

**Illinois State Board of Education  
State Template for the  
Consolidated State Plan  
Under the Every Student Succeeds Act**



**U.S. Department of Education**  
OMB Number: 1810-0576  
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## Introduction

Section 8302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)<sup>1</sup>, permits the Secretary to establish procedures and criteria under which, after consultation with the Governor, a State Education Agency (SEA) may submit a consolidated state plan designed to simplify the application requirements and reduce burden for SEAs. The Secretary must establish, for each covered program under section 8302 of the ESEA and additional programs designated by the Secretary, the descriptions, information, assurances, and other material required to be included in a consolidated state plan.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) encourages each state to think comprehensively about implementation of programs across the ESEA and to leverage funding to ensure a focus on equity and excellence for all students as it develops its consolidated state plan. Further, ED aims to support collaboration and efficiency across multiple programs to help ensure that all children have significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and that each SEA works to close achievement gaps.<sup>2</sup>

ED identified five overarching components and corresponding elements that integrate the included programs and that must be addressed by each SEA electing to submit a consolidated state plan. These components encourage each SEA to plan and implement included programs in a comprehensive way to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, and all subgroups of students. Consistent with the Secretary's authority in 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d) to establish the date, time, and manner for submission of the consolidated state plan, ED has established this template for submitting the consolidated state plan. Within each component, each SEA is required to provide descriptions related to implementation of the programs the SEA includes in the consolidated state plan. The consolidated state plan template includes a section for each of the components, as well as a section for the long-term goals required under the statewide accountability system in section 1111(c)(4)(a) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 299.17(a).

The sections are as follows:

1. Long-Term Goals
2. Consultation and Performance Management
3. Academic Assessments
4. Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools
5. Supporting Excellent Educators
6. Supporting All Students

When developing its consolidated state plan, ED encourages each SEA to reflect on its overall vision and how the different sections of the consolidated state plan work together to create one comprehensive approach to improving outcomes for all students. ED encourages each SEA to consider: (1) what is the SEA's vision with regard to its education system; (2) how does this plan help drive toward that vision; and (3) how will the SEA evaluate its effectiveness on an ongoing basis?

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, citations to the ESEA refer to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

<sup>2</sup> In developing its consolidated state plan, each SEA must meet the requirements section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act and describe the steps it will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the included programs for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

## Instruction for Completing the Consolidated State Plan

Each SEA must address all required elements of the consolidated state plan. Although the information an SEA provides for each requirement will reflect that particular requirement, an SEA is encouraged to consider whether particular descriptions or strategies meet multiple requirements or goals. In developing its consolidated state plan, an SEA should consider all requirements to ensure that it develops a comprehensive and coherent consolidated state plan.

### Submission Procedures

Each SEA must submit to ED its consolidated state plan by one of the following two deadlines of the SEA's choice:

- **April 3, 2017;** or
- **September 18, 2017.**

ED will not review plans on a rolling basis; consequently, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(2)(ii), a consolidated state plan or an individual program state plan that addresses all of the required components received:

- On or prior to April 3, 2017, is considered to be submitted by the SEA and received by the Secretary on April 3, 2017.
- Between April 4 and September 18, 2017, is considered to be submitted by the SEA and received by the Secretary on September 18, 2017.

Each SEA must submit either a consolidated state plan or individual program state plans for all included programs that meet all of the statutory and regulatory requirements in a single submission by one of the above deadlines.

ED will provide additional information regarding the manner of submission (e.g., paper, or electronic) at a later date consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(2)(i).

### Publication of State Plan

After the Secretary approves a consolidated state plan or an individual program state plan, an SEA must publish its approved plan(s) on the SEA's website in a format and language, to the extent practicable, that the public can access and understand in compliance with the requirements under 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(b)(1)-(3).

For Further Information: If you have any questions, please contact your Program Officer at OSS.[State]@ed.gov (e.g., OSS.Alabama@ed.gov).

## Consultation

Under ESEA section 8540, each SEA must consult in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor, or appropriate officials from the Governor's office, including during the development and prior to submission of its consolidated State plan to the Department. A Governor shall have 30 days prior to the SEA submitting the consolidated State plan to the Secretary to sign the consolidated State plan. If the Governor has not signed the plan within 30 days of delivery by the SEA, the SEA shall submit the plan to the Department without such signature.

## Assurances

In order to receive fiscal year (FY) 2017 ESEA funds on July 1, 2017, for the programs that may be included in a consolidated State plan, and consistent with ESEA section 8302, each SEA must also submit a comprehensive set of assurances to the Department at a date and time established by the Secretary. In the near future, the Department will publish an information collection request that details these assurances.

For Further Information: If you have any questions, please contact your Program Officer at [OSS.\[State\]@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.[State]@ed.gov) (e.g., [OSS.Alabama@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.Alabama@ed.gov)).


## Cooperation with CCSSO

ISBE worked with CCSSO throughout its plan development, including developing our own template, including all required elements were met.

## Section 427 GEPA Statement

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is the agency responsible for state federal funds administered under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ISBE requires each applicant for federal funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. ISBE ensures that all ESSA programs are a part of a State-wide system that supports the whole child and provides an environment free from discrimination and harassment based upon gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. ISBE will ensure to the fullest extent possible equitable access to, participation in, and appropriate educational opportunities for all teachers, families, and students with special needs.

## Cover Page

Contact Information and Signatures	
<b>SEA Contact (Name and Position):</b> Dr. Kimako Patterson Chief of Staff	<b>Telephone:</b> 312-521-9905
<b>Mailing Address:</b> 100 N. First Street Springfield, IL 62777	<b>Email Address:</b> <a href="mailto:kpatters@isbe.net">kpatters@isbe.net</a>
By signing this document, I assure that:  To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.  The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304.  Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers.	
<b>Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name)</b> Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent of Education	<b>Telephone:</b> 217-785-1288
<b>Signature of Authorized SEA Representative</b> 	<b>Date:</b> Original: 08/29/2017 Resubmission Amendment 1: 05/29/2019 Addendum: 01/25/2021 Amendment 2: 08/09/2022 Amendment 3: 04/25/2023 Amendment 4: 04/18/2025 Amendment 5: 04/17/2026
<b>Governor (Printed Name)</b> J. B. Pritzker	<b>Date SEA provided plan to the Governor under ESEA section 8540:</b> Original: 02/01/2017 – Gov. Bruce Rauner Amendment 1: 05/2019 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker Addendum: 01/21/2021 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker Amendment 2: 01/21/2022 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker Amendment 3: 12/20/2022 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker Amendment 4: 11/18/2024 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker Amendment 5: 03/03/2026 – Gov. J. B. Pritzker
<b>Signature of Governor</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

*Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA included in its consolidated state plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated state plan, but is eligible and still wishes to receive funds under that program or programs, it must submit individual program plans that meet all statutory requirements with its consolidated state plan in a single submission, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(iii).*

Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated state plan.

**or**

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below for which the SEA is submitting an individual program state plan:

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies

Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC)
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
- Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act): Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

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## Illinois Introduction

The mission of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is to “provide leadership and resources to achieve excellence across all Illinois districts through engaging legislators, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders in formulating and advocating for policies that enhance education, empower districts, and ensure equitable outcomes for all students.” ISBE sees the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as an opportunity to live this mission in partnership with Illinois stakeholders.<sup>3</sup>

In Illinois, we believe that a universal culture of high expectations is fundamental to creating and supporting the conditions that provide the best opportunities for all students. ESSA fosters the conditions for Illinois to implement a holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated system of success that prepares each and every student for academic excellence and postsecondary success. Illinois is using the opportunities provided through ESSA to reduce barriers to learning in order to achieve fair access to high-quality educational opportunities for each and every child.

In developing the state plan for Illinois, ISBE has worked diligently to engage stakeholders through a collaborative process in order to learn from their expertise. ISBE recognizes that engaging a broad representation of stakeholder groups, all of whom are committed to improving student outcomes, is a crucial aspect in the development and implementation of an education delivery system that results in success for each and every child. From the inception of the process in January 2016 through submission to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in April of 2017, ISBE recognized an opportunity through ESSA to actively engage Illinois residents on all aspects of creating a better education system in Illinois. The result of this collaboration is a plan that is both consistent with the law and reflective of the values and thinking in Illinois. The next important step in this work is implementation. While Illinois’ ESSA State Plan reflects many of the ideas offered by stakeholders, it is important to note that ideas not listed in this plan are not forgotten or ignored. Some of the input we received is specific to implementation and will guide our next steps. The relationships we built with stakeholders in the planning process will be essential as implementation begins such that we can discuss and develop shared action steps.

ISBE has co-authored four drafts of the ESSA State Plan with educators, community members, and national experts. This fourth draft is different from initial drafts as it presents the work we have developed collaboratively with all required participants, includes a formal introduction, and includes the template for submission of the consolidated state plan provided by ED in December 2016.

This template contains six sections: Long-Term Goals; Consultation and Performance Management; Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and Supporting All Students. At the conclusion of the introduction of the required template, ED provides:

*When developing its consolidated state plan, the Department encourages each State Education Agency (SEA) to reflect on its overall vision and how the different sections of the consolidated state plan work together to create one comprehensive approach to improving outcomes for all students. The Department encourages each SEA to consider: (1) what is the SEA’s vision with regard to its education system; (2) how does this plan help drive toward that vision; and (3) how will the SEA evaluate its effectiveness on an ongoing basis?*

Articulating this comprehensive vision is challenging within the structure of the template insofar as it requires the state to respond to prompts that, for the purposes of compliance, are compartmentalized. To more fully articulate the vision for Illinois and how ESSA assists us with making our vision real, this introduction connects topics in ways that allow for Illinois to share our values and, from this, the story about the educational opportunities and supports we are working to provide for each and every child in Illinois schools.

### **Vision, Mission, and Goals**

At the outset of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, the vision, mission, and goals of the ISBE are shared:

#### **Vision**

Each and every child is equipped to make meaningful contributions to society and live life to its fullest potential.

#### **Mission**

Provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

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<sup>3</sup> ESSA, signed into law by President Obama on December 10, 2015, is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the national education law.

## Goals

Illinois has three overarching goals, all underpinned by equity: student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. These goals are held together by four principles that guide ISBE's work — equity, quality, collaboration, and community — and our responsibility to tirelessly pursue educational equity for all of our students in all of our classrooms, schools, and districts.

**GOAL 1:** All students will receive a high-quality education with access to appropriate resources and supports to increase their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future.

**GOAL 2:** In partnership with its stakeholders, ISBE will advocate for the necessary resources to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments that meet the unique academic, social, and emotional needs of every student.

**GOAL 3:** Illinois' diverse student population will have educators who are prepared through multiple pathways and are supported in and celebrated for their efforts to provide each and every child an education that meets their needs.

Specific information about these goals can be found in the [ISBE strategic plan](#).

Illinois has clearly articulated a bold set of ideas and aspirations that with considerable collective effort and policy support will be realized over time. In Illinois, we know that a vision, mission, and supporting goals are only as useful as the collective work to make real what appears aspirational. The work we describe in ESSA is evidence of this collective quest. The most important question posed by ED is, "How does the state plan for Illinois, developed through deliberation and collaboration, assist in realizing the vision, mission, and goals articulated by ISBE?"

A partial answer to this question is provided by understanding the importance of deliberation and collaboration in working through the important values held by those involved in the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois.

## Collaboration

*It is for this reason...at the present time not to be distracted in allowing any issue, no matter how useful in itself, to displace the freedom of intelligence in public communication by means of speech, publication in daily and weekly press, in books, in public assemblies, in scientific inquiry, as the center and burning focus of democracy. Nothing will be more fatal in the end than surrender and compromise on this point. Now, more than ever, it is urgently necessary to hold it in steady view as the heart from which flows the life-blood of democracy.<sup>4</sup>*

Listening to and learning from stakeholders created the foundation upon which the Illinois ESSA State Plan was developed. As John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist, and education reformer in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, suggests above, public deliberation is essential for both sustaining and growing democracy. Creating and holding multiple public spaces for the introduction and contemplation of ideas was and is necessary in order to develop the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. This public space requires multiple avenues of entry for interested individuals and groups to share their values, opinions, and beliefs focused upon the "problem of practice," also known as ESSA. It is also essential in that the relationships and interdependence developed through dialogue will make the more difficult work of implementation significantly more possible.

Current problems of practice most often emerge from previous contexts or challenges. In this case, the previous context for ESSA is No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In the case of ESSA, these previous contexts and their interrelationships can be understood as an attempt to reach greater equity through compliance, pressure, and oversight. NCLB was a promise that all children would do better in school, and this obligation to all children was manifested through oversight, competition, and federal overreach.

These conditions for students, educators, and administrators were determined from afar. Ultimately, the rules often created confusion, resentment, and frustration for educators, families, communities, and, most importantly, students. The intent of NCLB, if actualized, was a public good. The ability to name deep inequities in educational opportunity and outcomes is ground we must not lose in our efforts to educate all children. However, the requirements for this public good, in fact, silenced many of those who needed to do the real work: educators and communities committed to improving the lives of their students. This silencing is precisely what Dewey was warning against in his writing and speaking. We suffer the loss of local wisdom and capacity to transform when the voices of those who have to live the requirements of a law or practice are removed from important communal deliberation and when the notion of expertise is limited to those far removed from the everyday living of a law or practice.

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<sup>4</sup> Dewey, J. (ca. 1946), "What is Democracy" (unpublished manuscript, ca.1946), Special Collections, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Box 55, Folder 3.

When a problem of practice emerges from a previous context, it is not a rejection of the past. It is an opportunity to learn from the past by taking parts that were important and placing them in a new context. When ESSA was signed into law on December 10, 2015, there were artifacts from NCLB that carried forward into the new law. Most specifically, ESSA kept the focus on equity of outcomes from NCLB that is essential to national prosperity and security. One of the most significant modifications from NCLB, however, was the acknowledgement that expertise existed in many spaces and the importance of this expertise in the development and implementation of the state plan. ESSA also acknowledges the critical importance of connecting early childhood education all the way through to postsecondary attainment. The authors of ESSA acknowledged what was overlooked in NCLB — that those who were required to “live” ESSA should have a voice in the conditions that constitute the work.

ESSA requires collaboration with stakeholders as part of creating state plans. ISBE fully embraced this requirement and has gone to great lengths to engage the entire state through a variety of means. The State Board’s hypothesis is that if we repeatedly engage community members in the conversation about what we want Illinois students to know and be able to do, ask educators and community members what support and accountability for these outcomes should look like, and connect these new networks to already existing groups that this approach would lead to the development of a plan that is durable, nimble, and robust enough to radically improve educational outcomes in the state so that we can reach our goal of having 60 percent of Illinoisans with a high-quality degree or postsecondary credential by 2025.

ISBE conducted three listening tours around the state to introduce ESSA and take feedback from educators and community members (including students and families). We also held meetings with content experts to gain insight and recommendations on the accountability requirements of the plan. In addition to this work, ISBE also established an email address through which individuals and stakeholders could submit their comments, critiques, and suggestions. The result of this work is a state plan that is grounded in the belief that each and every child should have easy access to high-quality educational opportunities. The Illinois ESSA State Plan is the result of many drafts. The first draft included divergent opinions; we sought feedback on how to reconcile those opinions. The second and third drafts narrowed the range of ideas. Finally, in draft four, we produced a plan that is responsive to local needs while meeting statewide goals and meeting the federal obligations in ESSA.

ESSA requires that a state regularly revisit its plan to ensure that the plan is, in fact, producing the intended outcomes. While the initial plan continues to support statewide goals and meets the federal obligations in ESSA, ISBE and stakeholders across the state have advocated for a more responsive accountability system that can recognize strengths and support continuous improvement in every school regardless of designation. The following principles have guided collaboration across the state in service of revisions that we collectively believe will better support our schools in improving outcomes for each and every child.

- School improvement is for everyone.
  - The most effective schools never stop reflecting, learning, and improving.
- We need to do the right work, at the right time.
  - Equity means every school — no matter its designation — has access to the tools, data, and support it needs to keep every student moving forward.
- When schools improve, students benefit.
  - When schools engage in a cycle of continuous improvement, they expand opportunities and outcomes for students.
- Clear and consistent criteria make progress visible.
  - A fair, transparent system helps all schools show progress and be recognized as they improve outcomes.

ISBE has taken deliberate and measured steps to dialogue with stakeholders about the current system and the desired improvements, which are described in section 2.1 Consultation. A key component of our proposed revisions is a continuing commitment to fidelity of implementation and continuous improvement of the plan driven by regular engagement with the community.

### **The Whole Child**

Both stakeholders and ISBE have been deliberate in identifying the importance of meeting the needs of “the whole child”<sup>5</sup> throughout the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. We believe caring for “the whole child” is an essential part of promoting academic excellence. The notion of “the whole child” in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois can be understood as a child within an ecology of multiple and interconnected parts (e.g., the child is an individual composed of interacting parts, such as cognitive, social and emotional, and physical, among others, *and* that this individual lives within overlapping environments including, but not limited to, home, school, and community). This idea has been articulated by the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth and suggested

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<sup>5</sup> ISBE, throughout the plan, attempts to include “the whole child” when using terminology such as “for each and every child,” “all students,” and “every student.”

by multiple stakeholders. It is well described by the visual expression of the child as central to and living within an interconnected system.<sup>6</sup>



However, if “the whole child” is understood as expressed above, then there are additional relationships inside and outside of school to ensure that the needs of the “the whole child” are met.<sup>7</sup> One important relationship not highlighted in the above image is the importance of ensuring that each and every child has access to highly effective educators who utilize a standards-based rigorous curriculum to develop new and more refined understandings. In this way, the needs of child are met through adapting instruction based upon child’s interest, readiness level, and learning profile and allow for multiple modes of representation. The intersection of academic rigor and the ideas shared above are woven through the vision, mission, and goals of the Illinois State Board of Education and ESSA will assist in bringing those ideas to life.

**System of Success**

The most obvious area in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois where “leadership and resources” are provided is through ISBE’s School/District Improvement department. This Department oversees the statewide system of success for schools identified for intensive, comprehensive, or targeted supports and services.<sup>8</sup> While these services are focused on schools in status, they are available to *all* schools and districts in Illinois. ISBE will periodically identify criteria for vendors to serve as providers of services focusing on improving student outcomes. Schools identified for intensive and comprehensive services will work with ISBE personnel to select the provider(s) that best meet the needs of the school community as determined through a needs assessment/equity audit.<sup>9</sup> Schools will, with their selected provider(s), develop a work plan to support improvement efforts related to the information gleaned from the needs assessment/equity audit.

ISBE will utilize field-based staff to assist districts and schools identify areas in need of support as well as connecting schools and districts together in peer networks in order to support one another. The agency has a major role to play in increasing statewide collaboration and sharing effective practices that will make a demonstrable difference in student outcomes. Sharing data, promoting effective practices, and facilitating connections across districts are core functions of the agency going forward. Capacity in individual schools and districts is necessary; however, it will not be sufficient to improve the entire system. The thoughtful intersection of School/District Improvement, accountability, and assessment is our best way to drive positive growth statewide.

<sup>6</sup> Image accessed from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/images/wsc-model-ig.png> on January 14, 2017. For additional information on the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model, please access <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/wsc/index.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> While the following will frame the work identified in the vision, mission, and goals in a means/end continuum, it is not intended to create a simple dichotomy. Rather, its intent is to demonstrate the necessary interactions and feedback loops necessary in order for a vision, mission, and goals to be realized.

<sup>8</sup> Schools identified for targeted services and supports engage with School/District Improvement primarily for technical assistance and grant management purposes, as their plans for support and improvement are approved at the district level and not by ISBE.

<sup>9</sup> ESSA requires that a needs assessment is conducted to determine areas requiring additional support. ISBE, while not disagreeing with this, also believes that an equity audit at the school level can be instructive in identifying areas in need of support and/or equity gaps.

### Assessment and Accountability

*First of all, as everyone knows, America doesn't do well on international tests.....But, where we undoubtedly lead the world is in variability. American standard deviations on all the [international] tests are just about at the top.....No country in the civilized world can match us in terms of the maldistribution of wealth...none can match the gap we create between our most literate and least literate countrymen. Ours is a diversity of inequality.<sup>10</sup>*

*I want to argue that one of the principal ways in which our minds are shaped to daily life is through the stories we tell and listen to – whether truth or fiction. We learn our culture principally through the stories that circulate within its bounds.<sup>11</sup>*

Jerome Bruner, like Dewey, was a public intellectual. His work was expansive and encompassed such diverse, yet interrelated, interests as concept formation, instructional design and delivery, and the use of storytelling as a central way of making meaning. He was committed to the public good. Bruner was an expert at making his work understandable to a variety of audiences. What he identifies in the quotes above is an example of the multiple ways one can view the use and outcomes of an assessment (e.g., the story one may wish to tell). His story on this topic emphasizes the possible intersections of the uses and outcomes of assessment results. For Bruner, assessment results could be used for the purpose of comparison. Comparison between two or more things or groups or ideas can be useful or not. These comparisons can lead to judgments of “good/bad,” “better/worse,” or “correct/incorrect.” What Bruner creates is a good way to discuss the various tensions resulting when considering the uses of assessment and, by extension, accountability. We heard about this tension in Illinois. We did not hear, however, that the current outcomes and access to quality educational opportunities are acceptable to anyone. We heard about the urgent need for better outcomes and better access across all groups of students.

The assessment and accountability sections of Illinois ESSA State Plan identify, among other things, the assessments Illinois will administer each school year to children in grades 3 through 8 and at high school. More specifically, student performance on these assessments is part of the required academic indicators within ESSA. Illinois is also required to select one or more school quality indicators that are used along with required academic indicators for the purposes of accountability.

As indicated previously, one of the nationally important elements of NCLB that remains is the requirement of annual testing in grades 3 through 8. The purpose of annual testing is to ensure that groups of children are meeting particular learning targets at particular times to ensure all children have fair access to high-quality public schools and are receiving the support they require.

ESSA retains the NCLB requirement for annual testing, and states now have additional say in selecting non-academic indicators and determining what weight both academic and non-academic indicators will hold within an accountability system. The importance of recognizing growth is also present in ways it was not in NCLB. The authors of ESSA saw the error of placing the entire locus of control with those farthest removed from the work that occurs in schools around the country. Moving this control closer to those who do the work provides ways to describe and support the complex interrelationship between the various levels of responsibility for student outcomes (e.g., federal, state, and local).

Many groups and individuals shared their thinking on school quality indicators and the weighting of indicators as the Illinois plan was developed. The weighting of the academic indicators and school quality indicators will identify schools in need of support and as well those well positioned to support them. Unlike NCLB before it, ESSA emphasizes supporting schools and districts. We believe a quality accountability system that focuses on equity and growth is the cornerstone of our next chapter of improving student outcomes in Illinois.

In order for Illinois' educators to create a positive story, educators must become the central protagonists. Teachers, school service personnel, principals, superintendents, and school boards are directly responsible for their local improvements. The good work that is occurring with their students and staff must be identified and highlighted. The stories of educational excellence must be shared locally, regionally, and statewide. At the same time, a statewide system of success needs to be robust and accessible enough so that schools, as living and breathing institutions, can ask for and receive the support they need without shame.

Every student in Illinois deserves to attend a high-quality school. If there isn't a high-quality education option for students where they live, that is a problem for all of Illinois. The state's goals will require some significant change and support in places where students and communities aren't on that track yet. It will also require a new and more comprehensive model of engagement and support from communities already on that track.

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<sup>10</sup> Bruner, Jerome S. *The Bulletin*. Boston, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Bruner, Jerome S. *In Search of Pedagogy: The Selected Works of Jerome Bruner*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.

### Supports for Educators and Students

ISBE is committed to supporting educators in the development of their professional capital. Professional capital is the knowledge, skills, and understandings that an educator uses to meet the needs of the whole child in the context of a professional community. This suggests that educator knowledge, skills, and understanding certainly include things such as, but not limited to, human development, instructional design and delivery, universal design, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment practices, and data and assessment literacy. In addition to these areas, educators must be sensitive to the experiences that each and every child brings into the school and classroom(s) and the appropriate supports that may assist the child as they develop. The professional capital possessed by educators is the means through which they meet the ends in support of each and every child.<sup>12</sup> The State of Illinois must prioritize collective, collaborative professional capital as a means of improving schools, districts, and communities.

Schools ought to be places in which each and every child can — through trying and sometimes failing, and trying again — develop a rich sense of self. This sense of self is most clearly described in that they can see a positive future for themselves in the world. This is part of the common good of public schooling. As described in the “whole child” diagram, this sense of self is developed both inside and outside of the school. The experiences provided to children within school are deliberately designed and limited in terms of time, whereas that is not always the case outside of school. Nonetheless, children in Illinois’ schools should be able to access and pursue multiple educational opportunities (e.g., Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate offerings and exams; career and technical education experiences – both exploratory work and career pathways; and access to experiences in the fine arts that allow the student to create, perform, and critique, among others). These opportunities should be based upon one or more of the following: interest, readiness level, and/or learning profile.<sup>13</sup> These experiences should provide children the opportunity for multiple modes of representing their understanding. These opportunities should be pursued in environments that are safe for children to try out ideas and learn from their mistakes in what educator/author Linda Darling-Hammond calls a “culture of revision and redemption.”<sup>14</sup>

In order to provide these opportunities for students, Illinois is obligated to provide resources and training to educators so that they can more readily provide these opportunities for students. Providing those resources and training is a central part of the work articulated in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the “within school” work articulated within the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, stakeholders also suggested that ISBE be deliberate in its “between school” work and use ESSA as an opportunity to clarify the importance of transitions between natural “fractures” in school composition. Students are much more likely to be comfortable in school within a system in which moving from building to building, based upon grade level, is thoughtful and deliberate care is taken to ensure the supports necessary are “moving” with the child.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

We take seriously the questions posed by ED within the ESSA template. This introduction is our attempt to demonstrate the state vision for education and how ESSA is an opportunity to assist Illinois in achieving our vision. At the same time, this text is our effort to extend beyond the required sections in the template to provide the field with intentions that were difficult, if not impossible, to articulate in the ED template.

To this end, we emphasize the importance of collaboration and deliberation in the entire process. The work that has occurred thus far has demonstrated what this collaboration and deliberation can and should be when matters of importance for the public good are considered. Supporting the whole child and how this notion enhances the vision, mission, and goals of ISBE and Illinois was considered. We feel that it is vitally important that Illinoisans achieve academic excellence and earn postsecondary credentials in order for the state to achieve social and economic vitality.

This narrative description is intended to recognize, thank, and appreciate the people of Illinois, who care deeply about quality education, and ensure that all students have fair access to quality. Countless individuals have spent extraordinary amounts of their personal and professional time assisting ISBE in the development of the ESSA

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<sup>12</sup> For clarity of example, the “educator” in this example is a classroom teacher. However, ISBE recognizes the important work of administrators, teacher leaders, school service personnel, paraprofessionals, and other staff at the school who are essential in supporting the whole child.

<sup>13</sup> This statement should not be understood as a child only accesses opportunities when ready or interested or when some characteristic of her or his learning profile is “met.” Rather, it is meant to suggest that readiness, interest, and learning profile are used to support the student in moving toward and accessing the particular opportunity in which the student is interested.

<sup>14</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda. *Redesigning High Schools: What matters and What Works*. Stanford, CA: School Redesign Network, 2002. [https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/10-features-good-small-schools-redesigning-high-schools-what-matters-and-what-works\\_0.pdf](https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/10-features-good-small-schools-redesigning-high-schools-what-matters-and-what-works_0.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> This work will occur deliberately on the part of ISBE. ISBE is currently developing a scope and calendar of the resources and training necessary to “move” this work forward. So, too, but possibly in a more limited way, School/District Improvement vendors (known as “approved learning partners”) will provide these supports should a school identify this as an area in need of support.

<sup>16</sup> One way that ISBE is asking schools and districts to consider this will occur within the Title application where there is an expectation that schools will be able to articulate how they transition students throughout the P-12 continuum.

State Plan for Illinois. However, submitting and receiving approval for the plan is only the beginning of the work. To take this strategy and make it result in an excellent education for each and every child in Illinois is work that lies ahead. We must become better partners for the success of our approximately 1.9 million preK-12 students if we hope to achieve our short- and long-term statewide goals.

## Section 1: Long-Term Goals & Academic Achievement

*Instructions: Each SEA must provide baseline data (i.e., starting point data), measurements of interim progress, and long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency. For each goal, the SEA must describe how it established its long-term goals, including its state-determined timeline for attaining such goals, consistent with the requirements in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.13. Each SEA must provide goals and measurements of interim progress for the all students group and separately for each subgroup of students, consistent with the state's minimum number of students.*

*In the tables below, identify the baseline (data and year) and long-term goal (data and year). If the tables do not accommodate this information, an SEA may create a new table or text box(es) within this template. Each SEA must include measurements of interim progress for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency in Appendix A.*

### 1.1. Long-Term Goals

- i. **Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved academic achievement, including how the SEA established its state-determined timeline for attaining such goals.**

The vision, mission, and goals of ISBE and ESSA explicitly focus on the equity of services, resources, and supports available for each and every child in order for them to be successful in school and beyond. NCLB, the predecessor to ESSA, put in place a structure to ensure that all children would be proficient in English language arts and mathematics, but it did not recognize or honor local expertise and context. ESSA, in doing so, allows states and districts the opportunity to create an accountability system that is grounded upon the belief that each and every child has the right to be taught and supported by a highly effective teacher in order to grow into a confident, competent, and connected young person. ESSA, moreover, allows ISBE and districts (LEAs) to create and participate in a statewide system of success. This statewide system of success in connection with the accountability system assists not only in the identification of districts eligible to receive supports but those who are in a position to provide support, should they choose. Put differently, ESSA provides ISBE the opportunity, through the following vision, mission, and goals, to advocate for schools and support the whole child.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Vision**

Each and every child is equipped to make meaningful contributions to society and live life to its fullest potential.

#### **Mission**

Provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

#### **Goals**

ISBE's approved Board goals focus on student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. The student learning goal states that:

All students will receive a high-quality education with access to appropriate resources and supports to increase their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future.

ISBE's strategic plan describes in rich detail the work aligned to this and other goals. To achieve the vision and goals identified above, ISBE engaged in a comprehensive alignment of its assessments, accountability system, and statewide system of success. The assessment alignment culminated with a unified academic achievement standard setting in July 2025. While the results of the 2025 standard setting serve as a new baseline for long-term goals and measures of interim progress, the long-term goals remain consistent.

In previous iterations of the plan, ISBE identified a 15-year timeline, with three-year interim goals. This recommendation emerged from the accountability stakeholder work groups and is consistent with the proposed timeline for improvement for schools receiving comprehensive and targeted supports and services. The state-

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<sup>17</sup> Retrieved on January 14, 2017, from <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Agency-and-Board-Information.aspx>.

level long-term goals and measurements of interim progress are based on progressive increases in the percentage of all learners in Illinois who make annual progress toward the long-term goals.

## 1.2 Academic Achievement.

- i. **(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(aa)) Describe the long-term goals for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.**

The long-term goals are as follows:

- Ninety percent or more of third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.
- Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
- Ninety percent or more of ninth-grade students are on track to graduate with their cohort.
- Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.

ISBE identified a 15-year timeline, with annual interim targets. This recommendation emerged from the accountability stakeholder work groups and is consistent with the proposed timeline for improvement for schools receiving comprehensive and targeted supports and services. The state-level long-term goals and measurements of interim progress are based on progressive increases in the percentage of all learners in Illinois who make annual progress toward the long-term goals.

The baseline for the measures of interim progress was initially set using 2021 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) data. Utilizing the new unified academic achievement standards implemented in 2025, ISBE has revisited the baseline data used to support long-term goals and interim targets. ISBE will continue to collect and report data, through grade 12, for former English Learners (ELs) in addition to the subgroups required in ESSA, in order to ensure equity.

