk”) has two years to resolve its problems. In that period, the campus must undergo another full site visit. Based upon the team review and other considerations, the State Teacher Certification Board may recommend one of two options to the State Board: continued accreditation or revocation.

If these rules are adopted as presented, revocation authority will be available to the Board after two years rather than the five provided by the “low-performing” definition (i.e., three years of “at risk” and two years as “low performing”). It is unlikely, therefore, that any college or university in Illinois will be declared as “low performing.”

At some point in the future, the Board and its educational partners may wish to revisit the definitions to determine whether a change is needed.

- **Number of Institutions that are “At Risk” or “Low Performing”** - The first Illinois report will indicate that no teacher preparation institutions are classified as “at risk” or “low performing” or are “at risk of being so classified.” In 1998, the State Board authorized a transition period for moving to the NCATE standards, during which institutions were to be provided with notice about findings of concern but were not subject to revocation of their operating authority. The first institutions to be impacted by the new State Board approval/probation procedures are those being visited in fall 2001.

- **Technical Assistance** - Although the State Board is not required to provide technical assistance to institutions that are “at risk” or “low performing,” the report will indicate that we plan to do so. Technical assistance provisions will include the assignment of an agency staff member to any institution declared to be “at risk,” a mandatory visit by the staff representative to the campus within 30 days of the determination, the identification and provision of resources, including workshops, arrangement for consultants expert in content and program design, and a minimum of one staff visit to the campus each year the institution is declared to be “at risk.” The extent to which the agency will be able to fulfill this commitment will depend on the resources available to the State Board and other demands on those resources.

- **Institutional Pass Rates** - The pass rates for Illinois teacher preparation programs that will be presented in the 2001 report are based on State Board rules that prohibit the institutions from requiring passage of the test
as a condition for graduation. Amendments to those rules are being submitted for Board approval at the September 2001 meeting. Those institutions that take advantage of this option (and most if not all are expected to do so) will have a 100% pass rate in the future. This practice will ameliorate those situations in which a candidate completes a program and is recommended for entitlement but is unable to pass the certification test on one or more occasions.

- **Alternative Certification Programs** - This first report requests data only on those who had completed an alternative certification program in 1999-2000. The only alternative program operational at that time with individuals who had completed the course of study was conducted by Northwestern University in association with the Golden Apple Foundation and the Chicago Public Schools. The State Report Card will document the programs that are presently in operation (e.g., Illinois State University, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Governors State University, University of Illinois at Chicago, etc.), the statutory authority under which they have been developed, and the regulatory responsibilities of the State Board. In the next reporting cycle (October 2002), data on program completers will be more extensive.

- **Individuals Teaching with “Waivers”** - To assure consistency across the country, the federal rules define a waiver as “any temporary or emergency permit, license or other authorization that permits an individual to teach in a public school classroom without having received an initial certificate or license from that state or any other state.” Employing this definition, the following teachers will be reported for Illinois:

  - **Persons employed full-time on a Substitute Teaching Certificate.** (Note: the Chicago Public Schools is the only district in the state authorized by statute to employ individuals holding only a Substitute teaching certificate in a teaching position requiring a teaching certificate.) Substitute teaching certificates are issued to those with a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. Substitutes may or may not have been prepared as a teacher.

  - **Persons employed on a Transitional Bilingual Teaching Certificate.** Individuals who receive the Transitional Bilingual teaching certificate must pass the appropriate language proficiency exam and hold the equivalent of an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. A large percentage of Transitional Bilingual certificate holders are prepared as teachers in their native country. However, that preparation may not meet the requirements for an Initial Illinois teaching certificate. Therefore, they must first receive
the Transitional Bilingual certificate and remove all remaining deficiencies prior to receiving the Initial Teaching certificate.

- **Persons employed on the Resident Teaching Certificate.** To receive the Resident Teaching certificate an individual must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning, be enrolled in an approved alternative route to teacher preparation program, and have passed the Basic Skills and Subject-Matter Knowledge assessments.

- **Other Illinois certificates that qualify as waivers under the federal definition** include provisional vocational certificates, temporary provisional vocational certificates, part-time provisional certificates, and provisional alternative certificates. The latter is issued to candidates completing the internship phase of an approved alternative route to teacher certification program.

Even though some individuals teaching under the authority of one of the aforementioned certificates may be enrolled in a teacher education program or they may have completed a program, they are not delivering instruction based upon their area of training.

The waiver data reported in Section VI of the Report Card indicate that a much higher proportion of the teachers in high poverty districts are operating on waivers than in the state as a whole. In the high poverty districts identified by the federal government, 5.4% of the teachers were operating on waivers. This compares to a statewide figure of 2.7%.

This disproportionate presence of teachers with insufficient or inappropriate certification in districts with large numbers of students from low-income homes is extremely disturbing, particularly in light of two other recent reports:

- the 2001 state assessment results that show the existence of a significant gap in achievement between students from low income homes and their peers; and
- the recent report in the Chicago Sun-Times that used different definitions but found similarly disproportionate numbers of inadequately certified teachers in high-poverty schools.

A fundamental proposition of education reform in Illinois is that the quality of the classroom teacher represents the single greatest impact on student learning. The State Board of Education must provide leadership for actions that will assure that those students who may be
at greatest academic risk have access to teachers with the highest qualifications.

Implications for Policy, Legislation, Budget and Communication

The Title II State Report Card is intended to provide public accountability for teacher preparation policies and programs. It will therefore be imperative that the State Board supplement formal submission of the Report to the federal government with actions that will inform the public about its contents and meaning. State Board staff are developing an appropriate plan for such communication.

Developing policy and legislative strategies to address the issue of staffing schools with teachers who lack appropriate certification will require further research about the extent of the problem and exploration of multiple options or solutions. Strategies that have been suggested for further exploration include

- incentives and/or differential mortgage rates for teachers who agree to teach in high poverty districts;
- loan forgiveness for teachers willing to teach in high poverty districts for a set number of years after graduation;
- financial incentives to attract teachers in shortage fields (e.g., special education, mathematics, science, etc.) to high poverty districts; and
- additional funding for districts willing to retrain their teachers in shortage fields.

All of these potential solutions would have an impact on the State Board’s budget.

Recommendations

The State Board of Education should:

- authorize staff to submit the 2001 Illinois Title II Report Card to the U.S. Department of Education and to the citizens of Illinois;

- direct staff to give highest priority to actions that will assure that all Illinois students have access to appropriately qualified teachers; and

- direct staff to take such other actions as may be necessary to continue the improvement of teacher preparation and certification in Illinois.
Next Steps

- Final compilation of the data for the State Report Card;
- Completion of a communications plan; and