

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



U.S. Department of Education
OMB Number: 1810-0576
Expiration Date: November 30, 2019

Introduction

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

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

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

The sections are as follows:

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

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

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, citations to the ESEA refer to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

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

Instruction for Completing the Consolidated State Plan

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

Submission Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

Publication of State Plan

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

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

Consultation

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

Assurances

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

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



Cooperation with CCSSO

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

Section 427 GEPA Statement

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

Cover Page

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

Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

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

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

or

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

- ☐ Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies
- ☐ Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
- ☐ Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- ☐ Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- ☐ Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
- ☐ Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- ☐ Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)
- ☐ Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
- ☐ Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act): Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

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Illinois Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

Articulating this comprehensive vision is challenging within the structure of the template insofar as it requires the state to respond to prompts that, for the purposes of compliance, are compartmentalized. To more fully

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

articulate the vision for Illinois and how ESSA assists us with making our vision real, this introduction connects topics in ways that allow for Illinois to share our values and, from this, the story about the educational opportunities and supports we are working to provide for each and every child in Illinois schools.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

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

Vision

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

Mission

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

Goals

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

GOAL 1: Every child will make significant academic gains each year, increasing their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future, with the state paying special attention to addressing historic inequities.

GOAL 2: All districts and schools will receive the resources necessary to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments, and will be equipped to meet the unique academic and social and emotional needs of each and every student.

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

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

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

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

Collaboration

It is for this reason...at the present time not to be distracted in allowing any issue, no matter how useful in itself, to displace the freedom of intelligence in public communication by means of speech, publication in daily and weekly press, in books, in public assemblies, in scientific inquiry, as the center and burning focus of

*democracy. Nothing will be more fatal in the end than surrender and compromise on this point. Now, more than ever, it is urgently necessary to hold it in steady view as the heart from which flows the life-blood of democracy.*⁴

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

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

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

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

ESSA requires collaboration with stakeholders as part of creating state plans. ISBE fully embraced this requirement and has gone to great lengths to engage the entire state through a variety of means. The State Board’s hypothesis is that if we repeatedly engage community members in the conversation about what we want Illinois students to know and be able to do, ask educators and community members what support and accountability for these outcomes should look like, and connect these new networks to already existing groups that this approach would lead to the development of a plan that is durable, nimble, and robust enough to

⁴ Dewey, J. (ca. 1946), “What is Democracy” (unpublished manuscript, ca.1946), Special Collections, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Box 55, Folder 3.

radically improve educational outcomes in the state so that we can reach our goal of having 60 percent of Illinoisans with a high-quality degree or postsecondary credential by 2025.

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

ESSA requires that a state regularly revisit its plan to ensure that the plan is, in fact, producing the intended outcomes. ~~If student outcomes do not meet those described in the plan, then ISBE will collaborate with stakeholders to determine the best approach to improving student outcomes. We are expected to implement this plan, continuously improve this plan, and ensure community members stay engaged in this work. Public deliberation is what Dewey emphasized as being good for the nurturing of democracy. The opportunity provided in ESSA for public deliberation is essential to ensure that Illinois' ESSA State Plan is a living document and its promise is realized in support of the whole child and a more economically vibrant Illinois.~~

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

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

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

The Whole Child

Both stakeholders and ISBE have been deliberate in identifying the importance of meeting the needs of “the whole child”⁵ throughout the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. We believe caring for “the whole child” is an essential part of promoting academic excellence. The notion of “the whole child” in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois can be understood as a child within an ecology of multiple and interconnected parts (e.g., the child is an individual composed of interacting parts, such as cognitive, social and emotional, and physical, among others, *and* that this individual lives within overlapping environments including, but not limited to, home, school, and community). This idea has been articulated by the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth and suggested by multiple stakeholders. It is well described by the visual expression of the child as central to and living within an interconnected system.⁶



However, if “the whole child” is understood as expressed above, then there are additional relationships inside and outside of school to ensure that the needs of the “the whole child” are met.⁷ One important relationship not highlighted in the above image is the importance of ensuring that each and every child has access to highly effective educators who utilize a standards-based rigorous curriculum to develop new and more refined understandings. In this way, the needs of child are met through adapting instruction based upon child’s interest,

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

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

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

readiness level, and learning profile and allow for multiple modes of representation. The intersection of academic rigor and the ideas shared above are woven through the vision, mission, and goals of the Illinois State Board of Education and ESSA will assist in bringing those ideas to life.

System of **Success Support**

The most obvious area in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois where “leadership and resources” are provided is through ~~ISBE’s~~ ~~its~~ School/District Improvement department. ~~Most simply, School/District Improvement will serve as~~ ~~This Department oversees~~ the statewide system of **success support** for schools identified for intensive, comprehensive, ~~or targeted~~ supports and services.⁸ ~~School/District Improvement~~ **While these** services are **focused on schools in status**, ~~however, they are~~ available to *all* schools and districts in Illinois.⁹ ~~School/District Improvement is a structure through which school improvement services are delivered.~~

ISBE will periodically **identify criteria** ~~release the requirements for vendors to serve as providers~~ ~~pre-approval through which providers of services focusing on improving student outcomes may be pre-approved.~~ Schools identified for intensive and comprehensive services will work with ~~pre-approved providers~~ **ISBE personnel** to select the provider(s) that best meet the needs of the school community as determined through a needs assessment/equity audit.¹⁰ Schools will, with their selected provider(s), develop a work plan **with to support** ~~improvement efforts~~ ~~targets and metrics~~ related to the information gleaned from the needs assessment/equity audit. ~~ISBE continues to evaluate whether pre-approval of third-party vendors is the most efficient model for delivery of school improvement services from the state and may make changes to future iterations of the statewide system of support based on that evaluation.~~

ISBE will utilize field-based staff to assist districts and schools identify areas in need of support as well as connecting schools and districts together in peer networks in order to support one another. The agency has a major role to play in increasing statewide collaboration and sharing effective practices that will make a demonstrable difference in student outcomes. Sharing data, promoting effective practices, and facilitating connections across districts are core functions of the agency going forward. Capacity in individual schools and districts is necessary; however, it will not be sufficient to improve the entire system. ~~Building collective capacity in Illinois is the only way we’ll get there.~~

~~The intersections of School/District Improvement, accountability, and assessments are really the heart, head, and hands of the plan. It is too simplistic to state that assessments (and other accountability indicators) are used for the purposes of accountability and accountability is used for the purposes of identifying schools for support. Logistically, this may be true, but what is missing from this picture is the powerful positive interdependence of each aspect of the system. In classrooms, the relationship between instruction, learning, and assessment is what drives positive growth. If we look at schools like the children they serve, they are learning and growing. The thoughtful intersection of School/District Improvement, accountability, and assessment is our best way to drive positive growth statewide.~~

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

⁹ ~~Schools that are not identified for comprehensive services that wish to use an approved provider through School/District Improvement will need to conduct a needs assessment and equity audit in order to obtain the services.~~

¹⁰ ESSA requires that a needs assessment is conducted to determine areas requiring additional support. ISBE, while not disagreeing with this, also believes that an equity audit at the school level can be instructive in identifying areas in need of support and/or equity gaps.

