



Illinois State Board of Education

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www.isbe.net

James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Dear Illinoisans,

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by the federal government provides Illinois with a unique opportunity to do even better work on behalf of all our children. ESSA assumes that the work completed in classrooms and schools is vital to ensuring our communities are healthy and strong.

Fortunately for families and communities in every state, ESSA is truly transformative and provides the necessary flexibility to access our best and brightest thinking. I believe the power, possibility, and promise of ESSA are directly attributable to the vision of its sponsors, Sens. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN). While No Child Left Behind (NCLB) changed the conversation about schooling in positive ways by ensuring that states used data to discuss groups of students from every background, somehow the US Department of Education forgot how to see and talk about the whole child and the interrelated systems where they actually live.

ESSA provides the opportunity to contemplate what is meant by “the whole child,” and, from this, consider the type of programming that will support the strengths and needs of each and every child. Unlike NCLB, ESSA is explicit in requiring that stakeholders within each state work together in developing a plan for the singular purpose of supporting the whole child, from early learning through post-secondary success. ESSA expects that states will combine funding in order to develop and deliver the highest quality programming based on what each individual student requires to succeed. More specifically, ESSA allows states to design supports for students that consider the unique contexts where they live, grow, and learn. Thus, our collective task is to develop an Illinois State Plan that can best ensure that Every Student Succeeds.

As educators, families, community leaders, and activists, we must seize the opportunities within ESSA. We must engage in dialogue, continue to build trusting relationships with one another, and activate all public, private, and philanthropic resources available in order to interrupt those practices that have left far too many of Illinois’ most vulnerable behind and without real access to opportunity. I’ve often called NCLB “a celebration of separation” because of its piecemeal approach to children’s needs and the programs that address those needs. From my conversations throughout Illinois, individuals tell me that they desire a holistic, yet common sense, approach to this work. This approach would respond to the needs of the whole child – medical, physical, social, emotional, and academic.

To respond to this new opportunity, and as many of you are already aware, beginning in January of 2016, ISBE began talking about different ways to create a state plan for Illinois. Part of that effort included a series of listening tours that occurred in April and May. These meetings provided a venue to learn about ESSA and, for stakeholders, including parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, community and business leaders,

and legislators, to share their thinking on the opportunities and areas of concern in ESSA. ISBE will continue to meet with staff and stakeholders to contemplate the numerous ideas shared through these meetings.

What follows is the first draft of the Illinois' ESSA plan. This is a work in progress, and as you will note, most sections are not complete. At this point, there are also instances of internal inconsistencies. This is not unexpected. There are a number of issues in ESSA that are complex and resist easy answers. My aspiration is that together we build a durable plan that rests on a foundation of shared work and reconciled differences of opinion. Please view the plan's current incompleteness as an opportunity – one where we come together, share our various ideas and rationales, and, in the end, come together to create a plan that maximizes opportunities and outcomes for students in Illinois.

As you read through and comment on this draft, I encourage you to consider the following questions:

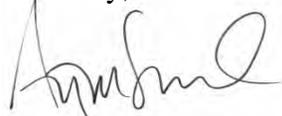
1. As we develop our state plan, how might we best reconcile the variety of complex ideas we've heard so that our final plan focuses on eliminating inequity of opportunity and outcome in every Illinois public school district?
2. How can a common understanding of the Every Student Succeeds Act create effective collaboration among public, private, and philanthropic agencies so that all children in Illinois become self-sufficient, well educated, healthy, and safe adults?

In order to continue to learn from the expertise in the field, in addition to the comments submitted on this draft, we have scheduled a second round of listening tours for September 2016. The dates for those meetings are available at www.isbe.net/essa. Please share your written comments to essa@isbe.net.

Your feedback is essential as we continue to refine the draft and post it again for your review later in the fall before ultimately bringing it to the Illinois State Board of Education for their vote. Although according to ESSA we are only obligated to post the plan once for 30 days of public comment, we believe that numerous opportunities for comment and dialogue will result in a plan that best exemplifies the values of all Illinois' stakeholders and that every student is, in fact, provided the best opportunity to succeed.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) STATE PLAN
DRAFT #1

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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 its mission in partnership with stakeholders.

Above all, stakeholders in Illinois believe that a culture of high expectations for all students is fundamental to creating and supporting the conditions that provide the best opportunities for students. The reauthorization of ESSA will allow Illinois to implement a holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated system that prepares each and every student for college or career. Moreover, Illinois will use the opportunities provided through ESSA to reduce barriers to learning in order to achieve equity of access and opportunity for each and every child.

The implementation of ESSA will require focus and diligence by all stakeholders in the Illinois. By submitting this state plan, Illinois signals its long-term commitment to preparing every Illinois student for college and career and, in doing so, best ensuring that all populations of students have achieved at high levels.

ISBE has worked diligently to engage stakeholders and, through a collaborative process, 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. Therefore, ISBE saw an opportunity through ESSA to engage stakeholders on substantial aspects of this request from its inception through submission to the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Throughout the document, ISBE has highlighted those areas where it requires feedback. However, please feel free to comment on any area within the draft. When submitting comments, please include name of individual and/or organization, section number, and page number. All comments should be submitted to essa@isbe.net no later October 7, 2016.

Section 1: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

1.1 TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION.

- A. **Public Notice.** Provide evidence of the public notice that the State Education Agency (SEA) provided of the SEA's processes and procedures for developing and adopting its consolidated state plan.

ISBE will post drafts of the state plan on <http://www.isbe.net/essa>. This information will be communicated through the Superintendent's Weekly Message and social media.

- i. **Outreach and Input.** Describe how the SEA conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities listed above 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 the consolidated state plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submission to ED for review and approval. How did the SEA take into account the consultation and public comment, including 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?

Since the passage of ESSA in December 2015, ISBE has presented on and participated in more than 50 meetings, conferences, and listening tours. Early in 2016, ISBE staff completed and shared with the field a bill summary and multiple presentations. These are posted at www.isbe.net/essa.

More specifically, ISBE held a series of "listening tour" meetings throughout 2016 to ensure that the Illinois state plan included ample opportunity for stakeholders to share their expertise. (See Appendix A for the ISBE Listening Tour Report which includes the schedule, information on attendees, and notes from these tours. This information is also available at www.isbe.net/essa.) District superintendents, school principals,

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teachers, policy advocates, parents, community members, and other stakeholders attended the listening tours.

There were two objectives for the first listening tour:

- To provide an overview of the new ESSA requirements and funding opportunities, and
- To gather feedback from education stakeholder about implementation of ESSA in Illinois.

The Illinois ESSA state plan addresses the needs of the “whole child” in order to fully ensure that all children have equitable opportunities to meet the challenging standards required by the state. In addition to the challenging academic standards and high expectations for student achievement, there needs to be a refocusing on the social/emotional needs of students. This notion is supported by the comments of individuals at several listening tour meetings when they identified the importance of social and emotional learning in preK-12 classrooms.

Also, listening tour participants voiced the importance of increased focus on homeless children, special education, and diverse populations. Illinois continues to see a rise in the number of students who are homeless, placed in foster care, and/or living in foster care. Strategies suggested from the listening tour meetings included, but are not limited to, greater access to before- and after-school programs, additional summer learning opportunities, streamlined enrollment processes, and greater outreach and communication among stakeholders. Additionally, funding needs to be allocated to cover viable transportation options.

Other topics identified in listening tour include

- Pre- and post-tests to measure growth.
- Possible shift from PARCC to SAT/PSAT.
- Assessments should have accompanying growth models.
- Funding allocated to address release times for educators to discuss/reflect on assessment.

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- Multiple measures to assess growth at the elementary level.

Additional information on the listening tour feedback is throughout this document.

1.2 COORDINATION.

A. **Plan Coordination.** Describe how the SEA is coordinating its plans for administering the programs under this consolidated application with the following programs:

- i. *other programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by ESSA;*
- ii. *the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;*
- iii. *the Rehabilitation Act;*
- iv. *the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006;*
- v. *the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;*
- vi. *the Head Start Act;*
- vii. *the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990;*
- viii. *the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002;*
- ix. *the Education Technical Assistance Act of 2002;*
- x. *the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act; and*
- xi. *the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.*

ESSA expects that state plans will include assurances that the SEA will modify or eliminate state fiscal and accounting barriers so that the schools can easily consolidate funds from other federal, state and local sources to improve educational opportunities and reduce unnecessary fiscal and accounting requirements. Legislation (PA 97-0558) was signed into law in 2011 directly addressing the duplications and redundancies within other government agencies and that can be a model for ISBE to consider as it contemplates the most appropriate ways to braid funding. Illinois has been utilizing horizontal collaboration across state agencies (facilitated within the Illinois Children's Cabinet structure) as well as cross divisional work within ISBE to identify duplicative approaches and/or barriers to implementation of effective and efficient programming for Illinois' children and families.

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ESSA provides the ideal opportunity for ISBE to coordinate the funding and administration between different federal programs. In the development of the state plan, for instance, the braiding between IDEA Parts B and D and Federal Statewide Systems of Support dollars has provided for the development and funding of its statewide multi-tiered system of support. So, too, the development of the ESSA plan has supported collaboration with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and Career and Technical Education through the development and implementation of career pathways for students in order for them to leave high school college and career ready.

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding how funding streams can be combined in order to support each and every child as she or he progresses through school.

Section 2: CHALLENGING STATE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

2.1 CHALLENGING STATE ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

These items are submitted through peer review

- A. **Challenging Academic Content Standards and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards.** Provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the secretary that the state has adopted challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards in the required subjects and grades consistent with section 1111(b)(1)(A)-(D) of ESSA.
- B. **Alternate Academic Achievement Standards.** If the state has adopted alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, provide

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evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the secretary that those standards meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(1)(E) of ESSA.

C. English Language Proficiency Standards. Provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the secretary that the state has adopted English language proficiency standards that meet the following requirements:

- i. Are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing;
- ii. Address the different proficiency levels of English Learners (ELs); and
- iii. Align with the state's challenging academic standards.

2.2 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS.

A. Student Academic Assessments. Identify the student academic assessments that the state is implementing under section 1111(b)(2) of ESEA, including the following:

- i. High-quality student academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science consistent with the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B);

ISBE administers high-quality student academic assessments:

- The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams in ELA and mathematics in grades 3-8.
- Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, the SAT, including a writing component, will be taken by all public high school juniors.
- The Illinois Science Assessment, first administered in spring of 2016 for students in grades 5 and 8 and in high school corresponding to the content of Biology I.

- ii. Any assessments used under the exception for advanced middle school mathematics under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(iii) of the Act;

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PARCC provides middle schools the option to assess advanced students in mathematics with the content best aligned to their current coursework (e.g., Algebra I when a student is in middle school).

- iii. Alternate assessments aligned with the challenging state academic standards and alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities;

The Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) is the alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The DLM-AA system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. The system uses items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction that are aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS). The DLM-AA is aligned to the ILS using the Essential Elements. The Essential Elements were developed to bridge the content in ILS and the academic expectations for students with the most significant intellectual disabilities. Universal Design for Learning is incorporated in how the assessment is delivered to students through technology. Students who have significant cognitive disabilities will be able to demonstrate their knowledge by completing an assessment that considers the unique needs of the student as identified by a special education staff member who works closely with the student. The assessment was designed to ensure that anyone is able to access the assessment.

- iv. The uniform statewide assessment of English language proficiency, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills;

Illinois has a policy for educating students with limited English proficiency that requires the instruction of core content in the native language or, where the native language is of lower incidence, at least support in the native language, together with instruction in English as a second language. This is to ensure that English Learners (EL) are able to access the high-level content of the new state standards and remain at grade level while also developing English academic language proficiency.

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Without native language instruction or supports, students with low levels of academic English proficiency are unable or would find it extremely difficult to comprehend, process, and interactively engage with the content of the ILS. ELs, in addition to learning the same grade-level content as their peers, must also develop their proficiency in English. This requires coursework in English as a second language and often sheltering content instruction. In order to assist in this process, Illinois has adopted EL-specific standards, policies, and supports that have put the state in an optimal position to deliver the new ILS content to ELs.

Illinois has been a World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium member since 2004. Illinois has contributed to and benefited from the work the WIDA consortium has undertaken since 2003 to develop English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. ELP Standards were developed using the ILS and incorporate the current college- and career-ready goals. Illinois officially adopted ELP Standards in 2004 and codified the 2007 version of the standards into the Illinois State Bilingual Rules and Regulations.

