

# APPENDIX B:

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

State Plan Development

Amendment 1

Amendment 2

Amendment 3

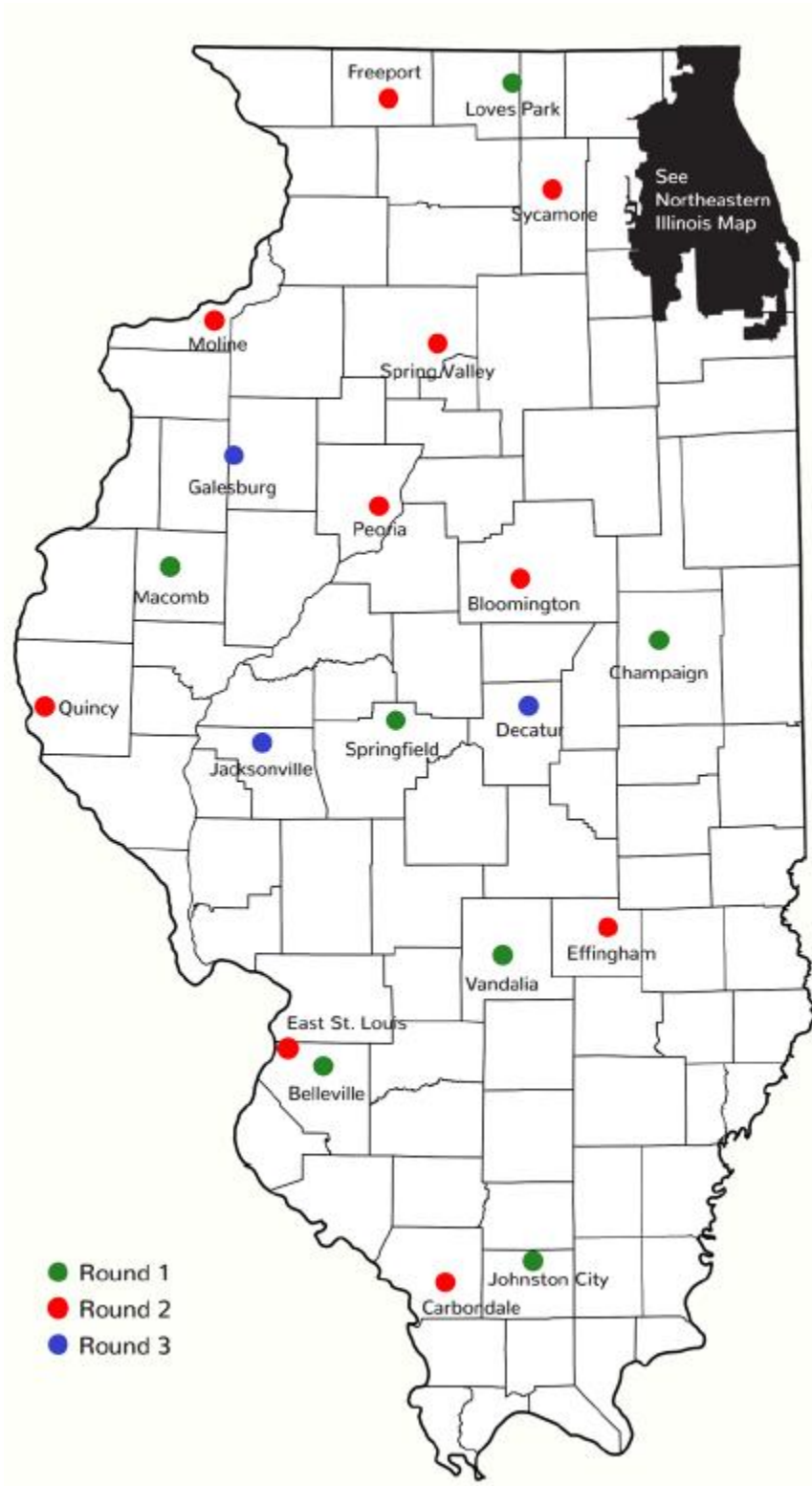
Amendment 4

Amendment 5

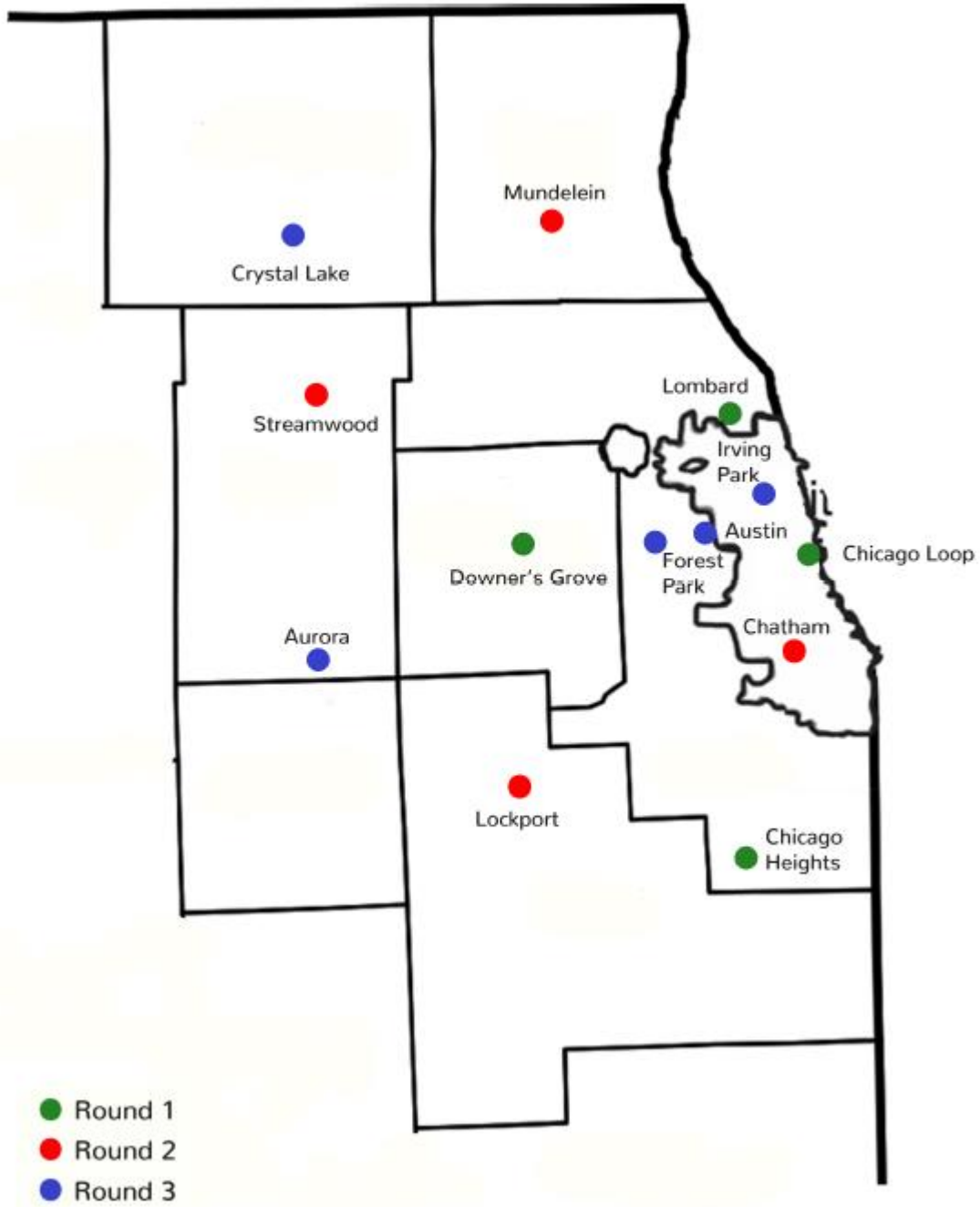
STATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

---

Listening Tour Map - Illinois



Listening Tour Map - Northeastern Illinois



ESSA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

December 10, 2015

ESSA passed

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. January 19, 2016</li> <li>2. January 29, 2016</li> <li>3. February 22, 2016</li> <li>4. February 23, 2016</li> <li>5. February 24, 2016</li> <li>6. February 24, 2016</li> <li>7. February 1, 2029</li> <li>8. March 2, 2016</li> <li>9. March 7, 2016</li> <li>10. March 9, 2016</li> <li>11. March 14, 2016</li> <li>12. March 22, 2016</li> <li>13. April 3 - 6, 2016</li> <li>14. April 11, 2016</li> <li>15. April 12, 2016</li> <li>16. April 18, 2016</li> <li>17. April 18, 2016</li> <li>18. April 19, 2016</li> <li>19. April 19, 2016</li> <li>20. April 21, 2016</li> <li>21. April 21, 2016</li> <li>22. April 25, 2016</li> <li>23. April 26, 2016</li> <li>24. April 27, 2016</li> <li>25. April 27, 2016</li> <li>26. May 3, 2016</li> <li>27. May 4, 2016</li> <li>28. May 5, 2016</li> <li>29. May 5, 2016</li> <li>30. May 10, 2016</li> <li>31. May 11, 2016</li> <li>32. May 12, 2016</li> <li>33. May 17, 2016</li> <li>34. May 19, 2016</li> <li>35. May 23, 2016</li> <li>36. June 6, 2016</li> <li>37. June 6, 2016</li> <li>38. June 7, 2016</li> <li>39. June 8, 2016</li> <li>40. June 13, 2016</li> <li>41. June 14, 2016</li> <li>42. June 14, 2016</li> </ol> | <p>DuPage Congressional Briefing</p> <p>Webinar with ROE 4</p> <p>NCLB Conference -ESSA Overview Presentation</p> <p>NCLB Conference -ESSA Overview Presentation</p> <p>NCLB Conference -ESSA Overview Presentation</p> <p>Consolidated Committee of