Assessment and Accountability

First of all, as everyone knows, America doesn't do well on international tests.....But, where we undoubtedly lead the world is in variability. American standard deviations on all the [international] tests are just about at the top.....No country in the civilized world can match us in terms of the maldistribution of wealth...none can match the gap we create between our most literate and least literate countrymen. Ours is a diversity of inequality.¹¹

I want to argue that one of the principal ways in which our minds are shaped to daily life is through the stories we tell and listen to – whether truth or fiction. We learn our culture principally through the stories that circulate within its bounds.¹²

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

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

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

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

Many groups and individuals shared their thinking on school quality indicators and the weighting of indicators as the Illinois plan was developed. The weighting of the academic indicators and school quality indicators will

¹¹ Bruner, Jerome S. *The Bulletin*. Boston, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004.

¹² Bruner, Jerome S. *In Search of Pedagogy: The Selected Works of Jerome Bruner*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.

identify schools in need of support and as well those well positioned to support them. Unlike NCLB before it, ESSA emphasizes supporting schools and districts. We believe a quality accountability system that focuses on equity and growth is the cornerstone of our next chapter of improving student outcomes in Illinois.

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

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

Supports for Educators and Students

ISBE is committed to supporting educators in the development of their professional capital. Professional capital is the knowledge, skills, and understandings that an educator uses to meet the needs of the whole child in the context of a professional community. This suggests that educator knowledge, skills, and understanding certainly include things such as, but not limited to, human development, instructional design and delivery, universal design, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment practices, and data and assessment literacy. In addition to these areas, educators must be sensitive to the experiences that each and every child brings into the school and classroom(s) and the appropriate supports that may assist the child as they develop. The professional capital possessed by educators is the means through which they meet the ends in support of each and every child.¹³ The State of Illinois must prioritize collective, collaborative professional capital as a means of improving schools, districts, and communities.

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

¹³ For clarity of example, the "educator" in this example is a classroom teacher. However, ISBE recognizes the important work of administrators, teacher leaders, school service personnel, paraprofessionals, and other staff at the school who are essential in supporting the whole child.

¹⁴ This statement should not be understood as a child only accesses opportunities when ready or interested or when some characteristic of her or his learning profile is "met." Rather, it is meant to suggest that readiness, interest, and learning profile are used to support the student in moving toward and accessing the particular opportunity in which the student is interested.

and learn from their mistakes in what educator/author Linda Darling-Hammond calls a “culture of revision and redemption.”¹⁵

In order to provide these opportunities for students, Illinois is obligated to provide resources and training to educators so that they can more readily provide these opportunities for students. Providing those resources and training is a central part of the work articulated in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois.¹⁶ In addition to the “within school” work articulated within the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, stakeholders also suggested that ISBE be deliberate in its “between school” work and use ESSA as an opportunity to clarify the importance of transitions between natural “fractures” in school composition. Students are much more likely to be comfortable in school within a system in which moving from building to building, based upon grade level, is thoughtful and deliberate care is taken to ensure the supports necessary are “moving” with the child.¹⁷

Conclusion

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

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

This narrative description is intended to recognize, thank, and appreciate the people of Illinois, who care deeply about quality education, and ensure that all students have fair access to quality. Countless individuals have spent extraordinary amounts of their personal and professional time assisting ISBE in the development of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. However, submitting and receiving approval for the plan is only the beginning of the work. To take this strategy and make it result in an excellent education for each and every child in Illinois is work that lies ahead. We must become better partners for the success of our ~~more than 2~~ **approximately 1.9** million preK-12 students if we hope to achieve our short- and long-term statewide goals.

¹⁵ Darling-Hammond, Linda. *Redesigning High Schools: What matters and What Works*. Stanford, CA: School Redesign Network, 2002. https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/10-features-good-small-schools-redesigning-high-schools-what-matters-and-what-works_0.pdf.

¹⁶ This work will occur deliberately on the part of ISBE. ISBE is currently developing a scope and calendar of the resources and training necessary to “move” this work forward. So, too, but possibly in a more limited way, School/District Improvement vendors (known as “approved learning partners”) will provide these supports should a school identify this as an area in need of support.

¹⁷ One way that ISBE is asking schools and districts to consider this will occur within the Title application where there is an expectation that schools will be able to articulate how they transition students throughout the P-12 continuum.

Section 1: Long-term Goals & Academic Achievement

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

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

1.1. Long Term Goals

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

The vision, mission, and goals of ISBE and ESSA explicitly focus on the equity of services, resources, and supports available for each and every child in order for them to be successful in school and beyond. NCLB, the predecessor to ESSA, put in place a structure to ensure that all children would be proficient in English language arts and mathematics, but it did not recognize or honor local expertise and context. ESSA, in doing so, allows states and districts the opportunity to create an accountability system that is grounded upon the belief that each and every child has the right to be taught and supported by a highly effective teacher in order to grow into confident, competent, and connected young person. ESSA, moreover, allows ISBE and districts (LEAs) to create and participate in a statewide system of ~~success-support~~. This statewide system of ~~success-support~~ in connection with the accountability system assists not only in the identification of districts eligible to receive supports but those who are in a position to provide support, should they choose. Put differently, ESSA provides ISBE the opportunity, through the following vision, mission, and goals, to advocate for schools and support the whole child:¹⁸

Vision

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

Mission

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

Goals

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

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

¹⁸ Retrieved on January 14, 2017, from <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Agency-and-Board-Information.aspx>.

~~Every child will make significant academic gains each year, increasing their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future, with the state paying special attention to addressing historic inequities.~~

ISBE's strategic plan describes in rich detail the work aligned to this and other goals. To achieve the vision and goals identified above, ISBE is currently engaged in a comprehensive alignment of its assessments, accountability system and statewide system of ~~success~~ support. ~~Currently underway is a unified academic achievement standard setting, to be completed in July of 2025. The long-term goals and measures of interim progress below will be in effect through SY2024-25. The assessment alignment culminated with a unified academic achievement standard setting in July 2025. While the results of the 2025 standard setting will serve as the a new baseline for new long~~ long-term goals and measures of interim progress, ~~the long-term goals remain consistent in the redesign of the accountability system, projected for completion in 2026.~~

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

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

1.2 Academic Achievement.

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

The long-term goals are as follows:

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

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

The baseline for the measures of interim progress was ~~initially~~ set using 2021 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) data. ~~Utilizing the new unified academic achievement standards implemented in 2025, ISBE has revisited the baseline data used to support long-term goals and interim targets. ISBE will revisit the baseline data after it completes its unified academic achievement standards setting in July 2025. So too, ISBE will~~ **continue to** collect

and report data, through grade 12, for former English Learners (ELs) in addition to the subgroups required in ESSA, in order to ensure equity.