Illinois is part of the Assessment Services Supporting ELs Through Technology System (ASSETS) project, which is funded through a U.S. Department of Education Enhanced Assessment Grant. The ASSETS project is working to create a technology-based assessment system for ELs anchored in the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards. Illinois will maintain its affiliation as a WIDA consortium member to ensure that it continues to provide ELs with high-quality ELP Standards aligned to the college- and career-ready state goals.

English Language Proficiency Assessment

ACCESS for ELs is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure ELs' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains.

All public school districts are required to assess annually all identified ELs in grades K-12 using the ACCESS for EL assessment until the students test as English language

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proficient. This includes all identified students whose parents have refused language support services. All ELs must be tested until they achieve the state-prescribed minimum score to be considered English language proficient.

ISBE is considering raising the overall composite proficiency level on the ACCESS for EL for students to be considered English language proficient. The current levels are overall 5.0, reading 4.2, and writing 4.2.

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding the overall composite proficiency level on ACCESS for ELs.

- v. Any approved locally selected nationally recognized high school assessments.

The local choice option is designed to allow a nationally recognized college entrance exam to substitute for the ISBE-identified accountability assessment. ISBE is currently using the SAT with essay for the purposes of the state accountability in ELA and math.

ISBE requests feedback from stakeholders regarding this approach.

- B. **State Assessment Requirements.** Provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the secretary that the state's assessments identified above in section 2.2.A. meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(2) of ESEA. - *Submitted via Peer Review*

- C. **Advanced Mathematics Coursework.** 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).

The state is continuing to actively support the implementation of the ILS in mathematics in a manner that responds to students' areas of strength and builds educator capacity to effectively differentiate instruction for students. ISBE is pursuing issues related to licensure and endorsement, as well as virtual opportunities for students, to ensure that qualified staff are available to each and every student to pursue advanced coursework in

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middle school.

- D. Universal Design for Learning.** Describe the steps the SEA has taken to incorporate the principles of Universal Design for learning, to the extent feasible, in the development of its assessments, including any alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards that the state administers.

The alternate assessment for students is delivered using the Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment. The DLM-AA is aligned to the ILS using the Essential Elements. The Essential Elements were developed to bridge the content in ILS and the academic expectations for students with the most significant intellectual disabilities. Universal Design for Learning is incorporated in how the assessment is delivered to students through technology. Students who have significant cognitive disabilities will be able to demonstrate their knowledge by completing an assessment that considers the unique needs of the student as identified by a special education staff member who works closely with the student. The assessment was designed to ensure that anyone is able to access the assessment. The DLM-AA also allows for the assessment to be incorporated into daily instruction by allowing instructors to select certain essential elements to instruct and assess their students.

The DLM-AA system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction that are aligned to the ILS. At end of the year, assessment will be created for states that want to include a summative test in addition to the instructionally embedded system.

The PARCC Consortium also has implemented tools for Universal Design to ensure that each and every student can access the content and constructs being measured in a way that meaningfully documents what they know and are able to do. Accessibility features such as text-to-speech and line readers help to support access to a content exam that is rigorous and aligned to the same challenging standards for all students.

- E. Appropriate Accommodations.** Describe how the SEA will ensure that the use of appropriate accommodations, if applicable, do not deny an English Learner (a) the

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opportunity to participate in the assessment and (b) any of the benefits from participation in the assessment that are afforded to students who are not ELs.

Assessment programs have made great strides in providing additional accommodation features available to ELs. The advent of technology-based assessment facilitates tools for access such as text-to-speech that have previously been unavailable to students. The state continues to investigate and advocate for additional supports to further enable access in a way that demonstrates what students are able to do related to the standards and in a manner that is not confounded by acquisition of a second language.

F. **Languages Other than English.** Describe how the SEA is complying with the requirements related to assessments 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" and identify the specific languages that meet that definition;

ISBE has identified languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population: Ten languages are used in translation of the directions and reporting shells within the PARCC assessment. The only language that is currently being trans-adapted for the math test is Spanish. The PARCC table (Appendix B) shows the 10 languages in Illinois during the last three school years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16). Chinese Mandarin is listed as a top 4 language in Illinois on the PARRC list. Chinese has two languages: Mandarin and Cantonese. When the two languages are counted together, the combination is in the top 4. Please note that Illinois counts these two languages separately. The estimate of the 2015-16 Illinois count is identical to the counts for 2014-15.

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

Math on the PARCC assessment is trans-adapted into Spanish. ISBE does not offer any other native language assessments at the current time.

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- iii. Indicate the languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population, as defined by the state, for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed;

Please see the data contained in Appendix B related to the top 10 languages in Illinois. Spanish represents the language of greatest need for translation of content assessments. There are no existing native language assessments.

- G. **Grants for State Assessments and Related Activities.** Describe how the state will use formula grant funds awarded under section 1201 of ESEA to pay the costs of development of the high-quality state assessments and standards.

Illinois will continue to support the design, development, and implementation of high-quality assessments aligned to the ILS. Illinois is committed to moving all assessments to the same platform to provide a consistent user experience for students and to provide better access for students through the continued development and refinement of accommodations and accessibility features. We will support districts in their pursuits to inventory the assessments currently utilized at the district level and will seek to offer support regarding the development of balanced assessment systems.

Section 3: ACCOUNTABILITY, SUPPORT, AND IMPROVEMENT FOR SCHOOLS

3.1 ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.

Each SEA must describe its accountability, support, and improvement system consistent with ESEA. The accountability system is based on the challenging state academic standards for English/language arts and mathematics, in order to improve student academic achievement and school success. The system must include the following key elements:

- Long-term goals and measurements of interim progress;
- At a minimum, four distinct indicators of student performance, measured for all students and separately for each subgroup of students, for each school;
 - Academic achievement (K-12)
 - English language proficiency (K-12)

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- Student growth or another valid and reliable statewide academic (K-8)
- Graduation rate (high school)
- At least one school quality or student success indicator
- Annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools (§1111(c)(4)(C)); and
- Identification of schools to implement comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans.

The vision, mission, and goals of the Illinois State Board of Education describe a system whereby children are able to develop their interests, talents, and sense of self supported by schools and communities. Every child in the public school system in Illinois deserves to attend a school wherein she or he is prepared to enter the workforce or college. Our accountability system must value these goals.

As of August 25, 2016, ISBE has hosted three accountability work sessions, with a diverse group of stakeholders, to gather feedback and insight into the development of an accountability system that is both equitable and educative for schools, districts, and stakeholders. (See Appendix C for agendas and meeting minutes.)

The meetings have resulted in a collection of student success and school quality indicators requiring further investigation. At minimum, a student success and school quality indicator must meet the following requirements:

- A. Is valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the state;
- B. Is calculated the same for all schools across the state, except that the measure or measures selected within the indicator of Academic Progress or any indicator of School Quality or Student Success may vary by grade span;
- C. Can be disaggregated for each subgroup of students;
- D. Includes a different measure than the state uses for any other indicator;
- E. Is supported by research finding that performance or progress on such measure is likely to increase student academic achievement or, for measures used within indicators at the high school level, graduation rates; and
- F. Aids in the meaningful differentiation among schools by demonstrating varied results across all schools.

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ISBE also wants to consider indicators that should be reported vs. what is included in our accountability system and wants to consider items that are within the schools' nexus of control.

The Accountability Workgroup suggested the following indicators:

Academic Indicators

1. Grades
2. Access to and completion of arts and enrichment coursework
3. Portfolio indicator of student success (e.g., combined lexile reading level)
4. Include Kindergarten Individual Development Survey readiness indicator and other K-2 academic indicators
5. Spanish literacy and science assessments to ensure validity and reliability for students classified as ELs and a growing number of students in dual language programs
6. Longitudinal data on current and former ELs; study former ELs' access to AP/IB, graduation rates, etc.
7. HS dropout/graduation rates
8. Teacher retention/engagement
9. Socio-emotional learning
10. Consistency of test scores so we can understand student growth over time

School Climate

11. Disciplinary Data: Suspensions and expulsions
12. Safe environments
13. Wrap-around support
14. "Ready to Learn"
15. Access to physical activities
16. Nutrition
17. Extracurricular activities (participation outside school day)
18. Transportation
19. Student-counselor ratio; student-nurse ratio
20. Components of 5Essentials Survey

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Engagement

21. Parent-Student-Teacher
22. Community
23. Teachers and administrators engaged beyond classroom

Postsecondary Readiness

24. Postsecondary plan
25. Postsecondary credentialing
26. College enrollment
27. Career pathways
28. GPA/x-scripts
29. Tech ed/CTE offerings
30. College/career/workforce ready

Access to Advanced Coursework

31. Dual credit/AP/IB -- equitable participation
32. Course offerings
33. Freshman reading/on track
34. Dropout and attendance rates

Non-Academic Indicators

35. Chronic absenteeism
36. Attendance
37. Expulsion and discipline policies (SB 100)
38. State seal of biliteracy
39. Mentorship programs
40. Early childhood education – K transition, pre-literacy activities, gains (both academic and other) within preK-2

After further consideration, members of the Accountability Workgroup repeatedly identified the following school quality indicators:

- 8th/9th grade on track (K-12 indicator)
- Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (k-12 indicator)

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- HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (9-12 indicator)
- PreK-2 indicator (2 groups) (may not be ready 2017-18)

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding both additional school quality indicators and other ideas as they relate to additional school quality indicators (e.g., why a particular indicator makes/does not make sense within an accountability system).

At its September 2016 meeting, The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) adopted a college and career ready framework. ISBE requests feedback on the structure and substance of the framework and its indicators.

Illinois College and Career Ready Indicator Framework

Students are College and Career Ready if they meet the academic and standardized testing benchmarks:

- **GPA 2.8 out of 4.0**
- **Readiness college entrance score on the SAT**

AND two or more of the following academic benchmarks or industry credential:

- Industry Credential
- Dual Credit Career Pathway Course
- Advanced Placement Exam (3+)
- Advanced Placement Course (A, B or C)
- Dual Credit College English and/or Math (A, B or C)
- College Developmental/Remedial English and/or Math (A, B or C)
- Algebra II (A, B or C)
- International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)

AND two or more from the following behavioral and experiential benchmarks:

- 90% Attendance
- 25 hours of Community Service (or military service)
- Workplace Learning Experience
- Two or more organized Co-Curricular Activities (including language and fine arts)

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Weighting of Indicators

Illinois is considering using four indicators for the elementary/middle level and five indicators at the high school level. The academic indicators specified in ESSA must be given significantly more weight than the school quality/student success indicator. Workgroup participants expressed concern about schools that may not have one or more of the indicators; for example, an EL subgroup subject to the EL proficiency indicator. What follows are two examples of weighting. (Please Note: The following examples are summaries created from the work of the Accountability Workgroup. These examples are provided in order to elicit comments and questions from the field. At this time, ISBE has not made any determination on the accountability system.)

EXAMPLE ONE:

- a. Academic achievement - 20 points (10 ELA/10 math)
- b. Elementary/middle growth -30 points
- c. High school adjusted grad / HS extended grad rate – 25 points
- d. EL proficiency – 20 points – Elem/Middle; 15 - HS
subtotal = 70 academic points-Elem/Middle; 60 - HS
- e. Student Success/School Quality
 - i. 8th/9th grade on track (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
 - ii. Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
 - iii. HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (9-12 indicator) - 10 points
 - iv. PreK-2 indicator (K-8 indicator) (may not be ready 2017-18) – no points at this time until indicator is developed

EXAMPLE TWO:

- a. Academic achievement - 20 points (10 ELA/10 math)
- b. Elementary/middle growth -20 points
- c. High school adjusted grad / HS extended grad rate – 25 points
- d. EL proficiency – 20 points – Elem/Middle; 15 - HS

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subtotal = 60 academic points-Elem/Middle; 60 - HS

e. Student Success/School Quality

- v. 8th/9th grade on track (4 groups) (K-12 indicator) – 15 points
- vi. Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (4 groups) (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
- vii. HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (3 groups) (9-12 indicator) - 15 points
- viii. PreK-2 indicator (2 groups) (K-8 indicator) (may not be ready 2017-18) – no points at this time until indicator is developed

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding the two examples of weighting (e.g., comments on these examples, issues such as the example identified by the Accountability Workgroup, and other, different possibilities of indicators and weighting).

The group has concluded that more research is needed on the English language proficiency indicators. In particular, if the overall composite proficiency level on the ACCESS for ELs for students to be considered English language proficient should be raised. The current levels are overall 5.0, reading 4.2, and writing 4.2.

