ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
May 12-13, 2003

TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
Lynne Haeffele Curry, Director

Agenda Topic: Action Item: System of Support

Materials
System of Support Plan

Staff Contact(s):
Christopher Walczak

Purpose of Agenda Item
To provide in-depth information to the Board regarding ISBE’s System of Support for high-priority schools.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
The Board will provide staff with feedback and direction regarding the System of Support plan for the 2003-04 school year and beyond.
The Board will endorse the System of Support plan.

Background Information
At its March 2003 meeting, the State Board discussed the overall conceptual redesign of the System of Support. Background information provided here reviews some of the elements of that discussion.

The 1994 reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) required that states provide Title I schools with a system of assistance designed to bolster school improvement. Illinois provided a variety of services that constituted a “mosaic” of assistance, but did not institute a systemic approach.

With the advent of the Academic Early Warning List (AEWL) in 1997, the need for targeted assistance to academically challenged schools increased. ISBE began to conduct school and district analyses designed to provide useful information for revising school improvement plans and implementing them in the AEWL schools. ISBE staff were assigned to schools and districts in various regions of the state, giving on-site technical assistance, approving and monitoring school improvement plans. Since 1997, the number of schools on the AEWL has climbed from 57 to 715, due largely to the
switchover to the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) in 1999 and the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) in 2001. These tests are based on the Illinois Learning Standards, and are more rigorous and demanding than the previous IGAP tests.

Once again, the numbers of schools and districts classified as needing improvement are expected to climb, based on the new accountability requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). In February 2003, the Board adopted criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations, setting state targets for achievement that climb every year. These targets apply not only to all students (for reading and math), but also to all subgroups of students with a group size greater than 40. The AYP calculations are performed at both the school and district levels. Thus, even if a school has too few students in a subgroup to count for AYP calculations, a large district will almost certainly have enough students in the that subgroup to make the calculation. Based on current trends in the performance of student subgroups, it is highly likely that districts as well as schools will appear on future AEWL lists. The table below shows ISBE’s current projections for schools based on the new AYP calculation criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>2100</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2400</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

With these new developments, it becomes clear that ISBE will not have the staff capacity to conduct the types of on-site, “hands-on” assistance it has offered in the past. Yet schools and districts will continue to need this type of support. With the Regional Offices of Education and other parties, staff has developed a plan for a regionalized delivery system. Redefining ISBE staff roles is an important component of the plan.

The plan is based upon two core beliefs:

- *School performance can improve with a systemic and sustainable approach.*

- *All improvement is local.*
The System of Support has four core elements, judged to be basic for improvement efforts in every school. This judgment arises from careful study of school improvement research and current effective practice in Illinois and in other states. The plan contains a bibliography of selected references.

### Basic System of Support Elements

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Data Analysis &amp; School Improvement Plan Development</th>
<th>Standards-aligned curriculum, instruction &amp; classroom assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher &amp; Administrator Enhancement</td>
<td>Student, Family &amp; Community Support Services</td>
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**Data Analysis & School Improvement Plan Development**

ISBE and other entities have developed many tools for analyzing student performance data and other information about schools. ISBE is working in conjunction with Deloitte, the Illinois Business Roundtable, the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA at www.measuretolearn.org), several university partners and other organizations to consolidate a “toolkit” of software, web-based applications and training to enable school and district faculty to use comprehensive data analysis. This analysis toolkit will enable districts and schools to accurately identify their needs and research best practices, thus driving effective improvement planning.

ISBE has developed a comprehensive school improvement plan “rubric” to guide schools through the plan revision process and to ensure that plans meet all state and federal requirements. All regional delivery systems will continue to employ this rubric as part of the plan approval process within the ROEs’ regular compliance services.
Standards-aligned curriculum, instruction and classroom assessment
Successful schools specifically teach to the Illinois Learning Standards each and every day. Teachers in standards-led classrooms understand that their jobs are not complete until their students meet or exceed the standards. For those districts and schools whose curriculum, teaching materials and practices, and classroom assessment practices are not fully aligned to the Standards, the service providers will make available Standards-Aligned Classroom training based on the work of Dr. Richard Stiggins. This training already has a highly positive track record in Illinois, and in fact has served as a model for other states.

All districts and schools in the System of Support will demonstrate a specific focus on improving reading and mathematics as a priority within their Improvement Plans.

Teacher and Administrator Enhancement
All new teachers, but especially those in academically challenged schools, need mentoring and induction support. Research shows that teachers who receive such support continue to improve their practice and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession.

All teachers in AEWL districts and schools (as well as all other districts) will be made aware of and supported to pursue National Board certification.

Specifically designed Administrator Academies will address the specialized role of school and district leadership in challenging settings. The Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Administrators will collaborate to design and regionally deliver this training. The process will include a mentoring/support network among school and district administrators.

Student, Family & Community Support Services (refer to Appendix E).
In schools that experience difficulty with student attendance, tardiness, discipline and other behavioral challenges, service providers will assist in establishing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and based on Sugai research and the Assessment Institute, Oregon.

Where appropriate, providers will assist in establishing community support and wrap-around services for districts, schools, students, families and communities. This “Full-Service Community Schools” initiative is based on research from the national Coalition for Community Schools (www.communityschools.org).
Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications

Policy Implications
Shifting the System of Support from a centralized (ISBE) to regionalized configuration will require the Board to adopt policies over time that allow and support this shift. In addition to providing improvement support to schools in academic early warning and academic watch status, the State Board should consider proactive assistance for schools that are “moving targets;” that is, those schools that are in danger of slipping in performance for one or more student groups, or those whose performance is not projected to rise as fast as the state AYP targets each year.

Budget Implications
Funding for System of Support activities currently comes from both state and federal sources. An estimate of future costs for the system is being developed. Most funding in future years will come from federal sources.

Legislative Action
Legislative language addressing the accountability requirements for NCLB is being included as a proposed amendment to ISBE’s shell bill for NCLB changes. In the draft language, ISBE is required to provide assistance to schools in academic early warning and academic watch status.

Communication
The shift to a regionalized System of Support will require close communication with the affected school districts and the public.

Superintendent’s Recommendation
- Approve the direction of the System of Support Plan for the 2003-04 school year.
- Authorize the State Superintendent to make adjustments in the plan as needed in order to best serve eligible districts and schools.

Next Steps
Continue the design process with partners and prepare a Request for Proposals to select providers for the 2003-04 school year.