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

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

Following the 2020 waiver of both academic assessment and accountability¹⁹ as required by ESSA, and the 2021 waiver of accountability²⁰, Illinois ~~finds~~ **found** it appropriate and necessary to adjust its measures of interim progress. ISBE ~~will use~~ **used** the same process used to set the initial benchmark levels and measures of interim progress to create adjusted 2022 targets by grade span (grades 3-4, grades 5-6, grades 7-8, and grade 11) for all students and student demographic groups. The 2021 academic achievement results in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics were used to establish a new baseline of performance and four new sets of interim targets while maintaining the long-term ambitious goal of having 90 percent of students proficient by 2033²¹. The 2021 state grade span average performance for all students and each student demographic group became the 2022 grade span target, with annual targets extrapolated out to 90 percent proficient in 2033. **Following the unified academic standard setting in 2025, which established a new baseline for performance, the interim targets have been updated utilizing this same process in support of achieving the previously established long-term goal of having 90 percent of students proficient by a new deadline of 2040.** ~~These targets are posted to the accountability website at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Accountability-Indicators.aspx>.~~

¹⁹ Illinois State Board of Education. "Request for a waiver of assessment and accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act." (2020). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf>.

²⁰ Illinois State Board of Education. "Request for a waiver of accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act." (2021). <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL20-21-Accountability-Waiver-Template.pdf>.

²¹ Illinois permitted schools to extend their 2021 test window into the fall of SY2021-22. Thus, complete 2021 results will not be available prior to the submission of this amendment to the Department of Education. **These targets have been archived on the accountability website at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Accountability-Archive.aspx>.** ~~Sample targets have been posted using preliminary 2021 assessment data from districts who tested in the spring. It excludes districts who tested in fall, and all data from the state's alternate assessment, so they are anticipated to change when all 2021 data are available. ISBE will publish the official interim targets to the identified website after the 2021 data are officially released in April of 2022.~~

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

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

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

1.3 Graduation Rate

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

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

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

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

The baseline data provided in the chart does not include data from the college and career readiness indicator. ISBE will have a three-year average for the four year, five year, and six year adjusted graduation rate at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 for most subgroups (the former English Learners will have a three-year average in 2020). Once a three-year average for the four-year graduation rates is available, ISBE will revisit and revise the measurements of interim progress currently identified in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois.

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

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 4-Year Graduation Rate											
4-Year Graduation	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Two or More Races	LEP	IEP	Low Income
2016	85.5	90.4	74.6	81.3	93.6	84.8	79.3	84.7	71.9	70.6	76.7
2019	86.3	90.0	77.5	82.9	90.0	85.8	81.3	85.7	75.3	74.2	79.2
2023	87.2	90.0	80.4	84.6	90.0	86.8	83.3	86.7	78.7	77.9	81.7
2026	88.0	90.0	83.3	86.2	90.0	87.7	85.3	87.7	82.1	81.5	84.2
2029	88.9	90.0	86.2	87.8	90.0	88.7	87.3	88.7	85.5	85.2	86.7
2032	89.7	90.0	89.0	89.5	90.0	89.7	89.3	89.7	88.9	88.8	89.2
2033	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0

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

ISBE will also utilize five-year and six-year extended cohort graduation rates as a part of its accountability system. Moreover, including the five and six year graduation rates ensures that those students who require additional time to graduate are recognized. The baseline data provided in the chart does not include data from the college and career readiness indicator. ISBE identified the most likely group of students not meeting the four year graduation rate target and determined the projected graduation growth for this group of students is a 2.0% increase for the 5 year cohort and .5% increase for the 6 year cohort. ISBE will have a three-year average for the five-year and six-year adjusted graduation rate at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 for most subgroups (the former English Learners will have a three-year average in 2020). Once a three-year average for the five-year and six-year graduation rates is available, ISBE will revisit and revise the measurements of interim progress currently identified in the ESSA State Plan for Illinois.

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

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 5 Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate											
5 Year Graduation	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Two or More Races	LEP	IEP	Low Income
2016	87.7	91.4	79.2	84.2	95.5	88.4	82.4	87.3	77.8	75.1	81.8
2019	88.4	91.5	81.3	85.5	95.5	89.0	84.0	88.1	80.2	77.9	83.5
2023	89.1	91.6	83.5	86.8	95.5	89.6	85.6	88.9	82.5	80.7	85.2
2026	89.9	91.7	85.6	88.1	95.5	90.2	87.2	89.7	84.9	83.6	86.9
2029	90.6	91.8	87.7	89.4	95.5	90.8	88.8	90.4	87.3	86.4	88.6
2032	91.3	91.9	89.9	90.7	95.5	91.4	90.4	91.2	89.6	89.2	90.3
2033	92.0	92.0	92.0	92.0	95.5	92.0	92.0	92.0	92.0	92.0	92.0

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

Benchmark and Measures of Interim Progress: 6 Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate											
6 Year Graduation	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Two or More Races	LEP	IEP	Low Income
2016	88.2	91.6	79.9	85	95.9	84.5	90.6	88.3	78.8	76.5	82.2
2019	88.9	91.8	82.0	86.3	95.9	85.8	90.9	89.0	81.1	79.2	83.9
2023	89.6	91.9	84.1	87.5	95.9	87.2	91.2	89.7	83.4	81.8	85.6
2026	90.4	92.1	86.2	88.8	95.9	88.5	91.6	90.4	85.7	84.5	87.4
2029	91.1	92.2	88.3	90.0	95.9	89.8	91.9	91.1	87.9	87.2	89.1
2032	91.8	92.4	90.4	91.3	95.9	91.2	92.2	91.8	90.2	89.8	90.8
2033	92.5	92.5	92.5	92.5	95.9	92.5	92.5	92.5	92.5	92.5	92.5

1.4 English Language Proficiency

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

The uniform procedure that is applied to all students in Illinois upon enrollment for the first time to any school²³ or preschool program in order to identify students for whom English is not their first language is as follows:

1. All enrolled students complete a Home Language Survey.
2. An appropriate prescribed placement screening assessment is administered within 30 days of a student's enrollment in the district to those students who have a language other than English spoken in the home as documented in the Home Language Survey.
3. Students whose English proficiency score is below the state-defined minimum for ELP on the prescribed placement screening assessment or WIDA ACCESS ACCESS 2.0 are eligible to receive language program services.²⁴
4. School districts in Illinois must annually assess the English language proficiency of all ELs in kindergarten through 12 using WIDA ACCESS ACCESS 2.0 for ELs for the purpose of determining the continuing need and eligibility of individual students for language program services.²⁵

Illinois implements a targeted maximum timeline of five years for English Learners to achieve ELP on the annual ELP assessment, commencing in first grade, which is the first mandatory grade for student attendance in Illinois. However, ELs in Illinois are not exited from English language instructional program services or status until attaining English language proficiency. Proficiency has been established as a composite score of 4.8 or above on the ACCESS 2.0²⁶ Pending data and research that WIDA will provide after their standard setting for the Alternate ACCESS in 2024 and standard setting for WIDA ACCESS in 2026, ISBE will set a new reclassification criteria. for those EL students who qualify to take the Alternate ACCESS test. Similarly, pending data and research that WIDA will provide after their standard setting for the ACCESS test in 2026, ISBE may set new reclassification criteria for all English Learners.

