

Accountability Redesign Round III

JANUARY 12 – FEBRUARY 25
2026

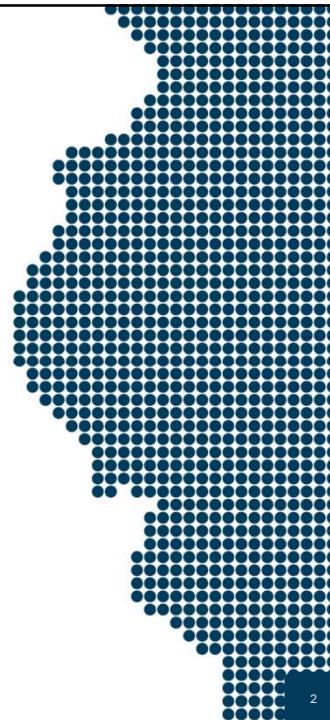


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Our Redesign Guidelines

- Want a single accountability system
- Must comply with ESSA requirements
- Addresses the problems of practice identified
- Retains those features of the current system that appear to be working



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Accountability Problems of Practice

- Our accountability system for schools is **not criterion-based**; it's normed or graded on a curve. That means the goal posts move every year.
- Misleading data (e.g., **70% of schools labeled “commendable”**) prevents us from directing resources to where they are needed most.
- The system tells schools that there is a problem (**it sorts**) but does not indicate what strategies or supports might be most helpful in addressing the problem (**informs**).

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ESSA Accountability System Requirements

- Every school must receive an annual designation.
- States must:
 - Use **multiple measures**
 - Apply metrics consistently for **all students and student groups**
 - **Identify schools** needing extra support
 - Report results **publicly**

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ESSA Required Indicators

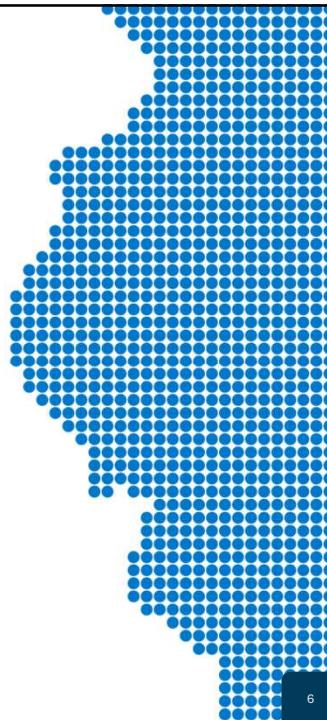
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	ACADEMIC PROGRESS	GRADUATION RATE	ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRESS	SCHOOL QUALITY OR STUDENT SUCCESS
Measure of proficiency on required assessment of ELA and math.	Measure of academic growth or other academic indicator. <i>Growth required for elementary & middle schools</i>	Percentage of students who graduate from high school within four, five, or six years. <i>Required for high school</i>	Measure of how much progress English Learners make towards becoming proficient in the language.	Any measure that meets the 5 requirements of a state-selected ESSA indicator.

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State-Selected Indicators Must...

- Be valid and reliable
- Be comparable and collected statewide
- Be measured annually for all students, disaggregated by student group
- Be consistent within a grade span (i.e., 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12)
- Allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance



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Round 1:

Profiles of Performance
A new way of looking at accountability

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Round 1 – What We Heard

Model Type: ISBE highlighted three accountability systems that could address the problems of practice:

- Decision tree
- **Profile of performance**
- Simple index
- There was strong support for either the decision tree (41%) or profile of performance approach (52%)
 - Common feature – no ranking or sorting

Respondents also shared other desired system features:

- **Easy to understand** and explain
- Asset or **strengths-based** in orientation
- **Retain growth**
- Reimagine the role of state-selected indicators

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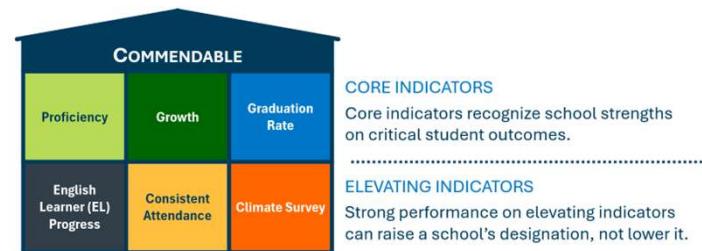
Round 1 – What We Did

This feedback
was integrated
into the
proposed
model

Proposed System: Profile of Performance Model

- Benefits:

- No ranking or sorting
- Streamlined, simpler indicators
- Growth indicator for all schools
- Clear, easy to understand thresholds
- Strengths-based (half the indicators can elevate but not lower a designation)



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Indicators Simplified

PROFICIENCY

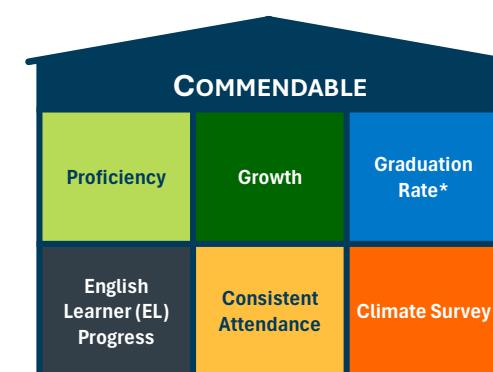
Redesigned: A composite of ELA, math, and science.

Replaces: Three separate indicators – one for each subject.

EL PROGRESS

Redesigned: Different performance expectations for elementary and high schools.

Replaces: Not applicable. Indicator and calculation remain.



GRADUATION RATE

Redesigned: Keeps a composite 4-, 5- & 6-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

Replaces: Not applicable. Federally required indicator.

*High schools only

CLIMATE SURVEY

Redesigned: Student participation on the climate survey.

Replaces: Not applicable. Indicator remains.

GROWTH

Redesigned: A composite of ELA and math.

Replaces: 9th Grade On Track for high schools & separate ELA and math growth indicators.

CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE

Redesigned: The percent of students who have been present for 90% or more of the school year.

Replaces: Chronic absenteeism.

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Round 2:

Bringing Balance

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Proposal First Draft

- We held **8 live feedback sessions** and **70 days of public comment**.
- Feedback identified three core issues:
 - **Names** of the designations
 - Ensuring **continuity** between elementary/middle designations and high school designations
 - Modest adjustments to the proposed **indicator thresholds** to reflect current data

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Changes Made in Response to Feedback

You spoke. We listened.

Here's what changed based on your feedback.

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Designation Names – What We Heard

- The indicator names, particularly Commendable and Approaching, received the most feedback.
 - Many expressed a preference for more neutral names or described the proposed names as **negative or deficit-oriented**
 - Others felt they were too **vague or ambiguous**
 - Only about 12% of survey respondents expressed general acceptance or no strong opinion.
 - Data from the live feedback sessions was more accepting.



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Designation Names

Version 2.0



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Profiles Show Starting Points, Not Finish Lines

- Profiles describe **patterns of performance**, not rankings.
- Every school has **strengths**.
- Every school has **gaps**.
- Every school sets **goals** and works toward them.
- What changes is the **starting point**, not the **responsibility**.



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Exemplary and Approaching Exemplary: Starting Strong

- Patterns of Performance
 - Strong performance across many indicators
- Student groups
 - Group performance may vary but no group has the lowest overall profile
- School improvement focus
 - Sustain strengths
 - Improve specific indicators
 - Reduce achievement gaps where they exist

What differs between these two bands is the degree of strengths relative to the gaps or areas of need.



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Commendable: Multiple Patterns, Multiple Paths Forward

- Patterns of Performance
 - May be a mix of clear strengths and areas for growth or a consistent need to improve
- Student groups
 - Gaps may be visible and urgent
- School improvement focus
 - Strengthen core indicators
 - Address gaps
 - Make strategic choices based on local needs



More than one right next step.

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Developing and Comprehensive: Focused Improvement to Build Momentum

- Patterns of Performance
 - Performance challenges across core and elevating indicators
- Student groups
 - Gaps are an early warning of larger patterns
- School improvement focus
 - Use strengths as a foundation to improve core indicators
 - Build systems for sustained improvement

What differs between these two bands is the degree of need relative to the strengths to build from.



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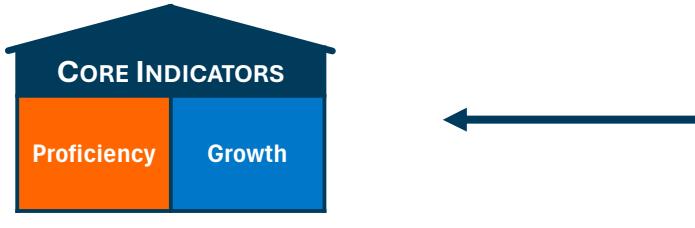
Balancing Grade Spans – What We Heard

- We received a range of comments and questions about the way the system functions differently for elementary and middle schools than for high schools.
- Continuity between grade spans is critical, as our recent assessment work showed, so we made adjustments in three areas:
 - **Changed high school Exemplary core requirements**
 - **Changed elevation rules for Exemplary and Approaching Exemplary**
 - **Adjusted thresholds slightly**

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Core Requirements for Elementary/Middle Schools Stay the Same



- The **strongest core indicator** defines core performance
- However, if any **core indicator is Comprehensive**, then core performance is set at **one level below** the strongest core indicator.