Practitioners</p> <p>Balanced Accountability Measure Committee</p> <p>State Homeless Conferences</p> <p>P-20 Council</p> <p>Balanced Accountability Measure Committee</p> <p>Federal Congressional Briefing Call</p> <p>Stakeholders Meeting (IPA, IFT, IEA, IASA, IARSS, LEND, IASBO, LUDA, and ED-RED)</p> <p>ESSA Implementation Workshop</p> <p>Gifted Webinar</p> <p>Title I Association Meeting</p> <p>ROE 50 St. Clair County Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 4 Boone/Winnebago Listening Tour</p> <p>Consortium for Education Change Think Tank on ESSA</p> <p>South Cook ISC Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 19 DuPage Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 9 Champaign Ford Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 3 Bond, Christian, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery Listening Tour</p> <p>North Cook ISC Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 51 Listening Tour</p> <p>ROE 26 Fulton, Hancock, McDonough, Schuyler Listening Tour</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Alsip</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Rockford</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Arlington Heights</p> <p>Balanced Accountability Measure Committee</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Peoria</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Springfield</p> <p>NCLB/ESSA Technical Assistance Meeting Effingham</p> <p>ROE 21 Effingham Listening Tour</p> <p>City of Chicago Listening Tour</p> <p>ESSA meeting with Schusterman Family Foundation</p> <p>Webinar with ROE 3</p> <p>Meeting with Illinois Network of Charter Schools</p> <p>Stakeholders Meeting (IPA, IFT, IEA, IASA, IASB, IASA, IASB, IASBO, LUDA, and IARSS)</p> <p>Presentation at ROE 8</p> <p>P20 Council</p> <p>ESSA Stakeholder Meeting (IPA, IFT, IEA, IASA, IARSS, LEND, IASBO, LUDA, and ED-RED)</p> <p>Stakeholder Webinar</p> |
|--|--|

