



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Tony Sanders
State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Superintendent Sanders:

I am writing in response to Illinois' request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Illinois first submitted its request on January 3, 2025, and submitted a revised version on March 13, 2025.

I have determined that the amendment request meets ESEA requirements; accordingly, I am approving Illinois' amended State plan. A summary of Illinois' amendment is enclosed. This letter, as well as Illinois' revised ESEA consolidated State plan, will be posted on the Department's website. Any further requests to amend Illinois' ESEA consolidated State plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is Illinois' responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

Thank you for the work Illinois has invested in its consolidated State plan under the ESEA. If you need any assistance regarding its implementation, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability at: OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Hayley B. Sanon
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
and Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Rae Clementz, ISBE
Jason Helfer, ISBE
Kimberly Clarke, ISBE
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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Amendment to the Illinois ESEA Consolidated State Plan

The following is a summary of Illinois' amendment request. Please refer to the Department's website <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/oese/key-documents> for Illinois' complete consolidated State plan.

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

- *Student Groups*

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) added the Middle Eastern or North African student group to the student groups used for accountability and reporting purposes.

- *Long Term Goals – Academic Achievement*

ISBE clarified its plan to set new annual long-term goals and measurements of interim progress using the results of its 2024-2025 standards setting as the baseline following implementation of its redesigned statewide accountability system.

Prior to implementing its new long-term goals and measurements of interim progress, ISBE must submit an ESEA consolidated State plan amendment for the Department's review and approval.

- *Academic Standards and Assessments*

For high schools, ISBE changed its statewide summative assessment for reading/language (R/LA), mathematics, and science from the SAT (and, for science, the grade 11 Illinois Science Assessment) to the ACT. ISBE made corresponding changes throughout its plan, including to the assessments included in its Academic Achievement and science School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicator.

- *Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP)*

ISBE clarified that it will set new reclassification criteria for English learners (ELs) who take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS test, which is for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, following standards setting.

ISBE must submit an amendment to its ESEA consolidated State plan for Department review and approval in fall 2025 that includes ISBE's proposed reclassification criteria for students who take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

ISBE also noted that it may set new reclassification criteria for the WIDA ACCESS test following the completion of the new ACCESS administration and subsequent standards setting in 2026.

- *School Quality or Student Success Indicator – College and Career Readiness*

ISBE updated one component of the academic measures within its College and Career Readiness SQSS indicator. Specifically, ISBE lowered the minimum SAT subject score in reading and writing from 540 to 480 and the minimum subject score in mathematics from 540 to 530. This decline is consistent with the College Board's updated college and career ready benchmark scores.

- *SQSS Indicator – Climate Survey*

ISBE revised its plan to remove two climate surveys that are no longer offered to LEAs. In addition, ISBE described its process to consult with teachers, principals, superintendents, and other stakeholders to identify two or three additional surveys of learning conditions that LEAs may elect to use in lieu of the State-adopted climate survey. The State did not change how it calculates the indicator.

- *SQSS Indicator – Meta-Indicators*

ISBE noted that it has begun including on State and local report cards the indicators previously mentioned in the State plan as under consideration for future inclusion in the State accountability system. That is, the State is now reporting on fine arts (student participation, teacher qualifications, and student voice measures), preschool through grade 2 (chronic absenteeism, dual language programs, participation in enrichment and

acceleration, and 3rd grade literacy measures), and additional elementary and middle schools measures (5th grade math grades, middle school success, and participation in enrichment and acceleration measures).

The State is not yet incorporating any of these measures in the State’s system of annual meaningful differentiation. Note that, prior to using these indicators in its system of annual meaningful differentiation, the State must submit an ESEA consolidated State plan amendment for Department review and approval.

- *Including All Public Schools in a State’s Accountability System – Alternate Methodology*
For small schools that do not meet the minimum n-size, ISBE clarified that it will use three years of data to ensure that all schools are included in the State system of annual meaningful differentiation.
- *Exit Criteria – Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*
ISBE clarified that additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) schools will have a planning year and three years of implementation prior to being elevated to comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) if they do not meet the statewide ATSI exit criteria.
- *Other Continued Support – More Rigorous State Determined Action*
ISBE changed the title of its statewide system of support from “IL-EMPOWER” to “School/District Improvement” and added its Intensive Support schools to the list of schools eligible to receive services.
- *Other Continued Support – Resource Allocation Reviews*
ISBE updated its process for conducting resource allocation reviews.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

- *Resources to Support State-level Strategies*
ISBE updated its ESEA consolidated State plan to describe how Title II, Part A funds will be used to support educators in the State.
- *Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs*
ISBE updated its ESEA consolidated State plan to note that it is assessing whether to maintain or change current contracting practices for third-party vendors of professional development services.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY)

- *Dispute Resolution*
ISBE incorporated into the narrative a statement indicating that it’s dispute resolution procedures for students experiencing homelessness have been added to the Illinois Administrative Code.