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding the overall composite proficiency level on ACCESS for ELs.

Goal Setting

Stakeholders discussed that the goal of an accountability system should be for continuous improvement of schools and systems that, most importantly, leads to improved equity and outcomes for students. The group considered the importance of ambitious long-term goals, and that there should be a framework in terms of achievable interim goals. Pervasive throughout the conversation was the notion that all goals – and the system as a whole – need to be balanced with the right equity and resources.

ISBE requests feedback on the relationship between long-term goals that are ambitious and achievable and long-term goals that are aspirational.

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ISBE requests feedback on the relationship between interim goals that are ambitious and achievable and interim goals that are relevant.

Aggregating Measures

Proposed regulations require performance levels and a summative rating that are consistent with attainment of the long-term goals and measurement of interim progress. Illinois needs to develop an approach to meaningfully differentiate schools in order to provide parents and the public a sense of school quality.

Stakeholders emphasized that it is essential to ensure that this is differentiation that parents can understand (such as using the colors from the 5Essentials). There was consensus against using grades for this differentiation and disagreement regarding how many levels to use (participants suggested two – meeting or emerging - to as many as six levels), but uniform approval of arrows that showed the directional trend. They were in concert with other data. Stakeholders also considered the language, if any, that could be used to assist in understanding the specific performance levels provided to school and the types of terms that should be used (e.g., avoiding negative terminology when expressing performance levels).

ISBE requests feedback on performance levels. More specifically considerations on

- *Number of levels,*
- *Terminology that can be used in expressing the performance levels,*
- *Suggestions that could assist parents and other interested parties in understanding performance levels and what they could mean for a school.*

Timeline

There was no clear agreement on the timeline for interim goals. Some stakeholders believed that this timeline should be two years whereas other thought three years was more appropriate.

Also, there was no consensus on long-term goals. Some stakeholders thought the long-term goal should be between 6-10 years, citing that long-term change in a school requires at least five years whereas others thought long-term goals should be between 11-15 years, citing that

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this allows intervention to start with kindergarten through graduation and thus we need a minimum of 12 years.

ISBE requests feedback on the timelines for interim and long-term goals. What is the appropriate timeframe for interim and long-term goals, and why?

There were many issues that came up in the course of the three accountability meetings that did not easily fall into one of the aforementioned categories but are nonetheless critical to the development of an equitable accountability system.

ISBE requests feedback on the following additional questions:

- *How might a system avoid the “bubble syndrome,” which focuses on students who are most likely to meet standards instead of those who need additional supports to meet standards or who are at the higher end of the spectrum?*
- *What is necessary in order to create a system wherein students are able to be identified as part of multiple subgroups?*
- *What is necessary in order to develop a system that addresses disparities in funding and resources (state, local, federal)?*
- *What needs to occur in order to ensure that schools are able to provide an accurate story to the public?*
- *How should Illinois define growth?*
- *What are other ways to define achievement?*

Statewide Goals to Complement Accountability Framework

Statewide efforts to collect data on schools, such as the 5Essentials Survey, and other data elements may be reported out using our long-term goal to complement the accountability framework and help districts and schools to tell their story. Since we may not have this data every year and we may not want to overcomplicate our accountability system, using this data to supplement the story will allow us more flexibility in sharing the information outside of the formal accountability structure.

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What other data do we want included in our reporting system, but not in our accountability system?

The federal accountability system does not need to be implemented until the 2017-18 school year. ISBE intends to use this time to develop a system that is realistic, reliable, achievable, and attainable. ISBE is awaiting the formulation of federal regulations, which are expected to be ready this winter. Modifications to state law will be needed as well.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

A. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe:

- i. The methodologies by which the state identifies schools for comprehensive support and improvement, including: 1) lowest-performing schools; 2) schools with low high school graduation rates; and 3) schools with chronically low-performing subgroups.

Illinois proposes to develop and implement a statewide multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). The MTSS will provide comprehensive and differentiated supports and services to eligible schools.

An MTSS is grounded upon a framework for continuous improvement that is systemic, prevention-focused, and data-informed, thus providing a coherent continuum of supports responsive to meet the needs of all learners. ISBE will utilize its MTSS for training, coaching, and technical assistance in order to build districts' capacity to deliver MTSS within all of its schools. In doing so, districts will be able to address the holistic needs of students through evidence-based practices that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes for all students.

Student achievement is critically important, but as a single measure of school

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performance it does not provide sufficient data to meaningfully differentiate supports and services that will lead to improved student achievement. Furthermore, by the established definitions, there will always be a “lowest-performing 5 percent of schools,” even if those schools eventually have high levels of student achievement. Therefore, as schools move between the different system levels, there will be ongoing adjustments to the services and supports provided based on the data from the accountability system.

Schools eligible to receive comprehensive supports and services will include 1) the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools as determined by the state accountability system, 2) high schools with a four-year graduation rate of less than 67 percent, and 3) schools with one or more student groups whose performance remains on par or is lower than the performance of the “all students” group in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools after a school improvement plan has been implemented for a state-determined number of years..

Pending approval of the proposed regulations, schools in the first two categories will first be identified and notified in 2017-18, using data from 2015-16 and 2016-17, and every three years thereafter. Schools in the third category will be identified in the second round of identification, in 2020-21.

ISBE requests comments to the following questions:

- *Should Illinois identify the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools first, and then identify high schools with a four-year graduation rate of less than 67 percent? Or should the state identify high schools first, then calculate a lowest-performing 5 percent from the remaining pool? Alternate methods will either increase or decrease the number of schools identified.*
- *How many years (up to four inclusive of a possible planning year) should schools with a student group whose performance is on par or lower than the performance of the “all students” group in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools have to implement a school improvement plan before it is identified as requiring comprehensive supports and services, and why?*

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- ii. 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.

The proposed regulations require that a state's exit criteria expect that at a minimum, schools

- a. Increase student outcomes, and
- b. No longer meet the eligibility criteria for comprehensive support and improvement.

It is ISBE's belief that its definition of increased student outcomes should be aligned to the totality of the state's accountability system, not a single assessment or measure.

ISBE requests responses to the following questions:

- *With respect to the definition of improved student outcomes, should improvements in achievement be required, or is increased growth sufficient? If so, why? If not, why not?*
- *Should there be minimal required amounts of growth (beyond the requirement to no longer meet the criteria for identification)? If so, what amount of growth would be sufficient? If not, why not?*
- *Is growth in the "all students" group sufficient, or must there be growth for underperforming student groups as well? If "all students" is sufficient, why? If growth for underperforming groups is necessary, why so?*
- *How should these exit criteria support or hinder progress toward the state long-term goals and measures of interim progress?*
- *What, if any, additional exit criteria should Illinois use? If so, what criteria and why?*

B. Targeted Support and Improvement Schools. Describe:

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- i. The state’s methodology for identifying schools with “consistently underperforming” subgroups of students, including the definition and time period used by the state to determine consistent underperformance.

The proposed regulations encourage the use of all of the indicators in the proposed accountability system to identify schools with consistently underperforming subgroups, while still meeting the statutory requirement to emphasize academic achievement, growth, and other indicators of student success.

Proposed definition: Illinois proposes to define schools with “consistently underperforming” subgroups as schools with a subgroup of students that is performing at the lowest performance level in the system of annual meaningful differentiation on two or more academic indicators.

ISBE requests stakeholder input into the aforementioned definition and response to the following question:

For how long should a student group be underperforming before it meets the definition of “consistently underperforming”? The proposed regulations suggest identifying schools with these student groups every two years. What might the intended and unintended consequences of such a timeline be?

Illinois will define a methodology for identification of these schools after further development and definition of its state accountability system.

- ii. The state’s methodology for identifying additional targeted schools with low-performing subgroups of students.

The proposed regulations define schools with low-performing student groups as “a school with a student group whose performance is at or below that of the performance of the ‘all students’ group in schools identified for comprehensive supports and services.”

EXAMPLE: Methodology for identifying additional targeted schools:

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1. Identify schools that meet the criteria for comprehensive supports and services.

2. For each of the identified schools, identify the highest performance level on the state accountability system.

3. Compare individual school disaggregated data against the values identified in step 2.

4. Notify any school where one or more subgroup is at or beneath the performance level identified above.

ISBE requests stakeholder input into the aforementioned methodology. For example, does it make sense in the context of identification of comprehensive and targeted schools?

- ii. The uniform exit criteria for schools requiring additional targeted support due to low-performing subgroups established by the state.

The proposed regulations require that a state's exit criteria expect that at a minimum, schools

- c. Increase student outcomes, and
- d. No longer meet the eligibility criteria for targeted support and improvement.

ISBE invites stakeholder response to the following questions:

- With respect to the definition of improved student outcomes, should improvements in achievement be required, or is increased growth sufficient? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Should student group performance on relevant indicators be compared to state averages for the "all students" category or the comparable student group? Why?

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- *Should there be minimal required amounts of growth (beyond the requirement to no longer meet the criteria for identification)? If so, what amount of growth would be sufficient? If not, why not?*
- *How should these exit criteria support or hinder progress toward the state long-term goals and measures of interim progress?*
- *What is the appropriate timeline for improvement of performance of underperforming student groups? Literature on systems change and school turnaround suggests a five-year minimum timeline, which is not presently an option under the law.*
- *What, if any, additional exit criteria should Illinois use? If so, what criteria and why?*

3.3 State Support and Improvement for Low-performing Schools

- A. **Allocation of School Improvement Resources.** Describe the SEA's process for making grants to LEAs under section 1003 of the ESEA to serve schools implementing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans.

It is expected that ISBE will reserve \$48,665,646 for school improvement activities in 2017-18. This is the sum of the amount the state reserved for school improvement for fiscal year 2016, plus the amount received for FY 2016 under School Improvement Grants 1003(g), and after which it will reserve no less than 7 percent.

Illinois proposes to use no more than 5 percent of the amount reserved to

- (1) Identify schools that require comprehensive or targeted support and services and notify them of their eligibility, responsibilities, and available system of supports and services;
- (2) Develop the state formula for allotment of funds and services to LEAs that have schools identified for comprehensive or targeted supports;
- (3) Design and implement a rigorous review and approval process for external providers that will become part of a statewide multi-tiered system of support;
- (4) Monitor and evaluate the use of funds by LEAs receiving an allotment of these

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funds; and

(5) Develop as a part of the multi-tiered system of support

- a. Statewide support liaisons, who will be responsible for evaluating, streamlining, and coordinating state application processes, improvement plan submission, review and approval processes, reporting and monitoring processes, and state resources. The purpose of these improvement liaisons is to reduce barriers LEAs and schools face in fully supporting the communities they serve and work to provide operational flexibility for schools in the implementation of comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities.
- b. Networked sets of educators from peer schools and districts who will serve on school review teams, offer support, and meaningful stakeholder engagement in the school improvement process.

Following a planning year, ISBE will make subgrants of varying amounts to schools that submit acceptable comprehensive or targeted improvement plans on a formula basis for a period of not more than three years.

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 as a comprehensive or targeted improvement, with schools requiring comprehensive improvement receiving a larger allotment of funds and/or services and supports 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 as comprehensive and the number identified as targeted,
- The concentration (i.e., percentage of schools in the LEA) identified as comprehensive and the concentration identified as targeted,

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- 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 is that the statute requires that ISBE prioritize LEAs that “demonstrate the greatest need for such funds” and “demonstrate the strongest commitment to using funds.”

Stakeholders were emphatic that there should be a minimum level of quality to the improvement plans, evidence of readiness to implement, and that the plans should be required for schools to receive more than the base-equitable amount needed for planning. When pressed to consider what was best for students in schools whose plans did not meet such criteria, respondents stated that if a school could not even create a solid plan for improvement, it was not going to be able to use any funds it received effectively. This assertion is backed by evidence from previously implemented School Improvement Grants 1003(g). Furthermore, there were concerns that distribution of the funds via a formula would disadvantage small schools and/or would spread the funds too thin for them to realistically have an impact. Therefore, ISBE proposes to incorporate a measure of the quality of the plan as a part of the formula. Stakeholders felt that external evaluation of plan quality by networked sets of educators from peer schools and districts, in conjunction with the state support liaisons described above and external partners who provided diagnostic services and supports during the planning year.

In addition, through the braiding of IDEA Parts B and D funds, ISBE will create a multi-tiered system of support that would arrange for the direct provision of technical assistance, professional development, and support to schools and LEAs whose plans do not meet minimal quality. These schools will receive far more intensive support, monitoring, and feedback from the support liaisons; other state partners, including districts; and agencies when they develop their revised comprehensive and targeted improvement plans.