The long-term goals adopted by ISBE in September 2015 are significantly more ambitious than previous board goals insofar as the goals are more comprehensive, inclusive of all student populations, and identify targets for readiness and achievement throughout the continuum of each and every child's P-12 schooling. It is important to maintain the same ambitious goals for all students and student demographic groups. ISBE will also conduct ongoing analysis of schools' actual success in closing achievement gaps to determine three-year interim goals that are both ambitious but also achievable.

- ii. **Provide the baseline and long-term goals in the table below.**

Following the 2020 waiver of both academic assessment and accountability<sup>18</sup> as required by ESSA, and the 2021 waiver of accountability,<sup>19</sup> Illinois found it appropriate and necessary to adjust its measures of interim progress. ISBE used the same process used to set the initial benchmark levels and measures of interim progress to create adjusted 2022 targets by grade span (grades 3-4, grades 5-6, grades 7-8, and grade 11) for all students and student demographic groups. The 2021 academic achievement results in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics were used to establish a new baseline of performance and four new sets of interim targets while maintaining the long-term ambitious goal of having 90 percent of students proficient by 2033.<sup>20</sup> The 2021 state grade span average performance for all students and each student demographic group became the 2022 grade span target, with annual targets extrapolated out to 90 percent proficient in 2033. Following the unified academic standard setting in 2025, which established a new baseline for performance, the interim targets have been updated utilizing this same process in support of achieving the previously established long-term goal of having 90 percent of students proficient by a new deadline of 2040.

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<sup>18</sup> Illinois State Board of Education. "Request for a waiver of assessment and accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act." (2020). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Illinois State Board of Education. "Request for a waiver of accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act." (2021). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL20-21-Accountability-Waiver-Template.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Illinois permitted schools to extend their 2021 test window into the fall of SY2021-22. Thus, complete 2021 results will not be available prior to the submission of this amendment to the Department of Education. These targets have been archived on the accountability website at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Accountability-Archive.aspx>.

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency													
ELA	All Students	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern or North African	Two or More Races	White	Children With Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2025	52.40	44.30	77.80	31.10	40.20	62.10	59.30	55.90	64.00	26.00	22.20	75.94	36.70
2028	59.92	53.44	80.24	42.88	50.16	67.68	65.44	62.72	69.20	38.80	35.76	78.76	47.36
2031	67.44	62.58	82.68	54.66	60.12	73.26	71.58	69.54	74.40	51.60	49.32	81.57	58.02
2034	74.96	71.72	85.12	66.44	70.08	78.84	77.72	76.36	79.60	64.40	62.88	84.38	68.68
2037	82.48	80.86	87.56	78.22	80.04	84.42	83.86	83.18	84.80	77.20	76.44	87.19	79.34
<b>2040</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: Mathematics Proficiency													
Mathematics	All Students	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern or North African	Two or More Races	White	Children With Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2025	38.40	30.90	71.20	15.30	24.90	44.80	46.30	41.80	50.40	19.70	16.00	53.58	22.00
2028	48.72	42.72	74.96	30.24	37.92	53.84	55.04	51.44	58.32	33.76	30.80	60.86	35.60
2031	59.04	54.54	78.72	45.18	50.94	62.88	63.78	61.08	66.24	47.82	45.60	68.15	49.20
2034	69.36	66.36	82.48	60.12	63.96	71.92	72.52	70.72	74.16	61.88	60.40	75.43	62.80
2037	79.68	78.18	86.24	75.06	76.98	80.96	81.26	80.36	82.08	75.94	75.20	82.72	76.40
<b>2040</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: Science Proficiency													
Science	All Students	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern or North African	Two or More Races	White	Children With Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2025	44.60	34.70	73.10	20.40	31.20	52.90	45.90	48.00	57.70	24.30	12.20	61.31	27.70
2028	53.68	45.76	76.48	34.32	42.96	60.32	54.72	56.40	64.16	37.44	27.76	67.04	40.16
2031	62.76	56.82	79.86	48.24	54.72	67.74	63.54	64.80	70.62	50.58	43.32	72.78	52.62
2034	71.84	67.88	83.24	62.16	66.48	75.16	72.36	73.20	77.08	63.72	58.88	78.52	65.08
2037	80.92	78.94	86.62	76.08	78.24	82.58	81.18	81.60	83.54	76.86	74.44	84.26	77.54
<b>2040</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>

### 1.3 Graduation Rate

- i. **Description. Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, including how the SEA established its state-determined timeline for attaining such goals.**

ISBE proposed a 15-year timeline, with three-year interim goals, that emerged from the accountability stakeholder work groups and is consistent with the proposed timeline for improvement for schools receiving comprehensive and targeted supports and services. The state-level long-term goals and measurements of interim progress are based on progressive increases in the graduation rate. The target of 90 percent of students graduating college and career ready is based on goals adopted by the Board in September of 2015. The college and career readiness indicator in the accountability system will also provide data necessary for the calculation of a baseline graduation rate and interim goals in order to meet the board goal of “90 percent or more of students will graduate from high school college and career ready.”

Since 2012, Illinois has used extended year adjusted cohort graduation rates into its accountability system insofar as it better represents the success schools have in graduating students who need additional time and support. Moreover, the graduation long-term goals (e.g., four-year, five-year, and six-year) are ambitious insofar as they include more than matriculation from high school. In addition to this, ISBE, in how its long-term goals are articulated, requires that 90% or more of students who graduate from Illinois’ public schools are ready for both college *and* career. Although it is important to maintain the same ambitious goals for all students and student demographic groups, ISBE will also conduct ongoing analysis of school’s actual success in closing achievement gaps to determine three-year interim goals that are both ambitious but also take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress.

ii. Provide the baseline and long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the table below.

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 4-Year Graduation Rate													
4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	ALL	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Middle Eastern or North African	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Children with Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2026	88	85.3	90	83.3	86.2	90	87.7	87.7	90	81.5	82.1	90	84.2
2029	88.9	87.3	90	86.2	87.8	90	88.7	88.7	90	85.2	85.5	90	86.7
2032	89.7	89.3	90	89	89.5	90	89.7	89.7	90	88.8	88.9	90	89.2
<b>2033</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>

iii. If applicable, provide the baseline and long-term goals for each extended-year cohort graduation rate(s) and describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements for such an extended-year rate or rates that are more rigorous as compared to the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress than the four-year adjusted cohort rate, including how the SEA established its state-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

ISBE will also utilize five-year and six-year extended cohort graduation rates as a part of its accountability system. Moreover, including the five- and six-year graduation rates ensures that those students who require additional time to graduate are recognized. ISBE identified the most likely group of students not meeting the four-year graduation rate target and determined the projected graduation growth for this group of students is a 2.0% increase for the 5-year cohort and .5% increase for the 6-year cohort.

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 5-Year Graduation Rate													
5-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	ALL	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Middle Eastern or North African	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Children with Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2026	89.9	87.2	95.5	85.6	88.1	92	90.2	89.7	91.7	83.6	84.9	94	86.9
2029	90.6	88.8	95.5	87.7	89.4	92	90.8	90.4	91.8	86.4	87.3	94	88.6
2032	91.3	90.4	95.5	89.9	90.7	92	91.4	91.2	91.9	89.2	89.6	94	90.3
<b>2033</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>92</b>

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 6-Year Graduation Rate													
6-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	ALL	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Middle Eastern or North African	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Children with Disabilities	English Learners	Former English Learners	Low Income
2026	90.4	91.6	95.5	86.2	88.8	92	88.5	90.4	92.1	84.5	85.7	94	87.4
2029	91.1	91.9	95.5	88.3	90	92.2	89.8	91.1	92.2	87.2	87.9	94	89.1
2032	91.8	92.2	95.5	90.4	91.3	92.4	91.2	91.8	92.4	89.8	90.2	94	90.8
<b>2033</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>92.5</b>

## 1.4 English Language Proficiency

- i. **Description. Describe the state’s uniform procedure, applied consistently to all English Learners (ELs) in the state, to establish research-based student-level targets on which the goals and measurements of interim progress are based. The description must include:**
  1. **How the state considers a student’s English language proficiency (ELP) level at the time of identification and, if applicable, any other student characteristics that the state takes into account (e.g., time in language instruction programs, grade level, age, Native language proficiency level, or limited or interrupted formal education, if any).**
  2. **The applicable timelines over which ELs sharing particular characteristics would be expected to attain ELP within a state-determined maximum number of years and a rationale for that state-determined maximum.**
  3. **How the student-level targets expect all ELs to make annual progress toward attaining ELP within the applicable timelines.**

The uniform procedure that is applied to all students in Illinois upon enrollment for the first time to any school<sup>21</sup> in order to identify students for whom English is not their first language is as follows:

1. All enrolled students complete a Home Language Survey.
2. An appropriate prescribed placement screening assessment is administered within 30 days of a student’s enrollment in the district to those students who have a language other than English spoken in the home as documented in the Home Language Survey.
3. Students whose English proficiency score is below the state-defined minimum for ELP on the prescribed placement screening assessment or WIDA ACCESS are eligible to receive language program services.<sup>22</sup>
4. School districts in Illinois must annually assess the English language proficiency of all ELs in kindergarten through 12 using WIDA ACCESS for the purpose of determining the continuing need and eligibility of individual students for language program services.<sup>23</sup>

Illinois implements a targeted maximum timeline of five years for English Learners to achieve ELP on the annual ELP assessment, commencing in first grade, which is the first mandatory grade for student attendance in Illinois. However, ELs in Illinois are not exited from English language instructional program services or status until attaining English language proficiency. Proficiency has been established as a composite score of 4.8 or above on the ACCESS 2.0.<sup>24</sup> Pending data and research that WIDA will provide after their standard setting for the Alternate ACCESS in 2024 and standard setting for WIDA ACCESS in 2026, ISBE will set new reclassification criteria.

ELs must make annual progress towards the composite score of 4.8 or above on ACCESS 2.0 within five years. In order to detect even small amounts of progress, ISBE uses the composite scale score for calculations, rather than the proficiency target. Additionally, a student’s progress towards proficiency is evaluated against the smaller of either their annual progress target as defined by their baseline ACCESS score (called a timeline target), or a target that is revised annually based on their individual progress (called a baseline target). The following describes how a student’s annual measure of English Learner Progress (ELP) is calculated:

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<sup>21</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

<sup>22</sup> [23 Illinois Administrative Code 228, Section 228.15.](#)

<sup>23</sup> [23 Illinois Administrative Code 228, Section 228.25.](#)

<sup>24</sup> The Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council provided this score recommendation to ISBE in June 2017.

Students are included in this indicator beginning in the year they have the EL designation and both a current and a prior ACCESS score. Students who are identified and reach proficiency in the same year they are identified are also included for that year only with a score of 100. For each student, the following information is used to calculate and individual ELP score.

- **Baseline Grade:** For each student, determine the grade level of their first ACCESS score in grade 1 or above. This is their baseline grade.
    - If they were identified in Pre-K or K, Baseline Grade = 1.
    - If they were identified in Grade 1 or after, the grade of identification is their baseline year, e.g., Grade 1 = 1, Grade 3 = 3, Grade 9 = 9.
  - **Baseline Year:** For each student, store the school year associated with the Baseline Grade (e.g., SY 2014-2015 – Student identified in fall 2014, first ACCESS in 2015 would be recorded as 2015).
  - **Partial Years:** A count of the number of years after a student’s baseline year for which the sum of a student’s enrollments for the year is  $\leq 134$  calendar days.
  - **Proficiency Target Year:** Baseline Year plus Partial Years + 5 (e.g., Baseline 2015 + 5 + 0 = 2020).
  - **Proficiency Target Grade:** (Baseline Grade + 5 + Partial Years)
    - If Current Year is  $\geq$  Proficiency Target Year (e.g., the student is past their timeline), Current Grade is Proficiency Target Grade Initial Scale Score: First ACCESS score in grade 1 or higher. If no initial scale score can be found, use 100 (the lowest obtainable score).
  - **Current Scale Score:** Most recent scale score. If no score can be found, use 100.
  - **Prior Scale Score:** Scale score from the year prior if one exists and the student has been EL for two or more years. If not, use 100.
  - **Proficiency Target Scale Score:** The composite scale score equivalent to a 4.8 composite proficiency level in a student’s Proficiency Target Grade or current grade if past their 5-year timeline. Scale score equivalency tables can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Accountability-Indicators.aspx>.
  - **Timeline Target:** Take the (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Initial Scale Score) / 5. Save as static variable Timeline Target.
  - **Revised Target:** Take the (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Prior Scale Score) / (Proficiency Target Year – Current School Year + 1). The denominator has a floor of 1 and a ceiling of 5. Save as variable Revised Target. Will be updated each year.
  - **Past Timeline Target:** If student did not reach their target in 5 years the formula is then (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Prior Scale Score)
  - **Gain:** The (Current Scale Score – Prior Scale Score). If this number is negative, round to zero. If a student has no test score, use 100 (which will result in a 0 or a negative).
  - **ELP Score:** Student’s scale score Gain / the lower of Timeline Target or Revised Target OR Past Timeline Target if Current Year > Proficiency Target Year
- ii. **These ELP scores are then averaged to create an ELP score for the school or student group. Describe how the SEA established ambitious state-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for increases in the percentage of all English Learners in the state making annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency based on 1.C.i. and provide the state-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for English language proficiency.**

ISBE used a 15-year timeline, with three-year interim goals, that emerged from the accountability stakeholder work groups and is consistent with the timeline for improvement for schools receiving comprehensive and targeted supports and services. The goal is for 90 percent of EL students in a school or district to be making sufficient annual progress towards proficiency. ISBE established the interim goals by interpolating between the baseline year, 2017, and the 90.0 goal in 2032. ISBE consulted WIDA and statewide stakeholders to establish the interim goals as they would best fit the English Learner population and be most understandable to parents.

The measures of interim progress shared below are not the result of a three-year composite average of data. As such, these progress measures and goals will be revisited and amended if needed by the Illinois State Board of Education periodically.

**Percent of EL Students Making On-Target Annual Progress Towards Proficiency**

<b>ELP</b>	<b>All - EL</b>
<b>2017</b>	22.1
<b>2020</b>	35.7
<b>2023</b>	49.3
<b>2026</b>	62.9
<b>2029</b>	76.5
<b>2032</b>	90.0

ISBE began fully implementing its accountability system including all required indicators, such as English Learner Progress to Proficiency, to identify schools in the fall of 2018.

## Section 2: Consultation and Performance Management

### 2.1 Consultation

*Instructions:* Each SEA must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders in developing its consolidated state plan, consistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 299.13 (b) and 299.15 (a). The stakeholders must include the following individuals and entities and reflect the geographic diversity of the state:

- The Governor or appropriate officials from the Governor's Office;
- Members of the state legislature;
- Members of the state board of education, if applicable;
- LEAs, including LEAs in rural areas;
- Representatives of Indian tribes located in the state;
- Teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals;
- Charter school leaders, if applicable;
- Parents and families;
- Community-based organizations;
- Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English Learners, and other historically underserved students;
- Institutions of higher education;
- Employers;
- Representatives of private school students;
- Early childhood educators and leaders; and
- The public.

Each SEA must meet the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(b)(1)-(3) to provide information that is:

1. Be in an understandable and uniform format;
  2. Be, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and
  3. Be, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12102, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.
- i. **Public Notice. Provide evidence that the SEA met the public notice requirements, under 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), relating to the SEA's processes and procedures for developing and adopting its consolidated State plan.**

The importance of stakeholder feedback has both provided the foundation and substance of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The process through which this plan was developed recognizes and honors the expertise of the field. The result of this collaboration is a plan that is consistent with the law and reflective of values and thinking of stakeholders. This collaboration provided the vision for the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The next important step in this work is implementation. While Illinois' ESSA State Plan reflects many of the ideas offered by stakeholders, it is important to note that those ideas that are not directly evidenced in this plan are not forgotten or ignored. Some of the input we received is specific to implementation and will guide our next steps.

The development of the initial ESSA State Plan occurred in five phases. The intention during the first four phases of this work was to listen and refine the ideas shared with ISBE. The full history of the development of the ESSA State Plan, including the subsequent four amendments, can be found in the ESSA History section on the ESSA

page at <https://www.isbe.net/essa>.<sup>25</sup> The collaboration and consultation that occurred in the development of the ESSA State Plan was also a time for ISBE to articulate its belief in the importance of supporting and nurturing the whole child. It was evident that stakeholders believed the same. The creation of an ESSA State Plan for Illinois that is durable required that ISBE, stakeholders, and the Governor had opportunities to share ideas and reflect on the consideration of others. Composing a plan that has a laser-like focus on equity while acknowledging and appreciating that the work in supporting the whole child is iterative and will require the continued work and refinement of stakeholders, the Governor, and ISBE staff.

ISBE posts drafts of the State Plan, amendments to the state plan, notices of public comment, reader's guides, and other materials on its [ESSA page](#).

See Appendix B for maps of listening tour meeting locations.

- ii. **Outreach and Input. For the components of the consolidated state plan, including Challenging Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and Supporting All Students, describe how the SEA: Conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities listed above, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), during the design and development of the SEA's plans to implement the programs that the SEA has indicated it will include in its consolidated state plan; and following the completion of its initial consolidated state plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submitting the consolidated state plan to the Department for review and approval.**

ISBE's plan for informing stakeholders and collecting input prior to submitting a final draft to ED consisted of five phases:

**Phase One:**

- January 2016 – July 2016
- Listening Tour 1 – April 2016-May 2016
- 46 meetings

**Phase Two:**

- July 2016 – September 2016
- Illinois' ESSA State Plan Draft 1 released on August 25, 2016, for six weeks of public comment
- Listening Tour 2 – September 2016
- 28 meetings

**Phase Three:**

- October 2016 – December 2016
- Illinois' ESSA State Plan Draft 2 released on November 18, 2016, for six weeks of public comment
- 20 meetings

**Phase Four:**

- January 2017 – April 2017
- February 1, 2017: Illinois' ESSA State Plan Draft 3 shared with Governor Bruce Rauner and posted on the ISBE website
- March 15, 2017: Illinois' ESSA State Plan Draft 4 shared with the Illinois State Board of Education for approval

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<sup>25</sup> Hereafter this site will be referred to as the [ESSA page](#) using an embedded hyperlink.

- April 3, 2017: Illinois' ESSA State Plan submitted to ED

**Phase Five:**

- April 4, 2017 – ongoing
- Amend Illinois School Code and administrative code, as necessary
- Implementation support for LEAs
- Continued reorganization of ISBE around ESSA
- Roll-out of IL-EMPOWER (now known as School/District Improvement)

ISBE provided information to the public during all phases of work to ensure that stakeholders had sufficient information about ESSA in order to provide meaningful feedback via the listening tours and submission of comments. ISBE maintained and updated an ESSA website all during the development of the ESSA State Plan to publicly post the timeline, resources, and additional information, including the draft plans.

More specifically, ISBE held a series of listening tour meetings throughout 2016 to ensure that creation of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois included ample opportunity for stakeholders to share their expertise. Listening Tour Reports are available in their entirety in the ESSA History section of the [ESSA page](#). The ESSA State Plan for Illinois Draft 1, which incorporated insights gained from the April/May tour, was released on August 25, 2016, for six weeks of public comment. Draft 2 was released on November 18 for six weeks of public comment. The third listening tour occurred in late November 2016 and focused on accountability issues contained within Draft 2. These comments and the Listening Tour Reports are available in their entirety in the ESSA History section of the ESSA page.

Draft 3 was released on February 1 and presented to the Governor for review. While there was no official public comment period, ISBE received numerous comments on Draft 3. A more detailed history of public comment and its incorporation into the State Plan can be found in the ESSA History section of the [ESSA page](#).

**Outreach and Input Specific to the 2026 Redesign of the Accountability System**

ISBE began its outreach on the accountability system redesign in 2024. The State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Tony Sanders, and ISBE staff toured the entire state beginning in summer 2024 and extending through December of 2025. Session included live polling and open-ended response items to gather input and feedback. Feedback opportunities are summarized below:

- State Assessment Review Committee meetings
  - Aug. 27, 2024
  - Oct. 29, 2024
  - Dec. 04, 2024 – Special Meeting
  - Jan. 28, 2025
  - Mar. 18, 2025 – Special Meeting
  - May 06, 2025
  - Nov. 05, 2025
- Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee meetings
  - Sept. 11, 2024
  - Oct. 09, 2024
  - Nov. 12, 2024
  - Dec. 12, 2024
  - Jan. 29, 2025
  - Mar. 03, 2025
  - Apr. 28, 2025
  - Jun. 9, 2025
  - Jul. 11, 2025

- Aug. 20, 2025
- Sept. 10, 2025
- Oct. 07, 2025
- Nov. 12, 2025
- Dec. 16, 2025
- Jan. 23, 2026
- Feb. 06, 2026
- Mar. 27, 2026
- Apr. 01, 2026
- Socializing the Assessment & Accountability Redesign Events
  - Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents (IARSS) meeting – Sept. 17, 2024
  - Title I Directors Conference – Sept. 18, 2024
  - Bilingual Program Directors meeting – Sept. 20, 2024
  - Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Fall Conference – Sept. 26, 2024
  - IARSS System of Support meeting – Oct. 17, 2024
  - Illinois Principals Association (IPA) Fall Conference – Oct. 20-22, 2024
  - IARSS System of Support meeting – Nov. 7, 2024
  - Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Associations of School Administrators, School Boards (IASB), and School Business Officials – Nov. 22, 2024
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase I
  - Feb. 03, 2025 – Chicago Heights, IL
  - Mar. 10, 2025 – Champaign, IL
  - Mar. 21, 2025 – Spring Valley, IL
  - Apr. 01, 2025 – Vandalia, IL
  - Apr. 07, 2025 – Carterville, IL
  - Apr. 21, 2025 – East Moline, IL
  - May 05, 2025 – Peoria, IL
  - May 09, 2025 – Joliet, IL
  - May 22, 2025 – Chicago (Chicago Public Schools District 299)
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase II
  - Nov. 06, 2025 – Huntley, IL
  - Nov. 07, 2025 – Bloomington, IL
  - Nov. 14, 2025 – O’Fallon, IL
  - Nov. 17, 2025 – Virtual Public
  - Nov. 24, 2025 – Virtual Public
  - Nov. 25, 2025 – Virtual – Stakeholder Organizations
  - Dec. 01, 2025 – Virtual Public
  - Dec. 08, 2025 – Virtual – Chicago Public Schools
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase III
  - Jan. 15, 2026 – Virtual Public
  - Jan. 21, 2026 – Virtual Public
  - Feb. 11, 2026 – Virtual Public
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase IV
  - Mar. 16, 2026 – Virtual Public

Additionally, three drafts of the accountability redesign were shared for public comment. The first was shared in the form of a presentation describing the proposed accountability redesign. It was posted for 72 days of public comment, from October 28, 2025, through January 7, 2026. A first draft formal redline amendment incorporating the feedback received on the proposed redesign was posted for another 45 days of public comment, from January 12, 2026, through February 25, 2026. A final draft formal redline amendment was posted for 30 days of

public comment, from March 3, 2026 to April 3, 2026. Virtual public listening tours were held during all public comment periods. Comment was solicited through survey, emails to [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net), and engagement with stakeholder organizations.

iii. **Took into account the input obtained through consultation and public comment. The response must include both how the SEA addressed the concerns and issues raised through consultation and public comment and any changes the SEA made as a result of consultation and public comment for all components of the consolidated state plan.**

For the development of the initial plan, ISBE received 280 public comments from the first listening tour and 369 public comments from the second listening tour. The topics upon which stakeholders' comments were generated are listed in a previous section of this document. Additionally, staff from the Midwest Comprehensive Center took formal notes from each of the listening tour meetings. These Listening Tour Reports are available in their entirety in the ESSA History section on the [ESSA page](#).

All comments received via [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net) and via the website were shared with relevant staff working on the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The team reviewed and discussed the comments prior to drafting to determine how to incorporate comments. The analyses of these comments can be found in the initial approved plan in the ESSA history section on the [ESSA page](#).

The public comment for each amendment was analyzed and documented separately and can be found on the [ESSA page](#). However, as the 2026 amendment represents a complete redesign of the state's accountability system, the state response to public comment is summarized below. The full analysis of public comment can be found on the [ESSA page](#).

Phase I of the Listening Tour was focused on identifying what type of accountability model was of greatest interest to the field and desired system features or outcomes. ISBE previewed three approaches: decision tree, profile of performance, and simple index. There was strong support for either the decision tree (41%) or profile of performance (52%), and ISBE was able to determine that what made the decision tree and profile of performance approaches attractive was that neither produced a score or numeric value that could be used to rank schools. Respondents also shared other desired system features, including that the system:

- Be easy to understand and explain
- Be asset- or strengths-based in orientation
- Retain growth as a core indicator
- Reimagine the role of state-selected indicators

During Phase II of public comment on the redesign of the accountability system, ISBE heard feedback from many sources that the proposed names of the designations were too vague, confusing, or punitive. In response, ISBE changed the names to more clearly reflect the intended meaning. Additionally, there were a variety of questions or concerns about the different patterns of school distribution across profile levels between the elementary/middle school grade band and the high school grade band. In response, ISBE made minor adjustments to various indicator performance level thresholds, added an additional core performance requirement to the high school Exemplary profile, and adjusted the elevation rules to require two Exemplary elevating indicators to elevate both Approaching Exemplary and Commendable performance to the next highest level. ISBE also heard feedback on the removal of Ninth Grade on Track, and the English Learner Progress indicator thresholds, and explored possible methods of being responsive to this feedback that would remain

compliant with requirements under ESSA. Last, a variety of individual stakeholders encouraged ISBE to limit the role of individual student group on a school's overall designation, either by increasing the number of students necessary to be counted as a "student group" (i.e., n-size) or by changing the influence Comprehensive student groups have on the Exemplary and Approaching Exemplary designation profiles.<sup>26</sup> After research on n-sizes in all 50 states and a review of the core values elicited in from Phase I, ISBE elected not to make changes to either aspect of the system. A full draft of the ESSA amendment reflecting these changes was posted for 45 days of public comment between January 12, 2026 and February 25, 2026.

During this 45-day period of public comment, ISBE received affirmation that the changed names were a better reflection of school performance. The Illinois Balanced Accountability Measures Committee noted some outlier cases in the modeled data set. In response, ISBE made a modest adjustment to processing rules for schools without assessed grades (e.g., K-1 and K-2 schools) and a minor adjustment to the processing logic for core performance at the high school level. Feedback during this 45-day period split further between those who advocated for increasing the role of student groups had on a school's final designation<sup>27</sup> and those who felt the proposed influence of student groups was appropriate.<sup>28</sup> Exploratory analyses showed that adopting proposals to expand the role of student groups both disadvantaged schools serving diverse learners and decreased alignment between the high school and elementary/middle school grade bands, so no changes were made regarding student groups with Developing profiles of performance. ISBE intends to ensure that performance gaps equal to or greater than two levels (e.g., Exemplary vs. Commendable, Approaching Exemplary vs. Developing) and all student groups with Developing or Comprehensive performance profiles will be highlighted in new custom accountability reports. Additionally, ISBE will monitor the extent to which these gaps increase or decrease over time with its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and will amend the plan in the future if gaps appear to be widening over time. Finally, ISBE remains committed to exploring the possibility of additional elevating indicators in the future, particularly in the area of college and career readiness, however research confirmed that the various proposals to reintegrate Ninth Grade on Track were not feasible. As with Developing student groups, ISBE is in agreement with stakeholders as to the importance of these student groups and indicators and is committed to ensuring they have a prominent place in ongoing reporting and school improvement supports.

A final redline amendment was released March 3, 2026, for a 30-day public comment period, accompanied by an additional virtual public engagement session. Revisions in the final draft were limited and largely technical in nature, making modest adjustments to processing rules for schools without assessed grades (e.g., K-1 and K-2 schools) and refining high school core performance logic.

Following the formal redline comment period, ISBE received two additional written submissions and 10 survey comments, focused on system implementation and future refinement. Commenters expressed continued support for the criterion-based Profile of Performance framework while emphasizing the importance of clearly communicating next steps, including how accountability designations will connect to school improvement supports, resources, and timelines. Feedback also highlighted the need to ensure transparency of subgroup performance, alignment between accountability outcomes and underlying resource conditions, and a commitment to ongoing system evolution.

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<sup>26</sup> Suggested changes included only prohibiting schools with Comprehensive student groups from Exemplary not the Approaching Exemplary profile, and/or requiring two or more Comprehensive student groups to be thusly prohibited.

<sup>27</sup> Joint comment from Advance Illinois, The Chicago Public Education Fund, Kids First Chicago, Latino Policy Forum, Teach Plus Illinois, and Stand for Children – Illinois advocated that schools with one or more Developing student groups should not be eligible for the Exemplary designation.

<sup>28</sup> This included the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, and various other stakeholders.

To address ongoing concerns by stakeholders, ISBE reaffirmed in the final draft its commitment to:

- Highlighting schools with performance gaps of two or more levels in magnitude, as well as all student groups with Developing or Comprehensive profiles in customized accountability reports
- Monitoring performance gaps over time with its Technical Advisory Committee
- Prominently reporting 9th Grade on Track and metrics removed from the system on the Illinois Report Card
- Exploring potential additional elevating indicators in future amendments

iv. **Governor’s consultation. Describe how the SEA consulted in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor consistent with section 8540 of the ESEA, including whether officials from the SEA and the Governor’s Office met during the development of this plan and prior to the submission of this plan.**

Staff from ISBE and the Governor’s Office met weekly regarding the ESSA State Plan for Illinois in its various drafts prior to sharing Draft 3 with the Governor on February 1, 2017. Relevant topics discussed in these meetings included updates on the status of the plan, areas of the plan where concerns and questions had been identified by the Governor’s Office or other stakeholders, and the various avenues through which feedback was elicited.

Regarding the assessment and accountability redesign, ISBE met frequently with staff from the Governor’s Office throughout the development of the plan and subsequent amendment. Formal progress briefings were provided to the Governor’s Office on October 9, 2026, January 28, 2026, and February 27, 2026.

Date SEA provided the plan to the Governor: March 3, 2026

Check one:

- The Governor signed this consolidated state plan.  
 The Governor did not sign this consolidated state plan.

## 2.2 System of Performance Management

*Instructions: In the text boxes below, each SEA must describe consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.15 (b) its system of performance management of SEA and LEA plans across all programs included in this consolidated state plan. The description of an SEA’s system of performance management must include information on the SEA’s review and approval of LEA plans, monitoring, continuous improvement, and technical assistance across the components of the consolidated state plan.*

i. **Review and Approval of LEA Plans. Describe the SEA’s process for supporting the development, review, and approval of LEA plans in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The description should include a discussion of how the SEA will determine if LEA activities align with: 1) the specific needs of the LEA, and 2) the SEA’s consolidated state plan.**

The purpose of ESSA is to provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps.

This expanded focus reaches beyond the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics foci of NCLB to help provide a better chance of closing the achievement gap. ISBE has engaged in significant monitoring and provided technical assistance in the predecessor programs but is now using ESSA as an opportunity to better coordinate monitoring between departments and provide differentiated technical assistance in order to support LEAs in their work.

ISBE is expected to receive more than \$1 billion in ESSA funds to distribute to its districts through the various programs. To facilitate this process, ISBE staff developed the required statutory plans for each program and updated the grant applications for the districts to access. The grant application portal opens to districts in the late winter or early spring of each year.

The development of these plans and applications are driven by (1) stakeholder consultation on the local level and (2) data-driven decision-making. Applications and plans are developed through consultation with districts, staff, and design experts. Elements within the plans and grant applications are based on supporting data. ISBE staff share this information in the spring of each year by creating guidance documents, having in-person meetings with Title I directors throughout the state, and holding webinars.

Review of applications is critical to ensure LEAs' activities align with both the needs of the LEA identified in their respective plans and within the greater ESSA State Plan for Illinois as well as with statutory and regulatory requirements for each program area. Staff at ISBE provide support to districts throughout this process.