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 43. June 17, 2016      | House Elementary and Secondary Education Curriculum and Policy Committee Subject Matter hearing |
| 44. June 29, 2016      | Meeting with Children's Aid on foster care provisions   |
| 45. July 8, 2016       | Accountability Workgroup  |
| 46. July 22, 2016      | Accountability Workgroup  |
| 47. August 4, 2016     | Special Education Directors Conference  |
| 48. August 15, 2016    | Accountability Workgroup  |
| 49. August 29, 2016    | Balanced Accountability Measure Committee   |
| 50. August 30, 2016    | P20 Council   |
| 51. September 6, 2016  | Stakeholders Meeting (IPA, IFT, IEA, IASA, IARSS, LEND, IASBO, LUDA, ED-RED)                    |
| 52. September 6, 2016  | Freeport Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                               |
| 53. September 7, 2016  | Moline-Coal Valley Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                     |
| 54. September 8, 2016  | Spring Valley Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                          |
| 55. September 9, 2016  | ESSA Stakeholder Meeting (IPA, IFT, IEA, IASA, IARSS, LEND, IASBO, LUDA, ED-RED)                |
| 56. September 9, 2016  | Mini-Accountability Working Group   |
| 57. September 12, 2016 | P20 Council   |
| 58. September 13, 2016 | Bloomington Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                            |
| 59. September 15, 2016 | Mundelein Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                              |
| 60. September 16, 2016 | DELL Conference   |
| 61. September 19, 2016 | Carbondale Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                             |
| 62. September 19-•21   | Title I Directors Conference intensive ESSA workshops   |
| 63. September 20, 2016 | Effingham Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                              |
| 64. September 20, 2016 | Effingham Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                              |
| 65. September 21, 2016 | Quincy Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                                 |
| 66. September 21, 2016 | Balanced Accountability Measure Committee   |
| 67. September 22, 2016 | Peoria Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                                 |
| 68. September 22, 2016 | Consolidated Committee of Practitioners   |
| 69. September 23, 2016 | Will County ROE including meetings with local legislators                                       |
| 70. September 26, 2016 | Lockport Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                               |
| 71. September 27, 2016 | East St. Louis Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                         |
| 72. September 27, 2016 | Chicago Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                                |
| 73. September 28, 2016 | U46 Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                                    |
| 74. September 30, 2016 | Illinois Reading Conference   |
| 75. October 5, 2016    | DeKalb Listening Tour including meetings with local legislators                                 |
| 76. October 6, 2016    | LUDA Conference   |
| 77. October 25, 2016   | Balanced Accountability Meeting   |
| 78. November 7, 2016   | ESSA Meeting - Department of Juvenile Justice - Harrisburg                                      |
| 79. November 15, 2016  | House Subcommittee Meeting on ESSA  |
| 80. November 28, 2016  | Jacksonville Listening Tour   |
| 81. November 28, 2016  | Balanced Accountability Meeting   |
| 82. December 1, 2016   | Aurora Listening Tour   |
| 83. December 5, 2016   | Forest Park Listening Tour  |
| 84. December 5, 2016   | Balanced Accountability Meeting   |
| 85. December 6, 2016   | Austin Town Hall Listening Tour, Chicago  |
| 86. December 7, 2016   | Crystal Lake Listening Tour   |