ISBE will make base-equitable awards of one year for the purpose of planning. After which, ISBE will make awards of three years in duration on a formula basis for the

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purpose of implementation of comprehensive and targeted improvement plans.

Meaningful inclusion of stakeholders in defining “greatest need” and “strongest commitment” and developing the distribution formula and any instruments or evaluation tools associated with the distribution of these funds is crucial to ensuring that funds are distributed in ways that maximize equity of access -- and also equity of outcomes -- for the students served by schools that receive these funds.

ISBE requests stakeholder response to the following questions:

- *How should the state define “greatest need”?*
- *Which should be prioritized, districts with the highest concentrations of identified schools or highest numbers? Why?*
- *What are practical ways for the state to include practitioners and stakeholders in the creation of a state formula and/or instruments that evaluate the quality of an improvement plan?*
- *How should the state define and measure “readiness” and “strongest commitment” to implement change?*

B. Evidence-Based Interventions. Describe the state’s process to ensure effective development and implementation of school support and improvement plans, including evidence-based interventions.

ISBE proposes that schools requiring comprehensive or targeted supports and services will begin a planning year after they have been identified. Former and current School Improvement Grant recipients emphasized the critical importance of a planning year to

- Conduct a school-level needs assessment,
- Develop structures for meaningful stakeholders, and
- Develop strong improvement plans.

Schools that utilized a planning year as a part of their School Improvement Grants

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were demonstrably more ready to implement comprehensive and coherent school improvement efforts, had deeper teacher engagement, and in some cases had already made progress equal to the first year of implementation than schools that did not have the option of a planning year.

In a planning year, Illinois will use 95 percent of these funds to

- (1) Create a multi-tiered system of support. This system will:
 - (A) Provide technical assistance, professional development, and support to LEAs and schools in the development of their comprehensive and targeted improvement plans;
 - (B) Conduct needs assessments, curriculum audits, equity audits, and other diagnostic supports and services for LEAs and schools necessary to develop strong comprehensive and targeted improvement plans;
- (2) Curate, annotate, and update a list of evidence-based strategies as defined in statute from the previous work done to support school improvement.

ISBE requests stakeholder response or additional ideas regarding the ISBE proposal for evidence-based strategies.

- C. **More Rigorous Interventions.** 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.

The director of the Center on School Turnaround recently observed:

"ESSA includes a new evidence-based requirement and defines four levels of evidence:

- Strong — at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (e.g., a randomized controlled trial).
- Moderate — at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study.
- Promising — at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlation study

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with statistical controls for selection bias.

- Research-based rationale — high-quality research findings or evaluations that show the intervention is likely to improve outcomes and that include ongoing efforts to examine effects of the activity, strategy, or intervention.

While some ESSA programs allow the use of all four levels of evidence, Section 1003 requires that schools identified as comprehensive and targeted use these funds only for interventions reflecting one of the highest three levels of evidence (Strong, Moderate, and/or Promising). Given the possible dearth of interventions that meet one of these evidence levels, how states and districts will be able to meet the evidence-based requirement is a concern.”

ISBE requests stakeholder response to the following question:

- *What are the challenges of which ISBE should be aware in regard to the identification and implementation of “evidence-based practices”?*

- D. Periodic Resource Allocation Review.** Describe the state's process for periodically reviewing and addressing resource allocation to ensure sufficient support for school improvement in each LEA in the state serving a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement and in each LEA serving a significant number of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

In 2014, an analysis was completed for the State Performance Plan-State Systemic Improvement Plan Process. In planning for ESSA, ISBE will complete an updated internal infrastructure analysis to review SEA systems, data, and practices utilized for LEA support. This analysis will then be reviewed yearly for updates and revisions.

ISBE proposes that every three years, starting in the year following the identification of schools for comprehensive services (e.g., at the end of a planning year), Illinois will review state, federal, and other programmatic resource allocations for each LEA serving one or more schools identified either for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement. The review will include an analysis of

- Equity gaps in funding per student of General State Aid.

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- Equity gaps in Title allocations, including section 1003 funds, supports, and services.
- Equity gaps in special education allocations from IDEA Parts B and D.
- Equity gaps in funding to gifted and talented grant programs.
- Equity gaps in bilingual education funding.
- Equity gaps in access and provision of educator loan repayment grants.
- Gaps in the provision of all technical assistance, professional development, and other support and services provided by agency staff.
- Gaps in the provision of all technical assistance, professional development, and other support and services provided by external partners in the MTSS.
- Gaps in the impact of funding, supports and services, relative to allocation, for all students, relevant student groups, and teachers.

The review will follow the processes used by Illinois to establish its State Systemic Improvement Plan process and develop its Equity Plan (Appendix D). The review will present data comparing allocations between LEAs and between schools and consider any inequities identified in school support and improvement plans. Following this review, the state will engage stakeholders to determine the most appropriate strategies and take other actions, to the extent practical, to address any resource inequities identified during its review.

ISBE requests stakeholder comments on the proposed periodic resource allocation review.

Section 4: SUPPORTING EXCELLENT EDUCATORS

4.1 SYSTEMS OF EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT, RETENTION, AND ADVANCEMENT

- A. **Educator Development, Retention, and Advancement Systems.** Describe the state's educator development, retention, and advancement systems, including at a minimum:

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- i. The state’s system of certification and licensing of teachers and principals or other school leaders;
- ii. The state’s system to ensure adequate preparation of new educators, particularly for low-income and minority students; and
- iii. The state's system of professional growth and improvement, which may include the use of an educator evaluation and support system, for educators that addresses induction, development, compensation, and advancement for teachers, principals, and other school leaders if the state has elected to implement such a system. Alternatively, the SEA must describe how it will ensure that each LEA has and is implementing a system of professional growth and improvement for teachers, principals, and other school leaders that addresses induction, development, compensation, and advancement.

In 1997, Illinois established a standards-based system of certification. All approved educator preparation programs must demonstrate alignment to specific state and national standards in order to receive approval to recommend individuals for licensure. In addition to completing a standards-based program, candidates must pass licensure tests (basic skills, content, and if entering a teaching field, an evidence-based assessment of teaching effectiveness). All educators must complete continuing professional development in order to renew their licenses.

All programs must align to rigorous state and national content standards, state Social and Emotional Learning Standards, and if entering a teaching field, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. These standards are designed to prepare educators to adequately teach all students, including low-income and minority students. Before being approved to prepare educators for licensure, programs must meet specific criteria, including placing teacher candidates in diverse student teaching settings. The state is also embarking on a new data collection initiative that will result in transparency, accountability, and program improvement within the state’s educator preparation programs.

ISBE will ensure that the professional development (PD) the LEAs offer their teachers and other instructional staff is consistent with the definition of “professional development” by the following means:

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- Align the process of auditing approved PD providers with the definition of “professional development” and remove provider approval status from those providers not in compliance with the definition.
- Establish an annual PD audit. The first provider audit process will begin in the fall of 2016.
- Communicate definition to LEAs in guidance for local plans and require that plans align activities to definition.

4.2 SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS

- A. **Resources to Support State-level Strategies.** 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
- Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards;
 - Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers and principals or other school leaders;
 - Increase the number of teachers and principals or other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
 - Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders consistent with the provisions described in the state’s plan for educator equity.

Professional learning will be offered to principals, teachers, and administrators to build their content knowledge in the Illinois Learning Standards, gifted students, English Learners, and students with disabilities. Resources such as units and lessons for mathematics, English language arts, science, social studies and fine arts will be created and shared with all educators. Content experts will provide support for these resources through professional development opportunities. There will be an effort to increase general communication to stakeholders regarding ISBE initiatives, grant opportunities, professional development opportunities, etc.

Districts, especially those identified for comprehensive services, will be provided

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professional learning opportunities that include strategies regarding leadership, learning communities, data, outcomes, resources, learning design, implementation, and recruitment and retention of teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority districts. This professional learning will improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and administrators and improve student academic achievement.

Other Listening Tour Comments: Some of the comments provided by the many stakeholders related to educator support included

- Bolstering teacher engagement and leadership opportunities and more opportunities for teacher leader training, funds for induction/mentoring, and an overall need for induction/mentoring programs. There will be induction and mentoring opportunities in districts. ISBE will hold focus group discussions with stakeholders to gather input regarding desired training and mentoring opportunities.
- Professional development to support native language instruction through Title II funding.
- Many participants identified potential solutions to effectively use Title II funding, which will be reduced under ESSA. A policy advocate noted that there is a close alignment between the ESSA Title II mandate and Illinois' regulations on principal preparation. Because of this alignment, Illinois may be a strong candidate for school leadership funding.
- The recommendation that Title II funds are used for National Board professional development.
- ISBE should establish new professional development guidelines, fund induction and mentoring programs, provide more opportunities for release time, develop leadership institutes, and offer teacher leader training. This comment occurred at multiple sites.
- Some attendees expressed interest in professional development programs supporting student subgroups, especially ELs.
- The importance of including professional development to meet the needs of high-achieving students.
- Participants also discussed Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at multiple

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listening tour meetings.

- Representatives from a number of groups advocate for supports for social and emotional learning, behavioral and mental health, and physical well-being.

ISBE requests additional comments on the aforementioned suggestions or other uses of Title II funds.

B. Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs. 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.

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 allows for consistency of services to LEAs through MTSS, Illinois Data First, Ed360, the Illinois Virtual School, and Online Impact.

MTSS will provide services that focus on improving student performance in grades K-12 through the implementation of differentiated learning supports in regard to the design and delivery of instruction, intervention, and assessment, including Response to Intervention (RtI); administrative leadership; scientific, research-based instruction in reading and math; social, emotional, and behavioral curricula and instruction at grades preK-12; data-based decision-making; universal screening and progress monitoring; and family/caretaker involvement.

Establishing a MTSS framework with fidelity will allow a district to have the necessary infrastructure needed to implement and sustain any evidence-based practice to improve student outcomes. Identification of student barriers to learning, such as specific learning disabilities or behavioral health issues, will be identified and supported through data-driven decision-making.

So, too, the Illinois Data for Fiscal and Instructional Results, Study, and Transparency

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(Illinois Data FIRST) project includes a series of interrelated efforts that will enable state policymakers, educators, learners, and members of the public to access information from the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) more efficiently to support and improve state and local resource allocations, instruction, and learner outcomes. While Illinois has built and deployed the fundamental components of the ILDS and has established a robust interagency ILDS governance system, Illinois Data FIRST will connect resource allocation information to student outcomes and educator information and significantly expand the use of ILDS for intuitive and “real-time” instructional feedback.

Illinois Data FIRST has two components: Fiscal Equity and Return on Investment (ROI) and Instructional Support. A key outcome of the Instructional Support component is to deliver a comprehensive and high-quality educator dashboard suite including district-, school-, teacher-, and student-level details to support data-informed administrative and instructional decisions.

As a result of this project, ISBE is launching an educator dashboard, Ed360. Ed360 is being developed incrementally to allow K-12 stakeholders to access an initial set of data while additional data sets, functions, and reports continue to be added based on stakeholder feedback. ISBE plans to integrate Ed360 with existing technology in school districts to enable a single sign-on solution. In addition, Ed360 will use existing data collections to populate the dashboards.

Ed360 is available at the state, regional, district, school, and classroom levels. Ed360 will have a formative assessment expansion with additional professional learning focusing on

- Identifying and/or developing formative and summative assessments,
- Using technology and tools in the classroom,
- Content resources, including guidance on how to use resources developed to improve student achievement, and
- Professional learning regarding behavioral and mental health, equity, and diversity issues to support healthier school environments.
- Ed360 is also connected to our Illinois Open Education Resource (IOER).

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The Illinois Virtual School, which began in 2001, has been providing 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.

ISBE also has Online Impact, an online professional development site that will allow teachers to expand their knowledge, explore new teaching strategies, and develop new pedagogical skills in a timeframe that is convenient for them. This is available for Illinois K-12 educators. Online Impact offers workshops that help educators throughout Illinois stay up to date on new and emerging educational trends and develop new skills that will foster continued success in the classroom. Currently, there are 15 online professional development courses that have been offered.

ISBE requests additional suggestions for ways it may improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs.