To the extent possible, departments are consolidating and coordinating their work regarding applications.<sup>29</sup> This coordination minimizes work on behalf of the district, helps to accelerate ISBE's application-approval process, and creates alignment between the plans and the application. Moreover, from 2017 to the current time, ISBE is working to better coordinate monitoring within and between departments for the purpose of providing better, more targeted services to districts.

ISBE is utilizing ESSA to remodel the internal organization of the agency. Departments are coordinating professional development to districts to support application and plan development and implementation. For example, the Title Grant Administration department (overseeing Title I, II, IV) coordinates training with Federal and State Monitoring in order to ensure that programmatic and fiscal requirements are meeting the law and, more importantly, supporting the work of educators in serving students. This work will allow ISBE to better coordinate application requirements, monitor throughout the year, and use the data submitted by districts to ensure return on investment as well as share promising practices throughout the state.<sup>30</sup>

The significant involvement of all agency staff in the creation of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois as well as the plan's strong connections to the field via stakeholder meetings will lead to valuable coordination between the ESSA State Plan for Illinois and ISBE plan initiatives. Any particular LEA plan to ensure a feedback loop includes compliance with the law, actionable suggestions for modification or amending an LEA plan (when applicable), and supports for implementation.

**ii. Monitoring. Describe the SEA's plan to monitor SEA and LEA implementation of the included programs to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information, which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on state and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of**

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<sup>29</sup> For example, questions from the Title I Plan were imported into the Consolidated District Plan (CDP) to support the budgeting process. The CDP contains the prompt, "Describe the services the district will provide homeless children and youth, including services provided with funds reserved to support the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth, in coordination with the services the district is providing under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act" and is used to evaluate the amount of money set aside for homeless students. So too, the CDP application requires districts to explain how they support the transition of children from the middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education.

<sup>30</sup> Put differently, creating a more coherent approach that considers the information asked within the application, and deliberately tying this to monitoring and outcomes, will assist ISBE in refining the supports it provides to the field in this work.

**strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.**

Monitoring ESSA programs is a joint and collaborative process at ISBE. Fiscal and administrative monitoring of the ESSA programs is primarily performed by the staff of the Federal and State Monitoring department at ISBE. This review includes both desk auditing of data supplied by districts as well as on-site visits by department staff. Districts are chosen for fiscal monitoring through a biannual risk-based selection process using various data inputs, such as the amount and type of funding received, overall number of awards, last time the grantee was monitored, and number of prior issues noted during reviews or audits. All grant recipients must annually complete an internal control questionnaire that is included as a pre-qualification to receive a grant award. Programmatic monitoring is conducted within each program area, such as monitoring within the School Improvement Grant or within the Title Grant department. Programmatic monitoring activities are determined by the employees who work closely with the grant recipients in order to maximize monitoring resources within ISBE. ISBE is continuing to consider ways in which monitoring could serve as an opportunity to revisit and refine practices. For instance, since 2017, ISBE has worked to better coordinate monitoring within and between departments for the purpose of providing better, more targeted services to districts. This work includes meeting with districts to hear perceptions and recommendations in order to create a system that best serves districts.<sup>31</sup>

Further, Illinois has adopted the principles included in the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(2 CFR Part 200\)](#) for all grants made by the state as either the originator or as a pass-through entity via the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\)](#) (30 ILCS 708/1). The purpose of GATA is to increase accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds while reducing the administrative burden on both state agencies and grantees. The law provides for the development of a coordinated, non-redundant process to establish effective and efficient oversight of the selection and monitoring of grant recipients, ensuring quality programs; limiting fraud, waste, and abuse; and defining the purpose, scope, applicability, and responsibilities in the life cycle of a grant. Fiscal, administrative, and programmatic monitoring protocols are being developed and formalized statewide in an effort to adopt best practices, create efficiencies, and improve outcomes. The requirements of GATA as well as Budgeting for Results<sup>32</sup> (BFR) and Illinois Data for Fiscal and Instructional Results, Study, and Transparency (Illinois Data FIRST<sup>33</sup>) provide ISBE with the opportunity to collect and share data on program efficacy in two ways. First, data collected from LEAs on accountability indicators will be shared on the Illinois State Report Card. Additional information on specific program outcomes, through the requirements of BFR, will be shared internally and with stakeholders in order to, as applicable, refine program goals and allocation requests.

The ISBE Internal Audit department will audit the agency's compliance with the rules of ESSA and GATA. Internal Audit provides independent and objective assurance and advisory services directed toward evaluating the effectiveness of internal risk management, control, and governance.

- iii. **Continuous Improvement. Describe the SEA's plan to continuously improve SEA and LEA plans and implementation. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information, which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on state and LEA report**

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<sup>31</sup> ISBE appreciates the Latino Policy Forum sharing that "[s]chool district staff found the on-site monitoring of EL programs to be effective for overall improvement of EL programs when conducted by ISBE qualified staff."

<sup>32</sup> For additional information on Budgeting for Results, please access <https://www.illinois.gov/hsc/Documents/BFR%20Strategic%20Plan%204-27-12.pdf> and <https://www.illinois.gov/gov/budget/Pages/results.aspx>.

<sup>33</sup> For additional information on the Illinois Longitudinal Data System, please access <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ILDS/Pages/default.aspx>.

**cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.**

Most generally, various sources of data (e.g., data collected through the LEA application, program targets, Report Card, etc.) will be used for the purposes of continuous improvement by both ISBE and the LEAs. ISBE will analyze the submission and approval process for applications to collect data from LEAs and compile lists of best practices and frequently asked questions. ISBE's outreach efforts will ensure that stakeholders within and outside of the agency are aware of the support they have to implement practices that will improve outcomes for children.

More specifically, ISBE shall use data from the state and local Report Cards as well as feedback from stakeholders to evaluate needs for programmatic technical assistance. Other data points may also be used, such as issues within the application process and monitoring findings. For example, in Title I, other factors considered when determining where to target technical assistance include:

- Years of experience of the program director in administering the Title I program
- The district's Consolidated District Plan
- District's responsiveness to communications from ISBE regarding submission of its application and response to ISBE's review findings
- Size of Title I allocation
- Number of Federal and State Monitoring audit findings
- Number of Audit Finding Resolutions
- Budget variances (net disbursement to budget comparison of Title I grant)
- Any complaints made against the district

Currently, each program area has unique indicators that drive the technical assistance determinations. ISBE's goal is to use its personnel resources to provide technical assistance and capacity building to districts to meet the goals of ESSA in a comprehensive manner. Thus, ISBE is using the opportunity presented by ESSA to look more holistically as an agency at how our departments overlap and can work together to improve efficiency and reduce burdens on districts and to improve services to students. And, while there are standardized approaches within departments to ensure compliance, ISBE is also sensitive to the differentiated needs of districts.

ISBE will maximize effective use of ESSA funds by:

- Coordinating plans and resources available with pre-existing resources and programs, leveraging on the knowledge of previous programs, and expanding on the opportunities provided under ESSA;
- Monitoring the implementation of activities and programs through its existing district oversight mechanisms and coordinating with other programs to minimize the burden on districts;
- Offering technical assistance to districts to help them in implementing approved program activities and tie fiscal decisions to improved student achievement;
- Providing technical assistance, professional development, and support to LEAs and schools in the development of their planning and application for comprehensive funding across programs; and
- Providing assistance or conducting a needs assessment, curriculum audits, equity audits, and other diagnostic supports and services for LEAs and schools necessary to develop strong improvement plans.

*iv.* **Differentiated Technical Assistance. Describe the SEA's plan to provide differentiated technical assistance to LEAs and schools to support effective implementation of SEA, LEA, and other subgrantee strategies.**

ISBE, as an agency, continues the transition toward cross-functional teams. As the ESSA State Plan for Illinois has developed, staff from different departments have come together to consider how ISBE can most appropriately be

organized in order to serve the field. Schools and districts — like the children they serve — must have available to them differentiated supports based upon identified needs and readiness. This occurs in two ways.

First, ISBE staff are available to support districts by responding to questions about technical matters (e.g., how to complete a grant application, the appropriate use of funds). Included in this work is fiscal and programmatic monitoring.

Second, ISBE will provide access to supports identified as necessary by a district or school through School/District Improvement (previously known as IL-EMPOWER).

ISBE's School/District Improvement department oversees the statewide system of success designed to help all districts, particularly those with schools identified for intensive, comprehensive, or targeted support, implement effective school improvement practices and subsequently improve student achievement and student outcomes. For schools in status, the statewide system of success provides *structure* to the craft of continuous improvement by mobilizing evidence-based resources including systematic needs assessments, grant funding, expert consultations with ISBE personnel, peer networks, professional learning opportunities, regular consultation and monitoring visits, program evaluation, online materials and information, and up to four years of time to turn around, improve, and exit status.

The statewide system of success is predicated on districts helping their schools develop effective school improvement plans by first identifying areas where support is needed and mobilizing resources to address the gaps. All newly identified schools in status engage in an initial school-level needs assessment/equity audit to identify deficit areas and inform a responsive school improvement plan with supporting SMART goals. The initial school-level needs assessment is an in-depth audit of school conditions conducted during the planning phase of the grant. Starting in school year 2027-28, the initial school-level needs assessment for intensive and comprehensive schools will be conducted by a learning partner selected by the school or district. Needs assessments are conducted by the district and school as a routine element of the school improvement cycle. Progress is measured and reported locally and statewide by comparing the initial needs assessment data to annual performance over the course of the grant. Districts with schools identified for intensive and comprehensive support must select and enter into agreements with expert vendors, also known as "learning partners," that possess the requisite content expertise, experience, and capacity to successfully support effective school improvement practices and deliver evidence-based services. The learning partner model provides a robust and diverse menu of evidence-based, professional services designed to meet school-level needs for turnaround intervention and improvement. The LEA and school's role within this model is to select the right provider that matches school-level needs to implement effectively the school improvement plan. The selection process is critical.

The results of the initial needs assessment inform continuous improvement and identify areas where expert vendors can serve as learning partners. ISBE personnel help LEAs facilitate appropriate learning partner matches. The matching process is a needs-based and fluid strategy of connecting appropriate interventions to districts and their schools to achieve their goals over the course of the four-year grant program. ISBE personnel will ensure that school-level needs drive how the requirement of maintaining a learning partner is met.

The learning partners' work plans must specifically address the SMART goals included in the school improvement plan as well as the actions that will be taken to make improvements.

All intensive and comprehensive schools are required to use a learning partner; however, districts and schools have flexibility in selecting their partners. This flexibility allows for:

- Short-term partnerships;
- Long-term partnerships;
- Multiple partnerships; and/or
- Concurrent partnerships.

There is no requirement on funding percentages to be spent on learning partners.

Ninety-five percent of grant funds identified for school improvement must flow to the districts. ISBE monitors progress through the submission of triennial reports that provide data on progress in achieving identified targets as well as utilizing field-based staff who can, if necessary, provide technical assistance and monitor for compliance. Schools that are not making reasonable progress work directly with ISBE to determine additional interventions. ISBE monitors each school's improvement plan to ensure that the school is on track to meet improvement targets or, if a school is not meeting performance targets, assist in amending the improvement plan to focus specifically on areas inhibiting improvement.

## Section 3: Academic Assessments

*Instructions: As applicable, provide the information regarding a state's academic assessments in the text boxes below.*

Illinois has an assessment system that meets ESSA requirements for measures of proficiency and has recently been expanded to enable measurement of growth at high school. The system includes:

- Content assessments in grades 3 through 8 in ELA and mathematics.
- Administration of the PreACT 9 Secure and the PreACT Secure at grade 10 including measures of ELA, mathematics, and science to support expanded measurement of growth at high school.
- Administration of the ACT with Writing and science at no cost to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students on a school day.
- A science assessment completed by students in grades 5, 8, and grade 11. The science portion of the ACT fulfills this requirement at grade 11.
- The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternative Assessment for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

In line with the opportunities presented within ESSA, ISBE endeavors to use assessment as an opportunity to ensure that each and every child is able to demonstrate academic achievement on state standards. However, while ISBE acknowledges that strong academic achievement is essential for each and every child, it is also the case that academic achievement is but one portion of a more complex picture of student development over time. ESSA requires an accountability system containing multiple measures. Thus, in addition to academic achievement, ISBE must collect and report on growth for students in grades 3 through 8 and has expanded that measurement of growth through high school with the implementation of the PreACT 9 Secure and PreACT Secure. Stakeholders and the Governor have made it clear that growth, while not required in ninth through 11th grades, is very important and should be included in the accountability system.

### A. Advanced Mathematics Coursework

**Does the state: 1) administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students in order to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA; and 2) use the exception for students in eighth grade to take such assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA?**

Yes. If yes, describe the SEA's strategies to provide all students in the state the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school consistent with section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.5(b)(4).

No.

ISBE will not utilize the eighth grade math exception. ISBE actively supports the implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards in mathematics in a manner that responds to students' areas of strength and builds educator capacity to effectively differentiate instruction for students.

### B. Languages other than English

**Describe how the SEA is complying with the requirements in section 1111(b)(2)(F) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f) in languages other than English.**

- i. **Provide the SEA's definition for "languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population," consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4), and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.**

ISBE defines languages other than English, present to a significant extent in Illinois' student population, as any world language spoken by more than 60 percent of English Learners in the state. While Spanish is the only language that currently meets the definition, ISBE provides translation of directions and reporting shells in the top 10 identified languages each year. In the 2024-2025 school year, these supports were provided in the following languages: Spanish, Arabic, French, Gujarati, Polish, Russian, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

ii. **Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.**

The only language that is currently being trans-adapted is Spanish for the 3-8 assessment in mathematics and grades 5 and 8 assessments of science.

iii. **Indicate the languages other than English identified in B.i. above for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.**

The mathematics assessment at 3-8 and the science assessment at 5 and 8 have been trans-adapted for Spanish; however, additional development and validation is necessary in all other areas and for other languages. Illinois will, to the greatest extent practicable, work to develop translations for all languages where 30 percent or more of the English Learner population speaks the same language other than English.

iv. **Native Language Assessments: Describe how the SEA will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population by providing:**

1. **The state's plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4);**

support this work. It is anticipated that we will continue to offer a trans-adapted version of mathematics and science for the 3-8 general education assessment and that we will seek to extend this opportunity to other content areas and assessments.<sup>34</sup> The goal is to provide translations for all languages where 30 percent or more of the English Learner population speaks the same world language<sup>35</sup>, other than English. However, Illinois' capacity to do this work will depend on a sufficient allocation from both federal and state sources to conduct the translations and validate the work.

2. **A description of the process the state used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English Learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and**

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<sup>34</sup> Stakeholders have requested native language assessments for IAR language arts for at least the Spanish speaking subgroup which takes into account 78% of all ELs in Illinois.

<sup>35</sup> Information on the number and percentage of students that speak each language can be found in the [English Learners in Illinois Statistical Reports](#). Information on the other accommodations and supports available for English Learners is test-specific and can be found in the Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manuals for the [Illinois Assessment of Readiness](#), [Illinois Science Assessment](#), [ACT suite of assessments](#), and [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternative Assessment](#).

ISBE's strategy to ensure that opportunities for meaningful consultation with stakeholders was formulated in three ways. First, ISBE provided information to the public to ensure that stakeholders had sufficient information about ESSA in order to provide meaningful feedback via the listening tours. ISBE maintained and updated an ESSA website throughout the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois to publicly post the timeline, resources, and additional information, including the draft plan. Second, key policymakers, including members of the Illinois General Assembly, ISBE, the P-20 Council, Illinois Balanced Accountability Measures Committee (IBAMC), and other stakeholder groups, met regularly and were informed of the progress of the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. These groups, in particular the P-20 Council and IBAMC, were integral in providing feedback and guidance in the development of all phases of the plan. Finally, the draft plan has been presented to many stakeholder groups through a wide array of venues prior to ISBE Board approval with sufficient time to consider relevant comments. Please see Appendix B for the list of all stakeholder meetings related to ESSA.

ISBE included information in all three phases on specific provisions related to English Learners and assessments in languages other than English and solicited comments from and consulted with stakeholders representing constituencies serving bilingual committees. The Latino Policy Forum and Bilingual Advisory Council, among others, have been deeply involved in the work of the P-20 Council and IBAMC and have contributed to the development of the plan.

**3. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the state has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.**

ISBE is committed to developing native language content areas exams. However, funding has been a barrier to completing any additional development of native language or content translations. Ongoing fiscal uncertainty has made it difficult to identify stable funding sources for the development of native language or content translations.

## Section 4: Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools

*Instructions: Each SEA must describe its accountability, support, and improvement system consistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 200.12-200.24 and section 1111(c) and (d) of the ESEA. Each SEA may include documentation (e.g., technical reports or supporting evidence) that demonstrates compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.*

### 4.1 Accountability System

School accountability in ESSA requires that a state consider more than academic achievement in grades 3 through 12. Also, while ESSA requires that the accountability system of a state include academic proficiency, it also requires the following:

- Academic growth (Grades 3 through 8);
- Graduation rate (High School);
- EL proficiency (Grades 3 through 12); and
- One or more student quality or student success indicator.

Together, these elements ensure that accountability systems reflect not only how well students perform academically but also how effectively schools support overall student development and long-term outcomes.

Illinois' original accountability system was a multi-measure, weighted index focused on identifying the schools and student groups most urgently in need of support. The system did so effectively but created problems of practice:

1. The system was based on rank, with the top tier arbitrarily limited to 10% of schools.
2. Performance expectations were a moving target. No one could specify what performance would qualify a school for a particular designation.
3. The Commendable band was overly large, hiding important difference in performance.
4. The system gave the impression that school improvement was something only necessary or expected for schools with Targeted or Comprehensive designations.
5. The system was overly complex, making it difficult for practitioners to understand, explain, or use to drive school improvement.

ISBE embarked on a two-year long process to redesign its accountability system. The first task was to identify aspects of the system that were working and not working for various stakeholders. Three working aspects identified were the:

- inclusion of growth as an indicator.
- compensatory nature of the different indicators, and how that allowed a school's strengths to compensate for areas in need of support and improvement.
- "schoolhouse" data visualization of the indicators and how they contributed to a school's designation.

Feedback on the aspects not working confirmed the problems of practice identified but also brought to light the role that the chronic absenteeism and English Learner Progress (ELP) indicators played in a school's final designation, and the way the performance of the high school system differed from that of the K-8 system. ISBE also heard feedback on aspects of the system that could not be changed, such as the requirement to identify a lowest performing five percent, the requirement to identify schools that have student groups whose performance is on par with that of the lowest performing five percent of schools, and the inability to set performance expectations that differ by student group. Thus, the objective of the redesign was to develop a system that addressed the identified problems of practice in ways that recognize school strengths and support improvement in every school.

### A. Weighting

The new accountability model is a profile of performance that combines core indicators of proficiency, growth, and graduation rate with elevating indicators English Learner progress (ELP), consistent attendance, and climate survey.

The designation first considers core performance, then the influence of elevating indicators, and finally the performance of individual student groups to arrive at the final designation.

Each indicator has five performance levels as defined in Section 4.1.F. Annual Meaningful Differentiation, with graduation rate, proficiency and growth having performance thresholds that automatically identify a school as Comprehensive.

The required academic indicators carry more weight than the state-selected School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicators by virtue of their role as core indicators in the case of proficiency, growth, and graduation rate. There are also a total of four academic indicators, and only two state-selected indicators, consistent attendance and climate survey.

Indicator	Role in System	Federal Classification
Proficiency <sup>36</sup>	Core	Academic
Growth	Core	Academic
Graduation Rate	Core	Academic
English Learner Progress	Elevating	Academic
Consistent Attendance	Elevating	School Quality and Student Success
Climate Survey	Elevating	School Quality and Student Success

### B. Indicators

i. **Describe the measure(s) included in each of the academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rate, progress in achieving English language proficiency, and school quality or student success indicators and how those measures meet the requirements described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(a)-(b) and section 1111(c)(4)(B) of the ESEA.**

- The description for each indicator should include how it is valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the state, as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(c).
- To meet the requirements described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(d), for the measures included within the indicators of academic progress and school quality or student success measures, the description must also address how each measure within the indicators is supported by research that high performance or improvement on such measure is likely to increase student learning (e.g., grade point average, credit accumulation, performance in advanced coursework).
- For measures within indicators of school quality or student success that are unique to high school, the description must address how research shows that high performance or improvement on the indicator is likely to increase graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, persistence, completion, or career readiness.
- To meet the requirement in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(e), the descriptions for the academic progress and school quality or student success indicators must include a demonstration of how each measure aids in the

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<sup>36</sup> ELA, math, and science are combined into a composite. ELA and math proficiency are academic indicators. ED however, considers science proficiency within Illinois’ system a school quality and student success indicator.

meaningful differentiation of schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18 by demonstrating varied results across schools in the state.

The following is a brief description of each indicator, the research that supports it, and how ISBE will continually verify that the indicator aids in meaningful differentiation of schools. Full business rules for the calculation of each indicator are published annually on the Report Card Metrics page at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Report-Card-Metrics.aspx>. Please refer to the business rules for the most accurate description of how each indicator is calculated and scored.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR – ELA & math) (3-8)  Illinois Science Assessment (ISA - science) (5, 8)  ACT Suite of Assessments (ELA, math & science) (9-11 <sup>36</sup> )  Dynamic Learning Maps- Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA – ELA, math & science) (3-11 <sup>36</sup> )	<p><b>Description:</b> The measures of academic achievement-for grades 3-8 will be the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) and Illinois Science Assessment (ISA). The measure of academic achievement for high school will be the ACT suite of assessments, including the PreACT 9 Secure at grade 9, PreACT Secure at grade 10, and the ACT with Writing and Science administered in grade 11. Additionally, the DLM-AA will be the measure of academic achievement for students with profound cognitive disabilities. This rate of proficiency will be a composite of ELA, math, and science defined as the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding standards on the required applicable assessments for each subject in each of the assessed grades served by the school. The annual measure of achievement will be calculated based upon the greater of the number of students assessed or 95 percent of those who should have been.</p> <p><b>Definition:</b> Proficiency is the percentage of students who meet proficiency criteria on the state’s ELA, math, and science accountability assessments, as unweighted student-level composite. ELA and math are inclusive of all grades 3-11,<sup>37</sup> and science results from grades 5, 8 and 11 are included in accountability calculations.<sup>38</sup> The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to assess their learning standards for ELA and math annually in Grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, and these assessments and grades included in the composite meet the requirements. Each state may also have a general assessment for the majority of its students and an alternate assessment for the 1 percent of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The subject proficiency rate is calculated by combining all tests for all subjects and grades served.</p>

<sup>37</sup> To ensure all students are included in state accountability assessments, Illinois annually rosters a very small number of grade 12 students who failed to test in grade 11, but grade 12 is not considered an academically assessed grade for purposes of accountability.

<sup>38</sup> Due to the embedded nature of science in the ACT suite of assessments, science is administered at grades 9 and 10, but these grades are not included in accountability calculations for two reasons. First, 105 ILCS 5/27-605 requires only two years of “laboratory science,” and the content of those two year is unspecified. Second, state course code usage reflects a biology-chemistry-physics orientation, while the assessments are aligned to [Illinois Next Generation Science Standards](#), with their four disciplinary core idea domains, so it is difficult to determine precisely which content areas students have had an opportunity to learn.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
		<p><b>Indicator Formula:</b>  <math display="block">\left[ \frac{\text{Students proficient in ELA} + \text{Students proficient in math} + \text{Students proficient in science}}{\text{Students assessed* in ELA} + \text{Students assessed* in math} + \text{Students assessed* in science}} \right] \times 100.</math></p> <p>*Or 95% of those who should have, whichever is larger.</p> <p><b>Research:</b>                      IAR is a custom assessment with its own blueprint, with items built to the specifications of the PARCC assessment. It was designed to provide comparable results to ensure longitudinal trends, one of the few assessments to receive full approval. The technical reports for IAR document the evidence for its validity, reliability, and comparability.<sup>39</sup></p> <p>ISA is a custom assessment administered in an online format and is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards for Science incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which were adopted in 2014. The technical reports for ISA document the evidence for its validity, reliability, and comparability.<sup>40</sup></p> <p>ACT: ACT sustains a continuous program of research on the ACT suite of assessments, examining the validity, fairness, and effectiveness of the test nationally. Extensive research on the predictive validity of the ACT has established its use as a college entrance exam through studies on the relationship between ACT scores and performance in college. ACT has also studied the predictive validity of ACT scores post COVID, career choice, post-secondary persistence, and research into equity influences on performance outcomes.<sup>41</sup></p> <p>DLM-AA: The DLM consortium has sustained a research agenda based on the validity, reliability, and technical soundness of the DLM-AA as an appropriate large-scale assessment for students with the most profound cognitive disabilities.<sup>42 43</sup></p>

<sup>39</sup> For research on IAR, please access <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/New-Meridian-Tech-Rpt-2019.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> For research on ISA, please access <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Illinois-Science-Assessment.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> For research on ACT, please access <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/reports/act-publications.html>

<sup>42</sup> For research on DLM, please access [http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/publication/Validity\\_Evidence\\_AA\\_Score\\_Uses\\_NCME2016\\_Karvon\\_Romine\\_Clark.pdf](http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/publication/Validity_Evidence_AA_Score_Uses_NCME2016_Karvon_Romine_Clark.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> For research on the validity and reliability of DLM, please access [http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/publication/Technical\\_Manual\\_IM\\_2014-15.pdf](http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/publication/Technical_Manual_IM_2014-15.pdf).

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
		<p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> Academic achievement has been the historical method for differentiation of schools. In the past, academic achievement was the only indicator used to meaningfully differentiate schools in Illinois. ISBE will continue to convene a TAC to annually evaluate the extent to which indicators are performing as intended. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.<sup>44</sup></p>
<p><b>ACADEMIC PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Student Growth Percentile (SGP – ELA &amp; math) (4-8, 9-11)</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> ISBE uses a cohort-referenced SGP to compute student academic growth at the final recommendation of the TAC. Beginning in 2022, Illinois began calculating both a cohort-referenced and a baseline-referenced SGP that used 2019 as the baseline year-for students in grades 4-8. Beginning in 2025, Illinois began calculating a cohort-referenced SGP for students in grades 9-11 and will begin calculating a baseline-referenced SGP for these grades in 2027 using 2025 as the baseline year.</p> <p>For both grade spans, the cohort-referenced SGP is the default SGP used to determine the growth indicator performance level. However, in years where the state mean baseline-referenced SGP for a given grade span is higher than the state mean cohort-SGP, the baseline-referenced SGP will be used for that grade span to determine the growth indicator performance level. Such decisions will be made independently by subject and grade span but consistently for all schools serving grades in that band.</p> <p><b>Definition:</b>                      Student growth percentile (SGP) is a measure of student growth that compares a student’s performance over time to that of their academic peers (e.g., students in Illinois who have the same scale score in the prior year). It includes the current year score and up to two prior years’ scores allowing the growth percentile calculation to represent a true growth trend and not just movement up and down from year to year. Individual student growth percentiles range from 1 to 99. A score of 50 represents average or expected growth each year. These scores are averaged to create a school or student group mean student growth percentile (MSGP). The methodology to calculate a cohort-referenced SGP and a baseline-referenced SGP are the same. The differences come from anchoring the academic year the comparison group students are from to a single baseline year (e.g., 2019).</p>

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<sup>44</sup> A Technical Advisory Council (TAC) provides guidance on technical assessment and accountability issues. TAC members help ensure alignment of the accountability system to core values and assure the statistical validity and reliability, accuracy, and fairness of individual assessments or indicators and the accountability system as a whole. The TAC is convened in collaboration with the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment and composed of national and local researchers and other practitioners, particularly those practitioners who specialize in assessment and school accountability research and data analysis for Illinois school districts.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
		<p><b>Indicator Formula:</b>                      The sum of all ELA SGPs and math SGPs, divided by the count of all ELA SPGs plus the count of all math SGPs. Otherwise expressed as:</p> $\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{ELA}} SGP_i^{ELA} + \sum_{j=1}^{n_{MAT}} SGP_j^{MAT}}{n_{ELA} + n_{MAT}}$ <p><b>Research:</b> Illinois utilized the following resources on the appropriateness of various growth models for the purposes of accountability: The Practitioner’s Guide to Growth Models<sup>45</sup> and Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act.<sup>46</sup> These resources are grounded in research<sup>47</sup> and evaluation<sup>48</sup> on past implementation of growth models as a part of accountability under NCLB. Additional research was done and presented to the TAC on the validity and reliability of an SGP calculated for grades 9-11 using the ACT suite of assessments.<sup>49</sup></p> <p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> ISBE will continue to convene a TAC to annually evaluate the extent to which indicators are performing as intended. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.</p>

<sup>45</sup> This document can be accessed at: [www.ccsso.org/documents/2013growthmodels.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/documents/2013growthmodels.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Pathways\\_New-Accountability\\_Through\\_Every\\_Student\\_Succeeds\\_Act\\_04202016.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Pathways_New-Accountability_Through_Every_Student_Succeeds_Act_04202016.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Beimers, Jennifer Nicole. The effects of model choice and subgroup on decisions in accountability systems based on student growth. ProQuest, 2008.

Council of Chief State School Officers. Understanding and Using Achievement Growth Data. Growth Model Brochure Series. (June 2011): [http://www.wera-web.org/links/Journal/June\\_Journal\\_2012/CC6\\_CCSSO\\_Growth\\_Brochures\\_jan2012.pdf](http://www.wera-web.org/links/Journal/June_Journal_2012/CC6_CCSSO_Growth_Brochures_jan2012.pdf)

Tekwe, Carmen D., Randy L. Carter, Chang-Xing Ma, James Algina, Maurice E. Lucas, Jeffrey Roth, Mario Ariet, Thomas Fisher, and Michael B. Resnick. 2004. "An Empirical Comparison of Statistical Models for Value-Added Assessment of School Performance." Journal Of Educational And Behavioral Statistics 29, no. 1: 11-36. ERIC, EBSCOhost (accessed March 9, 2017).

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Evaluation of the 2005–06 Growth Model Pilot Program. (January 2009):

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/gmeval0109.doc>.