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 87. December 7, 2016  | IASA Advisory Committee         |
| 88. December 7, 2016  | Galesburg Listening Tour        |
| 89. December 8, 2016  | Decatur Listening Tour          |
| 90. December 12, 2016 | P20 Council                     |
| 91. December 14, 2016 | Stakeholders Meeting            |
| 92. December 16, 2016 | Balanced Accountability Meeting |
| 93. December 20, 2016 | Partners 4 Meeting              |
| 94. January 11, 2017  | P20 Council                     |

**AMENDMENT 1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

In its original plan, ISBE included certain indicators (e.g., College and Career Readiness Indicator, Fine Arts Indicator, etc.) that were not yet ready for implementation. ED officials noted this discrepancy during their progress monitoring visit in September 2018 and again in December 2018 at a progress monitoring meeting held in Washington D.C. At that time, ED requested that ISBE determine how to redistribute the weight from indicators for which it did not yet have data, which ISBE proposed to address through changes in business rules.

No changes were needed at the elementary level. ISBE considered three models for redistribution to comply with ED’s instructions at the high school level:

- Proportional redistribution (across remaining SQSS indicators)
- Equal redistribution (across remaining SQSS indicators)
- Putting the weight to chronic absenteeism to mirror the K-8 band distribution of that indicator

Table 1. Methods for Redistributing Weight of Indicators and Their Impact

|                              | <b>Report Card 2018 Weight</b> | <b>Redistributed Proportionally (Recommended)</b> | <b>Redistributed Equally</b> | <b>Redistributed To Chronic Absenteeism</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| Chronic Absenteeism          | 7.5%                           | <b>10%</b>  | 9.583%                       | 13.75%                                      |
| Climate Surveys              | 5%                             | <b>6.67%</b>                                      | 7.083%                       | 5%  |
| 9th Grade On-Track           | 6.25%                          | <b>8.33%</b>                                      | 8.33%                        | 6.25%                                       |
| College and Career Readiness | 6.25%                          | <b>0%</b>   | 0%                           | 0%  |
| Fine Arts Indicator          | 0%                             | <b>0%</b>   | 0%                           | 0%  |

These three options and their impact on summative designations were shared with the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Committee<sup>1</sup> at its January 2019 meeting. IBAM recommended at its February 2019 meeting that ISBE use the “proportional redistribution” model. Proportional redistribution is consistent with past practice in how ISBE calculates performance when indicators are missing at the school level. Proportional redistribution maintains the relative weights of the remaining indicators.

In ED informed ISBE on April 4, 2019, that changes to business rules were insufficient, and that it must amend its ESSA state plan to remove indicators that were not yet ready for implementation. ED asked that the amendment be submitted no later than June 1, 2019. Thus, ISBE presented this issue, along with the solutions proposed to and recommended by stakeholders, to the Board for consideration at its April 17, 2019, meeting. A redlined version of the amendment was posted to ISBE’s website for public comment on Monday, April 22. ISBE closed public comment on Wednesday, May 1, 2019. A total of six public comments were received.

ISBE recognized there was a need to engage in deeper examination of the broader accountability system and thus conducted a 2019 Support and Accountability Listening Tour to collect suggestions from the field. The information from this listening tour was shared with the Board for consideration in October of 2019, but ultimately a decision was made not to further amend the plan at that time.

**2019 Listening Tour Dates and Locations**

<sup>1</sup> A committee convened in statue with authority to make recommendations to ISBE on matters of accountability.

## Support & Accountability

# LISTENING TOUR

The listening tour will focus on major areas, including:

- Overall weighting of academic vs. student success indicators
- Weighting of individual indicators
- Assessment policy for newly arrived English Learners
- Designations
  - Number of designations
  - Names of designations
  - Criteria for Exemplary designation

The Illinois State Board of Education invites you to provide feedback on the new support and accountability system during the 2019 Support & Accountability Listening Tour. Your feedback will inform an amendment to Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act Plan that will go into effect for the 2020-21 school year.

**1** **MAY 16, 5 P.M.**  
*DuPage County ROE*  
421 N. County Farm Rd., Wheaton

**2** **MAY 20, 5 P.M.**  
*Chicago Public Schools, Garden Level Board Chambers*, 42 W. Madison Ave., Chicago

**3** **MAY 22, 5 P.M.**  
*Springfield District 186*  
1900 W. Monroe St., Springfield

**4** **MAY 23, 5 P.M.**  
*Carbondale Community High School*  
1301 E. Walnut, Carbondale

**5** **MAY 29, 5:30 P.M.**  
*Rock Island ROE*  
3430 Avenue of the Cities, Moline



Please share with your networks! You may also provide feedback by emailing [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net). For more information, please visit [isbe.net/essa](http://isbe.net/essa).

### AMENDMENT 2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

---

In March 2020, all states suspended in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ED responded by issuing waivers<sup>2</sup> for both assessments and accountability requirements for 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact schooling in school year 2020-21. In February 2021, ED offered a variety of assessment administration flexibilities<sup>3</sup> and a full waiver of accountability requirements. In order to receive the accountability waiver<sup>4</sup> a State must identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement schools using data from the 2021-22 school year and ensure school identification resumes as quickly as possible in the Fall 2022.”