4.3 EDUCATOR EQUITY

- A. **Definitions.** Provide the SEA’s different definitions, using distinct criteria so that each provides useful information about educator equity and disproportionality rates, for the following key terms:

Key Term	Statewide Definition or Statewide Guidelines
Ineffective teacher	<i>The equity plan does not include a definition of “Ineffective teacher.” ISBE proposes the following, but requests the assistance of stakeholders in developing a definition.</i>

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	A teacher who has received an “unsatisfactory” rating in his/her most recent performance evaluation rating or a teacher who has received a “needs improvement” on an evaluation and in a subsequent evaluation has received an “unsatisfactory” or “needs improvement.”
Key Term	Definition
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 one/two/three/four years of teaching experience. <i>The current definition in the equity plan states that an inexperienced teacher is an individual with ‘less than one year’ of experience. ISBE requests stakeholder input in developing a definition for this term.</i>
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).

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- B. **Root Cause Analysis.** Describe the root cause analysis, including the level of disaggregation of disproportionality data (e.g., statewide, between districts, within district, and within school) that identifies the factor or factors causing or contributing to the disproportionate rates.

Please see Appendix D for the Illinois Equity Plan, which includes data, a root cause analysis, strategies, and a timeline for implementation.

Section 5: SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS

5.1 WELL-ROUNDED AND SUPPORTIVE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS.

- A. 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, a state with a long tradition of local control, 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 to postsecondary education and careers. The ILS and the support and guidance given to LEAs and schools regarding effective implementation of them helps ensure appropriate promotion practices as students attain mastery of the standards and decreases the risk of students dropping out by supporting multiple pathways to postsecondary education and careers.

The Illinois Early Learning Guidelines have been developed to provide early childhood professionals and policymakers a framework for understanding development through information on what children know and should do, and what

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development looks like in everyday instances. These guidelines also provide suggestions and ideas on how to create early experiences that benefit all children's learning and development.

Illinois has adopted the Birth to 5 Program Standards, found at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/0-5-program-stds.pdf>, to further support transition from birth into early childhood education. Illinois provides grants to support programs and services for families and children birth to age 5. Recipients of grants must be committed to establishing programs, providing services, and demonstrating accountability in compliance with all aspects of the requirements as stated in the Illinois School Code and the Administrative Rules for the Early Childhood Block Grant (23 Illinois Administrative Code 235), Subchapter f, Part 235. The standards and quality indicators in this document are the basis for the development, implementation, and evaluation of high-quality birth to 5 programs.

Numerous studies show the long-term gains on cognitive tests; improvements in social and emotional development; and improvements in school success, including less grade repetition, less special education placement, and increased high school graduation as a result of participating in high-quality preschool programs. And these impacts were found to be lifelong – increasing participants' earnings, rates of home ownership, and reducing the need for public assistance. Research demonstrates that the achievement gap can be identified long before children enter kindergarten. Disparities in children's learning are evident as early as 9 months of age and persist as children continue through school.

The achievement gap can also be linked to socioeconomic factors. One national study documented that, before kindergarten entry, the average cognitive scores of affluent children were 60 percent higher than those of low-income children.

A coordinated approach is needed to help young children develop and continue to build upon the fundamental skills they need to succeed in school and to improve the transitions for children and families. When children engage in a coherent set of high-quality learning experiences, the early gains in learning are much less likely to disappear later in school.

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Illinois has also adopted the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) found at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/early_learning_standards.pdf. These are broad standards that provide teachers with developmentally appropriate expectations for children’s development in the preschool years that are organized to parallel content in the Illinois State Goals for Learning. (See 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1 Appendix D found at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/23ark.pdf>.) The IELDS, based on the broad Illinois State Goals and Standards, include Preschool Benchmarks and Performance Descriptors. These standards directly align with the K-12 Illinois Learning Standards in order to promote a smooth transition from early childhood education into elementary education. Early learners must develop basic skills, understandings, and attitudes toward learning before they can be successful in the K-12 curriculum.

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 new Illinois Learning Standards (<http://isbe.net/ils/default.htm>) in math, science, social science, English 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.

Secondary students are offered a variety of academic, 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. Much of the local work with career pathways in districts is completed through the Education for Employment Regional Delivery System (EFE) with the local district level. 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.

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These activities help to connect secondary to postsecondary to careers for students.

Illinois helps to support these pathways by providing funding and other program improvement-related resources to local districts through federal Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006 and state Career and Technical Education Improvement funds for approvable programs as defined by the state's program standards. These grants require equitable access in the EFE and in the subrecipient districts. 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 pathway needs in Illinois that provide resources to local districts as well. Pathway courses' content in Illinois is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards (based on the Common Core) and Next Generation Science Standards, which Illinois has adopted. The state has various programs in place to assist local districts with making the transition to the new standards. Because of differences across the state, 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.

Illinois believes that increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student needs. Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative that requires collaborative efforts from all district staff, general educators, special educators, and bilingual/EL staff. Student academic and behavioral needs must 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 system of early interventions. It is through the continuous use of progress monitoring and analysis of student academic and behavioral growth that proper instructional and curricular responses may be made.

Additionally, Illinois enacted Public Act 99-0456, which addresses district and school policies that contribute to unequitable discipline practices and that contribute to students dropping out or being pushed out. The Act prohibits automatic suspensions and expulsions without considering context, as well as fines, fees, or

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cumulative discipline points systems that would escalate minor behavior into suspensions or expulsions. The law requires that schools exhaust all other means of intervention and discipline, including communication with parents about why certain disciplinary measures are being used, before expelling students or suspending them. Students who are suspended must be allowed equal opportunity to receive credit for their work, so that discipline -- even necessary and appropriate discipline -- does not hinder full and equitable opportunity to be successful.

Illinois is transitioning as an agency toward cross-functional teams, situated within a statewide multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to provide technical assistance, professional learning, funding, and related services and support that promote the shifts in pedagogy in all content areas in order to meet the needs of the whole child. This work draws extensively from the resources and statewide capacity developed by the Early Childhood Division, Special Education Division, College and Career Readiness Division, and the Foundational Services initiative. MTSS will provide support for schools and districts in balanced assessments, ELA, mathematics, science, family engagement, continuous improvement, and teacher evaluation. These services include high-quality professional development seminars that are designed and approved by ISBE for all school districts and provided at no cost to the districts.

- B. Equitable access to a well-rounded education, in subjects such as English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subjects, in which female students, minority students, English Learners, children with disabilities, and low-income students are underrepresented;

ISBE will support LEAs in the implementation of an MTSS to ensure the provision of equitable access to a well-rounded education for all students. An MTSS is a framework

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for continuous improvement that is systemic, prevention-focused, and data-informed, providing a coherent continuum of supports (e.g., evidence-based/evidence-informed practices) responsive to meet the needs of *all* learners.

Educational outcomes (e.g., academic, social, emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical) of students are improved in schools with

- Positive school climates;
- A highly qualified workforce that is trained in engaging academic and climate and culture education;
- Adequate academic, social, emotional, and behavioral health supports and interventions; and
- Coordinated systems for engaging, identifying, referring, and addressing student needs in a positive and proactive manner.

ESSA places an unprecedented priority on the provision of supports for young people struggling with barriers to learning, including programs that address 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 and youth spend most of their day - promote the necessary conditions for learning, which include

- A safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school/classroom climate, and;
- The development of academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical competencies.

Barriers to learning and teaching, such as inadequate access to the general education curriculum, poverty, trauma, disengagement, absenteeism, bullying, and behavioral health issues, must be addressed.

Districts/schools need to 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

- 1) Foster the well-being of *all* students through universal schoolwide approaches (core standards-aligned academic curriculum and instruction and practices that

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- promote healthy development and prevent issues) ;
- 2) Provide early intervention supports to reduce the possibility of escalating issues (evidence-based practices for content areas and social, emotional, behavioral and physical supports) ; and
 - 3) Provide intensive, individualized supports for those students demonstrating complex, multi-faceted needs.

All of this work needs to be done within an integrated manner throughout the school and with the support of resources from the local district and ISBE.

- C. School conditions for student learning, including activities to reduce
- a. Incidents of bullying and harassment;
 - b. The overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and
 - c. The use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety;

ISBE will support LEAs in the implementation of an MTSS to ensure the provision of equitable access to a well-rounded education for all students.

ISBE will support local districts receiving assistance to improve school conditions for student learning by providing professional learning opportunities to work directly with these districts on the implementation of specific evidence-based practices for improved academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical student outcomes.

Current professional learning opportunities include

- Trauma-informed Environments
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Promotional Attendance Practices (in collaboration with National Attendance Works!)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

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- Classroom Management
- Anti-bullying Programming
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards and Supports
- Differentiated Instruction
- Restorative Practices
- Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavioral Intervention Plans
- Check-in/Check-out
- Transitional Support Practices
- Special Populations Support Practices
- Family Engagement
- Educational Environment Practices
- Person-centered Planning Practices (wrap-around, Care Coordination, etc.)
- School-Community Partnerships

In addition, ISBE works in collaboration with learning supports and content specialists from Foundational Services to develop resources specifically meant to build the capacity of classroom educators. Some examples of grade level-specific tools and resources developed can be found at <http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/>.

D. The effective use of technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students;

ISBE is undertaking three strands of technology work related to the goals of improving the academic achievement of students, as well as their digital literacy.

The first strand of work involves increasing access to broadband and devices to mitigate the digital divide that is present across the state. Efforts including participation in the National Governors' Association K-12 Broadband and Digital

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Learning Policy Academy, in statewide fiber optic planning groups, and administration of the ISBE School Technology Revolving Loan program, which helps districts to make technology and hardware investments such as wide area networks, network hardware, hardware for staff development and classroom instruction and staff development related to integration of technology into the learning environment. These efforts are a necessary step in ensuring that students have equitable access to technology that may be used to improve educational outcomes and increase digital literacy.

The second strand of work focuses around the provision of support to districts in their technology implementation. Six regional technology centers, known as Learning Technology Centers or LTCs, provide no cost professional development and network/device consultation to schools. They utilize ISBE-provided tools to help determine school's technology readiness for digital learning and online assessments, support the implementation of these initiatives, and provide E-rate training and application assistance. Through these support mechanisms, districts and schools are better able to increase the digital literacy of educators and students.

The third strand of work is related to those services and resources available to directly support student learning. These resources include the following:

- The Illinois Virtual school, providing direct access to standards- aligned courses for high school students, including AP and credit-recovery options, and slated for expansion to grades 3-12 during the 2017-2018 school year in order to increase access to coursework that may not be readily available in a student's home district;
- The Illinois Open Education Resources project, a resource providing open, standards-aligned academic and career content that will soon be integrated with ISBE-provisioned district dashboards to better allow for customized instructional opportunities for students;
- Additional standards-aligned resources specifically designed to differentiate content for student consumption in order to increase academic achievement

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for each and every student by providing resources that are developmentally-appropriate and responsive;

- And, the Tech for Teachers website, which provides direct resources for implementing STEM concepts such as coding opportunities, 3-d projects, makers, and digital portfolios with students in order to build digital literacy while integrating content with the cultivation of marketable technology skills.

E. Parent, family, and community engagement;

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. ISBE has an intra-agency collaborative team charged with working across divisions to develop more cohesiveness and efficiency in the effort to build capacity, cognition, confidence, and connections for the work. The 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.

To that end, the agency continues to build internal capacity and a number of supports for LEAs and communities. This includes updating the ISBE Family Engagement Framework and its companion tools. The current universal framework is designed for LEAs and schools. It provides guidance on how to develop meaningful partnerships with families by developing family engagement systems, building welcoming and

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supportive environments, enhancing communication with parents, and including parents in decision-making. In using the framework, LEAs are using family engagement as a strategy for school improvement. Efforts 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 and/or EL students.

ISBE will also continue to update and develop family engagement professional development workshops and multi-tiered supports that are available statewide to schools and districts through Foundational Services. The workshops and networking opportunities are aligned to the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. They are designed to help schools and districts 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.

ISBE is pleased that there remains a set-aside requirement for parent and family engagement, with an allocation of more than \$500,000. Ninety percent of those set-aside funds must be distributed to the schools, with a priority for high-need schools. Principal consultants will verify compliance with specific statutes regarding allowable use of funds during their review of the grant. This information will be shared through a webinar.

The Title Grants Administration Toolkit 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.

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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. The professional development and technical assistance plan for 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees includes an annual comprehensive menu of supports for family and community engagement that includes webinars, regional workshops, newsletters, resource bulletins, a website, and two biannual conferences.