<sup>49</sup> Betebenner, D., & VanIwaarden, A. (2025, June 17). *Illinois high school SGP calculation: Implications of the transition from SAT to ACT* [TAC presentation]. Center for Assessment.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
<b>GRADUATION RATE</b>	4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate  5-year adjusted cohort graduation rate  6-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.	<p><b>Description:</b> ISBE collects data regarding the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and 5- and 6-year adjusted graduation rates. The Graduation Rate indicator will be the combined measure of the four-year cohort data that will make up 30% of the indicator’s weight, the 5-year cohort that will account for 15% of the indicator, and the 6-year cohort that will account for the remaining 5% of the accountability indicator.</p> <p><b>Definition:</b> The 4-, 5-, and 6-year Composite Graduation Rate is a combination of those years’ Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate. Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate is the rate of graduates compared to the total number of students in their 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year cohort for schools and student demographic groups. Graduation Rate is calculated based on ESSA High School Graduation Rate guidance. Students are reported at the home school of last enrollment. The cohort is based on the number of students who enter Grade 9 for the first time, adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during Grade 9 or during the next three years and subtracting any student from the cohort who transfers out, emigrates to another country, transfers to a prison or juvenile facility, or dies during that same period.</p> <p><b>Indicator Formula:</b>  <math display="block">[(\text{Cohort\_Year\_4} \times .60) + (\text{Cohort\_Year\_5} \times .30) + (\text{Cohort\_Year\_6} \times .1)] \times 100</math></p> <p><b>Research:</b> This data is stable and collected consistently across all LEAs serving high school grades, as can be seen in the School Report Card: 15-Year Statewide Trend Data.<sup>50</sup> The definition and criteria for high school graduation are set in School Code,<sup>51</sup> and the data collected statewide is valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the state, as evidenced in the Illinois State Report Card.</p> <p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> Graduation rate is a required metric of student achievement. The maximum high school adjusted cohort graduation rate is 100%. The all-students graduation rate in 2016 is 85.5% for 4-year, 87.7% for 5-year, and 88.2% for 6-year adjusted rates. ISBE will continue to convene a TAC to annually evaluate the extent to which indicators are performing as intended. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.</p>

<sup>50</sup> Information retrieved from: [https://www.isbe.net/\\_layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=/Documents/rc-trend-data-02-16.xlsx](https://www.isbe.net/_layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=/Documents/rc-trend-data-02-16.xlsx)

<sup>51</sup> For required high school graduation criteria, please see the Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27-22, 27-22.05, 27-22.10

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b></p>	<p>Composite proficiency level of 4.8 on ACCESS 2.0</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> The Illinois Administrative Code<sup>52</sup> identifies the state’s English Language Development Standards as those developed by the WIDA Consortium<sup>53</sup> and the state’s English Language Proficiency Assessment as the ACCESS 2.0.</p> <p><b>Definition:</b> English Learner Progress (ELP) is a measure of the extent to which a multilingual student is on track to reach proficiency within five years. ELP-incorporates both the starting point (grade and level of proficiency) of the student and their unique annual progress. All students have both a static timeline target and a revised annual target, and progress is measured using the smaller of the two targets while within their five-year timeline. If a student has not yet reached proficiency at the conclusion of their timeline, the target becomes the difference from where they are (their most recent scale score) to where they need to be (proficiency scale score equivalent in the applicable grade).</p> <p><b>Indicator Formula:</b> Calculate the following for all EL students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Timeline Target</b> (Applicable if student is within their five-year timeline.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (Proficiency Grade Scale Score – Initial Score) / 5</li> <li>○ Identify expected grade of proficiency (Baseline grade + 5)</li> <li>○ Find composite scale score equal to 4.8 proficiency level at that grade</li> <li>○ Does not change for five years</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Revised Target</b> (Applicable if student is within their five-year timeline, calculated annually beginning in the year after a student’s baseline year. Note: The timeline target and the revised target will be the same in the year after a student’s baseline year.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (Proficiency Grade Scale Score – Prior Scale Score) / Years left to grow</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Past Timeline Target</b> (Applicable if student is past their five-year timeline.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (Proficiency Grade Scale Score – Prior Scale Score)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Student ELP:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <math>[(\text{Current\_Scale\_Score} - \text{Prior\_Scale\_Score}) \div \text{Applicable Gain Target}] \times 100</math> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Max ELP value is 100</li> <li>▪ Min ELP value is 0</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Always use the smaller of the Revised or Timeline Target as Gain Target unless student has 0 years left to grow; then use the Past Timeline Target.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>School or Group ELP:</b></li> </ul>

<sup>52</sup> To see the English Language Development Standards, please see 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228 [Subtitle A, 228.10. Definitions](#)

<sup>53</sup> WIDA Consortium. "Amplification of the English language development standards, kindergarten-grade 12." Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, Madison, WI Google Scholar (2012).

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	MEASURE(S)	DESCRIPTION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sum of all associated ELP values ÷ Number of Students</li> </ul> <p><b>Research:</b> The adherence of WIDA ACCESS to the English Language Development Standards is documented by Cook (2007).<sup>54</sup> The technical properties of the ACCESS for ELs, including its validity, reliability, and operational performance, are published in annually updated reports by WIDA.<sup>55</sup></p> <p>Pending data and research that WIDA will provide after their standard setting for the Alternate ACCESS in 2024, ISBE will set a new reclassification criteria for those EL students who qualify to take the Alternate ACCESS test. Similarly, pending data and research that WIDA will provide after their standard setting for the ACCESS test in 2026, ISBE will set new reclassification criteria for all English Learners.</p> <p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> ISBE will continue to convene a TAC to annually evaluate the extent to which indicators are performing as intended. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.</p>

SCHOOL QUALITY/STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATORS	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Consistent Attendance</b> (K-12)</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> Consistent attendance is the percentage of students who have been present for at least 90% of the school year. Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/26-18) defines chronic absence as “absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause, as defined in Section 26-2a of this Code, and out-of-school suspensions for an enrolled student. ‘Student’ means any enrolled student that is subject to compulsory attendance under Section 26-1 of this Code but does not mean a student for whom a documented homebound or hospital record is on file during the student’s absence from school.”<sup>56</sup></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> Consistent attendance rate is the percentage of students who are identified as consistently present. Medically homebound and hospitalized students are excluded from this calculation. A student is “consistently present” if they were present for 90 percent or more of the school year.</p> <p>The combined total number of “days absent – unexcused” and “days absent – excused” per student is subtracted from the student’s length of enrollment and then</p>

<sup>54</sup> Cook, H. Gary. “Alignment Study Report: The WIDA Consortium’s English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12 to ACCESS for ELLs® Assessment.” Madison, WI: WIDA Consortium (2007).

<sup>55</sup> Center for Applied Linguistics (2016). “Annual Technical Report for ACCESS for ELLs® English Language Proficiency Test, Series 303, 2014–2015 Administration.” *WIDA Consortium Annual Technical Report No. 11* (2016).

<sup>56</sup>“Chronic absenteeism report and support,” P.A. 100-156, 100<sup>th</sup> Illinois General Assembly. (2018)

SCHOOL QUALITY/STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATORS	DESCRIPTION
	<p>divided by that student’s length of enrollment.</p> <p>The length of enrollment is calculated by counting the number of “days present” + “ELearning” + “Remote Learning” + “Blended Remote Learning” + “days absent – unexcused” + “days absent – excused” + “medically homebound.” Days hospitalized are excluded by how state law defines students.</p> <p>If the length of enrollment minus the sum of absences divided by the length of enrollment is greater than or equal to 0.9, then the student is considered consistently present.</p> <p><b>Indicator Formula:</b> Percent Consistent Attendance is (Consistently Present Students ÷ Total Students) * 100</p> <p><b>Research:</b> Illinois currently collects attendance.<sup>57</sup> This data is stable and collected consistently across all LEAs serving high school grades, as can be seen in the School Report Card: 15-Year Statewide Trend Data.<sup>58</sup></p> <p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> ISBE will continue to convene a TAC to annually evaluate the extent to which indicators are performing as intended and make amendments as additional data is available. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.</p>
CLIMATE SURVEY (5ESSENTIALS)	<p><b>Description:</b> In order to capture student (4-12), parent, teacher, and administration voice, ISBE will utilize the 5Essentials Survey or an approved alternate survey.<sup>59</sup></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> Climate Survey is a survey taken by all Grade PK-12 teachers and all Grade 4-12 students as required by the ESSA State Plan. The State Board of Education shall administer a Climate Survey, identified by and paid for by the State Board of Education, to provide feedback from, at a minimum, students in Grades 4 through 12 and teachers on the instructional environment within a school, according to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.153. In addition, the state superintendent must administer an approval process</p>

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of Education. “Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation’s Schools. An Unprecedented Look at an Educational Crisis.” (2016): <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Center, Utah Education Policy. "Research brief: Chronic absenteeism." Research Brief, University of Utah, College of Education (2012).

<sup>59</sup> Further, IBAMC unanimously supported the development of a suite of surveys that meet both statutory and regulatory requirements to collect required data. Also, The Early Learning Council recommends, and ISBE agrees, that the use of climate survey in the early grades warrants further consideration of how information gleaned from a climate survey is most appropriately used within the boundaries of ESSA.

SCHOOL QUALITY/STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATORS	DESCRIPTION
	<p>in consultation with teachers, principals, superintendents, and other appropriate stakeholders, to approve at least two (and not more than three) alternate survey of learning condition instruments that districts may elect to use in lieu of the state-adopted climate survey. Climate Survey Student Response Rate is the total number of individual students responding to the Climate Survey, divided by the total number of eligible students. Students are eligible to participate if they are enrolled in a school and are cognitively able to participate in the survey.</p> <p><b>Indicator Formula:</b>  <math>(\text{Number Participated} \div \text{Total Students Rostered}^{60}) \times 100</math></p> <p><b>Research:</b> There is evidence that school culture and climate has an impact on student achievement.<sup>61</sup> Illinois currently requires districts to use the 5Essentials Survey or an alternate survey selected from a list approved by the State Superintendent. ISBE will ensure that our school climate surveys meet the standards set forth in ESEA statutory requirements and are valid, reliable, comparable, used statewide in all schools on an annual basis, and can be disaggregated by student demographic groups.</p> <p><b>Aids in Meaningful Differentiation of Schools:</b> Support for climate and culture as a metric came from many stakeholders and was not exclusive to the 5Essentials Survey, as the requirement for state-approved alternate surveys is protected in <a href="#">105 ILCS 5/2-3.153(b)-(c)</a>. See also <a href="#">23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.97(g)</a>. The culture and climate indicator has proven useful in supporting meaningful differentiation of schools. 5Essentials was first administered in the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally, in all years a small number of districts use approved alternate surveys. For this reason, the focus of the metric is on the student participation rate. Student participation rate is collected and calculated consistently statewide annually in all grades 4-12. This indicator meets all requirements for ESSA indicators and will be disaggregated for all required student groups.</p> <p>Evidence presented at our most recent TAC meeting<sup>62</sup> shows that the climate survey indicator accounts for a degree of differentiation<sup>63</sup> with a semi-partial correlation range at the elementary level from 0.05 to 0.08 (i.e., five to eight percent) and at the high school from 0.07 to 0.09. While the range of student participation rates is wider at the high school level than the elementary and middle school level, in both grade bands there is a distinct positive relationship between designation and climate survey</p>

<sup>60</sup> Students are rostered at their public serving school. Students who are cognitively or linguistically unable to access the survey and have a corresponding valid IEP or EL record may be coded thusly and excluded from the calculation.

<sup>61</sup> Bryk, Anthony S., Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, John Q. Easton, and Stuart Luppescu. Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Technical Advisory Committee Meeting. January 22, 2025. Agenda Item 3. Accountability Review. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/AccountabilityTechnicalAdvisoryCommittee.aspx>

<sup>63</sup> Semi-partial correlations measure the unique contribution of independent variable to a dependent variable, after accounting for the effectiveness of other independent variables.

SCHOOL QUALITY/STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATORS	DESCRIPTION
	participation rates, meaning that schools with lower designations are likely to have lower climate survey participation rates. Discussions with schools during scheduled accountability data reviews suggest that climate survey participation is functioning as a proxy measure for the degree to which effective organization and management systems and structures are in place. For example, in schools and districts that are well organized, reaching high levels of participation is achievable through clear administration processes with defined roles and responsibilities that include tracking participation and offering make-up opportunities. In schools and districts with less effective systems and structures, participation rates are lower. Please see Section 4.1(F) for data on the five performance levels associated with this indicator.

ISBE’s accountability system will assign the Academic Achievement and School Quality and Student Success Indicator weights as noted in Section 4.1A.

In considering which state-selected indicators to retain in the profiles of performance accountability model, ISBE elected to retain those that fully met the five criteria for SQSS indicators in ESSA, namely, that the indicator:

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

Ultimately, these criteria impacted the college and career readiness indicator, which was determined not to be validly measuring the construct it was intended to measure.<sup>64</sup> The elementary-middle indicator was found to be neither consistent within a grade span nor comparable statewide due to the diverse range of school and district configurations in Illinois. The P-2 indicator and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade on Track indicators were both removed because they were redundant. The only contributing element of the P-2 indicator was chronic absenteeism, which was and is still measured through consistent attendance in the new system. When debating the inclusion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade on Track metric, advocates point to the deep research base supporting the extent to which rates of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade on Track are predictive of persistence to graduation. It is an excellent leading indicator. However, precisely because of that strong correlation and predictive validity, it replicates performance on the graduation rate indicator, which makes it redundant to the required indicator. The fine arts indicator met all other indicator requirements but had such a narrow and skewed band of performance that it did not allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance. Additional information can be found in Appendix C.

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<sup>64</sup> The college and career readiness indicator was intended to measure the many ways student demonstrated college and career readiness other than academic proficiency. As such, if the measure were valid, it would have rates of readiness higher than state rates of academic proficiency. However, as defined, the indicator consistently displayed rates less than half that of state proficiency rates.

### **All Schools Engaged in Continuous School Improvement, Regardless of Designation**

Illinois' previous accountability system was effective at identifying those schools most urgently in need of support, however, in doing so, it was incorrectly signaling that school improvement was not necessary for all other districts and schools. The proposed system is designed to support school improvement in every school. The most effective schools continuously engage in iterative cycles of inquiry wherein data is used to identify areas of need and plan interventions that are implemented and monitored regularly so that district and school leaders can intentionally examine and reflect on the impact of their efforts.

Central to the redesign are clear, objective criteria that define each performance level, a simplified structure that makes the system easier to understand, and enhanced customized reporting to support the inquiry process. The profile of performance model shows strengths and areas for growth side by side, providing a richer picture of how schools serve their students. It sets clear expectations that all schools can use to set goals, track progress, and inform strategic alignment of resources and effort.

The redesign of the accountability system does not change ISBE's position that all students must achieve at the highest levels possible. A school's profile of performance will highlight areas in which one or more student groups subgroups may be excelling as well as identify equity gaps between those groups that are excelling and those that are not. ISBE is committed to continuing to identify those schools most urgently in need of support for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and those schools with student groups whose profile of performance are Comprehensive for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and providing these schools with a framework, resources, and guidance to improve student outcomes. Schools with a Comprehensive profile of performance, which will identify, at minimum, the lowest-performing 5 percent of Title I schools statewide and any high school that has a graduation rate below 66.67 percent and will be placed in CSI status.<sup>65</sup> Schools in which one or more subgroups are performing at or below the level of the "all students" group in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools are identified for TSI status.<sup>66</sup> Schools in both these categories are required to receive support in order to improve student performance. Schools identified for intensive or comprehensive support-must use a learning partner and have a school improvement plan with targets and timelines approved by ISBE. Schools identified for targeted support must develop a plan that is approved by their district and *may* use a learning partner. All schools, regardless of school improvement status, can access supports through the School/District Improvement department.

### **C. Meaningful Differentiation of Schools**

ISBE will use a system with five tiers consistent with its five performance levels to meaningfully differentiate schools. These five levels are:

- Exemplary
- Approaching Exemplary
- Commendable
- Developing
- Comprehensive

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<sup>65</sup> A school that has completed a full Comprehensive Support school improvement cycle, but whose performance remains in the lowest-performing 5 percent of Title I eligible schools in Illinois or is a high school that has a graduation rate of less than 67 percent or less at the end of the four-year improvement cycle, will retain the Comprehensive profile and designation but will be placed in Intensive School Improvement (ISI) status and be subject to the more rigorous state-determined action identified in Section 4.3.C.

<sup>66</sup> Those schools that receive targeted services but that are unable to increase academic achievement/growth within a four-year period of time would then be identified as a chronically underperforming subgroup and required to receive comprehensive services (e.g., placed in ATSI status).

A school's profile of performance is composed of three elements:

1. Core performance +
2. Elevating performance +
3. Student group performance profiles

### **Core Performance**

Each core indicator will have a performance level. Broadly, the indicator with the strongest performance level defines core performance. There are three exceptions to this principle.

- The first pertains to high schools, which have the graduation rate core indicator in addition to proficiency and growth. Exemplary core performance for a high school can be achieved either by having proficiency or growth in the Exemplary performance level, or by pairing Exemplary performance on the graduation rate indicator with Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary performance on either proficiency, growth, or both. If graduation rates are Exemplary but neither proficiency nor growth are Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary, the graduation rate indicator is treated as Approaching Exemplary for the purposes of determining core performance.
- The second exception is when one or more of the core indicators is in the Comprehensive performance range. In these cases, core performance is one level below the strongest core indicator.
- Last, if the "all students" group's performance falls in the applicable ranges noted as Automatic Comprehensive, the school's profile of performance is Comprehensive. The Automatic Comprehensive ranges of the proficiency and growth indicators apply to elementary and middle schools, while the Automatic Comprehensive performance range of the graduation rate indicator applies to high schools.

Automatic Comprehensive performance ranges apply only to the "all students" group.

If at any time less than five percent of Title I-eligible schools are identified using the performance criteria associated with the Comprehensive performance level, the following adjustments to the Comprehensive performance level thresholds will occur, in order of priority:

- For high schools:
  - The proficiency indicator Automatic Comprehensive range will be applied to high schools.
  - The growth indicator Automatic Comprehensive range will be applied to high schools.
  - The Comprehensive performance threshold of the graduation rate indicator will be raised such that a minimum of 5% of high schools are identified as Comprehensive.
  - If the graduation rate indicator needs to be raised to 75% or higher in order to identify at least 5% of high schools, the Comprehensive performance threshold of the proficiency indicator will be raised such that a minimum of 5% of schools are identified as Comprehensive. Note, such automatic raises will apply only to the grade band that fails to identify at least 5% of schools using the published criteria.
- For elementary and middle schools:
  - The Comprehensive performance threshold of the proficiency indicator will be raised such that a minimum of 5% of schools are identified as Comprehensive. Note, such automatic raises will apply only to the grade band that fails to identify at least five percent of schools using the published criteria.

Every three years, as required in ESSA, ISBE will evaluate if adjustments are needed to the thresholds of the Comprehensive or Automatic Comprehensive performance levels to maintain the requirement to identify for each

grade band (K-8 and 9-12) a minimum of five percent of Title I-eligible schools with Comprehensive profiles of performance.

### **Elevating Performance**

Next the performance on elevating indicators is factored into the designation.

A school whose “all students” core performance is Exemplary moves directly on to consideration of student group profiles of performance.

A school whose “all students” core performance is Approaching Exemplary or Commendable can be elevated one level if it has two elevating indicators (of two or three) in the Exemplary performance range for those indicators. Schools with only one elevating indicator may elevate if their one elevating indicator is in the Exemplary performance range for that indicator.

A school whose “all students” core performance is Developing or Comprehensive can be elevated one performance level with either two elevating indicators in the Exemplary performance range, or one indicator in the Exemplary range and another in the Approaching Exemplary performance range. Schools with only one elevating indicator and core performance in the Developing or Comprehensive ranges can elevate one level if that indicator is either in the Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary performance range.

A school whose “all students” group has one or more indicators in an applicable Automatic Comprehensive range has a Comprehensive profile of performance, regardless of performance on the elevating indicators.

### **Student Group Performance Profiles**

A school cannot be considered to have an Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary profile of performance if one or more student demographic groups has a Comprehensive profile of performance. A school whose performance would otherwise be Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary would instead have a Commendable profile of performance.

Each student demographic group that meets the criteria specified in sections 4.1.D. and 4.1.E. will receive its own profile of performance, using the same five performance levels and defined indicator performance ranges applicable to the “all students” group. The Automatic Comprehensive performance criteria will not apply to student demographic groups.

Student demographic groups with Exemplary core performance have an Exemplary profile of performance.

Student demographic groups whose core performance is Approaching Exemplary, Commendable, Developing, or Comprehensive may be elevated by the performance of the elevating indicators as described for the “all students” group.

Student demographic groups do not factor the performance profiles of other student groups in their profile, so their performance profile is complete after considering core performance and elevating performance.

### **Supporting Continuous Improvement for All Schools**

The three elements that define the profile of performance — core performance, elevating performance, and student group performance profiles — result in the five performance profiles. However, within each profile there are some common patterns of performance that will form the foundation of the custom school profile report each district and school will receive to support their continuous improvement. This includes noting whether the profile was fulfilled through core performance alone or if it was elevated, as well as whether or not there is a student demographic group with a Comprehensive or Developing performance profile. This will allow schools and

districts an even more granular analysis of their data, as the supports and goals for an Exemplary school with strong core performance are different than an Exemplary school that also had one Comprehensive core indicator that was then elevated back to Exemplary through strong elevating indicator performance.

**School-based expenditure reporting:**

Parents and other stakeholders have access to school-based expenditure information as required by Section 1111(h)(C)(1) of ESSA. Prior to implementation, ISBE in consultation with LEAs:

- Finalized the collection tool for reporting local, state, and federal fiscal data
- Amended the Rules (6-month process)
- Trained district staff
- Had districts set up their accounts on a school level basis
- Collected the FY 2018 financial data on a school level basis by February 2019 (as per statute)

ISBE believes the reporting of financial data is a critical component of the accountability system and in providing equity information to parents and communities.

**D. Subgroups**

i. **List the subgroups of students from each major and racial ethnic group in the state, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(a)(2), and, as applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students used in the accountability system.**

- Economically disadvantaged students
- Children with disabilities
- English Learners
- Former English Learners
- Students from each major racial and ethnic group:
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Middle Eastern or North African
  - Two or More Races

ii. **If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former children with disabilities in the children with disabilities subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on state assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA and as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(b), including the number of years the state includes the results of former children with disabilities.**

Not applicable. Students formerly with disabilities will not be included in the subgroup of children with disabilities for the purposes of accountability. The definitions for students with disabilities is as follows:

- **Students with disabilities** includes students who were identified as having a disability through formal evaluations and met specific criteria as stated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

to be eligible for special education and related services by a team of individuals who developed an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students with a 504 Plan are also identified as students with a disability who have met specific criteria as stated under the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and are eligible to receive accommodations and related services in a general education setting. Both of these groups — students with disabilities and students with a 504 Plan — can include English Learners with a disability or English Learners with a 504 Plan. These students would be eligible for services that are inclusive of language assistance and disability-related services.

- iii. **If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former English Learners in the English Learner subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on state assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA and as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(1), including the number of years the state includes the results of former English Learners.**

Former English Learners will not be included in the subgroup of English Learners for the purposes of accountability, as they are now being treated as their own subgroup. The definitions for English Learners and former English Learners are as follows:

- **English Learners** are students whose home language survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken at home or by the student and who have not reached minimum English proficiency as established by the state superintendent.
- **Former English Learners** are students who met the English proficiency exit criteria established by the state superintendent and are considered to be a part of this student demographic group through high school graduation.

- iv. **If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English Learners in the state:**

- Exception under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(3)(i) or
- Exception under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(3)(ii) or
- Exception under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(4)(i)(B). If selected, provide a description of the uniform procedure in the box below.

Illinois implements the following exception, as permitted under Section 1111(b)(3) of ESSA: “(ii)(I) assess, and report the performance of, such an English learner on the reading or language arts and mathematics assessments required under paragraph (2)(B)(v)(I) in each year of the student’s enrollment in such a school; and (II) for the purposes of the State-determined accountability system— (aa) for the first year of the student’s enrollment in such a school, exclude the results on the assessments described in subclause (I); (bb) include a measure of student growth on the assessments described in subclause (I) in the second year of the student’s enrollment in such a school; and (cc) include proficiency on the assessments described in subclause (I) in the third year of the student’s enrollment in such a school, and each succeeding year of such enrollment.”

Colloquially, students are assessed in all years, even the year in which they are a newly arrived students; however, their results from that year are not used for accountability purposes. In the second year with a valid enrollment in an Illinois public school, their growth scores are used for accountability purposes, and in their third year with a valid enrollment in an Illinois public school, their proficiency scores are included.

## E. Minimum Number of Students

- ii. **Provide the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability that the state determines are necessary to be included in each of the subgroups of students consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a).**

All student demographic groups have a minimum size, referred to as n-size, of 20. It is worth noting that this represents 20 students' worth of data per indicator. This distinction is important, as some indicators are limited to a subset of grades, such as, but not limited to, growth, graduation rate, climate survey, etc.

In the original development of the plan, the IBAMC reached majority consensus to recommend an n-size for subgroups of 30. The rationale for the committee's recommendation stemmed from the fact that the current subgroup n-size used by ISBE for accountability purposes is 30. Members came to a consensus that lowering the existing n-size may result in too much weight on small subsets of students as well as cause unintended statistical consequences. The Illinois Education Association (IEA) recommended an n-size of 25 believing it was an appropriate compromise between educational stakeholders that supported 30 and those, such as the Illinois Latino Policy Forum, which supported 20. ISBE ultimately selected the n-size of 20 to ensure as many schools and student groups were included in the accountability system as possible. Currently, 22 states have n-sizes lower than 20. Eighteen, including Illinois, have an n-size of 20, and 10 have an n-size of 30.

**ii. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.**

There are thirteen states that had an n-size of ten or less prior to the passage of ESSA. These include California's CORE Districts plus nine other states that have n-sizes greater than ten but less than 20.<sup>67</sup> The National Center for Educational Statistics released a report 2011 detailing that states can set n-sizes of ten or five and still provide reliable data and protect student information.<sup>68</sup>

Using data suppression techniques, top and bottom coding of values in a distribution, and reducing details reported out are all statistically reliable and valid ways to ensure a reduced n-size.<sup>69</sup> An example of these methods producing reliable data that protects student information can be seen in the CORE Districts in California. They lowered their n-size from 50 to 20 which resulted in an additional 150,000 students being identified in their accountability system for intervention and support.<sup>70</sup>

**iii. Describe how the minimum number of students was determined by the State, including how the State collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number.**

ISBE released multiple drafts of its state plan and invited public comment after each draft, particularly on the topic of n-size.<sup>71</sup> In previous drafts of the plan, ISBE had proposed that all subgroups should have a minimum size, referred to as n-size, of 20. EL subgroups, both the traditional subgroups and a newly created "former EL subgroup," would also have an n-size of 20, which is consistent with past practice. IBAMC reached majority consensus to recommend an n-size for subgroups of 30. The Illinois Education Association (IEA) recommended an

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<sup>67</sup> Cardichon and Bradley, *Ensuring Equity in ESSA: The Role of N-Size in Subgroup Accountability*, Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, (2016).

<sup>68</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in Aggregate Reporting*, NCES 2011-603, Accessed January 5, 2017 at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in Aggregate Reporting*, NCES 2011-603, Accessed January 5, 2017 at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Cardichon and Bradley, *Ensuring Equity in ESSA: The Role of N-Size in Subgroup Accountability*, Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, (2016).

<sup>71</sup> See section on stakeholder engagement for full description of all stakeholder engagement activities.

n-size of 25 believing it was an appropriate compromise between educational stakeholders that supported 30 and those stakeholders that suggested a lower n-size. The Governor's office as well as other commenters proposed an n-size of 10. Commenters suggested it is too easy for schools in their efforts to balance the needs of the majority of the student population to lose sight of the unique needs of smaller populations of students. After much debate, ISBE determined that an n-size of 20 is appropriate insofar as it is large enough to maintain statistical validity and reliability, while respecting the desire of stakeholders to see as many schools and students represented in the accountability system as possible.

- iv. **If the state's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability, provide that number consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a)(2)(iv).**

The minimum number of students for reporting purposes will continue to be 10.

- v. **Describe how the state's minimum number of students meets the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a)(1)-(2);**

Illinois is following the process recommended in Best Practices for Determining Subgroup Size in Accountability Systems While Protecting Personally Identifiable Student Information,<sup>72</sup> a congressionally mandated report compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics. Illinois convened multiple teams<sup>73</sup> "with sufficient statistical and data expertise to lead the effort to establish a minimum n-size." Next, as sufficient baseline data is available for all indicators, Illinois, with the assistance of TAC, will begin to verify that the resulting estimates will be statistically valid and reliable.

- vi. **Describe how other components of the statewide accountability system, such as the state's uniform procedure for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), interact with the minimum number of students to affect the statistical reliability and soundness of accountability data and to ensure the maximum inclusion of all students and each subgroup of students under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(a)(2);**

The state began using its uniform procedure for averaging data in 2024 when three years of full data for each indicator were available. The procedure combines individual student-level data for each indicator across three school years to create a composite indicator value to determine the profile of performance for the school and the relevant student demographic groups. The state consulted its TAC before implementing a shift from a single year of data to a three-year composite average.

This procedure, which is applied to those schools that would otherwise have a non-reportable profile of performance, functionally triples the sample size available for making calculations for the purposes of

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<sup>72</sup> Seastrom, Marilyn. Best Practices for Determining Subgroup Size in Accountability Systems While Protecting Personally Identifiable Student Information. (IES 2017-147). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Washington, DC., 2017. Retrieved March 3, 2017 from <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

<sup>73</sup> The Illinois Balanced Assessment Measures Committee, the P-20 Council Data, Assessment and Accountability Subcommittee, and the ISBE Accountability Working Group Technical Subcommittee.

accountability, which increases statistical reliability and soundness of accountability data<sup>74</sup> while further protecting the identity of individual student data.<sup>75</sup>

**vii. Describe the strategies the state uses to protect the privacy of individual students for each purpose for which disaggregated data is required, including reporting under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and the statewide accountability system under section 1111(c) of the ESEA;**

The strategy that Illinois utilizes to protect the privacy of individual students is to suppress data for demographic groups that are below a minimum size of 10, pursuant to both the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as the Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA), 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (a).<sup>76</sup> FERPA and ISSRA require that personally identifiable information be protected from disclosure but do not provide exact parameters for some situations. Therefore, industry best practices have evolved in response, and ED, through the Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), has taken the lead on identifying and encouraging some of these best practices. PTAC suggests use of cell size suppression as an appropriate method of privacy protection. ISBE applies a minimum cell size of 10 as its minimum group size reporting rule in cases where other information, such as student outcomes or scores, could be combined with small subgroup data to deduce the identity of particular students. ISBE is among a majority of states using 10 as its minimum group size.<sup>77</sup>

**viii. Provide information regarding the number and percentage of all students and students in each subgroup described in 4.B.i above for whose results schools would not be held accountable under the state's system for annual meaningful differentiation of schools required by 34 C.F.R. § 200.18;**

Data is provided below on the number and percentage of students whose student groups are excluded from accountability at their school due to n-size limitations from the most recent accountability calculations. The higher percentage of students excluded in the elementary/middle band can be attributed to the intersectionality of n-size limitations and minimum indicator requirements, as well as the way in which not all indicators are applicable to or collected at all grades. While Illinois has large and small schools serving all grade levels, the average enrollment of schools serving elementary grades is lower than that of those serving middle school grades, which is significantly smaller than that of high schools. Please note that all students were included in accountability via the "all students" student group.

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<sup>74</sup> American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, Joint Committee on Standards for Educational, and Psychological Testing (US). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Amer Educational Research Assn, 1999.

<sup>75</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in Aggregate Reporting (NCES 2011-603), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup> From the Illinois School Student Records Act: "Personal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, unless the disclosure is consented to in writing by the individual subjects of the information. 'Unwarranted invasion of personal privacy' means the disclosure of information that is highly personal or objectionable to a reasonable person and in which the subject's right to privacy outweighs any legitimate public interest in obtaining the information."

<sup>77</sup> The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics notes: "Individual states have adopted minimum group size reporting rules, with the minimum number of students ranging from 5 to 30 and a modal category of 10 (used by 39 states in the most recent results available on state websites in late winter of 2010). Each state has adopted additional practices to protect personally identifiable information about its students in reported results. These practices include various forms of suppression, top and bottom coding of values at the ends of a distribution, and limiting the amount of detail reported for the underlying counts." (NCES 2011-603, available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf>)

<b>2025 Accountability Calculations</b>	<b>Elementary/Middle</b>		<b>High School</b>	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	2,322	0.22%	1,304	0.23%
Asian	15,194	1.43%	4,682	0.81%
Black or African American	22,491	2.12%	6,116	1.06%
Hispanic or Latino	23,530	2.22%	6,830	1.18%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	811	0.08%	566	0.10%
Two or More Races	31,790	3.00%	9,415	1.62%
White	9,339	0.88%	2,321	0.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105,477</b>	<b>9.95%</b>	<b>31,234</b>	<b>5.39%</b>
<b>Program</b>				
Children With Disabilities	30,881	2.91%	13,657	2.36%
English Learners	20,649	1.95%	7,029	1.21%
Former English Learners	13,763	1.30%	4,258	0.73%
Low Income	10,726	1.01%	7,793	1.34%

- ix. **If an SEA proposes a minimum number of students that exceeds 30, provide a justification that explains how a minimum number of students provided in 4.C above promotes sound, reliable accountability determinations, including data on the number and percentage of schools in the state that would not be held accountable in the system of annual meaningful differentiation under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18 for the results of students in each subgroup in 4.B.i above using the minimum number proposed by the state compared to the data on the number and percentage of schools in the state that would not be held accountable for the results of students in each subgroup if the minimum number of students is 30.**

Not applicable

**F. Annual Meaningful Differentiation**

x. Describe the state’s system for annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the state, including public charter schools, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. §§ 200.12 and 200.18. Describe the following information with respect to the state’s system of annual meaningful differentiation:

1. The distinct and discrete levels of school performance, and how they are calculated, under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(a)(2) on each indicator in the statewide accountability system;

Below are the specific performance ranges for each indicator associated with the five performance levels.