ELs must make annual progress towards the composite score of 4.8 or above on ACCESS 2.0 within five years. In order to detect even small amounts of progress, ISBE uses the composite scale score for calculations, rather than the proficiency target. Additionally, a student's progress towards proficiency is evaluated against the smaller of

²³ Beginning July 1, 2026, Preschool programs and Birth to age 3 Prevention Initiative programs funded through the Early Childhood Block grant will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood agency.

²⁴ [23 Illinois Administrative Code 228, Section 228.15.](#)

²⁵ [23 Illinois Administrative Code 228, Section 228.25.](#)

²⁶ The Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council provided this score recommendation to ISBE in June 2017.

either their annual progress target as defined by their baseline ACCESS score (called a timeline target), or a target that is revised annually based on their individual progress (called a baseline target). The following describes how a student's annual measure of English Learner Progress to Proficiency (ELPtP) is calculated:

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

- **Baseline Grade:** For each student, determine the grade level of their first ACCESS score in grade 1 or above. This is their baseline grade.
 - If they were identified in Pre-K or K, Baseline Grade = 1.
 - If they were identified in Grade 1 or after, the grade of identification is their baseline year, e.g., Grade 1 = 1, Grade 3 = 3, Grade 9 = 9.
- **Baseline Year:** For each student, store the school year associated with the Baseline Grade (e.g., SY 2014-2015 – Student identified in fall 2014, first ACCESS in 2015 would be recorded as 2015).
- **Partial Years:** A count of the number of years after a student's baseline year for which the sum of a student's enrollments for the year is ≤ 134 calendar days.
- **Proficiency Target Year:** Baseline Year plus Partial Years + 5 (e.g., Baseline 2015 + 5 + 0 = 2020).
- **Proficiency Target Grade:** (Baseline Grade + 5 + Partial Years)
 - If Current Year is \geq Proficiency Target Year (e.g., the student is past their timeline), Current Grade is Proficiency Target Grade Initial Scale Score: First ACCESS score in grade 1 or higher. If no initial scale score can be found, use 100 (the lowest obtainable score).
- **Current Scale Score:** Most recent scale score. If no score can be found, use 100.
- **Prior Scale Score:** Scale score from the year prior if one exists and the student has been EL for two or more years. If not, use 100.
- **Proficiency Target Scale Score:** The composite scale score equivalent to a 4.8 composite proficiency level in a student's Proficiency Target Grade or current grade if past their 5-year timeline. Scale score equivalency tables can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Accountability-Indicators.aspx>.
- **Timeline Target:** Take the (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Initial Scale Score) / 5. Save as static variable Timeline Target.
- **Revised Target:** Take the (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Prior Scale Score) / (Proficiency Target Year – Current School Year + 1). The denominator has a floor of 1 and a ceiling of 5. Save as variable Revised Target. Will be updated each year.
- **Past Timeline Target:** If student did not reach their target in 5 years the formula is then (Proficiency Target Scale Score – Prior Scale Score)
- **Gain:** The (Current Scale Score – Prior Scale Score). If this number is negative, round to zero. If a student has no test score, use 100 (which will result in a 0 or a negative).
- **ELPtP Score:** Student's scale score Gain / the lower of Timeline Target or Revised Target OR Past Timeline Target if Current Year > Proficiency Target Year

These ELP scores are then averaged to create an ELP score for the school or student group.

- ii. Describe how the SEA established ambitious state-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for increases in the percentage of all English Learners in the state making annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency based on 1.C.i. and provide the state-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for English language proficiency.

ISBE used a 15-year timeline, with three-year interim goals, that emerged from the accountability stakeholder work groups and is consistent with the timeline for improvement for schools receiving comprehensive and targeted supports and services. The goal is for 90 percent of EL students in a school or district to be making sufficient annual progress towards proficiency. ISBE established the interim goals by interpolating between the

baseline year, 2017, and the 90.0 goal in 2032. ISBE consulted WIDA and statewide stakeholders to establish the interim goals as they would best fit the English Learner population and be most understandable to parents.

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

Percent of EL Students Making On-Target Annual Progress towards Proficiency

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

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

Section 2: Consultation and Performance Management

2.1 Consultation

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

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

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

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

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

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

at <https://www.isbe.net/essa>²⁷. For example, during phase one, stakeholders identified more than 40 potential school quality/school success indicators; by the time the third draft of the state plan was shared, stakeholders had whittled this down to four indicators for inclusion in a P-8 accountability system and four indicators for inclusion within an accountability system for grades 9-12. Also, in previous drafts of the state plan ISBE asserted that achievement and growth should be weighted equally whereas the field thought differently. In this draft, growth is weighted significantly more than achievement. Moreover, in order to best ensure that stakeholders had the opportunity to share their ideas, ISBE, in addition to the required 30-day posting of the plan, posted each draft of the plan for multiple weeks.

ISBE believes that the work of implementing ESSA at the state and local levels only begins with the submission of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois to ED. Furthermore, ISBE deeply values the thinking and dedicated work provided by educators and other stakeholders for the children of Illinois each day.

As mentioned throughout the plan development, one of the most important opportunities available in ESSA is the ability for states to amend the plan. To do this well, will require us to continuously know and understand the thoughts of Illinois' stakeholders. For instance, ISBE requires the input of stakeholders in the short term for a variety of different projects:

- The development of a unique P-2 schools quality/student success indicator,
- For the purpose of data collection, the definition of career ready indicators,
- A recommendation on a proficiency level for the ACCESS exam, and
- A recommendation on an elementary/middle school indicator.²⁸

In the longer term—and acknowledging that there is great expertise and knowledge within districts in Illinois—ISBE, as part of its statewide system of support, would like to support schools in their sharing of best practices with other districts. More specifically, those districts that, through the accountability system required in ESSA, demonstrate that they have no underperforming subgroups and will be able to share their knowledge with other districts.

So, too, ISBE, using Title II funds, will sponsor modest grants to districts that wish to undertake a 30-60-90 research project focusing on teacher leadership and share their results with the field.²⁹

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

²⁷ Hereafter this site will be referred to as the [ESSA page](https://www.isbe.net/essa) using an embedded hyperlink.

²⁸ In previous drafts, the elementary/middle level indicator was identified as “8th grade on-track.” Feedback for the Office of the Governor suggested that this indicator should be more robust than only 8th grade on-track. This idea supports the belief of some stakeholders who stated that, just as in the college and career meta-indicator in the 9-12 accountability system, there should be meta-indicator in the P-8 accountability system.

