



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

September 11, 2026

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 submitted its request on April 16, 2026, and submitted revised versions between May 28, 2026, and August 28, 2026.

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 Division of State Support and Accountability at: OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Baesler
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Rae Clementz, 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

- *Academic Standards and Assessments*

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) updated its ESEA consolidated plan to reflect the State's implementation of new high school assessments the PreACT Secure 9 and PreACT Secure at grade 10, which will be used to measure student growth. e Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) updated its ESEA consolidated plan to reflect the State's implementation of new high school assessments the PreACT Secure 9 and PreACT Secure at grade 10, which will be used to measure student growth.

- *Long Term Goals – Academic Achievement*

ISBE set new annual long-term goals (LTGs) and measurements of interim progress (MIPs) for reading/language arts (R/LA), mathematics, and science using the results of its 2024-2025 academic achievement standards setting as its baseline. Specifically, ISBE updated its timeline to achieve its LTG of 90 percent proficient to the 2039-2040 school year (SY), including updating its MIPs.

ISBE also included baseline data, LTGs and MIPs for the new Middle Eastern or North African student group.

- *Long Term Goals – Graduation Rate*

ISBE updated its baseline data to 2026, MIPs, and LTGs for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). ISBE maintained its LTG of 90 percent of students to graduate college and career ready in 2033.

In addition, ISBE updated its baseline data to 2026, including MIPs and LTGs for its five- and six-year ACGRs. ISBE maintained its LTG of 92 and 92.5 percent of all students graduating career and college ready in five and six years, respectively, by 2033.

ISBE also included baseline data, LTGs and MIPs for the new Middle Eastern or North African student group.

- *Academic Achievement Indicator*

ISBE revised its Academic Achievement indicator to note the new statewide assessments it is administering. Proficiency will be calculated using an unweighted composite of reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics results for grades 3–11 based on the number of students scoring proficient or above divided by either the number assessed or 95 percent of the required testing population, whichever is greater.

For high schools, ISBE will use the PreACT 9 Secure, PreACT Secure (grade 10), and ACT with Writing and Science (grade 11) to measure proficiency. In addition, ISBE will use student growth percentiles (SGPs) beginning in 2025. The measure will be calculated by summing all R/LA and mathematics SGPs and dividing by the total number of students with an SGP.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will continue to participate in the Dynamic Learning Maps–Alternate Assessment across grades 3–11 and be included in the same manner as the general assessments in the Academic Achievement indicator.

Note that while the State combines science results with the R/LA and mathematics results in its overall calculation of academic proficiency, for ESEA purposes, ISBE includes science proficiency as an SQSS indicator.

- *Other Academic Indicator for Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools*
ISBE clarified its Other Academic Indicator (OAI) for elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools is student growth measured by student growth percentiles (SGPs) for students in grades 4 through 8. Previously, the State included SGPs for students in grades 3 through 8. ISBE updated its methodology for calculating student growth to be based on the sum of all R/LA and mathematics SGPs divided by the count of all R/LA and all mathematics SGPs.
- *Graduation Rate Indicator*
ISBE revised the calculation of its Graduation Rate indicator. ISBE will calculate this indicator using the four-, five-, and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, which will be weighted at 60 percent, 30 percent, and 10 percent, respectively.
- *School Quality or Student Success Indicator*
ISBE changed its chronic absenteeism School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicator to a consistent attendance SQSS indicator. Specifically, ISBE changed the calculation of this indicator to measure the inverse of the chronic absenteeism by evaluating the extent to which students attend school at least 90 percent of instructional days during the school year rather than measuring the students that were absent 10 percent or more of school days of the academic year.

ISBE also removed its 9th grade on track and its college career ready SQSS indicators from its accountability system.

ISBE changed the calculation of its SQSS climate survey indicator, which continues to be a measure of student participation on the survey. The measure is calculated by dividing the number of participating students by the total number of students rostered at their public-serving school.

ISBE also removed the points that corresponded to participation rates scores for this indicator (i.e., 100 points for a participation rate of greater than or equal to 95 percent or 0 points for a participation rate that is less than or equal to 50 percent no longer apply).

- *State's System of Annual Meaningful Differentiation/Weighting of Indicators*
ISBE revised its state system of annual meaningful differentiation (AMD) to be structured as a “performance profile” that integrates “core indicators”—proficiency on the R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments, student growth on the State assessments, and the graduation rate—with “elevating indicators” including the Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) indicator and the consistent attendance and climate survey participation SQSS indicators. ISBE reviews performance of the school and student groups to determine a school's overall designation.

ISBE will place schools into one of five levels—Exemplary, Approaching Exemplary, Commendable, Developing, or Comprehensive—based on specific numerical thresholds that vary by grade band and indicator.

- *Including All Public Schools in a State's Accountability System – Alternate Methodology*
ISBE clarified that it uses back mapped results from the closest tested grades for schools which the State does not have sufficient data to be included in the traditional manner defined in the State's accountability system (e.g., a K-2 school). Schools that rely on data two or more grade levels away are exempt from automatic comprehensive support thresholds for those specific indicators (e.g., a K-2 school will not be identified based on the student growth score, since it only includes students in grades 4-8) but will be identified, potentially, based on all other available data in the system.