Illinois returned to in-person instruction in the 2021-2022 school year, but three types of considerations prevent the it from implementing the accountability system as approved in 2019:

1. Technical considerations (e.g., missing 2021 prior scores or changes to calculation methodology)
2. Alignment considerations (e.g., targets or scoring rules misaligned to expectations in 2022)
3. Impact considerations (For example, is a school being identified for reasons that warrant investing in a four-year cycle of continuous improvement? Or is the system detecting issues that will resolve without intervention like low participation rates?)

ED released draft guidance on how states can request flexibilities in the implementation of their accountability systems on December 15, 2021<sup>5</sup>. Due to the late release of this guidance and in order to ensure appropriate stakeholder feedback ISBE moved forward with revisions to its accountability system so that schools and districts could have concrete information about accountability during the 2021-22 school year.

ISBE began the process of engaging stakeholders regarding this topic in October 2021. Early engagement focused on specific indicators with ISBE staff and other stakeholder possessing specific expertise (e.g., climate survey participation, Ninth-Graders on Track, and English Learner Progress to Proficiency indicator)<sup>6</sup>. Next, ISBE engaged the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Committee on Nov. 8, 2021 to provide a holistic overview of the amendment as well as a plan for stakeholder engagement and timeline to submission of the amendment. Issues identified by IBAM served as the foundation to develop a series of progressive stakeholder engagement webinars:

- November 22, 2021 (Open Forum)
- November 30, 2021 (Open Forum)
- December 17, 2021 (IBAM)
- December 20, 2021 (Open Forum)
- December 21, 2021 (Open Forum)
- January 10, 2022 (Open Forum)
- January 10, 2022 (IBAM)
- January 11, 2022 (Open Forum)

ISBE offered a variety of methods for stakeholder input and public comment on the proposed revisions. First, the six live open-forum webinars listed above sought stakeholder input on specific accountability remedy options and other

---

<sup>2</sup> View the waiver application at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> View the letter from ED at <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/02/DCL-on-assessments-and-acct-final.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> View the 2021 accountability waiver request at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL20-21-Accountability-Waiver-Template.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> View the draft guidance at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/title-i-part-a-program/resources/>.

<sup>6</sup> Bilingual Directors provided feedback on the English Learner Progress to Proficiency indicator at the October 5, 2021 meeting for Illinois bilingual directors.

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

changes. Two identical sessions were held each month in November, December, and January. Information was added and updated in the presentation each month, so stakeholders were encouraged to sign up for multiple sessions. An announcement of these webinars was placed in the *ISBE's Weekly Message* on Nov. 16, 2021<sup>7</sup>, and ran until the webinars were complete on Jan. 11, 2022. Additionally, information about the webinars and the proposed amendment was posted to both the [www.isbe.net/summative](http://www.isbe.net/summative) and [www.isbe.net/essa](http://www.isbe.net/essa) pages. The public comment period remained open until Jan. 14, 2022, which permitted a full 30 days of public comment. The opportunity for public comment was communicated via *ISBE's Weekly Message* and an announcement tile on the [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) home page. Comments were collected via a short online form and through the [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net) inbox.

---

<sup>7</sup> The announcement for the webinars may be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Weekly-Message-Display-Form.aspx?ItemId=274>.

### **AMENDMENT 3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

---

During the ESSA Amendment 2 process, it was determined that ISBE's exit criteria were insufficiently articulated for implementation. To address this, ISBE worked collaboratively with the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Committee to develop a revised set of exit criteria and state-determined actions. This work began in April of 2022, and the committee met monthly until October to develop a first draft that could be shared for feedback. The draft was shared with IBAM members so they could use it to solicit feedback from their respective constituents. Various Board members advised that a series of interactive public feedback sessions also be offered. In addition to the more traditional notification and solicitation methods, ISBE also hosted two sessions specifically for superintendents, principals, and grant staff associated with schools in the 2018 and 2019 Comprehensive Support cohorts on January 9 and 11.

The dates and times of these feedback sessions are listed below.

- Monday, November 28, 2022, from 2-3 p.m. (general public)
- Tuesday, November 29, 2022, from 9-10 a.m. (general public)
- Tuesday November 29, 2022, from 11 a.m. to noon (general public)
- Wednesday, November 30, 2022, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. (general public)
- Wednesday, November 30, 2022, from 1-2 p.m. (general public)
- Wednesday, November 30, 2022, from 4-5 p.m. (general public)
- Thursday, December 1, 2022, from 8-9 a.m. (general public)
- Thursday, December 1, 2022, from noon to 1 p.m. (general public)
- Monday, January 9, 2023 from 1-2 p.m. (currently identified CSI school administrators and staff)
- Wednesday, January 11, 2023 from 9-10 a.m. (currently identified CSI school administrators and staff)

The feedback from these focus group sessions was shared with IBAM at its Dec. 1 meeting and was used to create the official redline amendment presented to the Board on Dec. 14. After Board discussion, an executive summary of the proposed changes and an official redline amendment was posted for public comment for 31 days, from Dec. 16 to Jan. 15, 2023, before the issue was presented to the Board for action on Jan. 18, 2023.