	CORE INDICATORS				ELEVATING INDICATORS				
	Composite Proficiency	Composite Growth Student Growth Percentile (SGP)		Graduation Rate	EL Progress (ELP)		Consistent Attendance		Climate Survey
	All schools	Baseline SGP	Cohort SGP	High schools	K-8 schools	High schools	K-8 schools	High schools	All schools
<b>Exemplary</b>	≥ 75	≥ 67.5	≥ 60	≥ 93	≥ 75	≥ 50	≥ 88	≥ 85	≥ 95
<b>Approaching Exemplary</b>	≥ 52 < 75	≥ 60 < 67.5	≥ 52.5 < 60	≥ 88 < 93	≥ 50 < 75	≥ 40 < 50	≥ 80 < 88	≥ 70 < 85	≥ 90 < 95
<b>Commendable</b>	≥ 48 < 52	≥ 48 < 60	≥ 43 < 52.5	≥ 80 < 88	≥ 32.5 < 50	≥ 25 < 40	≥ 65 < 80	≥ 55 < 70	≥ 85 < 90
<b>Developing</b>	≥ 35 < 48	≥ 35 < 48	≥ 32.5 < 43	≥ 67 < 80	≥ 15 < 32.5	≥ 15 < 25	≥ 50 < 65	≥ 40 < 55	≥ 65 < 85
<b>Comprehensive</b>	< 35	< 35	< 32.5	< 67	< 15	< 15	< 50	< 40	< 65
<b>Automatic Comprehensive</b>	< 13.75* OR < 30	< 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 and apply to school-level profiles, not student group profiles.					

\*Automatic Comprehensive thresholds can increase as described in section 4.1.(C) C. Meaningful Differentiation of Schools to meet federal requirements for identification of schools.

\*\*Graduation rate is the only Automatic Comprehensive indicator for high schools.

The indicator thresholds associated with the proposed accountability profiles of performance were developed through a structured, data-informed process that combined Illinois school performance data, the design goals of the new accountability system, values articulated by stakeholders, and relevant benchmarks embedded in the prior accountability framework. Thresholds were refined across multiple rounds of modeling to ensure they functioned appropriately at both the indicator level and within the system as a whole.

The primary data source was Illinois school-level performance data analyzed at the “All Students” level. Statewide performance distributions, including typical performance (such as averages and medians), overall spread, and the upper and lower tails were examined for each indicator. Initial modeling relied on 2024 data, which were the most complete data available at the time. The previous system was a multi-measures weighted index system that scored indicator performance in ways specific to each indicator before weighting and aggregating those scores into an index. Schools with very similar ranks frequently had very different performance on any given indicator. Further, the scoring rules associated with some indicators collapsed raw performance differences in ways that made these differences even more pronounced.<sup>78</sup> Thus, while informative, pure statistical analysis was simply a foundation for deep stakeholder engagement.

Thresholds were set through an iterative process that began at the ends of the performance spectrum and worked inward, from clarity to complexity. Where appropriate or required, existing thresholds from the prior accountability system were used as anchor points, particularly where those thresholds reflected long-standing policy judgments or statutory requirements. Performance at the tails, where patterns are most distinct, informed the placement of Exemplary and Comprehensive thresholds, with existing benchmarks used as anchors where appropriate or required. Automatic Comprehensive thresholds were added to ensure consistent identification of extremely low performance and to meet minimum federal requirements.

Middle thresholds required greater judgment, including decisions about how many performance levels were warranted and where typical or average performance should fall. Here, ISBE relied heavily on the expertise and input of stakeholders on how the system as a whole should function. In particular, ISBE was advised to:

- Ensure that schools with low rates of proficiency, growth, or graduation would receive accurate signals about the need for school improvement while still recognizing the unique strengths of each school.
- Set performance ranges in ways that maintained rates of identification for CSI and TSI status to historic rates, as increases would spread limited 1003(a) funds over a larger pool of schools.
- Anchor typical or average performance in the middle range.
- Structure indicators in ways that mitigated external influences on outcomes.
- Structure the system in ways that were easy to understand and communicate.

Throughout the process, proposed thresholds were tested together under the full system rules using student-level data and refined as indicators, definitions, and available data evolved. Initial modeling relied on 2024 data, followed by interim analyses using a hybrid of 2024 and 2025 data, and final confirmation using full 2025 data.

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<sup>78</sup> This feature of the former accountability system was frequently analyzed and discussed by the TAC, noting that the difference between scored and raw performance could be considered either a feature or bug, depending on the types of ways one intended to use the data.

**xi. The weighting of each indicator, including how certain indicators receive substantial weight individually and much greater weight in the aggregate, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(b) and (c)(1)-(2).**

As described in section 4.1.A. Weighting, the profile of performance model is unweighted. Indicators serve as either core or elevating indicators. Core indicators are:

Indicator	Role in System	Federal Classification
Proficiency	Core	Academic
Growth	Core	Academic
Graduation Rate	Core	Academic
English Learner Progress	Elevating	Academic
Consistent Attendance	Elevating	School Quality and Student Success
Climate Survey	Elevating	School Quality and Student Success

ISBE received consistent feedback across a wide range of stakeholders that the reliance of the previous system on an index that was ranked and normative designation boundaries such as lowest five percent and highest ten percent were direct barriers to effective use of the data to drive school improvement. Moreover, stakeholders wanted a system in which only their own performance determined which designation they received. The proposed profile of performance model achieves this goal while still keeping a central focus on core academic outcomes.

**xii. The summative determinations, including how they are calculated, that are provided to schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(a)(4).**

Illinois has maintained a five-tiered system of summative designations of its schools but revised the process of identification in ways that set clear, objective criteria that define each performance level while also providing more meaningful differentiation and accurate signals about the need for continuous school improvement in all schools, not just those in school improvement status.

**Exemplary School:**

A school that has core performance that is either Exemplary, or Approaching Exemplary core performance paired with Exemplary performance on at least two of the elevating indicators.<sup>79</sup> These schools have no student groups with Comprehensive performance profiles.

**Approaching Exemplary School:**

A school that has core performance that is either Approaching Exemplary, or Commendable core performance paired with Exemplary performance on at least two of the elevating indicators.<sup>78</sup> These schools also have no student groups with Comprehensive performance profiles.

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<sup>79</sup> Note: Schools with only one elevating indicator due to their grades-served configuration can elevate with only one Exemplary indicator.

**Commendable School:**

A school that has core performance that is either Commendable, or Developing core performance paired with at least one Exemplary elevating indicator and one Approaching Exemplary indicator.<sup>80</sup> This category also includes those schools whose “all students” performance profile might otherwise qualify as Exemplary, Approaching Exemplary, or Commendable, but in which one or more student groups have a Comprehensive profile of performance.

**Developing School:**

A school that has core performance that is either Developing, or Comprehensive (but not Automatic Comprehensive) performance paired with at least one Exemplary elevating indicator and one Approaching Exemplary indicator.<sup>79</sup> Schools in this category may have one or more student groups with a Comprehensive profile of performance.

**Comprehensive School:**

A school that has one or more core indicators in the Comprehensive performance range, or any applicable indicator in the Automatic Comprehensive range. Schools with an applicable core indicator in the Automatic Comprehensive range may still have Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary performance on the elevating indicators, but that performance is superseded by their low core performance.

Appendix D provides modeled calculations illustrating meaningful differentiation using data from School Year 2024-25.

- xiii. **How the system for meaningful differentiation and the methodology for identifying schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 will ensure that schools with low performance on substantially weighted indicators are more likely to be identified for comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(c)(3) and (d)(1)(ii).**

Schools where one or more student groups have a Comprehensive profile of performance are eligible for and will be placed in TSI status. If, after one year of planning and three years of implementation, the performance of these same student groups remains Comprehensive, they would then be identified for comprehensive supports and services as defined below.

Schools that are eligible for and will be placed in CSI status include:

- A. Schools with a Comprehensive profile of performance on the state accountability system receiving Title I funds,
- B. **All** public high schools in the state failing to graduate one-third or more of their students, regardless of whether or not they receive Title I funds, and
- C. Title I schools that have been notified that they have one or more student demographic groups that have a Comprehensive profile of performance, and for whom, after one year of planning and three years of implementing targeted supports and improvement, the performance of those subgroups has not improved beyond Comprehensive.

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<sup>80</sup> Note: Schools with only one elevating indicator due to their grades-served configuration can elevate with only one Exemplary or Approaching Exemplary indicator.

## G. Participation Rate

- iii. **Describe how the state is factoring the requirement for 95 percent student participation in assessments into its system of annual meaningful differentiation of schools consistent with the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.15.**

A school's ELA, math and science proficiency rates are calculated out of either the number of students who tested, or 95 percent of those who should have. Illinois consistently has rates of participation on its assessments that are at or above 95 percent, and has a system of both proactive monitoring and responsive support for those districts with schools that do not reach the 95 percent testing requirement. Additionally, Illinois publishes assessment participation data prominently on the [achievement profile](#) of each school.

## H. Data Procedures

- iv. **Describe the state's uniform procedure for averaging data, including combining data across school years, combining data across grades, or both, in a school as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable.**

The state's uniform procedure for averaging data is to combine individual student-level data for each indicator across grades served in a single academic year first. If, using only a single academic year's worth of data, a school would have a non-reportable profile of performance, then ISBE would average across three school years to create a composite score that can then be divided by the actual number of students represented in the indicator pool to determine an average score for the school and the relevant student demographic groups. This is performed only for schools that are currently too small to meet the stated data thresholds to generate a profile of performance, after an analysis for the TAC found that such calculations would only be necessary for a small number of schools.

## I. Including All Public Schools in a state's Accountability System

- v. **If the state uses a different methodology for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in D above for any of the following specific types of schools, describe how they are included, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(d)(1)(iii):**
  1. **Schools in which no grade level is assessed under the state's academic assessment system (e.g., P-2 schools), although the state is not required to administer a standardized assessment to meet this requirement;**

ISBE has historically used a technique called back mapping for schools in which no grade level is assessed under the state's academic assessment system. That is, the closest assessed grade(s) in a school that the attending students feed into (e.g., grades 3 and 4 for K-2 building) was identified and those results applied to the building. Alternately, district aggregate results can be used to provide proxy academic indicators in schools that potentially draw from multiple districts. Illinois has 87 configurations of schools. The many configurations of schools, such as those listed below and more, as well as transitions through new and different assessment structures (e.g., course-based versus grade level) has prompted ISBE to convene its Technical Advisory Council to review historical and contemporary practices and determine specific techniques for implementation, which will remain the use of back-mapped data. Schools that use back-mapped data from students two or more grades distant from the highest grade served in the school will be exempt from the automatic comprehensive threshold for that particular indicator (i.e., a K-2 school uses growth data from former grade 4 students and would thus be exempted from the growth automatic comprehensive criteria, whereas K-1 schools, which use proficiency from former grade 3 students and growth from former grade 4 students, would be exempted from both growth and proficiency automatic comprehensive criteria), due to a higher likelihood of a Type I error associated with this relational distance.

**2. Schools with variant grade configurations (e.g., P-12 schools);**

Schools with variant grade configurations would receive two designations using the data elements and thresholds applicable to the grade band, so that supports can be provided as appropriate given the applicable designations. All grade level results for all indicators would be reported for these schools.

**3. Small schools in which the total number of students who can be included in any indicator under 34 C.F.R. § 200.14 is less than the minimum number of students established by the State under 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a)(1), consistent with a state’s uniform procedures for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable;**

Schools that fail to meet the student count in a sufficient number of indicators using only one year of data trigger the use of the state’s uniform procedure for averaging data, as described in section H.i.

**4. Schools that are designed to serve special populations (e.g., students receiving alternative programming in alternative educational settings; students living in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children, including juvenile justice facilities; students enrolled in state public schools for the deaf or blind; and recently arrived English Learners enrolled in public schools for newcomer students); and**

Illinois ties all students to their home school, the school that they would otherwise attend based on the location of residence of their family or guardian. This is necessary and appropriate given that the home school, and subsequently the home district, is the entity legally responsible for ensuring all students receive the free appropriate public education to which they are entitled. Schools that do not serve as the home school for any student, such as state public schools for the deaf or blind, are already well integrated into existing state reporting and data systems. Historically, many students receiving alternative programming in alternative educational settings fell outside the administration of ISBE, and these students were either represented within the system or not based on their specific placement at the time assessments were administered. ISBE is in ongoing dialogue with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) to more fully integrate these students into the accountability system. As appropriate, this section of the application will be amended to reflect changes in practice.

**5. Newly opened schools that do not have multiple years of data, consistent with a state’s uniform procedure for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable, for at least one indicator (e.g., a newly opened high school that has not yet graduated its first cohort for students).**

Schools that are newly opened are rarely excluded from calculation for reasons related to failure to meet the minimum n-size or number of indicators for inclusion or other reasons related to student inclusion in calculations. Schools are accountable for all students they have instructed for at least half a school year. School openings and closures are generally limited to the start of a new school year, so schools are typically accountable for the majority of their enrollments. All data for newly opened schools, including those that fail to meet the minimum n-size or number of indicators for inclusion, are publicly reported through the Illinois School Report Card.

## 4.2 Identification of Schools

### A. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools

Describe:

- vi. **The methodologies, including the timeline, by which the state identifies schools for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(a) and (d), including: 1) lowest-performing schools; 2) schools with low high school graduation rates; and 3) schools with chronically low-performing subgroups.**

Schools eligible to receive comprehensive supports and services were identified prior to the start of the 2018-2019 school year and annually thereafter upon the release of the Illinois Report Card each October<sup>81</sup> and include the following categories of schools:

1. Title I-eligible schools with a Comprehensive profile of performance, as determined by the state accountability system.
2. High schools with a four-year graduation rate of less than 66.67 percent, including those high schools that are not Title I eligible, that have not already been identified as being within the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools.
3. Schools with one or more student demographic groups with a Comprehensive profile of performance that have implemented targeted support and improvement plans, where, at the end of one planning year and three years of implementation, those same demographic groups that resulted in identification still have a Comprehensive profile of performance.

Schools are identified using data from the full range of the accountability system-and are notified that they are required to partner with a-learning partner(s) for comprehensive supports and services in developing and implementing improvement plans.<sup>82</sup> School identification and notification occurs annually. In general, schools must take one planning year and up to three years of full implementation before needing to meet the statewide exit criteria. Schools identified prior to 2018-2019 with data from 2017-2018 (i.e., cohort 2018) and schools identified with data from 2018-2019 (i.e., cohort 2019) had one additional year before needing to meet statewide exit criteria, as requested in the 2021 accountability waiver.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Federal accountability waivers granted to Illinois in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic specified that the 2019 designation be reissued in 2020; no designations were calculated in 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Districts, especially those with schools identified for comprehensive and targeted services, will be provided access to professional learning opportunities that include organizational, leadership, and capacity-building strategies regarding reflective supervision; job-embedded professional development; learning communities; data literacy; resource allocation; instructional technology and data; information literacy; implementation of Universal Design for Learning; recruitment and retention of teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority districts; parent family and community engagement; restorative practices; addressing issues related to school environment and school climate; and the development of school-community partnerships. Title I, School Improvement, Title II, IDEA, Title IV Part A and B, and State Longitudinal Data Systems dollars will be used for funding.

<sup>83</sup> Illinois State Board of Education. "Request for a waiver of accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act." (2021). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL20-21-Accountability-Waiver-Template.pdf>.

- xiv. **The uniform statewide exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement established by the state, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria, under section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA and consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(f)(1).**

The following exit criteria are proposed:

That a school no longer meets the eligibility criteria for comprehensive support and improvement, with improvement in one or more of the core indicators of proficiency, growth, and or graduation rate. Schools will have one planning year and up to three years of full implementation of Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans before being expected to meet these exit criteria. As approved<sup>84</sup> in the waiver of accountability requested for school year 2020-21, schools that were identified in 2018-19 and 2019-20 (i.e., cohorts 2018 and 2019) would need to meet these criteria by 2023-24 (based on data from SY2022-23) and 2024-25 (based on data from SY2023-24) respectively.

## B. Targeted Support and Improvement Schools

Describe:

- xv. **The state’s methodology for identifying any school with a “consistently underperforming” subgroup of students, including the definition and time period used by the state to determine consistent underperformance, under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(1) and (c).**

Schools with consistently underperforming student demographics groups will be identified through the following methodology, which is the same methodology used to identify schools that require additional targeted support and improvement:

1. Based on all indicators within the accountability system, the overall performance of each student demographic group within a school will be calculated to determine a summative rating comparable to that of the school’s all-student group.
2. Schools with one or more student demographic group<sup>85</sup> whose profile of performance is Comprehensive will be identified as eligible for Targeted support and improvement.

Schools identified under this definition will have an LEA-determined number of years, not to exceed four, to implement targeted supports and improvement. Schools identified for targeted supports and services *may* utilize learning partners.<sup>86</sup> Schools have been annually<sup>87</sup> identified for Targeted support and improvement under this definition since 2018.

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<sup>84</sup> Rosenblum, Ian. “Letter of Approval of Illinois’ 2021 Accountability Waiver Request.” (April 6, 2021).

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/il-acct-waiver-response.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> As defined by Section 1111(c)(2) in addition includes former English Learners and Former Students with Disabilities subgroups

<sup>86</sup> Districts, especially those with schools identified for comprehensive and targeted services, will be provided access to professional learning opportunities that include organizational, leadership, and capacity-building strategies regarding reflective supervision; job-embedded professional development; learning communities; data literacy; resource allocation; instructional technology and data; information literacy; implementation of Universal Design for Learning; recruitment and retention of teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority districts; parent family and community engagement; restorative practices; addressing issues related to school environment and school climate; and the development of school-community partnerships. Title I, School Improvement, Title II, IDEA, Title IV Part A and B, and State Longitudinal Data Systems dollars will be used for funding.

**xvi. The state’s methodology, including the timeline, for identifying schools with low-performing subgroups of students under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(2) and (d) that must receive additional targeted support in accordance with section 1111(d)(2)(C) of the ESEA.**

1. The proposed accountability system sets clear criteria in section 4.1(H) to define a Comprehensive profile of performance. First, ISBE will identify schools eligible for Comprehensive supports and improvement.
2. Next, from the remaining pool of all public schools in Illinois, including Title I and non-Title I schools, that have not already been identified as eligible for Comprehensive Support and Improvement, those schools that have one or more student demographic groups whose profile of performance is Comprehensive will be notified they are eligible for additional targeted supports and services and should implement targeted improvement plans.

Identification and notification are conducted annually with the release of the Illinois Report Card each October.<sup>86</sup> Schools that are identified in 2018-19 and all years after must take one planning year and up to three years of full implementation before needing to meet the statewide exit criteria. ISBE monitors progress through the submission of triennial reports that provide data on progress in achieving identified targets. Schools identified for targeted services that do not make the required gains will then be identified as comprehensive schools and will be required to use learning partner-services.

**xvii. The uniform exit criteria, established by the SEA, for schools participating under Title I, Part A with low-performing subgroups of students, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria, consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.22(f).**

In response to the questions posed in the first draft, commenters offered suggestions for criteria for exiting status. ISBE concurs with several commenters that a strong plan for sustainability (such that, at a minimum, all students are on a trajectory to reach grade level and graduate college and career ready) is necessary to no longer require targeted support. Therefore, the following exit criteria are proposed:

- That a school no longer meets the eligibility criteria for targeted support and improvement, including demonstrated measurable improvement in one or more of the core indicators of proficiency, growth, and or graduation rate

As approved<sup>88</sup> in the waiver of accountability requested for school year 2020-21, schools that were identified in 2018-19 and 2019-20 (i.e., cohorts 2018 and 2019) had to meet these criteria by 2023-24 (based on data from SY2022-23) and 2024-25 (based on data from SY2023-24) respectively. ISBE will monitor progress through the submission of triennial reports that provide data on progress in achieving identified targets. Schools that are not making reasonable progress will work with ISBE to determine additional interventions.

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<sup>87</sup> Except in 2020, and in 2021 as permitted under the applicable federal waivers.

<sup>88</sup> Rosenblum, Ian. “Letter of Approval of Illinois’ 2021 Accountability Waiver Request.” (April 6, 2021). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/il-acct-waiver-response.pdf>

## 4.3 State Support and Improvement for Low-performing Schools

### A. School Improvement Resources

- i. **Describe how the SEA will meet its responsibilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.24(d) under section 1003 of the ESEA, including the process to award school improvement funds to LEAs and monitoring and evaluating the use of funds by LEAs.**

#### **Meet Responsibilities**

Illinois met its responsibilities by:

- Collecting and applying computational algorithms appropriate to identify schools that require comprehensive or targeted support and services.
- Notifying identified schools of their eligibility, responsibilities, and the available system of supports and services.
- Distributing funds to identified schools based on identified need that Illinois developed, in collaboration with stakeholders, during the available transition year.

#### **Award Funds**

Illinois used its transition year and some portion of the available funds to develop, in collaboration with stakeholders, the state formula for allotment of funds and services to LEAs that have schools identified for comprehensive and/or targeted supports.<sup>89</sup>

#### **Monitor and Evaluate the Use of Funds**

Illinois utilized the transition year to align its reporting structures and monitoring and evaluation processes to those of other federally funded programs to improve the effectiveness of the agency and reduce the burden of monitoring activities on schools and districts. In addition, learning partners are expected to contribute to research on the effectiveness of strategies implemented in schools in improvement status, such that their work expands the available evidence base, particularly for diverse geographic and demographic contexts.

### B. Technical Assistance Regarding Evidence-Based Interventions

- vii. **Describe the technical assistance the SEA will provide to each LEA in the state serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, including how it will provide technical assistance to LEAs to ensure the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.23(b), and, if applicable, the list of state-approved, evidence-based interventions for use in schools implementing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans consistent with § 200.23(c)(2)-(3).**

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<sup>89</sup> When asked how a formula could be used to distribute funds both equitably and effectively, stakeholders suggested the formula should incorporate the following elements: Status for comprehensive (Comprehensive Support School) or targeted (Targeted Support School) support, with schools requiring comprehensive supports receiving a larger allotment of funds and/or services than targeted; the number of staff and students in the school; the phase of the implementation timeline the school is in (e.g., year 1, year 2, or year 3); the number of schools in the LEA identified for comprehensive services and the number identified for targeted services; the concentration (i.e., percentage of schools in the LEA) identified for comprehensive or targeted services; the level of “need” of the school and district; and the quality of the plan itself and readiness of the schools and districts to implement the plan effectively. The rationale for the inclusion of aforementioned elements in the formula was that the statute requires that ISBE prioritize LEAs that “demonstrate the greatest need for such funds” and “demonstrate the strongest commitment to using funds.”

ISBE's School/District Improvement department oversees the statewide system of success designed to help all districts, particularly those with schools identified for intensive, comprehensive, or targeted support, implement effective school improvement practices, and subsequently improve student achievement and student outcomes. For schools in status, the statewide system of success provides *structure* to the craft of continuous improvement by mobilizing evidence-based resources including systematic needs assessments, grant funding, expert consultations with ISBE personnel, peer networks, professional learning opportunities, regular consultation and monitoring visits, program evaluation, online materials and information, and up to four years of time to turn around, improve, and exit status.

The statewide system of success is predicated on districts helping their schools develop effective school improvement plans by first identifying areas where support is needed and mobilizing resources to address the gaps. All newly identified schools in status engage in an initial school-level needs assessment/equity audit to identify deficit areas and inform a responsive school improvement plan with supporting SMART goals. The initial school-level needs assessment is an in-depth audit of school conditions conducted during the planning phase of the grant. Starting in school year 2027-28, the initial school-level needs assessment for intensive and comprehensive schools will be conducted by a learning partner selected by the school or district. Needs assessments after the planning year are conducted by the district and school as a routine element of the school improvement cycle. Progress is measured and reported locally and statewide by comparing the initial needs assessment data to annual performance over the course of the grant. Districts with schools identified for intensive or comprehensive support must select and enter into agreements with expert vendors, also known as learning partners, that possess the requisite content expertise, experience, and capacity to successfully support effective school improvement practices and deliver evidence-based services. The learning partner model provides a robust and diverse menu of evidence-based, professional services designed to meet school-level needs for turnaround intervention and improvement. The LEA and school's role within this model is to select the right provider that matches school-level needs to implement effectively the school improvement plan. The selection process is critical.

The results of the initial needs assessment inform continuous improvement and identify areas where expert vendors can serve as learning partners. ISBE personnel help LEAs facilitate appropriate learning partner matches. The matching process is a needs-based and fluid strategy of connecting appropriate interventions to districts and their schools to achieve their goals over the course of the four-year grant program. ISBE personnel will ensure that school-level needs drive how the requirement of maintaining a learning partner is met.

The learning partners' work plans must specifically address the SMART goals included in the school improvement plan as well as the actions that will be taken to make improvements.

All intensive and comprehensive schools are required to use a learning partner; however, districts and schools have flexibility in selecting their partners. This flexibility allows for:

- Short-term partnerships;
- Long-term partnerships;
- Multiple partnerships; and/or
- Concurrent partnerships

There is no requirement on funding percentages to be spent on learning partners.

Ninety-five percent of grant funds identified for school improvement must flow to the districts. ISBE monitors progress through the submission of triennial reports that provide data on progress in achieving identified targets as well as utilizing field-based staff who can, if necessary, provide technical assistance and monitor for compliance. Schools that are not making reasonable progress work directly with ISBE to determine additional interventions. ISBE monitors each school's improvement plan to ensure that the school is on track to meet improvement targets or, if a school is not meeting performance targets, assist in amending the improvement plan to focus specifically on areas inhibiting improvement.

ISBE will support/interact with LEAs by:

1. Notifying LEA/schools of eligibility,
2. Notifying LEA/schools of responsibilities,
3. Supporting LEA/schools in the connection with learning partners,<sup>90</sup>
4. Utilizing ISBE Network (ISBE staff<sup>91</sup> and learning partners) in supporting LEA/schools in strong improvement plan development as well as connecting districts with each other in order to provide assistance and guidance.

LEA/schools may access the differentiated supports and services of School/District Improvement organized by the following foundational drivers of improvement:

- **Governance and Management:** Systems change efforts (e.g., effective policy development and implementation, diagnostic supports and services, data literacy, continuous improvement processes, organizational leadership, resource management, capacity-building practices, communication planning);
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** Supports administrator and educator development (e.g., teaming processes, facilitation of continuous learning and development, instructional practices, resource allocation, reflective supervision, instructional technology, data information literacy, recruitment, and retention of teachers);
- **Culture and Climate:** Emphasizes environment and supports needed for the sustainability of a safe school where productive work can occur (e.g., data competency, resource management, building leadership capacity, cultural awareness, communication strategies, professional learning communities, Universal Design for Learning, social and emotional learning).

## B. More Rigorous Interventions

- xviii. **Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the state’s exit criteria within a state-determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(f)(3)(iii).**

ISBE requires Comprehensive schools to select “evidence-based practices” for the purposes of school improvement. Schools identified for Intensive Support because they do not meet the state-determined exit criteria after completing a full Comprehensive Support school improvement cycle will be supported in selecting contextually appropriate, evidence-based practices that have more rigorous levels of evidence supporting their effectiveness. The LEA will be supported in establishing a strong program monitoring system to ensure that the selected practices are implemented with high levels of fidelity.

A school that has completed a full Comprehensive school improvement cycle, but which still has a Comprehensive performance profile, will be subject to the more rigorous state-determined actions identified below.

Districts will complete a more rigorous needs assessment that was fully articulated in 2023 by the Illinois State Board of Education, in consultation with the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee. Board members

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<sup>90</sup> Completion of the IBAM Quality Framework, completed prior to the initiation of services, shall assist schools with selecting the most appropriate supports.

<sup>91</sup> ISBE staff will work with district personnel to identify schools/districts that can share their expertise with other schools/districts in order to take advantage of the wide range of expertise found in Illinois schools.

of districts with schools that do not exit status will complete training provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards and ISBE on effectively supporting school improvement.

Districts will follow a standard protocol of progress monitoring and regular reporting to their boards of education, to the public, and to ISBE about progress on leading performance indicators. Monitoring and reporting protocols were fully articulated in 2024 by the Illinois State Board of Education, in consultation with the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee. Reporting will occur three times per year:

- Beginning of the school year (on or before September 30)
- Middle of the school year (on or before January 30)
- End of the school year (on or before May 30)

ISBE staff will present annually to its Board on the supports provided to schools in Intensive status.

A school that has completed a full Intensive school improvement cycle but whose performance is still in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in the state or is a high school with a graduation rate of 67 percent or below at the end of the four-year improvement cycle will receive further differentiated supports and oversight from the School/District Improvement department and statewide system of success.

**xix. Periodic Resource Review. Describe how the SEA will periodically review, identify, and, to the extent practicable, address any identified inequities in resources to ensure sufficient support for school improvement in each LEA in the state serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement consistent with the requirements in section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.23(a).**

Summative accountability designations are released by ISBE each fall, timed with the release of the public report card. Newly designated schools engage in various planning-year activities, such as identifying school leadership teams and stakeholder advisory groups, conducting needs assessments and root cause analyses, and developing school improvement plans. ISBE's School and District Improvement department provides various forms of support along the way. The Resource Allocation Review (RAR) program is managed by staff in the Finance department and situated within the planning year as a form of additional support for school improvement activities.

States must identify districts that operate a "significant number" of schools identified for improvement. ISBE's weighted selection formula considers both the percentage and number of schools identified for improvement, as well as the number of schools that have not exited from improvement status after four years. Districts are eligible for RARs every four years, as aligned with the school improvement cycle.

RARs follow an inquiry-focused process that supports the district and schools in evaluating current practices and identifying and addressing resource inequities, as required by ESSA. During the RAR, ISBE and the LEA discuss evidence of resource allocation patterns using protocols, reports, and rubrics co-developed with the Region 9 Comprehensive Center. Reports include data disaggregated by student demographics, such as:

- LEA and school-level per-pupil expenditures as reported on school report cards
- School-Level Finance Survey expenditures at each school
- The distribution of experienced teachers
- Student achievement data, including measures of attainment and growth

ISBE's program also considers other dimensions of resource equity, such as equitable resource allocation methodologies, transparency in school funding, and evidence of stakeholder engagement in financial decision-making.

ISBE has a comprehensive approach to addressing resource equity gaps across districts. The state funding formula, known as Evidence-Based Funding, ranks each district by a percentage of adequacy and distributes the

majority of new funding allocated by the General Assembly to districts with the greatest need. The state maintains other programs that address resource equity gaps, such as Early Childhood grant funding to add seats in pre-school deserts and a property tax relief grant. ISBE will monitor the results of the RAR program to consider additional resource equity gaps identified by LEAs.

## Section 5: Supporting Excellent Educators

### 5.1 Educator Development, Retention, and Advancement.

Teachers able to meet the needs of the whole child throughout her or his school journey and who serve as mentors and guides are the cornerstones of Illinois public schools. Moreover, supporting the development of educators from pre-service work through the sharing of experience to mentor and teach other professional educators as a more seasoned teacher is the responsibility of schools, professional organizations, and ISBE. In order to best ensure this work is meaningful, the use of Title II dollars must be utilized in ways that support the long-term student goals.

As previously stated, the long-term student performance goals for ISBE include:

- Ninety percent or more of third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.
- Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
- Ninety percent or more of ninth-grade students are on track to graduate with their cohort.
- Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.