²⁹ 30-60-90 projects ask that a school (or faculty within the school) identify a question they would like answered. Typically, these questions surround climate and culture or an instructional practice. In the case of ISBE, and in support of attempting to recognize, clarify, and celebrate the work of teacher leaders, the projects will surround teacher leadership. At the beginning of the 3-month project, faculty will propose a question and identify a timeline and intended outcomes. At the conclusion of the 90 days, faculty will share results with their colleagues and the field.

ISBE posts drafts of the State Plan, **amendments to the state plan**, **notices of public comment**, reader's guides, and other materials **on its ESSA page**. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ESSA-Draft-Report.aspx>.

~~This information has been repeatedly communicated through the Superintendent's Weekly Message and social media.~~

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1136>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1134>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1133>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1132>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1131>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1128>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1126>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1117>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1114>

<https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1112>

See Appendix B for maps of listening tour meeting locations.

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

ISBE's plan for informing stakeholders and collecting input prior to submitting a final draft to ED consisted of five phases:³⁰

Phase One:

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

Phase Two:

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

³⁰ ~~After submission of the plan, ISBE will provide districts with information regarding the transition year 2017-18 as well as information on implementation.~~

- 28 meetings

Phase Three:

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

Phase Four:

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

Phase Five:

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

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

~~Also, key policymakers, including members of the Illinois General Assembly, the P-20 Council, the IBAMC, and other stakeholder groups, met regularly and were informed of the progress of the development of the ESSA State Plan. These groups, in particular the P-20 Council and IBAMC, were integral in providing feedback and guidance in the development of all phases of the plan.~~

~~The drafts of the state plan have been presented to stakeholder groups through a wide array of venues with sufficient time to consider relevant comments prior to ISBE Board approval. ISBE received 280 public comments about Draft 1, which was open for comments for six weeks, and 369 public comments about Draft 2, which was also open for comment for six weeks. As indicated earlier, ISBE has hosted listening tours, conferences, one-on-one meetings, and other stakeholder meetings since January 2016. Please see Appendix B for the list of all stakeholder meetings related to ESSA.~~

~~The Governor's Office has been provided weekly updates throughout the process. The state plan was presented to the Governor's Office in February 2017 for comment during a required 30-day review. The State Board also has been receiving monthly updates and providing input throughout the year.~~

~~More specifically, ISBE held a series of listening tour meetings throughout 2016 to ensure that creation of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois included ample opportunity for stakeholders to share their expertise. Listening Tour Reports are available in their entirety [in the ESSA History section of the ESSA page](#) <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ESSA-Draft-Report.aspx>. District superintendents, school principals, teachers, policy advocates, parents, community members, and other stakeholders attended the listening tour meetings.~~

~~The first listening tour in April and May had two objectives:~~

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

~~The ESSA State Plan for Illinois Draft 1, which incorporated insights gained from the April/May tour, was released on August 25, 2016, for six weeks of public comment. The second listening tour occurred in September 2016 and focused on key issues contained within Draft 1. ISBE received more than 280 individual comments on Draft 1 via~~

essa@isbe.net. Comments were submitted from 54 organizations, 70 students who advocated including the arts in ESSA, and 60 emails on behalf of library and media specialists. What follows is an identification of the larger categories in which comments were received on Draft 1 as well as general themes included within the submission.

General Comments:³¹

- *Health and wellness:* Providing overall school wellness and whole child wellness within the school quality/student success indicators, including an assessment for health, physical education, and socio emotional learning, aggregate fitness scores, nutrition standards, integrated physical education into school day.
- *Title II funding:* Focus attention/resources on early grades, parent engagement, teacher residency programs, teacher leadership, teacher retention, English Learner issues that assist all teachers of ELs in implementing curricula, assessment measures and best practices and instructional strategies, support for students with disabilities, student needs, and supporting gifted children.
- *Supports for English Learners:* Native language assessments, adjusting the ACCESS proficiency score, growth in addition to EL proficiency, and formulating a former EL subgroup for purposes of accountability.
- *Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS):* Focus on leadership and supporting the whole child, incorporation of the after-school quality standards, use of the Illinois School Library Media Association Linking for Learning guidelines as part of MTSS, wellness centers in MTSS, opposition to MTSS in its current form unless it's fully funded, agreement with developing strong MTSS, and focus on parents/guardians.
- *Other comments:* Maintain foundational services³², support professional learning communities, and create a gifted subgroup for the Report Card.
- *Student success/school quality indicators (support for):* Chronic absenteeism, pre-K suspension/expulsion rates, preK-K attendance, K-2, extracurricular and out-of-school activities, teacher retention rates, after-school activity, overall school wellness and whole child wellness, Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) protocol with adjustments, work-based learning, socio-emotional learning, and school climate.
- *Accountability:* Equity in funding must come before accountability, high school growth needed, and parent involvement linked with accountability that might include funding for parent involvement coordinator.

Comments Specific to the College and Career Ready Indicator:

- *GPA 2.8 out of 4.0:* Concerns about the diversity of teacher grading and that GPA looks different in every district, concern about "gaming the system," schools are moving away from traditional grading methods (some schools use number systems [1-4] instead of grades), and about students taking easier classes to improve GPA.
- *Academic benchmark/industry credentials:* ZIP Code disparities, funding and staffing challenges, and required time to scale up.

³¹ Please note, that those topics and areas identified are for the purposes of showing the range of comments received by ISBE.

³² Foundational Services were professional learning opportunities that focused on ISBE initiatives. They were delivered through Regional Offices of Education. During the 2016-17 school year, ELA, mathematics, teacher evaluation, balanced Assessment, and family and community engagement were delivered throughout Illinois.

- ~~*Behavior and experiential benchmarks:* Coordination and oversight will require additional staff, students who work or with other obligations may not be able to meet experiential requirements, may be unfairly limiting for students with disabilities, support for 90 percent attendance and 25 hours community service, and the notion of attendance should be broadly considered.~~
- ~~*Miscellaneous:* Ninety percent attendance may be problematic due to prolonged illness or family/caretaker obligation, creates six necessary conditions for college and career readiness, the plan creates numerous veto points for students to achieve readiness, the requirement should be college OR career, and the work proposed is too restrictive.~~
- ~~*Additional ideas:* Inquiry-based skills; soft skills needed—add intelligence, collaboration, and social skills; and arts readiness.~~

Draft 2 was released on November 18 for six weeks of public comment. The third listening tour occurred in late November 2016 and focused on accountability issues contained within Draft 2. These comments and the Listening Tour Reports are available in their entirety at [in the ESSA History section of the ESSA page](https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ESSA-Draft-Report.aspx) <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ESSA-Draft-Report.aspx>. Another 369 comments were submitted by 67 organizations. Within these comments, 145 were from individuals advocating to include the arts in ESSA; there were 21 emails from school library and media specialists.