ISBE offered a variety of methods for stakeholder input and public comment on the proposed revisions. First, the eight live open-forum webinars listed above sought stakeholder input on the proposed exit criteria. Information about the webinars and the proposed amendment was posted to both the [www.isbe.net/summative](http://www.isbe.net/summative) and [www.isbe.net/essa](http://www.isbe.net/essa) pages and a slider was added to the main [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) home page. The public comment period remained open until Jan. 15, 2023, which permitted 31 days of public comment. The opportunity for public comment was communicated via *ISBE's Weekly Message* and an announcement tile on the [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) home page. Comments were collected via a short online form and through the [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net) inbox.

**AMENDMENT 4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

---

Amendment four was a procedural amendment, prompted by the procurement of a new state assessment at high school, as required in Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/2-3.64a-5 and Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500/20-5). The state’s previous high school accountability assessment contract expired on June 30, 2024. The Board approved the release and award of a competitive solicitation to comport with state procurement requirements at its September 2023 meeting and Notice of the Intent to Award was posted in BidBuy on Feb. 26, 2024. This change to assessments was driven solely by the expiration of the previous contract.

As this amendment was of a purely procedural nature, and there was no public comment that could change the outcome of a state procurement, ISBE intentionally took a more procedural approach to public comment. ISBE shared the changes with the State Assessment Review Committee and Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee as specified in Illinois School Code, professional organizations, and on the ISBE website. The consultation required in ESSA with the governor was held Monday, Nov. 18, 2024. An executive summary of the change and redline version of the plan was posted to ISBE’s website on Monday, December 2, 2024, and remained posted for the statutorily required 30 days until January 2, 2025. One comment was received, noting that a newly added link in the footnotes was no longer active. A change was made to provide a working link.

Feedback opportunities are summarized below:

- State Assessment Review Committee meeting – Aug. 27, 2024
- Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee meeting – Sept. 11, 2024

## **AMENDMENT 5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

---

In his initial 100 days, State Superintendent, Dr. Sanders, heard about issues with our current assessments and accountability system from many stakeholders. Changes were needed in three areas – state assessments, the accountability system, and the statewide system of support – to address four known problems of practice.

- First, high cut scores mislabel students who are on track for college or career as “not meeting” proficiency standards.
- Second, our accountability system for schools is not criterion-based. The goal posts move every year.
- Third, misleading data (e.g., 70% of schools labeled “commendable”) prevent districts from directing resources to where they are needed most.
- Fourth, the accountability system tells you that there is a problem, not what strategies or supports available from the Statewide System of Support might be most helpful in addressing the problem.

In response to these problems of practice, ISBE developed a three-part solution:

- Right-size assessment performance levels and proficiency benchmarks by conducting a unified academic achievement standards setting for all subjects and grades of its general content assessments.
- Realign designations to provide clearer expectations of school performance and structure the system in ways that incentivize continuous improvement.
- Deploy a continuous improvement model for all schools in partnership with the regional offices of education.

Over the first six months of his tenure Dr. Sanders built support for significant change to these systems, with the ultimate vision being an aligned statewide system of support in which all districts and schools are engaged in cycles of continuous school improvement, regardless of designation. This entirely procedural amendment sits in the context of a much larger initiative and consultation and public comment for this amendment is situated in that broader context as well.

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

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

- 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

Engagement opportunities to socialize the Assessment & Accountability redesign elicited over 6,700 responses and comments that were used to inform both the unified academic standard setting and accountability redesign.

### **Stakeholder Engagement Specific to the Unified Academic Achievement Performance Standards**

Historically, the Illinois assessment system has operated as a set of related, but distinct assessments, each with its own number of performance levels and definitions. This inconsistency created confusion for educators and families and did not allow for comparison of performance across grades or content areas. Furthermore, Illinois' prior expectations for proficiency in English language arts and mathematics ranked the state among the most restrictive in the nation, often classifying academically successful students as "not proficient," while science expectations were set too low, overstating mastery. These misalignments produced results that conflicted with classroom performance, national measures, and other trusted indicators of postsecondary readiness.

Guided by input from the Illinois Technical Advisory Council (TAC), a three-phase process<sup>2</sup> was designed predicated upon recognized best practices in standard setting. The active involvement of stakeholders was prioritized throughout the entirety of the process. This work occurred in three phases, beginning in June of 2024 and culminating in July of 2025.

#### Step 1. Establish performance level definitions.

Performance level definitions are policy statements that define the number and names of performance levels, as well as the intended rigor and desired student performance associated with each level.

On June 11, 2024, ISBE convened a broad-based group of education leaders, including student leaders, from across the state for a workshop<sup>8</sup> led by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. Participants were asked to draft policy definitions for new unified state assessment performance levels and offer guidance for subsequent standard setting tasks. Their input aimed to ensure that future work was clear, appropriately rigorous, aligned with stakeholder values, and would support the effective and appropriate use of standardized assessment data. Draft policy definitions and a supporting report were posted on the ISBE website for 33 days of public comment (from July 28 to Aug. 30, 2024). After careful consideration of all public comments, final policy definitions were adopted.