In addition, ISBE works closely with an Illinois after-school statewide network, the ACT Now Coalition, which recently published quality standards for Illinois after-school program providers. Almost 50 percent of the providers are LEAs and schools. This is significant, given that this leverages the ability for coordinate resources, staff, and funding to strengthen engagement efforts. There are dedicated standards for family and community engagement as well as 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.

So, too, ISBE's English Language Learners Division published a guidance framework for schools and districts that integrated the four core principals of the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. The guidance document will be used to provide technical assistance. The division will also partner with external stakeholders, including WIDA and the Illinois Resource Center, to build capacity to engage EL families. There are 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 Bilingual Statewide Advisory Council to ensure that the needs of EL families and communities in the education of bilingual students are met.

There are number of strategies that ISBE will be developing to continue and strengthen for young children and their families. Early Care and Education (ECE) providers can receive recognition of their work in family and community engagement from Early Childhood's Continuous Improvement Quality Rating System. This recognition boosts

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their quality rating and informs families of their quality practice.

ISBE, which has received a Preschool Expansion Grant, will work across the agency and in communities to build stronger systems and local capacity of ECE providers and families to better coordinate supports and increase confidence and opportunities for meaningful engagement. ISBE is a key stakeholder on the Illinois Early Learning Council that, as a public-private partnership created by Public Act 93-380, strengthens, coordinates, and expands programs and services for children, birth to 5, throughout Illinois. There is a dedicated committee for family and community engagement that is working in partnership with ISBE to implement a strategic plan to support hard-to-reach families, help families achieve self-sufficiency goals, and support schools in better coordinating the transition for families when their children transition into elementary school.

ISBE is also developing a framework for families because the agency recognizes that families are an integral part of a child's success. This work will align supports for children and families in efficient ways.

Finally, 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. Family and community engagement is one of the core elements for the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measures.

F. The accurate identification of English Learners and children with disabilities;

Illinois wants to ensure that, within the standard process for the identification of ELs in our state, there is enough flexibility to identify children with disabilities, who may or may not need additional services other than linguistic services. Every evaluation will include assessments both in English and in the native language of the student to determine if language is or is not the cause of the learning difficulty. Every Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will include a bilingual/dual

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language specialist able to speak both to the disability and the language questions

G. Other state-identified strategies.

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

The expanded focus in the Statement of Purpose supports ISBE's position that all children need access to an equitable, high-quality, well-rounded education to be successful. This expanded focus reaches beyond English language arts and mathematics foci of the No Child Left Behind to help provide a better chance of closing the achievement gap. ISBE looks forward to working internally and with our districts to support educational decisions that are well-grounded and well-considered to support this goal.

ISBE is expected to receive more than \$1 billion in Title I, Part A; Title II; and Title IV, Part A funds to distribute to its 852 districts. To facilitate this process, the Title Grants Administration Division within ISBE is in the process of updating its consolidated application to house Title I Part A; Title II; and Title IV, Part A programs. This will allow districts to use one portal to provide programmatic and fiscal information related to these grants in order to ensure that the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including each unique subgroup, are considered.

The 852 districts in Illinois must each submit a plan that was developed in consultation with stakeholders for approval. Many elements of the required ESSA District Plan were contained in the previous law, but some components are new, such as

- How the LEA will identify and address disparities in teacher distribution, and
- How the LEA will support efforts to reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, which may include

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identifying and supporting schools with high rates of discipline, disaggregated by each of the subgroups of students.

In accordance with Section 5103, an LEA may transfer all or a lesser amount of the funds from Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A into Title I, Part A. Further, school districts and schools should evaluate the ways in which federal formula grant programs such as Title I, Title II, Title III, IDEA, and Perkins can work together to support their educational goals. It is challenging to think about using federal grants beyond the traditional limited ways to explore new ways that may make a substantial difference in student achievement.

ISBE requests information on constraints districts have experienced preventing them from using and/or braiding federal funds to carry out innovative ways to support students.

- iv. Each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A and Part B and other federal funds.

Title IV, Part A funds are to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs, schools, and local communities to

- 1) *Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education;*
- 2) *Improve school conditions for student learning; and*
- 3) *Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.*

State Use of Funds

ISBE shall use funds under this part to provide technical assistance and capacity building to districts to meet the goals of this program. ISBE will work to support districts in providing programs and activities that (1) offer well-rounded educational experiences to all students; (2) foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement; and (3) increase access to

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personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology.

As with Titles I, and Title II currently, ISBE will consider what resources and programs across the state are presently in place and available, and it will seek to maximize effective use of Title IV, Part A funds by

- Coordinating new plans and resources available under this subpart with such pre-existing resources and programs,
- Monitoring the implementation of Title IV, Part A activities and programs through its existing district oversight mechanisms,
- Offering technical assistance to districts to help them in implementing approved program activities, and
- Identifying the appropriate division to provide equitable access for all students to the activities supported under Title IV, Part A, including aligning those activities with the requirements of other federal laws.

ISBE requests additional suggestions for ways it may consider the use of Title IV, Part A funds to

- 1) Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education;*
- 2) Improve school conditions for student learning; and*
- 3) Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.*

Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Title IV, Part B of ESSA supports the creation of community learning centers. These centers provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

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Two percent of the funds will be used for state administration. This includes using funds to pay for administration and peer reviewers of the sub grant applications. These 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. 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.

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

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assessment will need to be completed in order to receive the funds.

5.2 PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.

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

- A. Each SEA must describe the process and criteria it will use to waive the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold submitted by an LEA 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.

ISBE will use 20 percent poverty as the initial threshold for schools to receive consideration for the schoolwide waiver. Further considerations will include the educational need for schoolwide status. The educational need may include the size of the school, the benefit the schoolwide status will provide, and other factors that the school wishes the state to consider.

ISBE requests additional suggestions for other factors it may wish to consider in regard to the waiving of the 40 percent poverty threshold.

ISBE will continue to support all schools - including those that are ineligible 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

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- i. 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 migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the state 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 migrant agricultural workers or fishers or have a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migrant agricultural worker or fisher; and
- Have moved due to economic necessity from one school district to another (special conditions apply for Alaska and Hawaii); and
- Have changed residence within the preceding 36 months with/to join a parent, spouse, or guardian in order to obtain or seek temporary or seasonal employment in qualifying agricultural or fishing work.

Only certified MEP recruiters, individuals hired and trained by the Illinois Migrant Council or each specific program, can determine if a child / youth is eligible for MEP. Trained recruiters interview each family to determine program eligibility. 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 and prevent resources from being depleted by ineligible children and youth. 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 recruited.

Illinois will establish key personnel responsible for the identification and

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recruitment of MEP-eligible students, such as state identification and recruitment coordinator, state recruiter, and local recruiters. Illinois has developed a comprehensive identification and recruitment manual that describes the responsibilities of each of them and ensures high-quality practices in the state. (See Appendix E)

- ii. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will assess the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool 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.

Illinois developed a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) that includes identification and an assessment of

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

Not only does this analysis of needs provide a foundation for the future direction of the Illinois MEP through the service delivery planning process, but it also supports the overall continuous improvement and quality assurance processes of the Illinois MEP and the overall state plan. The CNA serves as a springboard to set rigorous goals for MEP and to better serve students in Illinois. Doing so contributes to strengthen the state plan.

The comprehensive needs assessment will be based on the resources and structures available in Illinois. The CNA manager, with the assistance of consultants with access to New Generation System (NGS) data and a consultant hired to assist with the CNA update, will collect data on migrant student achievement and outcomes; will disseminate and collect surveys documenting the perceptions of migrant staff and parents related to migrant students' needs; and identify relevant demographic and evaluation data. The data will assist the Needs Assessment

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Committee (NAC) to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the migrant student population in Illinois. A profile of Illinois migrant students will be developed based on the most recently available information. The NAC will use the profile and other collected data to develop concern statements, needs indicators, needs statements, and solutions strategies.

- 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 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 identified and addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, state, and federal educational programs.

Based on the needs identified in through the comprehensive needs assessment, each local MEP may offer the following educational services:

- (1) Preschool developmentally appropriate programs designed to prepare migrant children for a successful school experience,
- (2) Grades K-12 integrated classroom instruction – Math; reading; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (summer school); and tutorial support (during the regular academic year),
- (3) Secondary school services to assist high school students in achieving graduation, and
- (4) Continuity of instruction between and among school districts and states.

For migrant students, Illinois also offers the following services:

- (1) MEPs offer migrant students help to enroll in regular school year programs according to their needs,
- (2) In areas of high concentration, a migrant advocate works with schools and families to make sure their needs are addressed, and
- (3) Require migrant programs in high school to meet with the migrant counselor and the family of the student to review and update their

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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.

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

- (1) The Interstate Migrant Education Council,
- (2) Two migrant incentive grant consortia: Identification & Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium and Graduation and Outcomes for Success for Out-of-School Youth,
- (3) Illinois is part of the New Generation System (NGS) consortium that collects and shares data among several states, including Texas, which is home to a large number of migrant families that come to Illinois.
- (4) Illinois also participates in the National Migrant Student Exchange System (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 to ensure continuity for migrant students who leave Illinois' schools in the middle of the academic year. Illinois administers the Texas state academic test STAAR during the summer for migrant students required to take it.

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- v. Describe the unique educational needs of the state’s migratory children, including preschool 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 Reading and Mathematics

- The migrant student proficiency rate in reading needs to increase by 25 percent.
- The migrant student proficiency rate in math needs to increase by 25 percent.
- Migrant students need instruction and materials that work within the context of migrant programs where students enter and leave at different times.
- Migrant students need English language support in content area instruction at a higher rate than non-migrant students.

For School Readiness

- Migrant children need to increase alphabet and emergent literacy skills.
- Preschool migrant children need to increase math skills to prepare for school.

For High School Graduation and Services to Out-of-School Youth

- Proficiency on state assessments needs to increase by 20 to 51 percent.
- The percentage of students completing math and English courses needs to increase by 13 percent.

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- Migrant students need instruction and materials that work within the context of migrant programs where students enter and leave at different times.
- Migrant youth need to increase knowledge and abilities related to basic life skills and English language skills.

For Ancillary and Support Services

- MEP staff need to have the opportunity to receive training in methods of connecting content instruction to the diverse needs and backgrounds of migrant children.
- Migrant families need adequate access to transportation and nutrition resources.
- Migrant children and youth need to be screened for dental, health, and vision issues; problems found need to be addressed.
- Migrant families need ideas for helping their children succeed in school, including ideas for helping in core content areas, navigating the school system, and preparing for postsecondary options.
- Migrant families need access to educational materials and school supplies in the home.

vi. Describe the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for the Education of Migratory Children program the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes.

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 for the following areas:

Reading and Mathematics

1a: Migrant students participating in a summer program for at least three weeks will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in reading/literacy between pre- and post-test using an appropriate performance-based

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reading/literacy assessment.

1b: Migrant students participating in the MEP regular year reading/literacy instructional services for at least three months will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in reading/literacy skills as measured by a classroom teacher survey that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of reading/literacy achievement.

1c: Migrant students participating in a summer program for at least three 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: Migrant students participating in the MEP regular year math instructional services for at least three months will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in math skills as measured by a classroom teacher survey that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of math.

School readiness

2a: Eighty percent of all preschool migrant students participating for at least three weeks in summer school programs will show a gain of 3.0 in the combined scores of the Emergent Literacy Skills and Alphabet subtests of the New York MEP Early Childhood Education (ECE) Assessment.

2b: Eighty percent of all preschool migrant students participating for at least three weeks in summer school programs will show a gain of 3.0 on the Counting subtest of the New York MEP ECE Assessment.

2c: Seventy-five percent of migrant children ages 3-5 participating in MEP Family Literacy for at least six months will show a standard score increase of 25 or more points between pre- and post-assessment on the New York MEP ECE Assessment.

High School Graduation and Services to Secondary-aged Youth

3a: Seventy percent of secondary-aged migrant students enrolled in summer migrant credit-bearing programs for at least three weeks will complete partial or full credit in one course required for high school graduation.

3b: Seventy-five percent of migrant high school students enrolled in schools with MEP projects for at least three months during the regular school year will work with migrant project staff to complete or update and sign their secondary

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graduation completion plan.

3c: Thirty percent of migrant-eligible Out-of-School Youth will participate in instructional services.

3d: Seventy percent of secondary-aged migrant students (both those attending a home-based program and those in a center-based program for at least three weeks during the summer) will make progress toward the instructional/learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Services Plan.

- 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 Education of Migratory Children programs that span not less than one school year in duration.