For schools with variant or broad grade spans (e.g., P-12 schools), ISBE will continue to calculate accountability results for each applicable grade span and added that all indicator data for all grades served are reported for transparency.

- *School Identification Methodology – Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)*
ISBE revised its school identification methodology for CSI schools. ISBE will first look at its core indicators, including the threshold set by the State for each core indicator by which a school is automatically identified for CSI (e.g., proficiency rates below 13.75 percent). ISBE then applies the elevating indicators to determine the school’s status.

ISBE also clarified that, if fewer than five percent of Title I schools are identified by its system of AMD, ISBE will raise its indicator thresholds—for high schools and for elementary/middle schools, separately—to ensure it meets ESEA requirements to identify not less than the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools.
- *School Identification Methodology – Targeted Support and Improvement due to consistently underperforming student groups (TSI)*
ISBE updated its methodology to identify schools for targeted support and improvement due to consistently underperforming subgroups (TSI) to align with its revised State system of AMD.

ISBE will identify schools for TSI if any student group in the school meets the criteria for the “comprehensive” profile of performance.
- *School Identification Methodology – Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*
ISBE updated its methodology for schools identified for additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI). From among the schools identified for TSI, ISBE will identify schools for ATSI using the same methodology it uses to identify schools for CSI.
- *Annual Measure of Achievement*
ISBE removed its additional rule that a school with a participation rate lower than 95 percent could not receive the highest designation in its system of AMD. The State will continue to calculate participation rate in the Academic Achievement indicator consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(E).
- *Exit Criteria*
ISBE revised its exit criteria for CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools to align with its updated system of AMD, such that a school or student group must demonstrate measurable improvement in one or more core indicators (proficiency, growth, or graduation rate) and no longer meet the criteria for the comprehensive profile of performance designation.
- *Other Continued Support*
ISBE clarified that, beginning in school year 2027–2028, initial school-level needs assessments for intensive (i.e., CSI schools that have not met exit criteria) and CSI schools will be conducted by a learning partner selected by the school or district. Districts with identified schools will be required to select and contract with qualified expert vendors (“learning partners”) capable of supporting effective school improvement and providing evidence-based services.

Title I, Part C: Education for Migratory Children

- *Supporting Needs of Migratory Children*
ISBE provided details related to how it will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, and other needs that must be met in order for preschool migratory children to participate effectively in school, will be addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs.

ISBE described how, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the Migrant Education Program, the State and its local operating agencies will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children,

including migratory children who have dropped out of school, are identified and addressed through measurable program objectives and outcomes (MPOs) as well as through joint planning among local, State and Federal educational programs serving migratory children.

Additionally, ISBE updated its MPOs that it uses to determine whether the program has met the unique educational needs of migratory children and youth as identified through the comprehensive needs assessment (CNA). These outcomes are updated periodically as part of the continuous planning process.

Finally, ISBE updated its description for the following indicators of the unique educational needs of Illinois migratory children: 1. English Language Arts and Mathematics. 2. School Readiness for Preschool Children. 3. High School Graduation. 4. Out-of-School-Youth (OSY) Achievement. 5. Ancillary and Support Services.

- *Promote Coordination of Services*

ISBE updated its State plan to accurately reflect the SEA's current membership in the Identification & Recruitment Consortium-2 (IDRC-2) and Innovative Strategies for Out-of-school and Secondary Youth (iSOSY).

Title I, Part D: Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk Youth

- *Program Objectives and Outcomes*

ISBE updated its Title I, Part D grant application to include the requirement that subgrantees describe their assessment plan. This is in addition to information required under the ESEA for subgrantee applications.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

- *Use of Funds*

ISBE added information on its use of Title II, Part A funds to award competitive grants to universities to establish teacher residency and apprenticeship programs aimed at addressing statewide educator shortages. These initiatives, implemented in partnership with school districts, will conclude in 2026, with statewide dissemination of results to follow.

- *Data and Consultation*

ISBE updated its former Ed360 system to the MyDataDashboard (MDD) and integrated the MDD into its Illinois Interactive Report Card (IRC). The MDD provides school-level reports that surface key accountability patterns and, when appropriate, draw on additional ISBE data to support continuous improvement.

Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

- *Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures*

ISBE removed language regarding the assessment and placement of children in EL programs when they enroll in optional preschool programs.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY)

- *Student Identification*

ISBE removed activities that it no longer conducts or requires LEAs to conduct for student identification.

- *Access to Services*

ISBE inserted a description of activities to ensure access to public preschool for children experiencing homelessness. ISBE also removed the description of the McKinney-Vento Student Services Advisory Committee which is no longer convened but still meets the requirement for developing guidance and

procedures for granting full or partial credit for schoolwork previously completed.

- *Strategies to Address Other Problems*
ISBE described how State law 410 ILCS 525/25.3 provides free birth certificates to McKinney-Vento youth after certification from a public school homeless liaison or social worker, which still meets the requirement.
- *Assistance from Counselors*
ISBE described how State law 110 ILCS 131/1 requires each institution of higher education to designate a liaison to assist homeless students enrolled at the institution and to collaborate with LEA liaisons to facilitate their transition from secondary to postsecondary education.