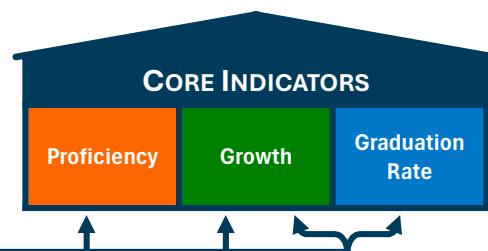
If a core indicator is in the **Automatic Comprehensive** range,
the designation is Comprehensive

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An Additional Exemplary Core Requirement for High Schools

- **Exemplary** core performance requires:
 - Exemplary **Proficiency** or **Growth OR**
 - Exemplary **Graduation** paired with Approaching Exemplary Proficiency or Growth
- Otherwise, core performance is defined by the **strongest core indicator**.
- However, if any **core indicator is Comprehensive**, then core performance is set at **one level below** the strongest core indicator.



If a core indicator is in the **Automatic Comprehensive** range,
the designation is Comprehensive

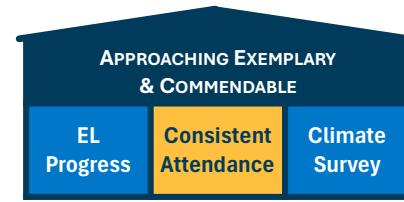
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Balancing Grade Spans – Elevating Indicators

- Another step we are taking to balance performance across the grade spans is to require two Exemplary elevating indicators to elevate from Approaching Exemplary to Exemplary and from Commendable to Approaching Exemplary.
- This ensures schools that earn these designations truly have strong performance across a range of indicators.

Two Exemplary elevating indicators to elevate from...



One Exemplary & One Approaching Exemplary elevating indicator to elevate from...



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Balancing Grade Spans – Threshold Adjustments

- The proposed thresholds received general support, but there are places where adjustments were made in response to feedback.
 - **Proficiency – raised slightly at all levels except Exemplary**
 - **Balances performance** across grade bands.
 - Gives Comprehensive, Developing and Commendable schools **room to grow**.
 - Allow us to **meet federal requirements** to identify a lowest performing 5% of schools.
 - **Growth – Commendable raised slightly**
 - Better centers the median.

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Clear Criteria - Adjusted

	CORE INDICATORS				ELEVATING INDICATORS				
	Composite Proficiency All schools	Composite Growth Student Growth Percentile (SGP)		Graduation Rate High schools	EL Progress		Consistent Attendance		Climate Survey All schools
		Baseline SGP	Cohort SGP		K-8 schools	High school	K-8 schools	High school	
Exemplary	≥ 75	≥ 67.5	≥ 60	≥ 93	≥ 75	≥ 50	≥ 88	≥ 85	≥ 95
Approaching Exemplary	$\geq 52 < 75$	$\geq 60 < 67.5$	$\geq 52.5 < 60$	$\geq 88 < 93$	$\geq 50 < 75$	$\geq 40 < 50$	$\geq 80 < 88$	$\geq 70 < 85$	$\geq 90 < 95$
Commendable	$\geq 48 < 52$	$\geq 45 < 60$	$\geq 43 < 52.5$	$\geq 80 < 88$	$\geq 32.5 < 50$	$\geq 25 < 40$	$\geq 65 < 80$	$\geq 55 < 70$	$\geq 85 < 90$
Developing	$\geq 35 < 48$	$\geq 35 < 45$	$\geq 32.5 < 43$	$\geq 67 < 80$	$\geq 15 < 32.5$	$\geq 15 < 25$	$\geq 50 < 65$	$\geq 40 < 55$	$\geq 65 < 85$
Comprehensive	< 35	< 35	< 32.5	< 67	< 15	< 15	< 50	< 40	< 65
Automatic Comprehensive	≥ 13.75	OR	< 30	< 30	OR	$< 66.67^*$	Core indicators have criteria that automatically designate a school as Comprehensive. These criteria represent the lowest levels of performance in the state.		