In addition to these performance goals, two additional ISBE goals identify the importance of where the work occurs and who serves as the cornerstone of a child's learning:

- **GOAL 2:** In partnership with its stakeholders, ISBE will advocate for the necessary resources to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments that meet the unique academic, social, and emotional needs of every student.
- **GOAL 3:** Illinois' diverse student population will have educators who are prepared through multiple pathways and are supported in and celebrated for their effectiveness in providing every child a high-quality education that meets their needs.

ISBE believes if a child is supported in achieving the aforementioned performance goals and the centrality of the educator and environment in creating a space for this work to occur that there is a far greater likelihood that the state will meet its long-term goals. Creating a system where students are supported in their learning and have the ability to easily access postsecondary opportunities of interest is good for the individual and good for Illinois.

To achieve these goals, ISBE recognizes the central role that administrators, teachers, school service personnel, and other licensed and non-licensed staff play in supporting each and every child in her or his growth. Thus, ISBE must ensure that educators are supported in their professional learning so they, in turn, can support children throughout the continuum of early childhood through postsecondary education and career. To this end, ISBE has a number of initiatives supporting the professional learning of educators and school leaders.

## 5.2 Support for Educators

*Instructions:* Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if the SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.

### A. Resources to Support State-level Strategies.

- i. **Describe how the SEA will use Title II, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of funds provided under those programs, to support state-level strategies designed to:**
  1. **Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards;**
  3. **Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;**
  4. **Increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and**
  5. **Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders consistent with the educator equity provisions in 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c).**

Currently, ISBE is focused on providing resources (Title I) and training to teachers regarding the Illinois Learning Standards (Title II-A funds), induction and mentoring for new teachers (state funds), and training on teacher and principal evaluations (Title II-A). So, too, through a past partnership with Regional Offices of Education, ISBE developed and delivered professional development through Foundational Services. Foundational Services were developed and refined over time to share up-to-date information on ISBE initiatives (e.g., ELA and math, teacher evaluation, balanced assessment, family, and community engagement). Data suggests that educators found this professional development useful, but it lacked coordination and the ability to differentiate services based upon district need. Because of this, ISBE must better coordinate its initiatives within and outside of the agency to maximize the impact of professional learning across Illinois in order to increase student achievement.

There are a multitude of professional development opportunities available to districts, many of which are of high quality. However, ISBE sees an opportunity in ESSA to deliberately move from “one and done” or “sit and get” models of professional development to a system wherein professional learning is the gold standard. To be clear, this is not only an issue of language. Rather, Illinois has adopted the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning. Moreover, ISBE expects that LEAs, to the extent practical, will engage in professional learning that is led by teachers, embedded by administrators, focused on at-risk subgroups as well as transitions between grades, schools, and into and out of schooling (e.g., entry into kindergarten, between elementary and middle school, middle school and high school, and high school and postsecondary), and focused on considering student level and teacher evaluation data for the purposes of LEA planning.<sup>92</sup> These standards provide a frame in which learning opportunities should be robust and have the opportunity for both application and reflection on the part of the educator. In order for this to occur, ISBE is committed to ensuring that the goal of the 2015 Illinois Equity Plan — that each and every child in an Illinois school is taught by a highly effective educator — is supported through professional learning opportunities and high-quality resources.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> ISBE will modify its Title II application to collect information on the intended and actual use of Title II dollars for professional learning.

<sup>93</sup> In addition to the importance of developing and supporting multiple avenues of entry for those who wish to teach, ISBE recognizes the importance of establishing a teacher pipeline. In 2013, the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council submitted a proposal to ISBE for the establishment of a diverse educator pipeline. As requested in that document, ISBE released a Request for Information to which 12 organizations submitted material. In addition, to show the commitment of ISBE to this work, beginning in FY 2015, ISBE has annually included a budget (\$700,000) to support this work. The line has yet to be funded.

The following work, some of which is ongoing,<sup>94</sup> provides examples of ways that ISBE has or will utilize Title II funds and braid and/or blend other fund sources when applicable and appropriate.<sup>95</sup>

### **Professional Learning and Resources for Educators**

ISBE understands the importance of job-embedded professional learning.<sup>96</sup> To that end, as the ESSA State Plan for Illinois is implemented, ISBE is committed to using Title II dollars in order to:

- Build the content knowledge of educators regarding the Illinois Learning Standards in core content areas and characteristics of learners;<sup>97</sup>
- Develop resources on supporting learning environments and transition throughout the continuum of early childhood through college and career (Title II and Title I);
- Develop resources and professional learning opportunities for educators on Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment, and data and assessment literacy (Title I, Title II, Title III, and IDEA funding);
- Continue to build upon the resources for family/caretaker and community engagement; social and emotional learning; cultural, racial, and socio-economic competence; conflict management; trauma and behavioral health issues; restorative practices; cultural competence; anti-racism; recognizing implicit bias; and actualizing anti-bias approaches (Title I, Title II, Title III, and IDEA funding); and
- Continue to support training for teacher and principal evaluators (Title II and state funding).

### **Teacher Residency and Apprenticeship Programs**

Illinois, like most every other state, has seen a significant decrease in the number of individuals who attend a college or university in order to obtain licensure to teach. Thus, considering multiple avenues of entry into the profession of teaching is important in order to afford individuals with a sense of calling and connection to specific communities the opportunity to become licensed to teach.

ISBE committed to supporting the development of teacher residencies and is currently working to identify any modifications to statute necessary as well as identifying funds in order for this work to proceed. As that work progresses, ISBE will develop a Request for Proposal for an Innovative Fieldwork competitive grant program. The purpose of this program is to provide funding for districts and institutions of higher education with approved teacher preparation programs to partner and develop innovative approaches to fieldwork requirements in order to provide candidates rich and extended opportunities to work with, learn from, and practice their developing craft with practicing teachers. This work will be shared throughout the state and beyond. Between 2019 and 2022, ISBE provided five universities with \$2.25 million in grant funding to plan and implement teacher residency

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<sup>94</sup> As monitoring data is collected and analyzed, the professional learning needs of educators will, in all likelihood, change. To that end, ISBE will track the needs of the field in order to remain nimble to the identified needs.

<sup>95</sup> So, too, many of the specific areas identified in this section will be included in the work of School/District Improvement.

<sup>96</sup> In addition to the information shared in this section, ISBE will provide LEA guidance regarding professional learning that is most likely to be effective, aligned to adult learning best practice, is evidence-based, and has been demonstrated to be effective in developing knowledge and improving practice and/or outcomes for students.

<sup>97</sup> For instance, this includes, but is not limited to, the identification and appropriate supports for gifted children, English Learners, and children with other identified needs. It also includes an emphasis on supporting the social and emotional development of each and every child and resource development in core content areas that emphasizes the tenets of differentiated instruction (e.g., ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical education, and foreign language).

programs in state subject-area shortages. Each university partnered with one or more local education agencies to plan and deliver the residency programs.

In 2024, ISBE partnered with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to award \$1.5 million in grant funding to three universities to provide career pathways opportunities and supportive services through teacher apprenticeship programs. Funds allowed universities to work with local education agency partners to develop apprenticeship programs that provide workforce training and wraparound services to current paraprofessionals who aspire to become teachers. The grant program will conclude in 2026, and results of the work will be shared throughout the state.

### **School Leaders and Administrators**

ISBE understands the importance of shared leadership within schools and districts in Illinois. School leaders include superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and, when appropriate, LEA leaders.<sup>98</sup> Below are examples of ways ISBE supported efforts focused on school leaders:

- Continues to support an educator leader network (ELN) to connect leaders between districts. These funds will be coordinated with state funding (Title II and state funding).
- Developed a competitive grant program wherein districts propose 30-60-90-day research projects. These projects assist Illinois in continuing to be a leader in advocacy for and approaches to teacher leadership, in particular. More specifically, in a 30-60-90-project, a district, school, or portion of faculty proposes a problem of practice important to teacher leadership at the school and/or district, develops a plan in which the problem of practice is investigated, and report findings. This work is used to increase clarity on the roles and work of a teacher leader. This work is shared through ELN among other spaces.<sup>99</sup>
- Created resources emphasizing the school leaders as instructional leaders, particularly for teachers in the early grades. School leaders need knowledge of child development, pedagogical content knowledge, differentiation of instruction, and knowledge of pedagogical practice and high-impact teacher-child interactions for young children (Title II, Early Childhood).
- Provided school leaders with opportunities to build their capacity as facilitators of continuous teacher learning and development (Title II).
- Professional learning opportunities provided to school leaders may include strategies regarding family and community engagement, as well as the use of referral mechanisms that link children to appropriate services.

### **Culturally Responsive and Evidence-based Instruction**

- In 2021, Illinois adopted [Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards](#). The standards come from research-based best practices for closing achievement gaps. Cultural responsiveness improves student outcomes across a range of indicators from math and reading scores to attendance, to postsecondary enrollment. The standards encourage future teachers to engage in self-reflection, to get to know their students' families, to connect the curriculum to students' lives, and to support student leadership. The standards will be implemented in educator preparation programs and will help aspiring educators build the skills they need to engage students who may come from different backgrounds and cultures than them, in order to create an environment most conducive to learning.

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<sup>98</sup> Additional clarification on this definition was provided by the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council.

<sup>99</sup> The Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council has recommended pilot programs for both teacher residencies as well as school leaders. ISBE is continuing to ascertain the feasibility of one or both of these in the near future.

Additionally, professional learning is being developed for district and school leaders and Regional Office of Education staff to support the implementation of the standards at the local district level.

- In 2024, the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan was adopted. The plan identifies three primary goals: 1) Every student receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction; 2) Every educator is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction; 3) Every leader is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction. This plan and associated suite of resources provide a framework for the adoption of local district literacy plans to support the integration of evidence-based literacy instruction. Differentiation of professional learning for administrators, school and district leaders, regional office of education staff, and classroom teachers will be offered with a focus on utilizing disaggregated student data to support meaningful organizational change supportive of the three primary goals of the plan.

## **B. Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs.**

- i. Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students, consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(J) of the ESEA.**

In addition to the information provided previously, ISBE will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students through systematic professional learning, training, technical assistance, and coaching that allows for differentiated services to LEAs through the statewide system of success, My Data Dashboard, the Illinois Virtual School, and Online Impact.

The statewide system of success designed to help all districts, particularly those with schools identified for intensive, comprehensive, or targeted support, implement effective school improvement practices and subsequently improve student achievement and student outcomes. For schools in status, the statewide system of success provides *structure* to the craft of continuous improvement by mobilizing evidence-based resources including systematic needs assessments, grant funding, expert consultations with ISBE personnel, peer networks, professional learning opportunities, regular consultation and monitoring visits, program evaluation, online materials and information, and up to four years of time to turn around, improve, and exit status.

The statewide system of success is predicated on districts helping their schools develop effective school improvement plans by first identifying areas where support is needed and mobilizing resources to address the gaps. All newly identified schools in status engage in an initial school-level needs assessment/equity audit to identify deficit areas and inform a responsive school improvement plan with supporting SMART goals. The initial school-level needs assessment is an in-depth audit of school conditions conducted during the planning phase of the grant. Starting in school year 2027-28, the initial school-level needs assessment will be conducted by a learning partner selected by the school or district. Needs assessments after the planning year are conducted by the district and school as a routine element of the school improvement cycle. Progress is measured and reported locally and statewide by comparing the initial needs assessment data to annual performance over the course of the grant. Districts with schools identified for intensive or comprehensive support must select and enter into agreements with expert vendors, also known as learning partners, that possess the requisite content expertise, experience, and capacity to successfully support effective school improvement practices and deliver evidence-based services. The learning partner model provides a robust and diverse menu of evidence-based, professional services designed to meet school-level needs for turnaround intervention and improvement. The LEA and school's role within this model is to select the right provider that matches school-level needs to implement effectively the school improvement plan. The selection process is critical.

The results of the initial needs assessment inform continuous improvement and identify areas where expert vendors can serve as learning partners. ISBE personnel help LEAs facilitate appropriate learning partner matches. The matching process is a needs-based and fluid strategy of connecting appropriate interventions to districts

and their schools to achieve their goals over the course of the four-year grant program. ISBE personnel will ensure that school-level needs drive how the requirement of maintaining an approved or primary learning partner is met.

The learning partners' work plans must specifically address the SMART goals included in the school improvement plan as well as the actions that will be taken to make improvements.

All intensive and comprehensive schools are required to use a learning partner; however, districts and schools have flexibility in selecting their partners. This flexibility allows for:

- Short-term partnerships;
- Long-term partnerships;
- Multiple partnerships; and/or
- Concurrent partnerships

There is no requirement on funding percentages to be spent on learning partners.

Ninety-five percent of grant funds identified for school improvement must flow to the districts. ISBE monitors progress through the submission of triennial reports that provide data on progress in achieving identified targets as well as utilizing field-based staff who can, if necessary, provide technical assistance and monitor for compliance. Schools that are not making reasonable progress work directly with ISBE to determine additional interventions. ISBE monitors each school's improvement plan to ensure that the school is on track to meet improvement targets or, if a school is not meeting performance targets, assist in amending the improvement plan to focus specifically on areas inhibiting improvement.

ISBE provides My Data Dashboard (MDD), a secure educator dashboard, formerly known as Ed360 and developed in conjunction with the Illinois Data FIRST project. MDD is integrated with the acclaimed Illinois Interactive Report Card (IRC) and provides information at the state, regional, district, school, and classroom levels. MDD will also host a dynamically generated custom report for each school that identifies important patterns and deviations from patterns in each school's accountability data. The report will, to the extent appropriate, leverage the wealth of other data collected and reported by ISBE to suggest lines of inquiry that support continuous school improvement and provide links to resources, supports, and services available through the statewide system of success. The Illinois Virtual Course Catalog provides both credit recovery and access to Advanced Placement courses for students and provides free and low-cost, self-paced online professional development to Illinois teachers on a variety of topics, including teaching blended learning courses, understanding mobile learning, and reading courses for K-3 teachers. Facilitated courses do cost more but generally include graduate credit.

### C. System of Certification and Licensing

xx. **(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B)): Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.**

Illinois licensure requirements for both in-state and out-of-state program completers can be found at: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Requirements.aspx>. The webpage is inclusive of initial licensure requirements and requirements for adding subsequent endorsements after initial licensure is earned.

### D. Data and Consultation

xxi. **(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K)): Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.**

ISBE has a robust data warehouse that aggregates the data collected through other systems as required under ESSA related to students and educators. This data is both reported on the IRC and in MDD. MDD dashboards assist educators in making instructional decisions about the students in the district and the classrooms. In order to ensure that MDD meets the data needs of districts, ISBE will continue to consult with stakeholders through its educator leader cadre, the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Principals Association, and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

## 5.3 Educator Equity

### A. Definitions.

ii. **Provide the SEA’s different definitions, using distinct criteria, for the following key terms:**

Key Term	Statewide Definition (or Statewide Guidelines)
Ineffective teacher*	A teacher who has received a “needs improvement” or “unsatisfactory” on an evaluation and, in a subsequent evaluation, received a rating of “unsatisfactory” or “needs improvement.”
Out-of-field teacher*+	A teacher teaching in a grade or content area for which he or she does not hold the appropriate state-issued license or endorsement
Inexperienced teacher*+	A teacher with less than two years of teaching experience.
Low-income student	Students from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.
Minority student	A person who is 1) American Indian or Alaska Native, 2) Asian, 3) Black or African American, 4) Hispanic or Latino, or 5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (HB 332 effective 1/1/12).

**\*Definitions of these terms must provide useful information about educator equity.**

**+Definitions of these terms must be consistent with the definitions that a state uses under 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.**

### B. Rates and Differences in Rates.

In Appendix E, ISBE has calculated and provided the statewide rates at which low-income and minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A using the definitions provided in Section 5.3. The statewide rate has been calculated using student-level data.

### C. Public Reporting

iii. **Provide the web address or URL of, or a direct link to, where the SEA will publish and annually update, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c)(4):**

1. *The rates and differences in rates calculated in 5.3.B;*
2. *The percentage of teachers categorized in each LEA at each effectiveness level established as part of the definition of “ineffective teacher,” consistent with applicable state privacy policies;*
3. *The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37; and*
4. *The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.*

ISBE has incorporated this information into its [public interactive state report card](#).

**D. Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences.**

- iv. **If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the likely causes (e.g., teacher shortages, working conditions, school leadership, compensation, or other causes), which may vary across districts or schools, of the most significant statewide differences in rates in 5.3.B. The description must include whether those differences in rates reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools.**

During 2015, ISBE worked with a variety of stakeholder groups in the development of the Educator Equity Plan for Illinois. One of the requirements of this plan was to determine probable causes in regards to why students who attended a high-poverty and high-minority school were more likely to be taught by an inexperienced or ineffective teacher than those students who did not attend such schools.

Three probable causes were identified:

1. Lack of an equitable funding formula for local school districts, which results in disparities in teacher salaries between districts (funding),
2. Lack of continuity in the recruitment and retention of educators (supports), and
3. Lack of awareness of community (practices and values) once in a high-needs school district (cultural competency).

**E. Identification of Strategies.**

- xxii. **If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, provide the SEA’s strategies, including timelines and federal or non-federal funding sources, that are:**
  1. **Designed to address the likely causes of the most significant differences identified in 5.3.D and**
  2. **Prioritized to address the most significant differences in the rates provided in 5.3.B, including by prioritizing strategies to support any schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 that are contributing to those differences in rates.**

Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences in Rates	Strategies (Including Timeline and Funding Sources)
Funding	<p><b>Strategies:</b> Throughout the 2017 Legislative Session in Illinois, stakeholders and lawmakers worked diligently to develop a new, evidence-based funding formula for Illinois Schools. This work continued into the late summer/early fall of 2017.</p> <p><b>Funding Sources:</b> The majority of the funds supporting the public schools in Illinois derive from state and local funding sources.</p>
Recruitment and Retention Strategies	<p><b>Strategies:</b> Utilize current ISBE communications strategies to ensure that districts are aware of how they can use Title II funds to support professional development including, but not limited to: recruitment and retention programming (e.g., induction and mentoring programming), professional development (e.g., pedagogical, content, and the establishment of professional learning communities) and programming that would assist teachers in supporting the academic and social and emotional growth of their charges (Local TII Funding).</p> <p>Develop, with teacher preparation institutions, best practices for preparing individuals who wish to teach in high-poverty and/or high-minority districts and ensuring that these individuals have ample opportunity to engage in regular and prolonged field experiences in these districts (State Title II Funding).</p>

Cultural Competency	Awarded grants to local education agencies (LEAs) for a three-year period that requires the development of programming focusing on retention, the use of teacher leaders as instructional leaders within the school, and programming that utilizes the talents of parents and community members (State Title II Funding).
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**F. Timelines and Interim Targets.**

xxiii. **If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the SEA’s timelines and interim targets for eliminating all differences in rates.**

Each year, Illinois will monitor the differences in rates, if any, between those teachers identified as ineffective, out of field, or inexperienced and who teach at high-poverty and high-minority schools. Like the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, the 2015 Illinois Equity Plan will be revisited and revised as new data becomes available. More specifically, identified probable causes and those strategies attached to these causes will be shared with stakeholders and, when applicable, be modified in order to most efficiently and effectively eliminate the differences in rates whereby students that attend high-poverty and/or high-minority school are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

Currently, Illinois has data for the differences in rates for those teachers taught by out-of-field teachers in low/high-poverty or minority districts. By October 31, 2017, ISBE will have baseline information on differences, if any, between ineffective teachers and inexperienced teachers who teach at high/low-poverty schools and high/low-minority schools.

Difference in Rates	Date by which differences in rates will be eliminated	Interim targets, including date by which target will be reached
Ineffective Teacher – High/Low-Poverty Schools	12.31.2021	The 2016-2017 school year was the first in which districts submitted data on teacher effectiveness. No later than October 31, 2017, ISBE will share benchmark data on effectiveness of teachers in low/high-poverty districts and, from this, develop interim targets.
Ineffective Teacher – High/Low-Minority Schools	12.31.2021	The 2016-2017 school year was the first in which districts submitted data on teacher effectiveness. No later than October 31, 2017, ISBE will share benchmark data on effectiveness of teachers in low/high-minority districts and, from this, develop interim targets
Out of Field – High/Low-Poverty Schools	12.31.2021	Percentage of students taught by out-of-field teachers (1.55% at high poverty schools and .3% at low poverty schools) Interim Goals: Assuming the .3% is stable at low poverty schools, then the interim goals for high poverty schools are as follows: 2018: .1.24%; 2019: .73%; 2020: .42%; 2021: .3%
Out of Field – High/Low-Minority Schools	12.31.2021	Percentage of students by out-of-field teachers (1.45% at high minority schools and .35% at low minority schools) Interim Goals: Assuming the .35% is stable at low minority schools then the interim goals for high minority schools are as follows: 2018: 1.09%; 2019: 73%; 2020: .36%; 2021: .35%
Inexperienced Teacher – High/Low-	12.31.2021	Illinois is collecting data on inexperienced teachers during the 2016-2017 school year. This data will be available no

Poverty Schools		later than October 31, 2017.
Inexperienced Teacher – High/Low-Minority Schools	12.31.2021	Illinois is collecting data on inexperienced teachers during the 2016-2017 school year. This data will be available no later than October 31, 2017.

## Section 6: Supporting All Students

### 6.1 Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students

In order to best support schools in providing opportunities for a well-rounded education, ISBE is dedicated to providing resources that enable schools to support the development of the whole child. This work consists of making sure that there are appropriate resources available to teach content in ways that afford multiple entries into curriculum as well as multiple ways to show their developing understandings.

As stated previously, the important work that occurs between teacher and student and the environment in which this work takes place supports two of the ISBE goals:

- All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

So, too, without the teacher and a safe learning environment, the possibility of each and every child in Illinois to meet the performance goals set by ISBE would be far less. In this way, the work that shall occur through the use of Title II dollars and the opportunities available to Illinois students through Title IV is intertwined. ISBE encourages districts to prioritize funds based upon identified needs. ISBE will work directly with those schools identified for comprehensive services to ensure that appropriate programming is aligned with Title IV funding.

For instance, ISBE intends to use Perkins V funding to support innovative, competency-based learning experiences with career technical education classrooms,<sup>100</sup> and it is of equal importance that the teachers mentoring students in each content area and school configuration are able to create a safe environment that affords students the opportunity to make mistakes and grow in competency and confidence as they continue their work.

***Instructions:*** *When addressing the state's strategies below, each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of fund provided under those programs, to support state-level strategies and LEA use of funds. The strategies and uses of funds must be designed to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging state academic standards and career and technical standards, as applicable, and attain, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.*

#### A. State Strategies Addressing Academic and Non-academic Needs

v. **The descriptions that an SEA provides must include how, when developing its state strategies, the SEA considered the academic and non-academic needs of the following specific subgroups of students:**

- *Low-income students;*
- *Lowest-achieving students;*
- *English Learners;*
- *Children with disabilities;*
- *Children and youth in foster care;*
- *Migratory children, including preschool<sup>101</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school;*

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<sup>100</sup> ISBE will develop a competitive grant for districts that highlights innovative work that utilizes competency-based approaches to skill development and attainment. ISBE will work with other state agencies to connect this work with the employer community.

<sup>101</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, Preschool programs and Birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood agency.

- *Homeless children and youths;*
- *Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA, including students in juvenile justice facilities;*
- *Immigrant children and youth;*
- *Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School program under section 5221 of the ESEA; and*
- *American Indian and Alaska Native students.*

## **B. Continuum of Education from Preschool<sup>102</sup> Through Grade 12**

- vi. **The state’s strategies and how it will support LEAs to support the continuum of a student’s education from preschool through grade 12, including transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to postsecondary education and careers, in order to support appropriate promotion practices and decrease the risk of students dropping out.**

Illinois has a long tradition of local control and has adopted a standards-based approach, supplemented with technical assistance and the alignment of programs and funds, to support the continuum of a student’s education. This continuum begins at birth and extends through postsecondary education and careers.

All Illinois K-12 students have access to rigorous academic standards, which set high expectations for academic achievement. Illinois adopted new learning standards in all content areas. The Illinois Learning Standards<sup>103</sup> in math, science, social science, English language arts, Spanish language arts, fine arts, and physical education/health are intended to support collaborative, engaging, student-centered learning environments designed to unlock student potential. These standards promote both horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum, which ensures effective transitioning between grade levels and increases the probability that all learners will be prepared to pursue and achieve, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.

The Illinois Learning Standards serve as a ground upon which ISBE provides resources and opportunities for professional learning for educators. The resources and opportunities themselves are essential when thinking about the necessary supports for each and every child insofar as the content identified in the learning standards is an important vehicle through which an educator can meet the individual needs of each and every child.

The Illinois Learning Standards and the strategic support and guidance given to LEAs and schools regarding effective implementation ensure appropriate promotion practices as all students attain mastery of the standards. A caring and supportive environment, one in which a child feels safe and cared for and where they can learn, decreases the risk of students dropping out by supporting multiple pathways to postsecondary education and careers.

More specifically, ISBE has sought to use Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants), Part B (21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers), and Part F funds (Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Community School Programs) to coordinate state-level strategies in order to reduce exclusionary discipline, implement evidence-based behavioral health awareness training programs, expand access for school-based counseling and behavioral health programs, and improve outcomes of children living in the most distressed communities. These efforts will help ensure that each and every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to a

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<sup>102</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

<sup>103</sup> For additional information on the Illinois Learning Standards, please access <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Learning-Standards.aspx>.

well-rounded education in a safe, healthy, supportive, and drug free environment. Title funds will also be used to promote positive school climates and address childhood exposure to violence and the effects of trauma. These activities, in addition to the supports provided for the Illinois Learning Standards, are critical to address the needs of subgroups, such as homeless children and youth, neglected and delinquent children and others at risk, and create an ecology that supports and nurtures the whole child.

An ecology that supports and nurtures the whole child requires a coordinated approach to best ensure each and every child continues to develop and build upon the fundamental skills they already possess and those skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. In addition, coordination during transitions from early childhood through high school graduation must deliberately identify and provide supports necessary for children and families so that the child may thrive.<sup>104</sup> When children are nested within whole, healthy systems that consider the child's areas of strength, the areas where additional support and nurturing may be required and the multiple avenues from where that support should occur are more likely to be identified. This increases the likelihood for improved student achievement and better overall student well-being.

Providing each and every student in Illinois' schools access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences — beyond the Illinois Learning Standards — is essential in order for a young person to explore interests and develop a sense of competence and sense of self. There are many opportunities for this to occur within Illinois' public schools. ISBE's strategic use of funds offers students a variety of academic and career and technical content in the public secondary setting in Illinois. Some courses are articulated with the postsecondary level and others provide dual credit opportunities for students, where applicable. Career pathways are available in 99 percent of the school districts in Illinois and are facilitated by the Education for Employment Regional Delivery System. These career pathways or programs of study include industry partnerships, a sequence of coursework, work-based learning experiences, credentials/certifications, career and technical student organizations, individualized career plans, dual and/or articulated credit, and other related pathway experiences. These activities help to connect secondary to postsecondary to careers for students.

In addition, ISBE believes that parent, family, and community engagement is a cornerstone of effective schools and a critical element for a child's education and well-being in order to ensure that the needs of the whole child are met. ISBE has an intra-agency collaborative team charged with developing greater cohesiveness and efficiency in this work. This team has developed a shared definition for family engagement: Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents, educators, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. This helps to frame the supports developed for ISBE, LEAs, and other key stakeholders. Family engagement is fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the school. It empowers adults to jointly support student growth, addresses any barriers to learning, and ensures college and career readiness. Foremost, effective family engagement systems, policies, and practices are mindful of diverse school-communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. They are responsive to student and family needs and improve their self-efficacy.

To that end, the agency continues to build internal capacity and a number of supports for LEAs, schools, and communities. This includes a recent (September 2024) update to the ISBE Family Engagement Framework and its companion tools.<sup>105</sup> The universal framework is designed for LEAs, schools, and their school boards, including, but

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<sup>104</sup> The Early Learning Council recommends and by way of example that individuals who work in ECE settings are trained and equipped to work with transition children from early intervention services and programs across the entirety of the school year. This work is especially important for two reasons: to aid in the smooth transition of the child and her or his parents/caregivers from one system into the next as well as to ensure those children that require additional services are able to receive these in a timely fashion.

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Family-Comm-Engage-Framework-Guide.pdf>

is not limited to, charter, alternative, and community schools. It provides guidance on how to develop meaningful partnerships with families by developing family engagement systems, building welcoming and inclusive environments, enhancing effective communication with parents, and including parents in decision-making. The framework helps LEAs use family engagement as a strategy for school improvement. Efforts to engage families in meaningful ways with an asset-based mindset that are linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students occur on an ongoing basis and are embedded in school policies and practices. Additional tools and resources will be integrated into the framework for more targeted and intensive individualized engagement with families of students with disabilities, EL students, students with behavioral health issues, and/or students with trauma.

Through its Family and Community Engagement Department, ISBE provides professional learning workshops and networking for family-facing professionals statewide. The workshops and networking opportunities are aligned to the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. They are designed to help family-facing school and district personnel partner with families so that they are more readily able to meet student achievement and healthy development goals, leverage resources, build effective relationships between parents and teachers, develop ongoing community support for school and district improvement, and meet federal and state requirements for family engagement. The updated tools, professional learning opportunities, and resources will provide greater opportunities for meeting the accountability measures.

As one such example, ISBE's Multilingual/Language Development department published a guidance framework for schools and districts that integrated the four core principles of the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. The guidance document will be used to provide technical assistance. The department will also partner with external stakeholders, including WIDA and the Illinois Resource Center, to build capacity to engage EL families. There is a series of bilingual online trainings that are available to families to assist them in navigating the school system. ISBE will engage families, community members, schools, and districts through the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education to ensure that the needs of EL families and communities in the education of bilingual students are met.

ISBE is pleased that there remains a set-aside requirement for parent and family engagement, with an allocation of more than \$500,000 in Title I funds. Ninety percent of those set-aside funds must be distributed to the schools, with a priority for high-need schools. ISBE staff will verify compliance with specific statutes regarding allowable use of funds during their review of the Title I grant. This information will be shared through a webinar. Also, staff, in consultation with educators and others from the community, will continue to provide technical assistance and supports. These supports ensure Title I funding that is dedicated for family engagement, strengthens school improvement efforts, ensures ongoing communication offered at locations and at times that allow parents and families to attend without undue burden, and builds capacity for families in ways that are linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students.

The Title Grants Administration Toolkit, updated August 2025, provides dates and sample letters districts can use to ensure they meet Parents Right-to-Know requirements. ISBE will ensure that at the beginning of each school year districts are aware of their obligation to notify Title I parents that a parent has the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. In addition, a Title I school must also provide timely notice to a parent of a child who has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

Also, Title IV, Part B funds will be used to build capacity of subgrantees as they implement high-quality after-school programs for students and families. ISBE recognizes that after-school programming oftentimes is the first entry point for family and community engagement in the school building. Family engagement is regularly monitored through ISBE's standard grant monitoring activities and technical assistance is provided as appropriate.

In addition, ISBE will work closely with an Illinois after-school statewide network to provide additional support to grantees. Almost 50 percent of the providers are LEAs and schools. This is significant, given that this leverages the

ability to better coordinate resources, staff, and funding to strengthen engagement efforts. There are dedicated standards for family and community engagement as well as for school partnerships. ISBE will work with the network in providing professional development and a community of practice to strengthen local connection and capacity for meaningful engagement that is linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students.

Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood. ISBE is also developing a framework for families in partnership with families, community resources, and faith-based partners because the agency recognizes that families are an integral part of a child's success from cradle to career. This work will align supports for children and families in efficient ways so community resources are strategically organized to support student success and so there is a focus on the whole child, integrating academics, services, supports, and opportunities. ISBE acknowledges the impact community resources and faith-based partners have in helping families become partners and leaders in supporting schools as well as their child's learning and healthy development. ISBE acknowledges the impact of the community school model as it embeds family engagement as a core pillar for school and student success. Community schools strengthen opportunities for schools and partners from across the community to come together to educate and support students and families in building thriving communities.