Illinois convenes a 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 MEP and how it could better serve their children's needs. During the summer, all MEP projects conduct parent surveys to gather information about their satisfaction with the program and to ascertain ways to improve the academic quality of the programs.

- viii. Describe the SEA's processes and procedures for ensuring that migratory children who meet the statutory definition of "priority for services" are given priority including
- a. The specific measures and sources of data used to determine whether a migratory child meets each priority for services criteria;

Based on data gathered for eligible migrant students, Illinois determines which migrant students receive priority for services (PFS).

Students are considered to be failing or at risk of failing if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Failed to meet state standards on state reading and/or math assessments (including students who were enrolled during the test window but were absent, exempt, not tested, or not scored);

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- b) English Learner;
- c) Over-age for grade (e.g., student is older -- 2-plus years -- than a typical student in that grade);
- d) Retained in grade;
- e) Failed one or more core high school courses;
- f) Out-of-school youth; or
- g) Special education student.

Failure to meet state standards may come from assessment results in mathematics, reading, or English language on the state assessments: PARCC and ACCESS. Standardized assessment results from another state (e.g., TAKS and STAAR scores) may be used as well; however, state assessment results from other states must be verified through an online records transfer system such as NGS or MSIX.

- b. The delegation of responsibilities for documenting priority for services determinations and the provision of services to migratory children determined to be priority for services; and

Every local MEP program in the state is required to maintain a current list of eligible migrant students as well as a list of students who meet PFS criteria. In accordance with ESEA—Section 1304(d), MEPs in Illinois must give PFS to migrant children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state’s content and performance standards and whose education has been interrupted during the regular school year.

NGS data provides the information to determine students eligible for PFS.

- c. The timeline for making PFS determinations and communicating such information.

The PFS criteria have to occur during the current school year or within the previous school year. Two key factors that determine interruption of education

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during the regular school year:

- a) The interruption has to occur within the preceding 12 months. Moves occurring during the summer are not considered an interruption of services.
- b) The interruption has to relate to the migrant lifestyle.

Local projects enter information in NGS and this information is used to determine whether a student is PFS. Illinois has timelines that local projects must follow for entering students' information on NGS.

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

- i. Describe the SEA's standardized entrance and exit procedures for ELs. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the state. At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must
 - a. Include a score of proficient on the state's annual English language proficiency assessment;
 - b. Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the EL subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes;
 - c. Not include performance on an academic content assessment; and
 - d. Be consistent with federal civil rights obligations.

The school district administers a Home Language Survey (HLS) for all students new to the district for the purpose of identifying students of non-English background. An appropriate Prescribed Screening Procedure is administered within 30 days of student's enrollment the district to those students that identify a language other than English in the HLS. Students who score below the state-defined minimum for English language proficiency on the prescribed assessment are eligible for services and are placed into a Transitional Bilingual Education or Transitional Program of Instruction program to receive language support services.

These are the mandated screening test, grades, and corresponding scores:

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Screener	Grades	Cut Scores
MODEL	K (1 st semester)	Oral composite 5.0
MODEL	K (2 nd semester) – Grade 1 (1 st semester)	Overall Composite 5.0 Literacy (R+W) 4.2
W-APT	1 st grade (2 nd semester) – 12 th grade	Overall Composite 5.0 Literacy (R+W) 4.2

School districts must annually assess the English language proficiency, including aural comprehension (listening), speaking, reading, and writing skills, of all ELs in kindergarten and any of grades 1 through 12 using ACCESS for ELs for the purpose of determining individual students' continuing need and eligibility for bilingual education services.

The annual assessment shall be based on the 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards Kindergarten-Grade 12, published by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System on behalf of the WIDA Consortium.

Students are exited from the program of bilingual education services after attaining the state-identified proficiency scores on the annual English language proficiency assessment. ELs will be considered proficient in English when they achieve a score of 5.0 in the overall composite score and 4.2 in reading and 4.2 in writing.

ISBE is considering raising the overall composite proficiency level on the ACCESS for EL for students to be considered English language proficient.

ISBE requests ideas from individuals or groups regarding the overall composite proficiency level on ACCESS for ELs.

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

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

ISBE will fund Rural and Low-Income School grants to LEAs to improve education outcomes based on new accountability metrics. ISBE will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs through email, statewide bulletins, telephone support, and other available means to assist grantees.

vii. **McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

- A. Describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the state and assess their needs.

The Illinois State Board of Education has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same educational opportunities to be successful learners as all other children and youths. 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 vast 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 (EH CY) program requirements and share McKinney-Vento guidance provided by ED. Notices will be provided on the ISBE website, by teleconferencing, and through trainings and workshops.

Illinois is a regionally designed state that has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same opportunities to be successful learners as all children and youths. The landscape for providing those opportunities is coordinated by Illinois' State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (State Coordinator). The State Coordinator oversees an Office of the Coordinator, and Lead Area Liaisons.

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State Coordinator

With the landscape of Illinois consisting of a regional model approach, the State Coordinator for Homeless Education has assigned some of the requirements within the Office of the Coordinator and with the Regional Subgrant Lead Area Liaisons. The State Coordinator and/or assigned staff will

- Provide professional development opportunities for LEA personnel, including the LEA liaison for homeless children and youth (LEA liaison), to assist these personnel in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless children and youths and provide training on the federal definition of terms related to homelessness (Section 722(f)(6)). The State Coordinator must ensure that technical assistance and professional development opportunities are provided to all LEAs. The LEA liaison will receive ongoing information and professional development on challenging areas of implementation, including determining eligibility, determining best interest for school selections, and facilitating the dispute resolution process. The LEA liaison and administrators will be assessed regarding competency and knowledge of LEA requirements and obligations under McKinney-Vento Act.
- Respond to inquiries from parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, as well as unaccompanied homeless youths, to ensure that they receive the protections and services required by the McKinney-Vento Act (Section 722(f)(7)).
- In conjunction with LEA liaisons, inform parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, as well as unaccompanied homeless youths, of the duties of LEA liaisons and publish an annually updated list of LEA liaisons on the SEA's website (Section 722(g)(6)(B)).
- Conduct monitoring of LEAs (Section 722(f)(5)) and the Subgrant Lead Area Liaisons to ensure compliance with EHCY program requirements (Section 722(f)(5)). The State Coordinator and staff within the Office of the State Coordinator will analyze LEA data on enrollment or other demographic information for patterns of possible underidentification of homeless children and youth and subgroups across the state. This allows for the provision of differentiated technical assistance within the McKinney-Vento

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program.

- Help ensure that LEAs are aware of, understand, and can successfully implement the changes to the EHCY programs under ESSA.

The Office of the Coordinator will

- Create annual work plans with measurable goals to improve
 - Identification of homeless children and youths,
 - Enrollment of homeless children and youths,
 - Attendance rates,
 - Achievement,
 - Graduation rates for homeless students.
- Create an annual work plan with measurable goals to give the Office of the Coordinator an opportunity to revisit and revise, as appropriate, policies and procedures.

Illinois will continue gathering valid and reliable data on the educational achievements of homeless children and youth to measure progress in meeting the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Data is collected through the ISBE Student Information System. Data collected and analyzed consists of monthly homeless counts, graduation rates, student growth (test scores), and attendance rates. The analysis of data provides insight into needed program changes that will enhance student growth and development.

Lead Area Liaison (LAL)

There are seven regional areas within Illinois that receive subgrant awards to offer professional development and technical assistance to the 852 public school districts throughout Illinois. The LAL in each region acts as the point of contact for school districts, parents, and homeless children and youths in their region.

The professional development offered by the LALs mirrors the professional development offered by the State Coordinator and the staff within the Office of the Coordinator. The homeless education LAL will disseminate information on the

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act by means of posters, brochures, and other printed materials. The homeless education LALs will be trained to ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated in locations frequently visited by parents/guardians/caregivers of children and youths and unaccompanied youths, such as schools, family shelters, public libraries, bus and train stations, thrift clothing shops, and soup kitchens. It is provided in a manner that is understandable to all persons.

The LALs are required to attend the annual National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Conference each year to receive professional development on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. They are also required to attend the annual State Homeless Conference held in conjunction with the Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) Conference. The conferences will provide opportunities to connect and coordinate with contacts at other agencies and local programs that serve the homeless.

In addition, LALs will be required to attend annual two- to three-day meetings at ISBE and participate in monthly LAL/SEA conference calls. These opportunities will provide LALs with direct access to resources and collaboration with the State Homeless Coordinator, Office of the State Coordinator staff, and other LALs.

Responsibilities of the LAL include

- Provide professional development opportunities for LEA personnel, including the LEA liaison, to assist these personnel in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless children and youths and provide training on the federal definition of terms related to homelessness (Section 722(f)(6)). The LAL will receive ongoing information and professional development on challenging areas of implementation, including determining eligibility, determining best interest for school selections, and facilitating the dispute resolution process.
- Respond to inquiries from parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, as well as unaccompanied homeless youths, to ensure that they receive the protections and services required by the McKinney-Vento Act (Section 722(f)(7)).

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- In conjunction with LEA liaisons, inform parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, as well as unaccompanied homeless youths, of the duties of LEA liaisons and submit annually an updated list of LEA liaisons to the Office of the State Coordinator to be posted on the SEA’s website (Section 722(g)(6)(B)).
- Help ensure that LEAs are aware of, understand, and can successfully implement the changes to the EHCY programs under ESSA.

A map with contact information for the Lead Area Liaisons is at http://www.isbe.net/homeless/pdf/mkv_liaison_map.pdf.

Activities	Timelines
1. Distribute materials to LEA liaisons.	Annually and upon request
2. Distribute awareness and educational materials to shelter providers and to other providers for homeless families.	Annually and upon request
3. Train LEA homeless education liaisons.	Ongoing
4. Update LEA homeless education liaison assignments.	Ongoing
5. Attend annual LAL/SEA meetings.	Annually
6. Attend the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Annual Conference.	Annually
7. Attend the State Homeless Conference, which is held in conjunction with ICEARY Conference annually.	Annually
8. Participate in monthly LAL/SEA conference calls	Monthly

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School District (LEA) Homeless Liaison

Each Illinois school district is required to appoint an appropriate staff member person to serve as a LEA homeless liaison. The LEA homeless liaison will help ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of that LEA (Section 722(g)(6)(A)(ii)). The LEA homeless liaison will receive professional development and technical assistance from the SEA and regional LALs and, in turn, is required to

- Ensure that school personnel providing services under the McKinney-Vento Act receive professional development and other support (Section 722(g)(6)(A)(ix)).
- Ensure that unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as other children and youths, and are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and also ensure that they may obtain assistance from the LEA liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (Section 722(g)(6)(A)(x)).
- Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such youth and that public notice of education rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by unaccompanied homeless youths in a manner and form that is understandable. These places include schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens (Section 722(g)(6)(A)(vi)).
- With appropriate training, may affirm that a child or youth who is eligible for and participating in a program provided by the LEA, or the immediate family of the child or youth, is eligible for homeless assistance programs administered under Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Act (Section 722(g)(6)(D)).
- Ensure that all homeless children and youths in the school district receive the services needed to be successful in school. The homeless liaison will focus on

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enhancing the educational opportunities of homeless children and youths.

- Work closely with school staff to ensure that the homeless classification in the Student Information System is completed for each student identified as being homeless. A student identified as a homeless student at any time during the academic year will remain designated as such during the entire academic year.
- Notify the regional LAL whenever a new LEA liaison is appointed. A listing of LEA administrators and homeless liaisons can be found at <http://webprod1.isbe.net/HomelessChildLiaison/default.aspx>.

Activities	Timelines
1. Distribute materials to school building staff.	Annually and upon request
2. Distribute awareness and educational materials to shelter providers and to other providers for homeless families.	Annually and upon request
3. Train LEA personnel on McKinney-Vento identification, enrollment, and services.	Ongoing
4. Contact LAL of a change in LEA liaisons.	Ongoing

Identification of Homeless Children and Youths

Homeless children and youths 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 (<http://www.isbe.net/homeless/pdf/83-01-common-form.pdf>) was created for LEAs to use when enrolling homeless children and youths. In addition to information on enrolling children and youths into school, it also asks for other children and youths residing in the home to be listed. That allows LEA homeless liaisons to reach out to families with preschool-aged children to assist with finding

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preschool placement for that child. It also allows LEAs to work with families who may need early intervention services for children ages birth to 3 years of age.

To ensure that children and youths are identified, the homeless education liaisons will be 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. (See

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/illinois/homeless/cocontacts.>)

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.

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 National Center for Homeless Education website at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf.