*Graduation rate is the only automatic comprehensive indicator for high schools.

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Threshold Methodology

Inputs

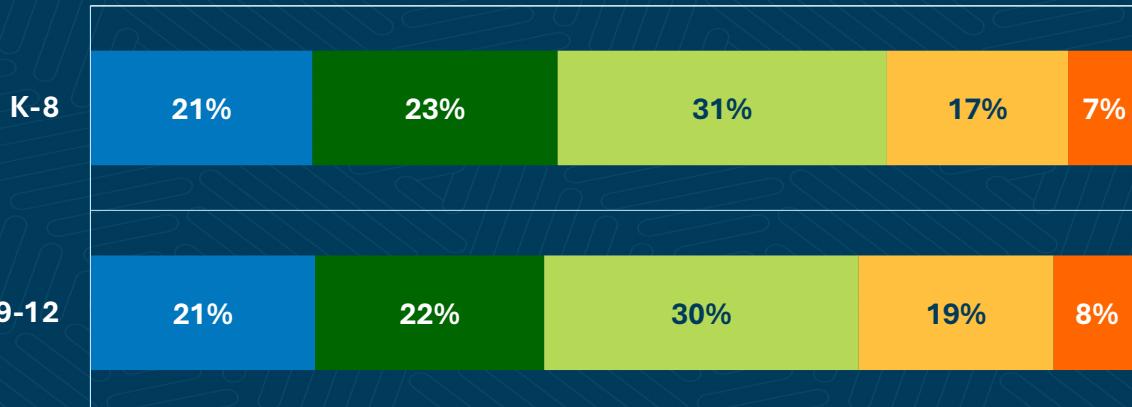
- Illinois school-level “All Students” performance data
- Prior system thresholds, statutory benchmarks, and policy anchors
- Student-level modeling datasets
- Stakeholder feedback

Process

- Analyzed statewide performance distributions (i.e., averages, medians, spread, tails)
- Worked from clarity to complexity
 - Distinct patterns are clearest in the tails
 - Middle levels require greater judgement (e.g., how many levels, where “average” falls/should fall, whether average = typical, etc.)
- Tested thresholds under full system rules using student-level data
- Repeated and refined as indicators evolved, data became available, and public comments received

Approximate Percentage of Schools in Each Designation Category After All Changes*

■ Exemplary ■ Approaching Exemplary ■ Commendable ■ Developing ■ Comprehensive



*Impact of the new system modeled with SY 2024-25 data

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Explaining Our Constraints

Feedback matters, even when outcomes stay the same.

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Ninth Grade on Track

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of Ninth Grade on Track as a foundation for long-term success and graduation.
- Ninth Grade on Track performance is nearly identical to the required graduation rate indicator, raising concerns about redundancy if retained.

Academic Progress
ELA Achievement Profiles
ELA Growth
Math Achievement Profiles
Math Growth
Science Achievement Profiles
NAEP
Eighth Graders Passing Algebra I
9th Grade on Track
Career and Technical Education
Graduation Rate

Ninth Grade on Track remains a prominent academic progress metric on the **Report Card** and will be included in the **School Profile Report**.



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Minimum Student Group Size

- Stakeholders have raised questions about how student group size (n-size) affects whether a group is included in a school's profile of performance.
- States are required to set a minimum group size that balances broad inclusion of student groups with statistical reliability.
- No state has received federal approval for a minimum group size above 30.

There are:

- 22 states use an n-size **less than 20**
- 18 states use an n-size **of 20**, including Illinois
- 10 states use an n-size **between 25 and 30**

Illinois will continue to use a minimum group size of **20 students worth of data** in at least two core indicators and one elevating indicator.

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English Learner Progress Differentiation

- Stakeholders have expressed a desire to see greater differentiation of English Learner Progress thresholds by:
 - Home language type and fluency
 - Serving grades (i.e., K-5, 6-8, and 9-12)
- ESSA does not allow states to set different expectations for student performance based on home language.
- A student's fluency in English when they start is factored into the calculation of the indicator.
- ISBE is continuing to explore ways in which it might better differentiate expectations by serving grades and will implement a solution, if possible, in the draft published for comment in March.

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What's Next?

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Timeline



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www.isbe.net/feedback

Follow the Timeline To Find

- ESSA Plan First Draft & supporting documents
- The ESSA Final Draft & supporting documents

Look Left To Find

- Updated datasets
- Links and information about public comment

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Thank
you!

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