Only the final names of the performance levels differed substantively from the options initially drafted by the policy group. Naming was an area in which the group did not reach consensus. As a result, the public comment process specifically invited respondents to express a preference for descriptive names, numeric levels, a combination of both, or an alternative naming structure. The selected names reflect feedback received during the workshop and through public comment indicating the draft names were confusing for parents — particularly those for whom English is a second language. Numeric levels also were considered problematic, both because the order representing best and worst was not intuitive and they could be conflated with grade point averages.

#### Step 2. Develop performance level descriptors.

Performance level descriptors (PLDs) describe the range of observable student performance characteristics within each performance level. Large-scale standardized assessments assess multiple pathways to proficiency and students may demonstrate competence through different strengths within a given performance range.

ISBE recruited over 200 applicants with demonstrated experience working with the Illinois Learning Standards in ELA, mathematics, and/or science, such as teaching, coaching, and/or curriculum development, and from that created nine writing teams (three subjects – ELA, mathematics, and science – with three grade groups – Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11 – each). Each group had between 10 and 12 writers, and included:

- Three to six grade-specific content experts

---

<sup>8</sup> A virtual orientation to the work for participants was held on May 20, 2024. The group closed its work with a virtual meeting on July 18, 2024, to discuss any final edits to the policy definition and guidance report.

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

- Three to six subject matter experts whose position spanned multiple grades and required deep expertise with the content and standards
- At least one non-assessed subject educator
- At least one special education educator
- At least one multilingual educator

Each team also had at least one member from each of six geographic regions in Illinois, with the city of Chicago as a separate seventh region<sup>9</sup>, and included the demographic diversity of Illinois educators. The teams met every other week from September 2024 through February 2025.

ISBE representatives attended nine stakeholder meetings and collected over 6,700 comments and suggestions during this period. The writing teams used this input to develop two sets of draft PLDs for each assessed subject and grade. One set was organized by standard and written in sufficient detail to support classroom educators – the primary contributors to standard setting. The second set was organized by broad domains and designed to be shorter, more accessible, and suitable for discussing proficiency expectations with parents and community members. Finally, a supplemental resource set featuring test items and/or sample student work aligned to the PLDs was created because examples across performance levels was the resource most frequently requested by all stakeholders.

This suite of 53 documents was posted on the ISBE website for 32 days of public comment (from March 7 through April 7, 2025) along with a set of guiding questions to promote deep review and critique. Additionally, ISBE presented the PLDs to the State Assessment Review Committee and requested that members conduct their own deep review with their staff or constituents. A second draft of the PLDs was posted for a final round of public comment from May 5 through June 6, 2025.

### Step 3. Recommend Cut Scores

The specific process used to recommend cut scores constitutes the standard setting methodology. Although Illinois' tests differ in design and score scales, ISBE's testing vendors — Pearson and ACT — worked together to create a single, unified plan for setting performance levels on state assessments.

Drafts of the standard setting plan were presented to the Illinois Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in September 2024 and January 2025. TAC members offered detailed -- but sometimes conflicting -- recommendations about which variation of a judgment task they felt would best support ISBE's goals. To resolve these conflicting recommendations, ISBE requested that Pearson conduct a mini-study comparing two approaches: a variation of the Angoff method Extended Modified-Angoff (Yes/No)<sup>10</sup> and the Item-Descriptor Matching<sup>11</sup> methodology. Twelve ISBE staff with experience as classroom teachers were recruited from departments other than Assessment (e.g., Standards and Instruction, Special Education, Multilingual/Language Development, School Improvement, Accountability, Charter Schools, etc.). After being divided into two groups by subject, they conducted one round of judgments. Each group used a different methodology first to reduce bias based on presentation order. The study found score outcome was the same for both methodologies, but that a majority of participants expressed a preference for the Extended Modified-Angoff methodology, particularly when provided with a briefing that included score distribution maps. Thus, the recommended plan for standard setting combines the Extended Modified-Angoff (Yes/No) methodology with elements of ACT's

---

<sup>9</sup> See ISBE McKinney-Vento [Lead Area Liaison Map](#).

<sup>10</sup> Plake, Barbara S., A. A. Ferdous, James C. Impara, and Chad W. Buckendahl, "Setting Multiple Performance Standards Using the Yes/No Method: An Alternative Item Mapping Method" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, Montreal, Canada, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Ferrara, Steve, Perie, Marianne, and Johnson, Eugene. "Matching the Judgmental Task with Standard Setting Panelist Expertise: The Item Descriptor (ID) Matching Method." *Journal of Applied Testing Technology*

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

empirical approach, which looks at how test scores relate to students' chances of earning certain grades in first-year college courses and makes statistical connections across the ACT tests.

ISBE empaneled 19 committees:

- Grades 3 through 8 for reading and math (12 committees)
- Grades 5 and 8 for science (two committees)
- ACT for ELA, math, and science, PreACT, and PreACT 9 (five committees)

The standard setting utilized a staggered scheduling approach that built incremental articulation across committees by preselecting two to three panelists on each committee (approximately 33 in total) to participate in a second committee one grade higher or lower. On the last day, a formal articulation process occurred to align the cuts vertically across grades from Grade 3 to high school in ELA, mathematics, and science with a content reasonableness review as a final step in the process for coherence.

