



2026 Illinois Report Card

Why Profiles of Performance

The Ideas Behind Illinois' Accountability Redesign

Why Does Accountability Exist?

Accountability helps communities understand how schools are serving students and helps schools identify where to strengthen practice. It is one part of a larger improvement system. An effective accountability system makes important information visible, applies expectations consistently, and supports action that improves outcomes for students.

Four Goals of Accountability

1

Transparency

Make information about school performance understandable and available to families, educators, policymakers, and communities.

2

Improvement

Provide useful information that helps schools identify strengths, investigate needs, and plan next steps.

3

Equity

Keep every student visible and make it harder for differences among student groups to be hidden by overall results.

4

Public policy

Meet state and federal requirements and help leaders understand whether the system is moving toward its goals.

What Shapes a State Accountability System?

A Federal Foundation

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) establishes a common foundation. It requires states to measure academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rate, English learner progress, and at least one state-selected measure of school quality or student success. It also sets expectations for which students are included, how results are applied, and how states communicate and use the information.

Illinois Design Choices

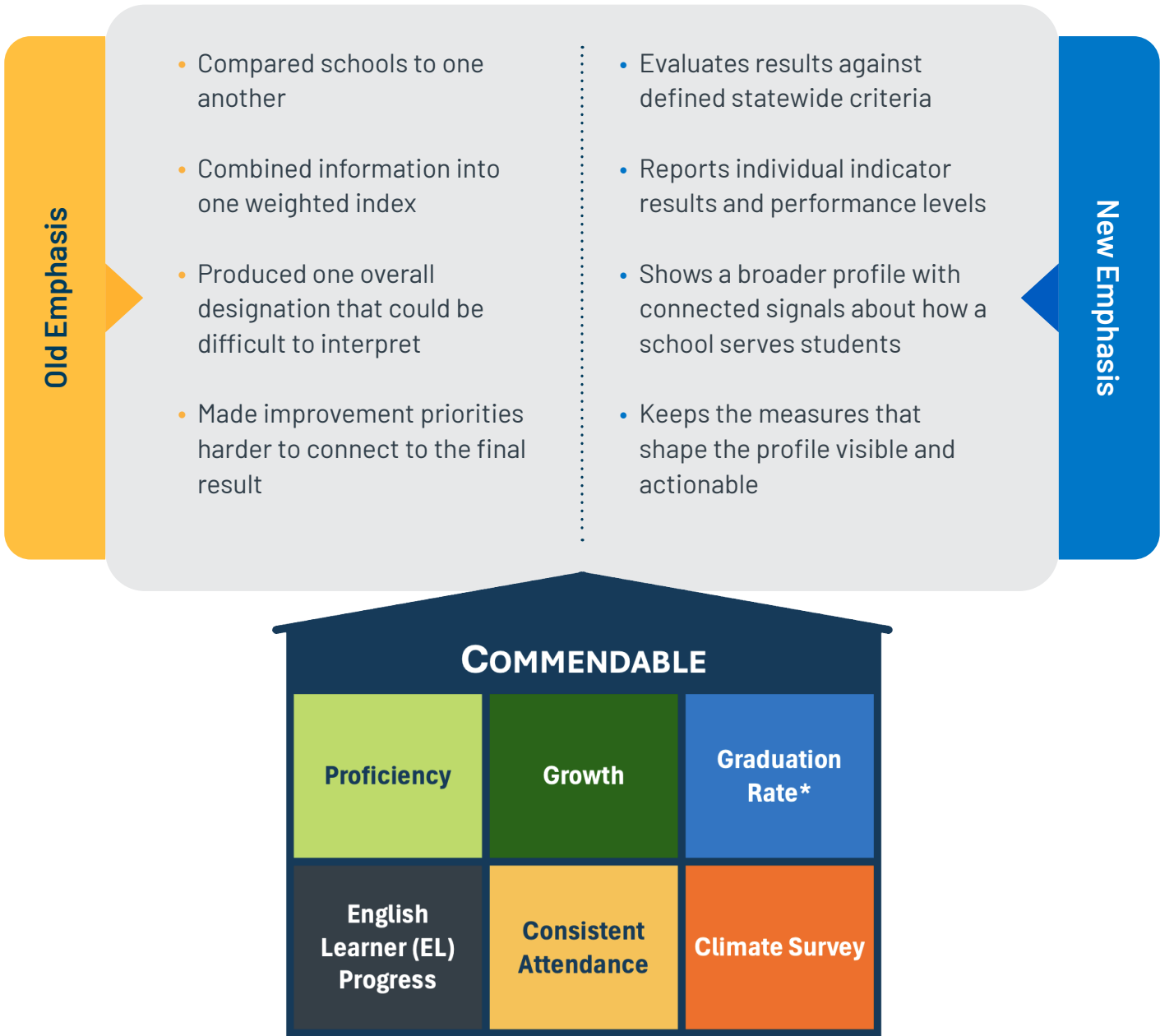
Within those requirements, Illinois decides how measures are defined, how some measures are combined, what performance criteria mean, how results are reported, and how information connects to improvement supports. Illinois chose a profile approach so that the meaning of individual measures remains visible.

Why Did Illinois Redesign the System?

Stakeholders asked for an accountability system that would:

- Support continuous improvement in every school.
- Set clear expectations that do not depend on how schools compare with one another.
- Recognize strengths as well as identify challenges.
- Connect reported results directly to measures educators can understand and act on.
- Make results easier for educators, families, and communities to interpret.

From a Weighted Index to Profiles of Performance



Why These Measures?

Measures	Why they are included
Proficiency and Growth	Proficiency shows whether students are meeting important academic expectations. Growth shows how much students are progressing over time. Together, they give a fuller picture of academic performance.
Graduation Rate	Graduating from high school is connected to students' future education, work, and life opportunities.
English Learner Progress	Shows whether English learners are making progress toward English proficiency, a distinct student outcome and a federal accountability requirement.
Consistent Attendance and Climate Survey Participation	Provide practical signals about whether students are present, connected, and able to share information about their school experience.
Student group performance	Shows whether outcomes and experiences are shared across students, rather than hidden by an overall result.

Why Not Use a Single Score or Ranking?

A single score can make it easy to rank schools, but it can make it harder to understand what is driving the result or what action might help. A Profile of Performance keeps the meaning of each measure visible. It also recognizes that schools can demonstrate strengths in different ways, rather than requiring one identical path to success.

The profile is not a claim that a school has finished improving. It is a clear starting point for celebrating strengths, asking better questions, and deciding what to do next.

Related Resources:

[An Overview of Profiles of Performance](#); [How to Read a Profile of Performance](#); [Accountability Indicators Measure by Measure](#); [Using Profiles for Continuous Improvement](#)