What follows is an identification of the larger categories for which comments were received on Draft 2 as well as general themes included within the submission:

- ~~*Health and wellness:* Providing overall school wellness and whole child wellness within the school quality/student success indicators, including an assessment for health, physical education, and socio-emotional learning, aggregate fitness scores, nutrition standards, integrated physical education into school day.~~
- ~~*Title II funding:* Subsidize bilingual education programs, micro-credentialing, competitive grants to teacher leaders, teacher wellness.~~
- ~~*Supports for English Learners:* No more than 10-15 percent weighting for ELs in the accountability matrix; native language assessments, exit criteria: 5.0 composite score, five-year timeline and growth-to-proficiency model should be developed.~~
- ~~*Student success/school quality indicators (support for):* Chronic absenteeism, physical fitness, school health index, social worker to student ratio, school nurses—to student ration, civics, arts, suspension/expulsion rates.~~
- ~~*College and career ready:* Change labels, need pathway for students with disabilities.~~
- ~~*Accountability:* Equity in funding must come before accountability, high school growth needed~~
- ~~*Support for positive behavioral support:* (1) Ensure all Illinois schools have access to adequate technical assistance aligned to implement and sustain behavioral supports within an MTSS framework (2) use multiple measures for school climate (3) develop both state and LEA capacity for implementation, fidelity, and sustainability of supports and integrated evidence-based practices for district and schools.~~
- ~~*Other:* Develop Parent Advisory Council at the state level, align ESSA with Perkins V, align with early childhood education.~~
- ~~*n-size:* Suggestions included an n-size between 10 and 30. Some comments just thanked ISBE for the recommendation of 20. Those who had other recommendations are captured by the following sentiments:~~
 - ~~Raise the n-size to 30. The threshold of 30 for a subgroup is generally considered the minimum sample size for statistical analysis. Setting subgroups smaller than that can result in less precise data. It is critical that subgroup data be statistically significant because the sample size in ESSA could play a big role for accountability purposes, including the determination of what districts are identified as needing targeted supports.~~

- Lower the n-size to 10: The current proposed n-size of 20 is a major improvement for Illinois, but there is concern that some subgroups in some schools would be overlooked if the n-size is larger. Commenters suggested it is too easy for schools in their efforts to balance the needs of the majority of the student population to lose sight of the unique needs of smaller populations of students.

Draft 3 was released on February 1 and presented to the Governor for review. While there was no official public comment period, ISBE received numerous comments on Draft 3. (These comments are available in their entirety at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ESSA-Draft-Report.aspx>. A total of 760 comments were submitted. One hundred of those comments were from individuals advocating that (1) growth should count more than proficiency, (2) high expectations and outcomes for all students, especially those from historically underserved subgroups, be ensured, (3) summative designations should make sense to parents, and (4) creating the appropriate plan for Illinois is more important than completing it quickly. Arts Alliance Illinois, Ingenuity, and 682 individuals wrote that arts should be included as a distinct indicator of K-12 school quality.

A more detailed history of public comment and its incorporation into the State Plan can be found in the ESSA History section of the ESSA page.

Some of the other critical feedback received on Draft 3 include:

- *Summative Ratings:* Further discussion and review was requested for the system of designations that is described in Draft 3. There is concern that it does not appear that the plan addresses the performance of subgroups in a school's designation.
- *Weighting:* Commenters are still providing conflicting recommendations on the weighting of indicators, from "70/30 or above ...[because] aiming for a high standard will ensure that growth and outcomes are acknowledged and Illinois students can remain competitive among their peers³³ to "academic indicators weighted 51% overall while the school quality or student success indicators be weighted 49%." "... Without sufficient and equitable funding, the overall weighting should not be overly reliant on standardized tests results tied to community poverty levels as the basis for both proficiency and growth measures in the state accountability system. When the state can demonstrate adequate and sufficient funding for all schools, then we welcome the opportunity to revisit and reevaluate the overall weights."³⁴
- *Subgroup size:* Again, there were conflicting recommendations on the subgroup size between 20 and 30.
- *Appendix E: Accountability System Comparisons* provide information on the different recommendations from IBAMC, ISBE, and the Governor's Office.

In several instances, commenters sought clarification or more time on items. For example, questions surrounding the definition of college and career ready terms were identified. Lessons learned from past school improvement efforts were offered and request for collaboration in moving forward with the development of supports and interventions were requested. Several commenters requested the development of a High School Growth options.

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

³³ Illinois Chamber of Commerce Comments on Draft 3

³⁴ CTU-IFT Comments on Draft 3

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

- State Assessment Review Committee meetings
 - Aug. 27, 2024
 - Oct. 29, 2024
 - Dec. 04, 2024 – Special Meeting
 - Jan. 28, 2025
 - Mar. 18, 2025 - Special Meeting
 - May 06, 2025
 - Nov. 05, 2025
- Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee meetings
 - Sept. 11, 2024
 - Oct. 09, 2024
 - Nov. 12, 2024
 - Dec. 12, 2024
 - Jan. 29, 2025
 - Mar. 03, 2025
 - Apr. 28, 2025
 - Jun. 9, 2025
 - Jul. 11, 2025
 - Aug. 20, 2025
 - Sept. 10, 2025
 - Oct. 07, 2025
 - Nov. 12, 2025
 - Dec. 16, 2025
 - Jan. 23, 2026
 - Feb. 06, 2026
 - Mar. 27, 2026
- Socializing the Assessment & Accountability Redesign Events
 - Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents (IARSS) meeting – Sept. 17, 2024
 - Title I Directors Conference – Sept. 18, 2024
 - Bilingual Program Directors meeting – Sept. 20, 2024
 - Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Fall Conference – Sept. 26, 2024
 - IARSS System of Support meeting – Oct. 17, 2024
 - Illinois Principals Association (IPA) Fall Conference – Oct. 20-22, 2024
 - IARSS System of Support meeting – Nov. 7, 2024
 - Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Associations of School Administrators, School Boards (IASB), and School Business Officials – Nov. 22, 2024
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase I
 - Feb. 03, 2025 – Chicago Heights, IL
 - Mar. 10, 2025 – Champaign, IL
 - Mar. 21, 2025 – Spring Valley, IL
 - Apr. 01, 2025 – Vandalia, IL
 - Apr. 07, 2025 – Carterville, IL
 - Apr. 21, 2025 – East Moline, IL
 - May 05, 2025 – Peoria, IL
 - May 09, 2025 – Joliet, IL
 - May 22, 2025 – Chicago (Chicago Public Schools District 299)

- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase II
 - Nov. 06, 2025 – Huntley, IL
 - Nov. 07, 2025 – Bloomington, IL
 - Nov. 14, 2025 – O’Fallon, IL
 - Nov. 17, 2025 – Virtual Public
 - Nov. 24, 2025 – Virtual Public
 - Nov. 25, 2025 – Virtual – Stakeholder Organizations
 - Dec. 01, 2025 – Virtual Public
 - Dec. 08, 2025 – Virtual – Chicago Public Schools
- Assessment & Accountability Listening Tour Phase III
 - Jan. 15, 2026 – Virtual Public
 - Jan. 21, 2026 – Virtual Public
 - Feb. 11, 2026 – Virtual Public
 - Mar. 16, 2026 – Virtual Public

Additionally, three drafts of the accountability redesign were shared for public comment. The first was shared in the form of a presentation describing the proposed accountability redesign. It was posted for 72 days of public comment, from October 28, 2025, through January 7, 2026. A first draft formal redline amendment incorporating the feedback received on the proposed redesign was posted for another 45 days of public comment, from January 12, 2026, through February 25, 2026. A final draft formal redline amendment was posted for 30 days of public comment, from March 3, 2026 to April 3, 2026. Virtual public listening tours were held during all public comment periods. Comment was solicited through survey, emails to essa@isbe.net, and engagement with stakeholder organizations.