Family and community engagement is one of the central foci of the work of the Health and Human Services Transformation agenda and an integral part of the overall effort to build internal capacity and coordination for services targeting impacts for children and families statewide. ISBE, in partnership with the Governor's Office, will work to build stronger pathways for communication with families, community resources, and faith-based partners to optimize the efficacy of the work.

### C. Equitable Access to a Well-Rounded Education

vii. **The state's strategies and how it will support LEAs to provide equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English Learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are underrepresented. Such subjects could include English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, or physical education.**

ESSA places an unprecedented priority on the provision of supports for all young people struggling with barriers to learning, including programming that addresses academics along with the climate and culture of the school setting. Improving the educational outcomes for all students requires that schools — the places where children spend most of their day — promote the necessary conditions for learning, which include:

- A safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school/classroom climate;
- The development of academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical competencies;
- Effective and inclusive leaders;
- Ambitious instruction;
- Collaborative teachers;
- Supportive environment; and
- Involved families.

Barriers to learning and teaching, such as inadequate access to the general education curriculum, poverty, trauma, homelessness or instability in a living situation, disengagement, absenteeism, bullying, behavioral health issues, and lack of or insufficient number of behavioral and physical health supports in the school environment (counselors, social workers, and school nurses), must be addressed.

Districts/schools will provide programming at three levels of care and instruction (promotion, prevention, intervention) as they develop a safe, caring, (re-)engaging, and participatory environment. These levels:

- Foster the well-being of all students through universal schoolwide approaches (core standards-aligned academic curriculum and instruction and practices that promote healthy development and prevent issues);
- Provide early intervention and identification strategies and supports to reduce the possibility of escalating issues (and evidence-based practices for content areas and social, emotional, behavioral, and physical supports), such as the use of early childhood mental health consultation, family support, and inclusion specialists;
- Provide intensive, individualized supports for those students demonstrating complex, multi-faceted needs, including developmental screenings that could lead to additional supportive services.

All of this work will be done within an integrated manner throughout the school and with the support of resources from the local district (inclusive of school health centers,<sup>106</sup> if available), community, and ISBE.

Illinois provides equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English Learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are generally underrepresented. ISBE embraces an educational model that offers a comprehensive educational program to meet each student's unique academic needs, learning styles, and interests. Providing a well-rounded education, including all areas in the Illinois Learning Standards, ensures that students have the knowledge and skills to fulfill this vision and be successful, globally engaged, and productive citizens. Struggling learners will be addressed through intervention strategies while advanced learners receive acceleration and enrichment based on individual student needs. In addition, school librarians support rigorous personalized learning experiences supported by technology and ensure equitable access to resources for all students.

For instance, ISBE supports these multiple pathways by providing funding and other program improvement-related resources to local districts through federal sources such as The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) and state Career and Technical Education Improvement funds for approvable programs as defined by the state's program standards. These grants require equitable access. Illinois also provides specific funding and resources for Agricultural Education programs in local districts, of which a portion is based on attainment of quality indicators. State leadership projects also are in place to help address various career pathways in Illinois by providing resources to local districts as well. Pathway courses' content in Illinois is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards. Other standards are used in local districts to meet local needs, such as Common Career and Technical Core, and various content-specific national and/or industry standards. ESSA provides a unique opportunity to work in collaboration with the Perkins V Act and other career programs to provide opportunities for each and every child.

As indicated previously, Illinois strives to increase student learning through the consistent practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student needs. Implementation of a multi-tiered continuum of student supports is a collaborative effort involving all district staff, general educators, special educators, counselors, behavioral health staff, and bilingual/English language staff. Student strengths and needs will be identified and monitored continuously, with documented student performance data used to make instructional decisions. The process of such identification and continuous monitoring are the foundational pieces of a successful prevention

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<sup>106</sup> ISBE is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate Medicaid dollars and the availability of health services at a school site for those children who may lack access to health care.

system. It is through the continuous use of progress monitoring and analysis of student academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical growth that ISBE can collect and compile information from LEAs in order to ensure that dollars and programming are tied to the supports LEAs need to ensure that each and every child has regular access to educational opportunities.

ISBE seeks to improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. This will ensure that each and every child has regular opportunities to meet challenging state standards in developmentally appropriate ways.<sup>107</sup> ISBE can utilize Title IV, A dollars to support LEAs in offering all students, through the Illinois Virtual School, direct access to standards- aligned courses for high school students, including AP and credit-recovery options.<sup>108</sup> In addition, LEAs will have access to the Illinois Open Education Resources project, a resource providing open, standards-aligned academic and career content to better allow for customized instructional opportunities for students.<sup>109</sup> Lastly, additional standards-aligned resources will be specifically designed to differentiate content for student consumption in order to increase academic achievement for each and every student by providing resources that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and responsive.

#### D. Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators

viii. **(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)): Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.**

Within the Consolidated District Plan, districts must describe the process through which they will identify and address any disparities that result in low-income and/or minority students being taught at rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. ISBE staff review these responses to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance, when applicable.

#### E. School Conditions

ix. **(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(C)): Describe how the SEA agency will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A to improve school conditions for student learning, including through reducing: (i) incidences of bullying and harassment; (ii) the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and (iii) the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety.**

Within the Consolidated District Plan, districts must describe the process through which the district will (i) reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, which may include identifying and supporting schools with high rates of discipline; (ii) reduce incidences of bullying and harassment; and (iii) reduce

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<sup>107</sup> For instance, ECE students should have access to technology and this work should follow the joint guidelines from ED and the Department of Health and Human Services on technology and early education (<http://tech.edu.gov/early/learning/principles>)

<sup>108</sup> IVS is expanding its offerings to grades 3-12 during the 2017-18 school year in order to support LEAs in increasing access to coursework that may not be readily available in a student's home district.

<sup>109</sup> This work is currently being integrated with ISBE-provided district dashboards.

the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom. ISBE staff will review responses to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance, when applicable.

## F. Use of Funds

- x. **(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(A)):** Describe how the SEA will use funds received under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 for State-level activities.

ISBE will use the 4 percent set-aside from the Title IV allocation to fund to support LEA activities and programs designed to meet the purposes of the Title IV, Part A program. The activities and programs will include monitoring and providing technical assistance to LEAs; identifying and eliminating State barriers to the coordination and integration of programs, initiatives, and otherwise supporting LEAs in carrying out activities in the three SSAE program content areas. This would include efforts to reduce incidents of bullying and harassment; the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety. For example, activities could support LEAs offering all high school students, through the Illinois Virtual Course Catalog and virtual course reimbursement program, direct access to standards-aligned courses for high school students, including AP and credit-recovery options.<sup>110</sup> Access to AP fees for low-income students may be supported with Title IV, Part A funds. ISBE is also considering using a portion of its 4 percent State Activities set-aside from the Title IV Part A allocation to fund a grant to support family engagement. All of these grant activities would provide support and technical assistance to all districts in Illinois.

## G. Awarding Subgrants

- xxiv. **(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B)):** Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).

ISBE follows a specific process in allocating Title IV, Part A funds to districts. ISBE continues to meet the requirement that no LEA will receive less than \$10,000 provided in Section 4105(a)(2) after the ratable redistribution is conducted. ISBE will be awarding funds to LEAs through a formula process.

## 6.2 Program-Specific Requirements

### A. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies

- xi. **Describe the process and criteria that the SEA will use to waive the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold under section 1114(a)(1)(B) of the ESEA that an LEA submits on behalf of a school, including how the SEA will ensure that the schoolwide program will best serve the needs of the lowest-achieving students in the school.**

Schools may operate a schoolwide program if the low-income percentage is 40 percent or greater. Districts with a poverty percentage between 20 and 39.9 percent may be considered for the schoolwide waiver. This waiver allows schools with high percentages of students with poverty the flexibility to use Title I dollars to serve the

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<sup>110</sup> This work is currently being integrated with the ISBE-provided district dashboard system.

whole school. For example, based on FY2025 data, there were 1,563 schools under the 40 percent threshold. Using the 20–39.9 percent poverty threshold would allow existing targeted assistance schools to utilize the schoolwide waiver. Reasons that schools are not served may include lack of funding and/or the district did not want to offer targeted services. ISBE believes allowing schools with 20 percent poverty or more the option to apply to and receive a schoolwide waiver is aligned with the intent of the law and provides needed flexibility to schools.

The intent and purpose of ESSA is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps. Schoolwide flexibility allows a school to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves a high number of children from low-income families, in the instance of the waiver, 20 percent or more. The school will have to explain how taking advantage of the schoolwide waiver will allow them to use their funds to upgrade the entire educational program to provide a high-quality education and close achievement gaps. As part of a simple waiver form, schools applying would need to provide the educational need to receive schoolwide status. Educational need will include the size and demographics of the school, the benefit the schoolwide status will provide to students and teachers, and how the schoolwide option funding will be used differently to impact more students, improve educational outcomes, and close the achievement gap. More specifically, those schools with 20 percent poverty threshold or greater will need to provide information on the academic status of the students, budget, and other factors of the school. ISBE provides a waiver template that must be completed and approved.

Staff in the Title Grant Department review these waiver requests in context to the Districts Consolidated Plan, the Consolidated Application, and their unique knowledge of the circumstances of the district. This is to ensure the waiver is in the best interest of the students and the schools. Further, within the goals of the Consolidated District Plan and the schoolwide plan that is based on a comprehensive needs assessment, the school, district, and ISBE will monitor their progress at improving the educational outcomes for students. ISBE will continue to support all schools – including those that are not eligible for schoolwide programming, those that have not received a waiver to operate such a schoolwide program, or those that choose not to operate a schoolwide program – in addition to our schoolwide buildings.

## B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

- xii. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will establish and implement a system for the proper identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children on a statewide basis, including the identification and recruitment of preschool<sup>111</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the SEA will verify and document the number of eligible migratory children aged 3 through 21 residing in the state on an annual basis.**

For the purposes of the Migrant Education Program (MEP), eligible children/youth are defined as those who:

- Are younger than the age of 22 who have not earned a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate from a granting institution in the United States; and
- Are migratory agricultural workers or fishers or have a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher; and
- Have moved due to economic necessity from one school district to another; and

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<sup>111</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

- Have changed residence within the preceding 36 months with/to join a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher or on their own for youth who are migratory agricultural workers or fishers.

Only certified MEP recruiters and individuals hired and trained by the Illinois Migrant Education Services – Northern Illinois University (IMES-NIU) can determine if a child/youth is eligible to be identified for MEP. Trained recruiters interview each family to determine program eligibility.

Illinois has a state identification and recruitment (ID&R) coordinator employed by IMES-NIU who oversees statewide activity to ensure that migrant recruiters cover the areas of the state where migrant families reside and reach out to all eligible populations, including migratory youth who have dropped out of school. The state ID&R coordinator, in consultation with ISBE and local Illinois MEP operating agencies, develops, implements, and coordinates a plan to effectively identify and recruit all MEP-eligible children/youth residing in the state. The state ID&R coordinator works with a state recruiter as well as regional and local recruiters employed by IMES-NIU to ensure that all MEP-eligible children and youth in the state are identified and recruited.

Qualified recruiters *must* complete identification and recruitment training each year to receive certification and participate in other scheduled training sessions, as required.

Recruiters document specified eligibility information on the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and maintain records relating to identification and recruitment. Information used for eligibility and enrollment is gathered from self-eligible youth, parents/guardians, spouses, employers, social service agencies, and community members and organizations, documented on the COE, and entered into the migrant database, MIS-2000. MIS-2000 transmits data to the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) and also generates the counts of eligible migratory children for the Comprehensive State Performance Report that is submitted annually.

ID&R staff verify and document those individuals who may be eligible for services each September by contacting families previously recruited to verify and document the continued residency in the state of eligible migratory children from birth through 21 under a process called Residency Verification.

The coordinator oversees the state quality control efforts, which are designed to strengthen the accuracy of the ID&R processes through use of a variety of checks and balances. The Illinois quality control plan requires that the COE be checked by a local COE reviewer and a state reviewer before the final eligibility determination is made. An annual re-interview process of a sample of families previously identified is carried out to verify the accuracy of the state eligibility determinations. Illinois has developed a comprehensive identification and recruitment manual, updated annually, that describes the responsibilities of recruiting staff and ensures high-quality practices in the state.

In addition, recruiters serve as a link among the MEP, schools, parents/guardians, employers, and community agencies. The recruitment of MEP-eligible children and youth is the first step toward the provision of supplemental educational and supportive services by local operating agencies and the State of Illinois. Proper eligibility determinations ensure that eligible children and youth receive needed services. A coordinated statewide effort among key personnel responsible for identification and recruitment is critical to ensure that all MEP-eligible children and youth in the state are identified and recruited in order to obtain necessary supports.

- ii. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will identify the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool<sup>112</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school.**

The MEP planning and implementation is guided by a continuous improvement cycle comprised of a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA), a service delivery plan (SDP), and an evaluation. Joint planning with local, state, and federal programs will occur through the processes in place to develop the CNA and SDP and to inform the evaluation. To integrate services and ensure that migrant children receive the full range of services available to address their unique needs, the MEP will consult with other programs that serve migrants on an ongoing basis. These programs include Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, state and federally funded language instruction programs for English learners (Title III Part A and state Transitional Bilingual Education), Summer Food Service Program, and McKinney Vento. Committees formed to update the CNA and the SDP will include representation from the MEP as well as other local, state, and federal programs that work with migrant children and families in the areas of education, health, and other support services. The committees' membership and contributions will be recorded in the CNA, SDP, and evaluation reports.

Throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation phases, the MEP focuses on the unique needs of migrant children. Specific service delivery strategies and objectives out-of-school youth and those who have dropped out of school are developed and included in the state plan.

Illinois developed a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) in 2022 as part of a continuous improvement process. It includes identification and an assessment of:

- The unique educational needs of migrant children that result from the children's migrant lifestyle; and
- Other needs of migrant students that must be met in order for them to participate effectively in school.

This analysis of needs provides a foundation for the future direction of the Illinois MEP through the service delivery planning process and supports the overall continuous improvement and quality assurance processes of the Illinois MEP and the overall ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The CNA serves as a springboard to set rigorous goals for the MEP and to better serve migrant students in Illinois. Doing so strengthens the plan.

The CNA will be updated periodically as necessary to respond to changes in the characteristics of the program and migrant population in Illinois. The CNA process will involve the collection and review of data on migrant student achievement and outcomes, the perceptions of migrant staff and parents related to migrant students' needs, and relevant demographic and evaluation data. A committee of stakeholders and experts will use the data to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the migrant student population in Illinois and describe and quantify their needs as well as solution strategies to guide the MEP.

When children arrive during the summer, local, and comprehensive summer school projects assess newly identified migrant children and youth to determine their individual strengths and areas for growth and support in mathematics and reading. Out-of-school youth who are not proficient in English take an English language proficiency screener. These assessment results are used to guide summer school instruction. During the regular school year, migrant students enroll in the local school and are screened and assessed with the instruments used for all students.

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<sup>112</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

- iii. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool<sup>113</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, are addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, state, and federal educational programs.**

A service delivery plan (SDP) designed to address the needs identified in the CNA guides the implementation of the MEP. The SDP is developed in consultation with other local, state, and federal education programs to determine the unique educational needs of migrant children that are not addressed through existing services and to identify ways to collaborate to more effectively promote academic success for migrant children.

The SDP provides distinct strategies and measurable program outcomes targeted toward school readiness for children; services tailored for out-of-school-youth and youth who have dropped out of school, secondary youth, and high school graduation; and reading and mathematics education for elementary and middle school students.

Each year, local projects implement the program as specified in the plan in communities where migrant families are living. Local migrant project staff link children and families to existing programs and services including state and federal Title III funded language instruction programs for English learners. The MEP offers supplemental education and support services to respond to the unique needs of migrant children and youth that are not addressed through existing state, local, and federal educational programs. The supplemental services are designed to provide continuity of instruction for students who move from one school district or state to another.

Many migrant children are present in Illinois only during the summer months and return to their home state during the school year. As a result, most MEP services are offered during the summer months through both center-based and home-based or itinerant programs. These services include:

- Grades K-12 integrated classroom instruction – math; reading/language arts; English as a second language; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (summer school); and tutorial support (during the regular academic year)
- Secondary school services to assist high school students in achieving graduation, as well as postsecondary and career preparation
  - Outreach and instruction in HSED preparation, life skills, and English as a second language for out-of-school youths and those who have dropped out of school,
  - Ancillary support services, including health, nutrition, and transportation, and
  - Parent involvement activities.

During the regular school year, the local MEP project provides supplemental services, such as:

- Outreach and assistance to enroll in regular school year programs,
- Supplemental instructional or tutorial support,
- A migrant advocate who works with schools and families in areas of high concentration to make sure their needs are addressed, and

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<sup>113</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

- An annual meeting with the migrant staff, high school counselor, and the student to review and update the student’s graduation plan.
- iv. **Describe how the state and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use funds received under Title I, Part C to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the state will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year (e.g., through use of the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), among other vehicles).**

Local operating agency data entry specialists enter information for eligible migrant children and youth in MIS-2000. MIS-2000 files are transmitted daily to MSIX. MIS-2000 student records include demographics, enrollments, course history, health and immunization information, and assessment results. Illinois has established timelines for entry of information in line with the MSIX regulations. Local operating agencies use MIS-2000 and MSIX to gather information about newly arrived migrant children and youth to facilitate school placement and provision of appropriate services.<sup>114</sup>

Illinois is part of several multistate consortia that seek to improve the identification and recruitment, policies, and educational services and programs for migrant students:

- Two migrant incentive grant consortia: Identification & Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium and Graduation and Innovative Strategies for OSY and Secondary Youth.
- Illinois also participates in MSIX.

Being part of these consortia has enabled Illinois to establish a system that ensures that school records are transferred from one school to another in a timely manner when migrant students cross state borders. Illinois is in contact with neighboring states to ensure that migrant students are identified and provided with services. Further, Illinois has developed relationships with school districts in sending states as well as other migrant programs to ensure continuity for migrant students who leave Illinois’ schools in the middle of the academic year.

- v. **Describe the unique educational needs of the state’s migratory children, including preschool<sup>115</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, based on the state’s most recent comprehensive needs assessment.**

Based on the most recent CNA, the following are indicators of the unique education needs of Illinois migratory children:

**For English Language Arts and Mathematics**

- Migratory student proficiency rates in ELA need to increase by 27 points on the IAR and 33.4 points on the SAT to be on track with non-migratory peers.
- Migratory student proficiency rates in mathematics need to increase by 21.3 points on the IAR and 29.6 points on the SAT to be on track with non-migratory peers.

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<sup>114</sup> This includes children identified through Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

<sup>115</sup> Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

**For School Readiness for Preschool Children**

- Beginning July 1, 2026, the Early Childhood Block Grant and associated programs will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

**For High School Graduation**

- The percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students passing Algebra 1, which is required for graduation, needs to increase by 26.9 points to meet long-term graduation rate target of 90%.

**Out-of-School-Youth Achievement**

- OSY participation in instruction aligned to pathways toward their goals and graduation need to increase.

**For Ancillary and Support Services**

- Migratory family and child access to support services and health and nutrition information needs to increase.

**vi. Describe the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Title I, Part C, and the strategies the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes consistent with section 1304(b)(1)(D) of the ESEA.**

ISBE has established Measurable Program Outcomes to determine whether the program has met the unique educational needs of migrant children and youth as identified through the CNA. These outcomes are updated periodically as part of the continuous planning process. The current Service Delivery Plan establishes Measurable Program Outcomes for the following areas:

**English Language Arts and Mathematics**

**1a:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, migratory students in grades K-8 participating in a summer program for at least 3 weeks will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in reading / literacy between pre- and post-test using an appropriate performance-based reading / literacy assessment.

**1b:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 70% of migratory students in grades K-8 participating in the MEP regular year reading / literacy instructional services for at least 3 months will demonstrate above average performance or one level gain in reading / literacy skills as measured by a classroom teacher observation tool that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of reading / literacy achievement.

**1c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, migratory students in grades K-8 participating in a summer program for at least 3 weeks will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in math between pre- and post-test using an appropriate performance-based math assessment.

**1d:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 70% of migratory students in grades K-8 participating in the MEP regular year mathematics instructional services for at least 3 months will demonstrate above average performance or one level gain in math skills as measured by a classroom teacher observation tool that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of math.

**1e:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, the percent of identified migratory children in grades K-12 who participate in MEP instructional services will increase to 44%.

### **High School Graduation**

**3a:** By the end of summer 2026, the percentage of eligible migratory students in grades 9-11 who participate in summer programs will increase to 35%.

**3b:** By the end of summer 2026, 75% of secondary-aged migratory students (those attending a field-based program and those in a center-based program for a sufficient amount of time to show progress [about 3 weeks in summer programs or 3 months in the regular term]) will make progress toward instructional learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Services Plan.

**3c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 80% of migratory high school students enrolled in schools served by migrant projects for at least 3 months during the regular school year will work with MEP staff and their counselor to complete or update and sign their graduation plan.

### **Out-of-School-Youth Achievement**

**4a:** By the end of summer 2026, 70% of migratory OSY engaged in instructional services for a sufficient amount of time to show progress (typically 3 weeks) will make measurable progress toward the instructional / learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Service Plan.

**4b:** By the end of summer 2026, 70% of the migratory OSY who completed OSY lessons during the regular year or summer will gain 5% on curriculum-based lesson assessments.

**4c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, the percentage of migratory OSY identified who participate in instructional services will increase to 50%.

### **Ancillary and Support Services**

**5a:** As a result of MEP coordination / collaboration activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents who engage in parent activities and complete the parent survey will report that they received information about support and academic services (e.g., health, nutrition, transportation, other support services) to promote the health, well-being, and knowledge of support services and community resources for their children.

**5b:** As a result of MEP-sponsored parent engagement activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents participating in MEP activities will report satisfactory ability to support their child's success in school as measured on the parent engagement survey.

**5c:** As a result of MEP-sponsored parent engagement activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents participating in MEP activities will report satisfactory ability to support their child's success in school as measured on the parent engagement survey.

### **Evaluation**

Illinois conducts an evaluation of the MEP to ensure that services are implemented as intended; to document the success of services for program validation; and analyze information to identify the strengths of services and the areas targeted for improvement. To address the impact of the full range of federal, state, and local education services that are available to migrant students in Illinois, migrant student performance relative to state targets is reviewed to determine the gap between actual and expected levels of performance. The evaluation utilizes the measurable program outcomes, developed through the SDP planning process in consultation with other local, state, and federal programs, to review the impact of migrant specific services in Illinois. As such, the evaluation considers program outcomes for elementary and middle school students learning reading and mathematics, high school students, out-of-school youth, and those who have dropped out of school through separate measures. In addition to outcomes, the evaluation also encompasses a review of the implementation of SDP strategies by local projects.

- vii. **Describe how the SEA will ensure there is consultation with parents of migratory children, including parent advisory councils, at both the state and local level, in the planning and operation of Title I, Part C programs that span not less than one school year in duration, consistent with section 1304(c)(3) of the ESEA.**

Illinois convenes a Migrant Parent Advisory Group at the state level and requires local projects that operate for one school year in duration to also convene a local parent advisory group. These groups provide advice and feedback about the MEP and how it could better serve their children's needs. All MEP projects conduct parent surveys during the summer to gather information about their satisfaction with the program and to ascertain ways to improve the academic quality of the programs. Survey responses are analyzed and the results are included in the annual program evaluation. Illinois has developed a series of parent workshops based on survey responses that focuses on topics of interest that are offered in different locations throughout the state.

- viii. **Describe the SEA's priorities for use of Title I, Part C funds, specifically related to the needs of migratory children with "priority for services" under section 1304(d) of the ESEA, including:**

- 1. The measures and sources of data the SEA, and if applicable, its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use to identify those migratory children who are a priority for services; and**
- 2. When and how the SEA will communicate those determinations to all local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, in the state.**

The state establishes Title I, Part C funding parameters aligned with the results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the Service Delivery Plan that specifically target the needs of migratory children with "priority for services" (PFS). The Title I, Part C grant application requires local funded entities to identify and give priority for service to PFS children and youth and to provide services that address the special needs of migratory children in accordance with the Illinois Service Delivery Plan.

Beginning July 1, 2017, PFS migratory children will be those who have made a qualifying move within the previous one-year period and who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet state academic standards or have dropped out of school. Currently, Illinois utilizes the following student characteristics to identify those who are most at risk of failing or have dropped out of school:

- Failed to meet state standards on state reading and/or math assessments;
- English Learner;
- Over-age for grade (e.g., student is older – two-plus years – than a typical student in that grade);
- Retained in grade;
- Failed one or more core high school courses;
- Out-of-school youth or dropped out of school;
- Special education student
- Homeless / Eligible for McKinney-Vento Services

Data documenting previous moves and age is taken from the COE. Failure to meet state standards comes from assessment results on the state academic assessments. ELs are identified with state screening tools or annual English language proficiency assessment results. School records are used to document other criteria, including students being retained in a grade, students failing one or more high school courses, and students with IEPs or 504 Plans.

When a migrant child/youth is first identified, the recruiter collects information on the COE that relates to PFS. Local project staff compile relevant information from school records, migrant student databases (including MSIX), and family interviews. PFS data for each migrant child and youth is entered in the state database by data entry

specialists following timelines that conform to MSIX regulations. The state database uses current data to make PFS determinations for each migrant child/youth and produces a PFS report that includes the criteria used to make the determination for each child. Local projects generate the PFS report and use the detail provided to tailor services to the particular needs of each child/youth. Should the availability of migrant program services be limited, PFS children/youth receive priority for services.

### C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

#### i. Describe the SEA's plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

ISBE provides technical assistance to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) and the LEAs concerning transitional services to ensure ongoing academic engagement of the youth between the two entities. Transition coordinators for youth in the facility help youth and families as they enter and exit facilities. The goal of these coordinators is to reduce the time between the transition of records for some of the state's most vulnerable youth and to improve coordination across school districts for services and supports available for these youth. The services should include IDEA, workforce, and training services.

The state's plan is to assist the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs, including supporting comprehensive strategies to re-engage these youth, and offer community supports that improve the likelihood of success in communities with significant numbers of disconnected youth. ISBE will coordinate with IDJJ, neglected and delinquent institutions, and service agencies to coordinate services on behalf of youth served under this part. This will provide opportunities for successful school re-entry and/or employment after they leave the institution and return to the local community.

Detailed transition plans are required for LEAs and agencies to complete in their application for funding. ISBE continues to support in-service training on programs and activities that IDJJ and the LEA may use to promote transitional services. These programs and activities can assist the LEA and the correctional facilities in developing a working relationship to accomplish a high-quality transitional program for the neglected or delinquent population.

IDJJ, in applying for these funds, completes an application that describes the type of transition services that will be used for students entering or leaving the institutions for schools served by LEAs, postsecondary institutions, or vocational and technical training programs. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Replacement programs that allow adjudicated or incarcerated youth to audit or attend courses on college, university, or community college campuses or through programs provided in institutional settings.
- Work-site schools in which institutions of higher education and private or public employers partner to create programs to help students make a successful transition to postsecondary education and employment.
- Essential support services to ensure the success of the youth such as:
  - Orientation programs, including transition centers in high schools and institutions;
  - Pupil services, including counseling, psychological, and social work services designed to meet the needs of neglected or delinquent children and youth;
  - Tutoring and mentoring programs;
  - Instruction and training at alternative schools and learning centers;
  - Services of in-school advocates on behalf of individual neglected or delinquent youth;
  - Information concerning and assistance in obtaining available student financial aid; and

- Job placement services.
- ii. **Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the state that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program, including the knowledge and skills needed to earn a regular high school diploma and make a successful transition to postsecondary education, career and technical education, or employment.**

The targets that ISBE has established for its use in assessing the effectiveness of Title I, Part D in improving the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students being served by the program are:

1. Educational services for children and youth in local, tribal, and state institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth that increase the opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic content standards and challenging state academic standards that all children in the state are expected to meet in order to obtain a high school diploma as measured by increased performance on annual state assessment and graduation rates;
2. Children and youth services which provide successful institutional and further schooling or employment transition. This will be measured by reducing the number of students in secure facilities; and
3. Youth services which include support systems to ensure continued education and the involvement of their families and communities as measured by increased attendance rates after reentry into an LEA or transition program.

The performance indicators and the data sources are a combination of ISBE academic indicators and LEA information. The LEA will submit to ISBE a comprehensive assessment of individual students which may consist of standardized tests, informal measures, observations, student self-reports, parent reports, and program monitoring (i.e., response to intervention approaches). Each individual institution/LEA collects achievement data based on the tests given at that institution and submits its assessment plan as part of its application. The LEA/institution is responsible for evaluating the results of the data and maintaining this information on file. The neglected or delinquent program requires the applicant to describe its assessment plan, including the tests that will be administered to the youth and how the results of the tests will help to improve the neglected or delinquent program. ISBE currently collects the results of the tests. In the FY 2027 grant application process, ISBE will require the applicant to describe its assessment plan description. Only those students attending a public school, although they live in the institution, will take the state tests. Agencies and LEAs will be required to submit a report biannually that reflects growth toward performance and assessment goals and targets. Additionally, ISBE collects demographic information and monitors the number of students participating in the neglected or delinquent services and the services provided. ISBE also collects information and data while providing technical assistance, such as on-site visits, to correctional institutions and local neglected or delinquent institutions. These program objectives and outcomes will assess the effectiveness in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of youth served in local or state secure-care institution.

#### **D. Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students**

- i. **Describe the SEA's standardized entrance and exit procedures for English Learners consistent with section 3113(b)(2) of the ESEA. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the state. At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must:**
  1. **Include a score of proficient on the state's annual English language proficiency assessment**
  2. **Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the English Learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes; and**
  3. **Not include performance on an academic content assessment.**

Each district administers the home language survey (HLS) to all students enrolling for the first time in kindergarten, or any of grades 1 through 12. Illinois plans to maintain the current practice of identifying ELs early and providing quality early childhood education that matches a child's cultural and linguistic needs. It is vital to consider native language screening and assessment in early childhood settings; teachers will not capture a full understanding of a student's knowledge and skills if they only assess children in the language in which they are least proficient. The HLS is administered in order to identify students who have a language background other than English, based on the language(s) used at home. A student is given a prescribed screening instrument to assess English language proficiency within 30 days of the student's enrollment. First semester kindergarten are tested in aural language (Listening and Speaking) while students in second semester kindergarten to grade 12 are tested in four domains of English; that is, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each student whose score on the prescribed screening instrument is "not proficient" shall be considered an English Learner and thus eligible for, and placed in, an appropriate language assistance program.

All kindergarten to grade 12 English Learners are assessed annually with the state's English language proficiency assessment. This assessment tool includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills components. ISBE revised the state definition in 2017 for English language proficiency to be applied to all English Learners. As a result, English Learners who obtained an overall composite score of 4.8 on the state's English language proficiency assessment are considered English language proficient. Students are then exited from the program of bilingual services and no longer identified as English Learners.

English Learners will be assessed annually for English proficiency in grades K-12 and for English language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11 and in science in grades 5, 8 and 11. Illinois will assess newly arrived ELs, enrolled in their first year in US schools in the identified grades in academic content areas: English language arts, mathematics and science. Data from the first-year assessments will not be included in accountability determination but serve solely for baseline purposes.

ii. **SEA Support for English Learner Progress (*ESEA section 3113(b)(6)*): Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:**

1. **The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and**
2. **The challenging State academic standards.**

ISBE will assist school districts in appropriately targeting English learners who have demonstrated significant lags in academic progress although having participated in a Transitional Bilingual Program or Transitional Programs of Instruction for five years or longer. ISBE will work directly with or provide technical assistance to districts to concentrate ongoing goals that identify long-term English learners and specifically provide instructional learning strategies for secondary students that address growth in reading and math. Further assistance will include backward planning to provide appropriate cultural and linguistic strategies for English learners starting in middle schools and is inclusive of professional learning for teachers in general education classrooms.