Each committee had 12 to 18 panelists per committee split into three to five table groups. There was one professional facilitator per committee, one or more ISBE Assessment Department representative per committee, and additional observers from the TAC and ISBE leadership. Recruitment of panelists began on April 21, 2025, and over 600 applications were received within the first week. [Final panelists](#) were selected using the same methodology used to select PLD writers, with greater focus on selecting practicing educators serving the full diversity of Illinois' students. The full [standard setting report](#) is also available online.

### **Stakeholder Engagement Specific to the Accountability Redesign**

At the same meetings that ISBE sought feedback on its unified academic standard setting, it also sought input into the accountability redesign. The accountability redesign was developed through a phased, interrelated process of statutory consultation, public engagement, modeling analysis, and formal public comment extending from September 2024 through March 2026. ISBE engaged both required statutory advisory bodies and a broad range of field stakeholders throughout all phases of development.

#### Phase I: Model Type and Desired System Features and Outcomes (September 2024–May 2025)

ISBE began socializing potential redesign concepts with key stakeholder groups in fall 2024 via their established annual conferences. Then, in early 2025, ISBE conducted an in-person statewide Listening Tour across nine locations representing geographic diversity, including Chicago Heights, Champaign, Spring Valley, Vandalia, Carterville, East Moline, Peoria, Joliet, and Chicago Public Schools. During Phase I, ISBE presented three potential accountability approaches: a decision tree model, a profile of performance model, and a simplified index model. Feedback indicated strong preference (92%) for approaches that did not produce a single numeric score capable of ranking schools. Respondents emphasized that the system should:

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

This input directly informed ISBE's decision to pursue a Profile of Performance model.

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

### Phase II: Initial Redesign and Extended Public Comment (Oct. 28, 2025–Jan. 7, 2026)

On Oct. 28, 2025, ISBE released a public presentation describing the proposed accountability redesign and opened a 72-day public comment period. Comments were solicited via online survey, direct email to [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net), and through targeted outreach to stakeholder organizations. In-person and virtual Listening Tour events were held throughout November and December 2025, including sessions in Huntley, Bloomington, O’Fallon, Chicago, and multiple statewide virtual forums, including one specifically for stakeholder organizations.

Feedback during this phase focused primarily on:

- Concerns regarding designation names
- Perceived imbalance between K-8 and high school performance distribution patterns
- The removal of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade on Track and College and Career Readiness indicators
- The role of student group performance in overall designation more broadly

In response to stakeholder concerns, ISBE extended and expanded the planned timeline, which ended public comment on Dec. 5, 2025, and had ISBE proceeding directly to a draft for Board discussion in December 2025 and approval in January 2026. The revised timeline extended the open comment period to Jan. 7, 2026, and added five additional virtual engagement opportunities. It also introduced a new Phase (Phase III) in the process to allow time for stakeholders to react to a draft amendment that incorporated their feedback.

### Phase III: System Revisions and Formal Redline Amendment (Jan. 12–Feb. 25, 2026)

On Jan. 12, 2026, ISBE released the first formal redline draft of the ESSA amendment incorporating revisions based on Phase II feedback and opened a 45-day public comment period. Reflected in this first draft were changes to the accountability design that:

- Revised designation names to better reflect intended meaning
- Made targeted adjustments to indicator performance thresholds to improve alignment between grade bands
- Added an additional core performance requirement for high school Exemplary profiles
- Modified elevation rules to require two Exemplary elevating indicators to elevate into the two strongest profiles (i.e., Exemplary and Approaching Exemplary)

Additionally, ISBE provided a full data set modeling the impact of the proposed system on every school’s designation using school year 2024-25 data, including the impact on accountable student group profiles.

Feedback during this period reflected increasingly divergent perspectives on individual student groups, with some wanting to expand the influence student group performance has on a school’s overall designation and others wanting to limit said influence. ISBE conducted exploratory analyses of proposals in both directions. Research did not support increasing the number of students necessary to be considered an accountable student group, while modeling proposals to expand subgroup influence determined that such changes would both disadvantage schools serving diverse learners and decrease alignment between grade bands.

Finally, the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measures Committee identified several outlier cases in the modeled dataset and raised questions about ways in which the system could or should be modified to address these outliers.

## ESSA STATE PLAN FOR ILLINOIS AMENDMENT April 3, 2026

### Phase IV: Technical Refinement and Final Draft (March 3–April 3, 2026)

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.

However, 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

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.

Final changes were made to clean up any inconsistencies in pagination, footnote numbers, and section references that stem from the redlining process.

### Consultation with the Governor

Consistent with Section 8540 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ISBE consulted in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor's Office throughout development of the amendment. ISBE staff met regularly with the Governor's Office during plan development and provided formal progress briefings on Oct. 9, 2025; Jan. 28, 2026; and Feb. 27, 2026. The Governor's Office received the final draft of the plan on March 3, 2026 for a final 30-day review.