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

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

All comments received via essa@isbe.net and via the website were shared with relevant staff working on the ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The team reviewed and discussed the comments prior to drafting to determine how to incorporate comments.³⁵ The analyses of these comments can be found in the initial approved plan in the ESSA history section on the [ESSA page](#).

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

³⁵ Many of the comments received focused on the implementation of the state plan and will be more appropriately developed through guidance developed by ISBE beginning in the first quarter of 2017.

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

[Description of additional rounds of public comment to be added in subsequent drafts.]

What follows are a few examples of how comments have assisted ISBE in clarifying portions of the draft plans and that have strongly shaped the ESSA State Plan for Illinois through its development:

- ~~College and career readiness: A framework was presented in Draft 1 that had three major components—GPA, SAT, and two or more academic benchmarks or industry credentials. A suggestion from the field prompted the incorporation of an alternative College and Career Pathway into Draft 2 to further assist in clarifying this indicator. This is testimony to the involvement of the community in the process, the responsiveness to accepting new ideas in the draft, and the time we have invested in allowing for community engagement to allow for this important dialogue to occur.~~
- ~~Chronic absenteeism: There was interest at an early accountability stakeholder meeting in chronic absenteeism as a student success/school quality indicator. Numerous stakeholders have submitted comments in support of this indicator³⁶. ISBE heard support at meetings for this indicator as a proven early warning sign of academic risk and of the likelihood a student will drop out of school. The definition of chronic absenteeism is being developed by the Attendance Commission.~~
- ~~Accountability: The development of the accountability system, including identification and weighting of the included indicators, was heavily informed by the accountability working group³⁷, the technical steering committee, recommendations of the IBAMC, and the P-20 Council, as well as the statements submitted during public comment periods and during the listening tour meetings. Not all indicators recommended were able to be included, predominantly because they did not meet one or more of the technical criteria required in ESSA (e.g., being valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the state, capable of being disaggregated for each student demographic group, supported by research that high performance or improvement is likely to increase student learning, or will aid in the meaningful differentiation of schools).~~
- ~~Fine arts: Numerous commenters indicated they believed the fine arts should be included in ESSA, but in many cases did not specify what this could mean (e.g., some commentators only suggested that the fine~~

³⁶ Healthy Schools Campaign, Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity, Ounce of Prevention, Action for Children, Action for Healthy Kids.

³⁷ The accountability working group included representation from the Illinois Association of School Administrators, Advance Illinois, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Education Association, Leadership and Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities, SCOPE, ED-Red, Large Unit District Association, Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents, Stand for Children, Latino Policy Forum, Illinois Parent Teacher Association, Chicago Public Schools District 299, Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois Network of Charter Schools, General Assembly staff, members of the General Assembly, Governor's Office, and Secretary of Education's Office.

~~arts are important whereas others mentioned a fine arts indicator should be included within the accountability system).~~

- ~~● School library and media specialists: School library and media specialists were present at almost every listening tour meeting across the state and submitted numerous comments expressing the value that licensed school library and media specialists provide to schools, classrooms, and students. ISBE will include language in the Consolidated District Plans that asks districts “how they will identify and address disparities in library resources.”~~

~~Additional information on the listening tours and comments feedback are above and throughout this document.~~

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

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

Regarding the assessment & accountability redesign, ISBE met frequently with staff from the Governor’s Office throughout the development of the plan and subsequent amendment.

Date SEA provided the plan to the Governor: ~~2/1/2017~~ **Date to be updated once plan is final.**

Check one:

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

2.2 System of Performance Management

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

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

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

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

ISBE is expected to receive more than \$1 billion in ESSA funds to distribute to its ~~852~~ districts through the various programs. To facilitate this process, ISBE staff developed the required statutory plans for each program and updated ~~g~~ the grant applications for the districts to access. The grant application portal opens to districts in the late winter or early spring of each year.

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

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

To the extent possible, departments are consolidating and coordinating their work regarding applications.³⁸ This coordination minimizes work on behalf of the district, helps to accelerate ISBE's application-approval process, and creates alignment between the plans and the application. Moreover, from 2017 to the current time, ISBE is working to better coordinate monitoring within and between departments for the purpose of providing better, more targeted services to districts.

ISBE is utilizing ESSA to remodel the internal organization of the agency. Departments are coordinating professional development to districts to support application and plan development and implementation. For example, the Title Grants Administration department (overseeing Title I, II, IV) coordinates training with Federal and State Monitoring in order to ensure that programmatic and fiscal requirements are meeting the law and, more importantly, supporting the work of educators in serving students. This work will allow ISBE to better coordinate application requirements, monitoring throughout the year, using the data submitted by districts to ensure return on investment as well as share promising practices throughout the state.³⁹

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

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

³⁸ For example, questions from the Title I Plan were imported into the Consolidated District Plan (CDP) to support the budgeting process. The CDP contains the question, "Describe the services the district will provide homeless children and youth, including services provided with funds reserved to support the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth, in coordination with the services the district is providing under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act" and is used to evaluate the amount of money set aside for homeless students. So too, the CDP application requires districts to explain how they support the transition of children from the middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education.

³⁹ Put differently, creating a more coherent approach that considers the information asked within the application and deliberately tying this to monitoring and outcomes, will assist ISBE in refining the supports it provides to the field in this work.