ISBE will provide assistance to school districts struggling to have their English Learners meet the rigorous challenges set forth in the Illinois State Standards. By building on the English learners' cultural and linguistic strengths, ISBE will aid school districts by providing sustained professional learning to professional staff.<sup>116</sup>

iii. **Monitoring and Technical Assistance (ESEA section 3113(b)(8)): Describe:**

1. **How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and**
2. **The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.**

ISBE will monitor the progress of English learners in attaining English language proficiency by collecting and analyzing data regarding students' growth and proficiency on the state's language proficiency assessment (viz., ACCESS 2.0).

Programming monitoring of the ESSA programs (specifically Title III) for English Learners is performed by the staff of the Multilingual/Language Development Department at ISBE. In addition, state required programming for English Learners is performed during this review. The monitoring review includes both desk auditing of data and evidence required to be supplied by districts as well as on-site visits by department staff. Districts are chosen for English Learners program monitoring through an annual risk-based selection process using various data inputs, such as the district's English Learner progress to proficiency, disproportionality of dually identified students (special education and English Learner), and number of prior issues noted during applications to ISBE (i.e., high number of parent refusals for EL services). Stakeholder input (such as formal complaints) from ISBE program employees, district employees, and community members is included in the risk assessment, as appropriate.

Additionally, ISBE will oversee student data that crosswalks both English learners and former English learners' performance on the ACCESS 2.0 and the IAR. Districts in which scores of English learners and former English learners lag behind their non-EL counterparts on the IAR will be provided interventions and supports. Districts consistently demonstrating a lag in EL progress will be monitored to ensure native language programs are in adherence to research-based interventions and strategies that are consistent with WIDA's English Language Development Standards and services are conforming to the 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 228, Article 14C and Title III.

## E. Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

- i. **Describe how the SEA will use its Title IV, Part B, and other federal funds to support state-level strategies that are consistent with the strategies identified in 6.1.A starting on page 60.**

Title IV(b) funding will be leveraged with other federal funds to increase the state's ability to address performance gaps in learning and healthy development for the most vulnerable children; meaningfully engage families as critical partners; connect community systems with schools and districts in sustainable ways; and, in partnership with the afterschool statewide network, ensure implementation of high-quality out-of-school time programming throughout the state that leads to increased student achievement.

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<sup>116</sup> Some of this assistance can occur through School/District Improvement. Additional assistance may occur through other TA and professional learning provided directly by ISBE.

Two percent of the funds will be used for state administration. This includes using funds to pay for administration and peer reviewers of the subgrant applications. Peer reviewers will be used in the review of the proposals using a rubric based on the criteria for review in the Request for Proposal. No less than three peer reviewers will read each proposal. Each peer reviewer's score will then be averaged to determine the score of the grant. Each reviewer will fill out a conflict of interest and a confidentiality agreement before they will review the grant proposals. These administrative activities will be done in consultation with the Governor's Office and other state agencies responsible for administering youth development programs and adult learning activities.<sup>117</sup>

Five percent of the funds will be used for state activities. The funds will be used to pay for the following as outlined in ESSA, Title IV, Part B, Section 4202 (c)(3):

- Monitoring and evaluating programs and activities.
- Providing capacity building, training, and technical assistance.
- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation (directly or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities assisted.
- Providing training and technical assistance to eligible entities that are applicants for or recipients of awards.
- Ensuring that any eligible entity that receives an award under this part from the state aligns the activities provided by the program with the challenging state academic standards.
- Ensuring that any such eligible entity identifies and partners with external organizations, if available, in the community.
- Working with teachers, principals, parents, the local workforce, the local community, and other stakeholders to review and improve state policies and practices to support the implementation of effective programs.
- Coordinating funds received with other federal and state funds to implement high-quality programs.
- Providing a list of prescreened external organizations, as described under Section 4203(a)(11).

The remaining 93 percent of funds will be awarded to eligible applicants through competitive subgrants using a peer review process. A financial and programmatic risk assessment will need to be completed in order to receive the funds.

**ii. Describe the SEA's processes, procedures, and priorities used to award subgrants consistent with the strategies identified in 6.1.A. starting on page 60 and to the extent permitted under applicable law and regulations.**

Illinois awards subgrants on a competitive process to school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers, state-authorized charter schools, and other public and private entities. An eligible entity must serve schools with 40 percent or higher low-income student population. A Notice of Funding Opportunity is released on the ISBE website and through the GATA website. The applicants have 45 days to submit their proposal. The applications are scored by a minimum of three

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<sup>117</sup> These agencies include, but are not limited to, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Illinois Community College Board.

peer reviewers using a merit-based review. Applications are also reviewed by ISBE staff to ensure eligibility and meeting past performance criteria.<sup>118</sup> Applicants are required to describe in the narrative how they will meet the needs of student subgroups, including how activities are expected to improve student academic achievement, which aligns to the Illinois Learning Standards as well as overall student success, integrate quality programming standards, and engage stakeholders on an ongoing basis. ISBE or an external technical assistance provider will provide support to grantees around areas of needs including a focus on how the learning centers will align their programs with the Illinois Learning Standards. This will be done through such activities as site visits, webinars, Project Directors meetings, or conferences. Following the initial award of a subgrant, continuation beyond the initial funding period is based on whether a subgrantee has made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives stated in its approved proposal. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees will be monitored on what they proposed in their grant to ensure the fidelity of the program, specifically on evidence that the programming will support students in achieving local and state academic standards.

Grantees will also conduct 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program monitoring, fiscal and programmatic risk assessment each year when they apply. The programmatic risk assessment includes the review of the grantees proposed target of their activities to improve the student achievement in their programs. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff will monitor these grants through the ISBE monitoring plan. If programs are found to not be achieving their goals, they will be provided with technical assistance to address the potential impediments to them doing so. The grantee could be at risk of not being funded in future years if this is not corrected. Monitoring of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees will be connected to the required risk assessments completed as part of the awarding of the grant process.

## F. Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

### iii. **Provide the SEA's specific measurable program objectives and outcomes related to activities under the Rural and Low-Income School Program, if applicable.**

Districts deemed eligible for Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) funds by the U.S. Department of Education are expected to use their funding for activities to increase the academic achievement of students. ISBE will continue to use the academic achievement of students, as described in Illinois' multi-measures accountability system, to evaluate fulfillment of program objectives.

### iv. **Outcomes and Objectives (ESEA section 5223(b)(1)): Provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards.**

Districts primarily use Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) funds for activities to increase the academic achievement of students. As part of their annual Consolidated District Plan application, grantees are required to provide a description of how the funds are linked to student achievement and the budgeting for funds must reflect the information provided in the programmatic descriptions. Thus, the program objective will be to measure the academic achievement of students, as defined in the state's academic achievement indicators, to drive the program.

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<sup>118</sup> The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has a provision that includes priority points for serving lowest-performing eligible schools. Information is included in the NOFO to coordinate with other programs that work with the subgroups.

- v. **Technical Assistance (*ESEA section 5223(b)(3)*): Describe how the SEA will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222.**

ISBE shall provide technical assistance to districts to assist in implementing approved program activities and tie fiscal decisions to improved student achievement. Technical assistance may be offered through webinars, conference presentations, and conferences via telephone and video options, and may include one on one assistance to LEA staff by ISBE staff.

## G. McKinney-Vento Act

- ii. **Consistent with section 722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act, describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the state and assess their needs.**

ISBE has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same educational opportunities to be successful learners as all other children and youth. Ensuring that all Illinois students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the 21st century is a challenge that public schools face because of the large increase in homelessness over the past five years. Cross-coordination of programs is essential to the goal in ESSA that all students, including homeless children and youth, will meet state academic standards.

ISBE will prepare and disseminate to LEAs guidance documents, notices, or letters summarizing the new and existing Education for Homeless Children and Youth program requirements and share McKinney-Vento guidance provided by ED. Notices will be provided on the ISBE website and through trainings and workshops.

Illinois is a regionally designed state that has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same opportunities to be successful learners as all children and youth. The landscape for providing those opportunities is coordinated by the Illinois' state coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth. The state coordinator oversees an Office of the Coordinator and Lead Area Liaisons (LALs). The LAL will provide professional development and technical assistance to the LEA homeless liaisons and school staff on removing the barriers to homeless children and youth education. The barriers (e.g., lack of immunization and health records, birth certificates, school records and other documents, residency documents required for non-homeless students, guardianship issues) must be removed and the homeless children and youth must be immediately enrolled. The LAL and the LEA liaison must work together to meet the requirements. Uniform dress code requirements will be addressed by the LAL and LEA homeless liaison. Title 1, Part A funds may be used to remove this barrier.

Homeless children and youth in Illinois will be identified by school personnel and through coordination of activities with other entities, such as homeless shelters and community service agencies. The Common Form<sup>119</sup> was created for LEAs to use when enrolling homeless children and youth. The homeless education liaisons are trained to educate and work closely with all personnel in the school district as well as with community social service agencies and Continuum of Care programs to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified.<sup>120</sup> Continuum of Care programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are represented in every Illinois community and are responsible for locally coordinating services to homeless families.

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<sup>119</sup> To access the Common Form, go to <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-01-common-form.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> To access the Continuum of Care Contacts, go to <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/illinois/homeless/cocontacts>

A close working relationship between homeless education liaisons and staff of the Continuum of Care programs is critical to meeting the educational and support services needed by homeless families. A key part of training for school personnel and social service agencies will be to emphasize the need to sensitively identify families in homeless situations and the need to be respectful of the families' privacy. Sensitive questions to ask when dealing with homeless families can be found on the Schoolhouse Connection website at <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/determining-mckinney-vento-eligibility-guiding-questions-for-liaisons>.

- iii. **Describe the SEA's programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, school counselors, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are runaway and homeless youths.**

All school personnel continue to gain in understanding of the specific needs of homeless children and youths by participating in ongoing trainings on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Program conducted by LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons.

LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will work collaboratively to identify homeless youths not currently attending school. The liaisons will work to ensure that these youths are connected to available services in the community and will help them to enroll in available before- and after-school programs, as appropriate.

The LAL will be responsible for providing technical assistance to the LEA homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth receive counseling services either through the school district or community services providers. The LAL and the LEA homeless liaison will work collaboratively with the School Counselor to advise and assist homeless children and youths to prepare and improve their readiness for college. Furthermore, the MVSSC shall include in its charge additional resources and guidance for school districts to make connections with institutions of higher learning.

Unaccompanied youths include young people who have run away from home, been thrown out of their homes, and/or have been abandoned by parents/guardians/caregivers. Unaccompanied youths have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness. These young people are separated from their parents for a variety of reasons. They face unique barriers to enrolling and succeeding in school. Without a parent or guardian to advocate for them and exercise parental rights, they are sometimes denied enrollment and remain out of school for extended periods of time. They may not understand their educational rights or know how to acquire this information. Removal of barriers to transportation, immediate enrollment, and the right to return to the school of origin must be addressed.<sup>121</sup> ISBE ensures that schools are doing this through monitoring and through continuous trainings and contact with LEA homeless liaisons.

State law (110 ILCS 131/1) mandates that each institution of higher education shall designate at least one staff member to serve as a liaison to assist homeless students and youth in care enrolled at the institution. The colleges are to collaborate with LEA liaisons to facilitate the efficient transition of homeless students and youth in care from secondary to postsecondary education.

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<sup>121</sup> For additional information on the rights of unaccompanied youths, please access <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/youth.pdf>.

Unaccompanied youths with special needs: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 offers guidelines pertaining to unaccompanied youths with disabilities as defined by IDEA.<sup>122</sup>

Activities	Timelines
LALs provide technical assistance and training to school districts to provide effective district-higher education collaboration.	Ongoing
Monitoring of sub-grantees annually to ensure post-secondary referrals and assistance to students.	Ongoing
LALs conduct monitoring within their regional area to ensure LEA referrals and assistance to students.	Ongoing

**iv. Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths are promptly resolved.**

Ensuring that families have equal access to educational opportunities is of critical importance to Illinois’ McKinney-Vento program. Equally as important is the ability of students and families to be afforded procedural due process rights in cases where a district disagrees with an assertion of homelessness or issues related to homelessness. The Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act [105 ILCS 45] provides the basis for dispute resolution procedures by requiring that the applicable regional superintendent of schools “appoint ombudsperson who is fair and impartial and familiar with the educational rights and needs of homeless children to provide resource information and resolve disputes at schools within his or her jurisdiction relating to the rights of homeless children under this Act.”<sup>123</sup> In furtherance of the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act and in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, ISBE’s Dispute Resolution for Students Experiencing Homelessness was added into the Illinois Administrative Code effective February 5, 2024.<sup>124</sup> An overview of the dispute resolution process is outlined below.

**Overview of Dispute Resolution**

The dispute resolution process must be the last resort used to bridge disagreements between a school district and a student/family. Prior to initiating dispute resolution, the district’s local homeless liaison shall attempt to resolve the disagreement informally.

**The dispute resolution process contained herein is:**

- The only process to formally determine the outcome of a homeless-related dispute between an eligible student and a district;
- A method of sensitively resolving disagreements with respect to eligibility;
- To be used for resolving disputes regarding enrollment, full participation in school activities, transportation, and any other issue related to a pupil’s homelessness;

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<sup>122</sup> For additional information on unaccompanied youths with special needs, please see <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 45/1-25 (a).

<sup>124</sup> 23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.241

- To be structured as informally as possible in order to allow parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth as much assistance as possible in navigating the process.

**The dispute resolution process contained herein is not:**

- A formal legal proceeding, administrative hearing (under the Administrative Procedures Act) or judicial hearing;
- An opportunity to vet disagreements about any other matter other than issues related to homelessness;
- An opportunity for a district to intimidate, scorn, or otherwise marginalize a pupil or family;
- An opportunity for pupils or parents to unlawfully gain access to a district's educational program.

**Topics and Scenarios Covered Under Dispute Resolution**

Any issue related to homelessness or the homeless-related claim of a student or family shall be eligible for dispute resolution. Topics eligible for dispute resolution include, but are not limited to, homeless or alleged homeless impacts on eligibility, registration, enrollment, transportation, access to curricular and extracurricular programs, and fee waivers. Nothing in this plan shall be construed as intending to vet issues not related to homelessness through dispute resolution.

**Immediate Enrollment, Transportation and Services**

The student must be enrolled, provided transportation, or otherwise provided services sought immediately upon request. Enrollment, transportation, or services cannot be delayed prior to or during dispute resolution and such enrollment, transportation or services shall be provided until the conclusion of dispute resolution.

**Dispute Resolution in Detail**

The district must issue a letter to the parent/guardian or youth explaining, with a degree of specificity, the district's position as to the homelessness-related dispute. In this letter, the district must also include referrals to free/reduced cost legal help and an outline of the dispute resolution procedure. The district must copy on such letter the applicable regional superintendent of schools and Illinois' State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth ("State Coordinator"). Within ten (10) school days after receiving such notice, the regional superintendent of schools shall appoint an ombudsperson to hear the dispute.

If possible, within ten (10) school days of his or her appointment, the ombudsperson shall convene a meeting with the district and student or family. The regional homeless liaison and lead area liaison may also attend such meeting.

The ombudsperson shall be responsible for setting clear rules, timelines and expectations for all parties and may:

- Require each party to make an opening statement;
- Limit the amount of time per party to present information;
- Ask questions of each party as he or she feels fit;
- Limit redundant testimony or testimony not directly related to homeless claims;
- Make allowances for parents who might not be experts in limiting their argument or knowing how to put on a presentation of facts;

The Ombudsperson shall, as part of the meeting, allow for a complete presentation of relevant facts by all parties. The child and/or his or her parent or guardian should be allowed to have assistance from a legal representative knowledgeable of federal and state laws pertaining to homeless students' educational rights.

Prior to the dispute resolution meeting, the ombudsperson must inform all parties that they may request copies of documents that will be used by the other party during the meeting. Such requests must be received within five (5) school days of the meeting.

Within ten (10) school days after the conclusion of the dispute resolution meeting if possible, the ombudsperson shall make a written determination on a form supplied by the ISBE as to the issue under disagreement. The form, at a minimum, shall include the following:

SECTION	CONTENT
Background Information	Name of the district and school; name of the parent/guardian and student(s); and the nature of the dispute.
Individuals in Attendance	A complete listing of all individuals present for the dispute resolution meeting and their professional titles.
Case-Specific Timelines	Timeline of procedural events, including: the date the district invoked dispute resolution; the date the dispute resolution meeting was convened; and the date of the final determination of the Ombudsperson.
The Arguments	The arguments and positions of each party, including the evidence, testimony and documentation used in support.
Discussion	The Ombudsperson’s discussion of the parties’ arguments, including the weight to be given to each. If the Ombudsperson does not agree with or support an argument made by one of the parties, a discussion of why s/he feels such should be discounted in making a final determination.
Fixed, Regular and Adequate Analysis	The Ombudsperson must complete an analysis as to the current living situation of the student(s) and make findings as to whether or not such living situation is fixed, regular and adequate.
Final Determination	The final determination, finding the student(s) either “homeless” or “not homeless” pursuant to federal law and state law/policy. The date of the final determination must be explicitly noted.
Notice of Right to Appeal	Notice of the parties’ right to appeal the final determination to the State Coordinator for Homeless Education. Such notice must include all of the language referencing appeals in the State Policy.

**Appealing the Determination of the Ombudsperson**

Either party may, within five (5) school days of the ombudsperson’s determination, send a written request to the State Coordinator asking the State Coordinator to review such decision for compliance with applicable law. Such request must include any documentation related to the dispute resolution proceeding. The request may be made via U.S. Mail or via email.

Upon receiving a request for review, the State Coordinator shall direct the ombudsperson to submit all documents, notes, transcripts, and other materials used by all parties to present their respective cases. The State Coordinator may also request from either party any additional information that he or she deems relevant to determining compliance with applicable law.

No later than fifteen (15) school days after receiving the request for review, the State Coordinator shall make a final decision regarding the ombudsperson’s decision and the appropriate placement of the student (deferring, in this review, to any and all findings of fact by the Ombudsperson).

If the State Superintendent of Education or designee determines that the district’s action giving rise to the dispute is inconsistent with applicable law, he/she may order the district to take any action necessary for such

district to be in compliance with applicable law. Should the district not comply with such order, the State Superintendent shall place the district’s recognition status on probation in accordance with 23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.20(b).

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES
Train LEA homeless education liaisons in dispute resolution processes via LALs.	Ongoing
Train homeless education liaisons in their duties to represent homeless youth who may be involved in a disagreement related to their homeless status and education via LALs.	Ongoing

- v. **Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that that youths described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youths described in this paragraph from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.**

LEA homeless liaisons are required to ensure that homeless youth, unaccompanied homeless youth, and youth separated from public schools are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as non-homeless children and youths and are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965. Youths must be assured that they may obtain assistance from the LEA homeless liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (Section 722(g)(6)(A)(x)). Liaisons must assist unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools in receiving the help they need from counselors to advise and prepare them for college and ensure that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent students from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.

To ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including identifying and removing barriers that prevent the youth from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies, LEAs are expected to review a student’s previous school records to calculate, award, and receive partial credits from the prior school and participate in credit recovery opportunities, e.g., online learning, learning labs, and computerized modules. The LEA Homeless Liaison will lead the review process, along with school counselors, administrators, and other school staff, as designated by the LEA. The LAL may also be included in the process at the request of the LEA or at the request of the parent/guardian or youth.

Illinois does not currently have a uniform plan to ensure appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. However, if a dispute should arise between the LEA and the parent/guardian or youth regarding acceptance of the appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, the parent/guardian or youth has the right to appeal the decision through the Dispute Resolution process.

Per [105 ILCS 5/10-22.39](#) and as a requirement of the McKinney-Vento sub-grants, the LALs are required to provide outreach to homeless children and youth not in the public schools. During school district homeless liaison and administration trainings, the LALs train the districts on assistance in identifying homeless youth not currently enrolled in or attending school. The LALs and the school district liaisons partner with community service agencies and local community group to assist with identifying homeless youth not attending school.

The LAL and the LEA homeless education liaison will be responsible for annual trainings for district and program staff on the needs of runaway and homeless youth, including youth separated from the public schools. They will disseminate information about homeless youths and update information on unaccompanied youths and youth separated from public schools to all sites where youths may gather to educate and inform them of their rights. The LAL and LEA liaison will develop collaborative relationships with shelters and services providers focusing on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools. School district personnel will receive training on the educational right of unaccompanied youth, including guardianship issues that cannot exclude enrollment. Abiding by the guidelines, defined in the IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youth with a disability of special education needs will be addressed as well as the need for referral to social service agencies for needed services.

vi. **Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths:**

- 1. Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the state;**
- 2. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities; and**
- 3. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in federal, state, and local nutrition programs.**

Beginning July 1, 2026, preschool programs and birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

#### **Barriers to Academic and Extracurricular Activities**

Homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels.

Procedures in Illinois law eliminate barriers to academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)). Such legal provisions will be enforced via each LAL, who will monitor compliance and provide technical assistance to the districts in his/her charge. Further, information regarding the rights of homeless pupils with respect to equal access to such programs will be disseminated by the SEA and LALs via webinars, materials, guidance, and formal updates/communications.

Magnet schools, summer school programs, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs may be highly motivating or a necessary option for homeless children and youth to reach their highest education potential. The LAL will work with homeless children and youth and their families to assist in gaining access to these programs. In addition, the LAL will work with staff within the programs through trainings on the McKinney-Vento program and also through ongoing technical support to the programs.

Extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, theater, debate, and clubs often a key to engaging child and youth in school. They can provide students with a sense of belonging, stability, pride, and responsibility and strengthen a student's application for higher education admission and scholarships. Homelessness can create barriers to participation in extracurricular activities. Homeless students who change schools during the school year may not meet residency requirements related to sports or may enter school in the middle of the season. They may lack birth certificates, physical examinations, and other documents normally required prior to participation and may not be able to pay for equipment or fees. The McKinney-Vento Act provides legal rights and support to help ensure that students experiencing homelessness can participate fully in extracurricular school activities.

LEAs are required to enroll children and youths experiencing homelessness immediately. “Enroll” is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as specifically “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” Therefore, homeless students must be allowed to enroll and participate immediately in class and other academic activities and extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, and clubs.

Ongoing and close collaboration with the Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Elementary School Association to ensure alignment with policy and procedures regarding homeless children and youth will be an ongoing process for both ISBE and the LALs. Further, the Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Elementary School Association will have membership on the MVSSC. Trainings will be provided on the value of academic and extracurricular activities for homeless children and youth. The LAL and LEA homeless liaison will provide guidance to schools regarding removing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Nutrition Programs**

Materials developed and disseminated online include information regarding the right of homeless children and youths to receive services under the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program. These materials are reviewed and revised on a continuous basis to ensure that information is current and effectual and meets the needs of students experiencing homelessness and their families. School officials may accept documentation that the children are homeless from the local education liaisons or directors of homeless shelters where the children reside to expedite the delivery of nutritional programs. Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the child’s name or a list of names, effective date(s), and the signature of the local education liaison or the director of the homeless shelter. This documentation is acceptable in lieu of a free and reduced-price meal application.

Additionally, implementation of these expedited procedures encourages public school determination officials to work closely with the homeless education liaison to ensure that homeless children and youths are provided free meal benefits as promptly as possible. School food service personnel must be promptly advised when homeless children and youths leave school or are no longer considered homeless. Households or unaccompanied youths must be provided with an application for free and reduced-price meals when the family or youths are no longer considered homeless. The homeless education liaison must carefully evaluate each child’s situation.

Homeless children and youths residing with another household application process will not include the size and household income of the “host family” to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meal eligibility. The “host family” may now also be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on the total number in the household and can be provided temporary approval for this eligibility until the homeless family leaves the “host family” residence.

Unaccompanied youths or youth separated from public school who live alone are to be considered a household of one based on the definition of “emancipated child” in the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual. Section 107 (Runaway, Homeless, and Migrant Youth Directive USDA update from the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265, which amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act). It states that effective July 1, 2004, homeless, runaway, and migrant children are categorically eligible for free school meals. No application is required for these children, as they may be directly certified based on lists provided by the local shelter director, a school district homeless education liaison, a migrant education coordinator, or similar officials. The lists must contain the child’s name and a signature and date of the official making the determination. The eligibility lasts for the full school year regardless of changes in status as runaway, homeless, or migrant.

All homeless education liaisons are trained in using ISBE, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and McKinney-Vento guidance and materials. The USDA guidance also is used as a guide to state and local food programs. ISBE staff members who work with school nutrition programs are trained on an ongoing basis to maintain the most current information related to the USDA regulations pertaining to families with children or youths who are experiencing homelessness, on the McKinney-Vento Act, and on the role of the homeless education liaisons. They work with their contacts at local schools to make sure that local nutrition staff members are familiar with the local homeless education liaison.

A focus of all trainings provided to school districts is to best assist homeless families by ensuring that school forms brochures, websites, handbooks, and instructional materials reflect accurate information about homelessness and rights and are easily accessible. Further, training all staff, board members, and administrators responsible for school enrollment on Illinois and federal residency and homeless laws will be encouraged and will be offered via the LEA liaison and LAL.

Activities	Timelines
Train LAL and LEA homeless education liaisons on specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.	Ongoing
Distribute homeless youth posters.	Ongoing
Distribute updated information on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools to all sites where youth may gather to educate and inform them of their rights.	Ongoing
Development of collaborative relationships with shelters and services providers focusing on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
Train school district personnel on the educational rights of unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools, including guardianship issues that cannot exclude enrollment.	Ongoing
Establish enrollment procedures to accommodate unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools with direct referral to the LEA homeless education liaison to provide assistance to develop a surrogate educational advisor relationship for the youth regarding education decisions and use of the Caregiver Form <a href="https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf">https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf</a>	Ongoing
Abide by the guidelines defined in the IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools who have a disability or special education need.	Ongoing
Provide referral to social service agencies for services needed by unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
Present at regional and statewide meetings of school counselors on removing barrier to receiving full or partial coursework in accordance with State, local, and school policies.	Ongoing
Train districts on the responsibilities to identify, provide equal access and support services to unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
LAL will assist unaccompanied youth, youth separated from public schools, families/caregivers, and school counselors in accessing secondary education for the youth.	Ongoing
Collaborate with IHSA and IESA to ensure alignment with policy and procedures regarding homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
Provide training on the value of academic and extra-curricular activities for homeless children and youth.	Ongoing

LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will provide trainings and guidance to school district administrators, coaches, teachers, club sponsors, faculty advisors, and other district personnel regarding removing barriers to accessing academic and extra-curricular activities.	Ongoing
LALs will share district and local policies and procedures which expedite and support full participation of students experiencing homelessness, including magnet schools, summer school, career and technical education, advance placement, online learning, gifted and talented, and charter school programs.	Ongoing
SEA reviews current policy and adopts a modified one, as needed, to support federal and state law.	Ongoing
Collaborate with school districts to revise any local policies that are barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
Monitoring of sub-grantees annually to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.	Ongoing
LALs conduct monitoring within their regional area to ensure LEA compliance with McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.	Ongoing
Training of Lead Area Liaisons and district liaisons on the removal of barriers for students experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing

**vii. Describe the SEA’s strategies to address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays and retention, consistent with sections 722(g)(1)(H) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.**

Ongoing trainings are provided to liaisons and district staff on the removal of barriers for homeless children and youth. This information is shared with all district liaisons and addressed at all area trainings by the LALs. School districts are advised to review their school policy and make any revisions to policies that may not address barriers to homeless student enrollment.

ISBE considers the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth throughout Illinois as a high priority. It is the policy of the ISBE that every homeless child and youth be sensitively identified as required by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (“McKinney-Vento”), 42 U.S.C. § 11431 *et seq.*, that every such child or youth be enrolled in and attend the appropriate school on every school day, and that school admission for such children and youth be immediate and be handled sensitively and in a child and family-centered manner in accordance with McKinney-Vento and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act (IEHCA), 105 ILCS 45/1-1 *et seq.* This policy is promulgated with the intention of minimizing educational disruption for homeless children and youth and promoting stability and continuity in education as well as providing social supports during a period of housing in stability. Illinois law and regulations contain multiple provisions to remove barrier to education access for children and youth experiencing homelessness. ISBE specifically requires that barriers related to outstanding fees, fines, or absences be waived for homeless families. Furthermore, regardless of housing status, a student in Illinois cannot be denied educational services based upon outstanding school fees, fines, or absences. It is the expectation of ISBE that districts and LEA homeless liaisons will identify the needs of homeless pupils in this regard and ensure compliance with the law and regulations. In addition to fee, fines, and absence provisions, each of the issues below will be enforced through LAL or ISBE intervention through normal compliance, monitoring, and enforcement procedures. Failure to comply may result in the reduction in a school district’s state recognition status. Further, information regarding the rights of homeless pupils with respect to

equal access to such programs will be disseminated by the SEA and LALs via webinars, materials, guidance, and formal updates/communications.

**Requirements of Immunization and Other Required Health Records;**

LEAs must not delay the enrollment of homeless children or youth. If required health records are not readily available, the LEA homeless liaison must work with the parents/caregivers, unaccompanied youth, and youth separated from public schools to meet the health records requirement. The LAL may also provide assistance to the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth to obtain the necessary health records. Under no circumstance may a homeless student be denied enrollment because the inability to produce such documentation was caused by homelessness.

**Residency Requirements**

When responding to residency questions, districts need to think about whether the pupil at issue may be homeless as defined under federal (McKinney-Vento Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431) and Illinois (the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, 105 ILCS 45/1-1, or IEHCA) laws. Under both federal and Illinois law, school districts have an affirmative duty to identify homeless families within the district. Each school district's homelessness liaison must be involved to provide assistance to families who may be homeless, so that they are aware of their right to enroll their children in school. In all cases, however, the provisions of McKinney Vento supersede state laws on residency requirements.

**Lack of Birth Certificates, School Records, or Other Documentation;**

The LEA homeless liaison and the LAL will work with the parents/caregiver, unaccompanied youth, and youth separated from public schools to obtain the birth certificate. However, under Illinois law, no student may be denied enrollment based on not presenting a birth certificate or previous school records. The one exception is that transferring students must present a form that indicates that they are in "good standing" with respect to immunizations and not being disciplined by suspension or expulsion. However, it is the policy of ISBE that homeless students must be enrolled even without this form and the district should work to receive the document after enrollment.

State law ([410 ILCS 535/25.3](#)) provides free birth certificates to McKinney-Vento youth after certification from a public school homeless liaison or social worker.

**Guardianship Issues;**

With the exception of students with IEPs, guardianship of children or youth is not a requirement to enroll children and youth in school. The child is enrolled based on where they are currently residing or their "school of origin" (the school that they last attended when permanently housed). The Caregiver Form [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J\\_caregivers.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf) will provide necessary documentation for enrolling as a caregiver.

**Uniform or Dress Code Requirements.**

The LEA homeless liaisons and the LAL will work together to ensure that the children and youth meet the school's uniform or dress code requirements. Title 1, Part A funds may be used to remove this barrier.

**In General**

The LAL for each of the seven regions must ensure that homeless children receive the services that they need to become successful, lifelong learners. The LAL will work with other service providers in their region, such as Continuum of Care, shelters, food banks, and health and housing providers to assist families in homeless situations. Active working partnerships will allow all entities to be able to provide services that address the needs of homeless families and to identify children age birth to age 5 who are in need of early childhood education services.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES
LALs will provide training to school districts on removing barriers that could result in enrollment delay.	Ongoing
Collaborate with school districts to revise any local policies that are barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
LAL will assist families/caregivers, unaccompanied youth, and youth separated from public schools to relieve any barriers that might cause delay in enrollment.	Ongoing
SEA will work with IDPS and IDHS to inform them of McKinney-Vento rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and address the five barriers that may cause delay in enrollment.	Ongoing
LEA policies and procedures are reviewed as part of the LEA McKinney-Vento monitoring process conducted by the LAL.	Ongoing