School of Origin

The school of origin may be the only stable and structured part in the lives of homeless children and youths preschool through grade 12 so they are given, by state law and ISBE policy, every opportunity to continue their education without interruption in their school of origin or the school that they last attended when permanently housed. The LEA must presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the individual youth) (Section 722(g)(3)(B)(i-ii)).

Illinois schools can help students experiencing homelessness meet challenging state academic standards by reducing their mobility rate and providing a stable school environment in which to learn. Transportation to their school of origin is essential for their educational success. The LEA homeless liaison will coordinate with the LEA

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transportation director, LEA administrators, parents and caregivers, and unaccompanied youth to arrange for an agreeable and safe mode of transportation. (See <http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/50-27-homeless-transportation.pdf>.)

The definition of “school of origin” specifically includes preschools and, when a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, it also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools (Section 722(g)(3)(I)).

Immediate Enrollment

Homeless children and youths whose parents or guardians choose to enroll their children in schools other than the school of origin are enrolled immediately, even if he or she has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness (Section 722(f)(7)). LEA homeless liaisons must work with the homeless family and the previous school to obtain needed documentation for enrollment. Every homeless student shall have equal access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless. If a dispute arises over eligibility, the child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals (Section 722(g)(3)(E)).

- B. Describe the SEA’s programs for school 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 will gain a better 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

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to enroll in available before- and after-school programs, as appropriate.

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. (See <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/youth.pdf>.) ISBE ensures that schools are doing this through monitoring and through continuous trainings and contact with LEA homeless liaisons.

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. (See <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf>.)

IDEA requires each public agency to ensure that the rights of unaccompanied homeless youths are protected.

- The definition of “parent” includes individuals acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives. The regulations specify that “include” means that the persons named are not all of the possible persons that are covered, whether like or unlike the ones named.
- IDEA specifically requires LEAs to appoint surrogate parents for unaccompanied youths and to make reasonable efforts to complete the appointment process within 30 days. The regulations specify that staff members of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs can serve as temporary surrogate parents for unaccompanied youth, when appropriate. Additionally, a temporary surrogate

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may be the employee of an SEA or an LEA, as well as anyone else involved in the care or education of the child.

- IDEA does not require an LEA to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation for wards of state if the LEA cannot find the parent, the parent’s rights have been terminated, or a judge has removed the parent’s educational decision-making rights and appointed another person to represent the child.
- IDEA permits judges to appoint surrogate parents for wards of state.

Activities	Timelines
1. LAL and LEA homeless education liaison will work collaboratively to identify homeless youth not currently in school.	Annually and upon request
2. LAL and LEA homeless education liaison will train LEA staff on identification of unaccompanied youths, IDEA, and McKinney-Vento alignment of services for homeless children and youths.	Annually and upon request
3. Follow the guidelines defined in IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youths who have a disability or special education need.	Ongoing
4. Collaborate with ISBE Special Education staff on IDEA policies and procedures.	Ongoing

C. 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

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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” [105 ILCS 45/1-15 (a)]. In furtherance of the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act and in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, the following procedures constitute Illinois’s dispute resolution process for homeless students.

An 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;
- 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

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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 the State Coordinator.

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The regional superintendent of schools shall appoint an ombudsperson to hear the dispute within 10 school days after receiving such notice.

If possible, within 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 school days of the meeting.

If possible, the ombudsperson shall make a written determination on a form supplied by the State Board of Education within 10 days after the conclusion of the dispute resolution meeting. The form, at a minimum, shall include the following:

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1. Background and case-specific timelines;
2. Detailed summary of the arguments made by each party;
3. Findings of fact and an analysis of each argument and the specific reason(s) why the ombudsperson accepts or rejects each argument;
4. A detailed discussion of all relevant findings of fact, arguments, and analysis of such arguments;
5. An explanation of any inferences (positive or negative) reached in making the determination;
6. The final determination.

Appealing the Determination of the Ombudsperson

Either party may, within five school days of the ombudsperson's determination, send a written request to the State Coordinator asking the State Coordinator to review the 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.

The State Coordinator shall make a final decision no later than 15 days after receiving the request for review 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

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Superintendent shall place the district’s recognition status on probation in accordance with 23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.20(b).

Activities	Timelines
1. Train LEA homeless education liaisons in dispute resolution processes via LALs.	Ongoing
2. Train homeless education liaisons in their duties to represent homeless youths who may be involved in a disagreement related to their homeless status and education via LALs.	Ongoing
3. Regional superintendents of education will appoint the ombudsperson at the beginning of the academic school year.	Annually
4. Ombudspersons appointed to the position will complete annual training relative to their position.	Annually

- D. Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that that youths and youths separated from the public school 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 polices.

The term homeless “children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes

1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters;

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- or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 4. Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in the above situations.

Information about a McKinney-Vento student's living situation is a student education record subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (11432(g)(3)(G)). LEA homeless liaisons are required to ensure that unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as other children and youths, and are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and to ensure that they may obtain assistance from the LEA liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (Section 722(g)(6)A)(x)). They must assist unaccompanied youths in receiving the help they need from counselors to advise and prepare them for college, and that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent them from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.

The goal for unaccompanied homeless youths is to improve high school graduation and college readiness by maximizing credit accrual, ensuring college counseling and access to financial aid, providing school stability during the vulnerable transition from middle school to high school, and requiring states to report disaggregated achievement and graduation data for homeless youths. 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)).

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Activities	Timelines
1. Train LAL and LEA homeless education liaisons on specific needs of runaway and homeless youths.	Ongoing
2. Distribute posters to disseminate information about homeless youths.	Ongoing
3. Distribute updated information on unaccompanied youths to all sites where youths may gather to educate and inform them of their rights.	Ongoing
4. Development of collaborative relationships with shelters and services providers focusing on unaccompanied youths.	Ongoing
5. Train school district personnel on the educational rights of unaccompanied youths, including guardianship issues that cannot exclude enrollment.	Ongoing
Establish enrollment procedures to accommodate unaccompanied youths with direct referral to the LEA homeless education liaison to provide assistance to develop a surrogate educational advisor relationship for the youths regarding education decisions and use of the Caregiver Form. (See http://www.isbe.net/homeless/pdf/83-04J_caregivers.pdf .)	Ongoing
7. Abide by the guidelines defined in the IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youths who have a disability or special education need.	Ongoing

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8. Provide referral to social service agencies for services needed by unaccompanied youths.	Ongoing
s	

- E. Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths
- a. Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or by LEA, as provided to other children in the state;
 - b. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities under ; and
 - c. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in federal, state, and local nutrition programs.

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a. Homeless children access public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the state.

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 should 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. By establishing an active working partnership, all entities will be able to provide services that address the needs of homeless families and to identify children age birth to 5 who are in need of early childhood education services.

LEA homeless education liaisons will identify homeless families with preschool-age children during initial school enrollment or as part of the identification of a family's transitional status during the academic year and will collect data on all children in the family. It is the responsibility of the homeless liaison to ensure that the homeless children and their families have equal access to ISBE-funded preschools available in their community and to make referrals to all early childhood programs of any kind that homeless children age birth to 5 may be eligible for within their community service area.

ISBE early childhood programs are those included in the Early Childhood Block Grant, Prevention Initiative for Programs Offering Coordinated Services to At-Risk Children and Their Families from Birth to Age 3 Years, and Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years. The Prevention Initiative Program provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to help families build a strong foundation for learning to prepare children for later school success.

The Preschool for All initiative focuses on providing high-quality educational programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failures. First priority is given to children who at preschool screenings are determined to be at risk of academic failures due to environmental and developmental delays. A disproportionate share of children come from low-income working families, homeless families, teen parent families, or families where English is not the

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primary language spoken in the home. Homeless children and youths are a priority in this high-risk category and if slots are available at the time of enrollment, homeless children must be enrolled immediately. If no slots are available, the child must be placed at the top of the program's waiting list. Children who are at a greater risk of academic failure may be rescreened within the first 30 days of school attendance.

ISBE believes that the educational development and success of all Illinois children can be significantly enhanced when children participate in early childhood programs. Community services coupled with a commitment to supporting early childhood education will give additional support to ensuring that all Illinois children have the opportunity to develop a strong foundation for learning. These two factors help make the ultimate goal of having students be college and career ready more attainable.

District homeless liaisons will also assist families to access federally funded Head Start programs, when appropriate. Head Start has specific local criteria for meeting the needs of homeless children in the community. Head Start provides information about families whom their staff identifies as in need of homeless education services. Head Start programs identify a need that closely aligns their family service provisions for early childhood students with local homeless education liaisons to coordinate services. Head Start staff members often have collaborative relationships with local public health clinics and may be able to obtain immunization records to ensure that homeless children do not receive excessive immunizations due to their living situation.

Regulations were put in place as part of the Head Start reauthorization to remove barriers to enrollment for homeless children and provide early identification to assist with enrollment. This allows families to apply to, enroll in, and attend Head Start programs while required documents are being obtained. ISBE works with Head Start staff to gather and report data to determine the needs of homeless children age 5 and under.

ISBE's McKinney-Vento goal is to ensure homeless children are receiving an early education to prepare them for a successful future.

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- Provide awareness to state-level early childhood staff;
- Provide awareness to school district homeless liaisons on the importance of early childhood education;
- Provide annual training and education to Early Childhood program grant participants by ISBE staff and Lead Area Liaisons from the Homeless Education Program through conference and regional training participation;
- Create and develop a tip sheet on recognizing and identifying homeless children for Early Childhood providers;
- ISBE McKinney-Vento staff work collaboratively with Early Childhood staff to develop and update the State Early Childhood Implementation manuals on staff and professional development resources, best practices, and program briefs that will increase the knowledge and skill of Early Childhood parent coordinators and homeless education staff;
- Train Early Childhood staff on the McKinney-Vento Act and the importance of including opportunities for homeless children and their families to be able to enroll in preschool programs;
- Provide Early Childhood staff with a link to homeless education liaisons throughout the state.

(See <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/early-childhood.pdf>.)

Activities	Timelines
1. Train LAL and LEA homeless education liaisons on the importance of preschool for young homeless children.	Ongoing
2. Collaborate with state-level early childhood staff.	Ongoing
3. Collaborate with Head Start staff on McKinney-Vento Homeless Education at regional and statewide conferences annually or at their	Annually

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request.	
4. Provide early childhood resources to all homeless education liaisons in cooperation with the ISBE Early Childhood Education Program.	Ongoing
5. LALs provide training to Early Childhood program grant participants on McKinney-Vento identification, enrollment procedures, and Student Information System data reporting through conference presentations and workshops.	Ongoing

b. Homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, theater, debate, and clubs, are often a key to engaging children and youths 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.

However, 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

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class and other academic activities and extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, and clubs.

Activities	Timelines
1. Collaborate with Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Elementary School Association to ensure alignment with policy and procedures regarding homeless children and youths.	Ongoing
2. Provide training on the value of academic and extracurricular activities for homeless children and youths.	Ongoing
3. LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will provide guidance to schools regarding removing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.	Ongoing

c. Homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in federal, state, and local 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, 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.

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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 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

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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.

Activities	Timelines
1. Train LAL and LEA homeless education liaisons in procedures to assign homeless children and youths to the free lunch program.	Ongoing
2. Collaborate with ISBE Nutrition staff regarding free lunch status for homeless children and youths.	Ongoing
3. LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will provide guidance to schools regarding eligibility of homeless families, children, and youths for free lunches as part of the enrollment process.	Annually

- F. 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.

ISBE adopted a policy on the education of homeless children and youths in December 1995 to ensure that the Illinois Education of Homeless Children Education Act is fully implemented. It requires all Illinois school districts to comply

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fully with the policy and with federal and state laws affecting the rights of homeless children and youths. The ISBE policy also requires that all LEAs review any rules or regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and take steps to revise them so that homeless children and youths are afforded the same opportunities as the non-homeless. This policy also emphasizes the importance of homeless students attending their school of origin without interruption, wherever possible.

This policy, along with the strong state law on the education of homeless Illinois children, means Illinois has taken every possible step to ensure that homeless children have the opportunity to meet state academic standards. A federal law modeled after the Illinois law has some additional requirements beyond those included in the Illinois law. ISBE will review the federal law and adopt an updated policy that directly supports it.

Activities	Timelines
1. State Board of Education reviews current policy and adopts a modified one, as needed, to support federal and state law.	Ongoing
2. Collaborate with school districts to revise any local policies that are barriers to the enrolment of homeless children and youths.	Ongoing

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