Monitoring ESSA programs is a joint and collaborative process at ISBE. Fiscal and administrative monitoring of the ESSA programs is primarily performed by the staff of the Federal and State Monitoring department at ISBE. This review includes both desk auditing of data supplied by districts as well as on-site visits by department staff. Districts are chosen for fiscal monitoring through an ~~an~~ bi-annual risk-based selection process using various data inputs, such as the amount and type of funding received, ~~overall number of awards, last time the grantee was monitored, overall financial status,~~ and number of prior issues noted during reviews or audits. All grant recipients must annually complete an internal control questionnaire that is included as a ~~pre-qualification to receive a grant award. piece of the overall risk assessment. Stakeholder input from ISBE program employees, district employees, and community members is included in the risk assessment, as appropriate.~~ Programmatic monitoring is conducted within each program area, such as monitoring within the School Improvement Grant or within the Title Grants department. Programmatic monitoring activities are determined by the employees who work closely with the grant recipients in order to maximize monitoring resources within ISBE. ISBE is continuing to consider ways in which monitoring could serve as an opportunity to revisit and refine practices. For instance, since 2017, ISBE has worked to better coordinate monitoring within and between ~~divisions~~ departments for the purpose of providing better, more targeted services to districts. This work includes meeting with districts to hear perceptions and recommendations in order to create a system that best serves districts.⁴⁰

Further, Illinois has adopted the principles included in the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(2 CFR Part 200\)](#) for all grants made by the state as either the originator or as a pass-through entity via the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\)](#) (30 ILCS 708/1). The purpose of GATA is to increase accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds while reducing the administrative burden on both state agencies and grantees. The law provides for the development of a coordinated, non-redundant process to establish effective and efficient oversight of the selection and monitoring of grant recipients, ensuring quality programs; limiting fraud, waste, and abuse; and defining the purpose, scope, applicability, and responsibilities in the life cycle of a grant. Fiscal, administrative, and programmatic monitoring protocols are being developed and formalized statewide in an effort to adopt best practices, create efficiencies, and improve outcomes. The requirements of GATA as well as Budgeting for Results⁴¹ (BFR) and Illinois Data for Fiscal and Instructional Results, Study, and Transparency (Illinois Data FIRST⁴²) provide ISBE with the opportunity to collect and share data on program efficacy in two ways. First, data collected from LEAs on accountability indicators will be shared on the Illinois State Report Card. Additional information on specific program outcomes, through the requirements of BFR, will be shared internally and with stakeholders in order to, as applicable, refine program goals and allocation requests.

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

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

⁴⁰ ISBE appreciates the Latino Policy Forum sharing that "[s]chool district staff found the on-site monitoring of EL programs to be effective for overall improvement of EL programs when conducted by ISBE qualified staff."

⁴¹ For additional information on Budgeting for Results, please access <https://www.illinois.gov/hsc/Documents/BFR%20Strategic%20Plan%204-27-12.pdf> and <https://www.illinois.gov/gov/budget/Pages/results.aspx>.

⁴² For additional information on the Illinois Longitudinal Data System, please access <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ILDS/Pages/default.aspx>.

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

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

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

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

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

ISBE will maximize effective use of ESSA funds by:

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

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

ISBE, as an agency, continues the transition toward cross-functional teams. As the ESSA State Plan for Illinois has developed, staff from different departments have come together to consider how ISBE can most appropriately be organized in order to serve the field. Schools and districts -- like the children they serve -- must have available to them differentiated supports based upon identified needs and readiness. This occurs in two ways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All intensive and comprehensive schools are required to use an ~~approved~~ learning partner; however, districts and schools have flexibility in ~~partnering with approved~~ **selecting their** partners. This flexibility allows for:

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

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

~~The School/District Improvement approved learning partners are pre-approved by ISBE to offer evidence-based, professional services at guaranteed costs. ISBE contracts with selected learning partners to provide services at fixed costs so that schools and learning partners will not need to negotiate price. Schools will have four years⁴³ in which to demonstrate consistent improvement in identified areas (one year for planning and three years for implementation).~~⁴⁴

- ~~• To serve as an approved learning partner, applicants must possess the content expertise, relevant experience, and capacity to successfully support effective school improvement practices and deliver evidence-based services. Under the current process, vendors seeking pre-approval identify the specific content expertise and service types they offer to help schools implement effective continuous improvement practices and build capacity of school leaders to lead continuous improvement efforts after the partnership ends.~~

~~ISBE continues to evaluate whether pre-approval of third party vendors is the most efficient model for delivery of school improvement services from the state and may make changes to future iterations of the statewide system of **success** support based on that evaluation.~~

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

⁴³ Schools identified as a part of Illinois first and second cohorts of comprehensive and targeted schools (i.e. cohort 18 and cohort 19) have a total of five years, as approved in the Illinois 2021 accountability waiver, which can be viewed at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL20-21-Accountability-Waiver-Template.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The determination for a four-year timeframe was recommended by stakeholders (one year of planning, three for implementation) and is the longest timeframe allowed for this work in ESSA.

Section 3: Academic Assessments

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

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

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

In line with the opportunities presented within ESSA, ISBE endeavors to use assessment as an opportunity to ensure that each and every child is able to demonstrate academic achievement on state standards. However, while ISBE acknowledges that strong academic achievement is essential for each and every child, it is also the case that academic achievement is but one portion of a more complex picture of student development over time. ESSA requires an accountability system containing multiple measures. Thus, in addition to academic achievement, ISBE must collect and report on growth for students in grades 3 through 8, and has expanded that measurement of growth through high school with the implementation of the PreACT9 Secure and PreACT Secure. Stakeholders and the Governor have also made it clear that growth, while not required in ninth through 11th grades, is very important and should be included in the accountability system.

A. Advanced Mathematics Coursework

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

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

☒ No.

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

B. Languages other than English

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

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

ISBE defines languages other than English, present to a significant extent in Illinois' student population, as any world language spoken by more than 60 percent of English Learners in the state. ~~This accounts for over 91 percent of all English Learners in the state based on the most recent verified data (2014).~~ While Spanish is the only language that currently meets the definition, ISBE provides translation of directions and reporting shells in the top 10 identified languages each year. In the 2024-2025 school year, these supports were provided in the following languages: Spanish, Arabic, French, Gujarati, Polish, Russian, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. ~~ISBE provides translation of directions and reporting shells within the for the 3-8 and high school ELA and mathematics assessments⁴⁵ assessment. The table in Appendix C shows the 10 languages in Illinois during the last three school years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16).⁴⁶ 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.**

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

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

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

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

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

The state will continue work with stakeholders to identify all possible funding streams and technical resources to support this work. It is anticipated that we will continue to offer a trans-adapted version of mathematics ~~and science~~ for the 3-8 general education assessment and that we will seek to extend this opportunity to other content areas and assessments.⁴⁷ The goal is to provide translations for all languages where 30 percent or more of the English Learner population speaks the same world language, other than English. However, Illinois' capacity to do this work will depend on a sufficient allocation from both federal and state sources to conduct the translations and validate the work.

⁴⁵ Approved translated directions at high school can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/sat-psat.aspx>.

⁴⁶ Chinese Mandarin is listed as a top 4 language in Illinois on the IAR list. Chinese has two dialects: Mandarin and Cantonese. When the two dialects are counted together, the combination is in the top 4. Please note that Illinois counts these two dialects separately.

⁴⁷ Stakeholders have requested native language assessments for IAR language arts for at least the Spanish speaking subgroup which takes into account 78% of all ELs in Illinois.

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

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

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

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

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