

## Section 5: Supporting Excellent Educators

### 5.1 Educator Development, Retention, and Advancement.

Teachers able to meet the needs of the whole child throughout her or his school journey and who serve as mentor and guide are the cornerstones of Illinois public schools. Moreover, supporting the development of educators from pre-service work through the sharing of experience to mentor and teach other professional educators as a more seasoned teacher is the responsibility of schools, professional organizations, and ISBE. In order to best ensure this work is meaningful, the use of Title II dollars must be utilized in ways that support the long-term student goals.

As previously stated, the long-term student performance goals for ISBE include:

- 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 addition to these performance goals, two additional ISBE goals identify the importance of where the work occurs and who serves as the cornerstone of a child's learning:

- **GOAL 2:** ~~In partnership with its stakeholders, ISBE will advocate for the necessary resources to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments that meet the unique academic, social, and emotional needs of every student. 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 **effectiveness in providing** ~~efforts to provide each and every child an~~ **high-quality** education that meets their needs.

ISBE believes if a child is supported in achieving the aforementioned performance goals and the centrality of the educator and environment in creating a space for this work to occur that there is a far greater likelihood that the state will meet its long term goals. Creating a system where students are supported in their learning and have the ability to easily access postsecondary opportunities of interest is good for the individual and good for Illinois.

To achieve these goals, ISBE recognizes the central role that administrators, teachers, school service personnel, and other licensed and non-licensed staff play in supporting each and every child in her or his growth. Thus, ISBE must ensure that educators are supported in their professional learning so they, in turn, can support children throughout the continuum of early childhood through postsecondary education and career. To this end, ISBE has a number of initiatives supporting the professional learning of educators and school leaders.

### 5.2 Support for Educators

***Instructions:** Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if the SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.*

## A. Resources to Support State-level Strategies.

- i. Describe how the SEA will use Title II, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of funds provided under those programs, to support state-level strategies designed to:
  1. Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards;
  2. Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
  3. Increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
  4. Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders consistent with the educator equity provisions in 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c).

Currently, ISBE is focused on providing resources (Title I) and training to teachers regarding the Illinois Learning Standards (Title IIa funds), ~~mentoring for principals of low-performing schools (Title I, Part 1003a)~~, induction and mentoring for new teachers (state funds), and training on teacher and principal evaluations (Title IIa). So, too, through a ~~past~~ partnership with Regional Offices of Education, ISBE ~~has~~ developed and delivered professional development through Foundational Services. Foundational Services were developed and refined over time to share up-to-date information on ISBE initiatives (e.g., ELA and math, teacher evaluation, balanced assessment, family and community engagement). Data suggests that educators ~~have~~ found this professional development useful, but it ~~lacked~~ coordination and the ability to differentiate services based upon district need. Because of this, ISBE must better coordinate its initiatives within and outside of the agency to maximize the impact of professional learning across Illinois in order to increase student achievement.

There are a multitude of professional development opportunities available to districts, many of which are of high quality. However, ISBE sees an opportunity in ESSA to deliberately move from “one and done” or “sit and get” models of professional development to a system wherein professional learning is the gold standard. To be clear, this is not only an issue of language. Rather, Illinois has adopted the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning. Moreover, ISBE expects that LEAs, to the extent practical, will engage in professional learning that is led by teachers, embedded by administrators, focused on at-risk subgroups as well as transitions between grades, schools, and into and out of schooling (e.g., entry into kindergarten, between elementary and middle school, middle school and high school, and high school and postsecondary), and focused on considering student level and teacher evaluation data for the purposes of LEA planning.<sup>1</sup> These standards provide a frame in which learning opportunities should be robust and have the opportunity for both application and reflection on the part of the educator. In order for this to occur, ISBE is committed to ensuring that the goal of the 2015 Illinois Equity Plan -- that each and every child in an Illinois school is taught by a highly effective educator -- is supported through professional learning opportunities and high-quality resources.<sup>2</sup>

The following work, some of which is ongoing<sup>3</sup>, provides examples of ways that ISBE has or will utilize Title II funds and braid and/or blend other fund sources when applicable and appropriate.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ISBE will modify its Title II application to collect information on the intended and actual use of Title II dollars for professional learning.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the importance of developing and supporting multiple avenues of entry for those who wish to teach, ISBE recognizes the importance of establishing a teacher pipeline. In 2013, the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council submitted a proposal to ISBE for the establishment of a diverse educator pipeline. As requested in that document, ISBE released a Request for Information to which 12 organizations submitted material. In addition, to show the commitment of ISBE to this work, beginning in FY 2015, ISBE has annually included a budget (\$700,000) to support this work. The line has yet to be funded.

<sup>3</sup> As monitoring data is collected and analyzed, the professional learning needs of educators will, in all likelihood, change. To that end, ISBE will track the needs of the field in order to remain nimble to the identified needs.

<sup>4</sup> So, too, many of the specific areas identified in this section will be included in the work of School/District Improvement.

### Professional Learning and Resources for Educators

ISBE understands the importance of job-embedded professional learning<sup>5</sup>. To that end, as the ESSA State Plan for Illinois is implemented, ISBE is committed to using Title II dollars in order to:

- Build the content knowledge of educators regarding the Illinois Learning Standards in core content areas and characteristics of learners;<sup>6</sup>
- Develop resources on supporting learning environments and transition throughout the continuum of early childhood through college and career (Title II and Title I);
- Develop resources and professional learning opportunities for educators on Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment, and data and assessment literacy (Title I, Title II, Title III and IDEA funding);
- Continue to build upon the resources for family/caretaker and community engagement; social and emotional learning; cultural, racial, and socio-economic competence; conflict management; trauma and behavioral health issues; restorative practices; cultural competence; anti-racism; recognizing implicit bias; and actualizing anti-bias approaches (Title I, Title II, Title III and IDEA funding); **and**
- Continue to support training for teacher and principal evaluators (Title II and state funding) ~~;~~ **and**

~~Districts, especially those identified for comprehensive and targeted services, will, through School/District Improvement, be provided access to professional learning opportunities that include an emphasis on Governance and Management, Curriculum and Instruction, Climate and Culture. More specifically, capacity building strategies, with an emphasis on sustainability, will be emphasized (Title I, School Improvement, Title II, IDEA, Title IV Part A and B, State Longitudinal Data Systems funding).~~

### Teacher Residency **and** Apprenticeship Programs

Illinois, like most every other state, has seen a significant decrease in the number of individuals who attend a college or university in order to obtain licensure to teach. Thus, considering multiple avenues of entry into the profession of teaching is important in order to afford individuals with a sense of calling and connection to specific communities the opportunity to become licensed to teach.

ISBE committed to supporting the development of teacher residencies and is currently working to identify any modifications to statute necessary as well as identifying funds in order for this work to proceed. As that work progresses, ISBE will develop a Request for Proposal for an Innovative Fieldwork competitive grant program. The purpose of this program is to provide funding for districts and institutions of higher education with approved teacher preparation programs to partner and develop innovative approaches to fieldwork requirements in order to provide candidates rich and extended opportunities to work with, learn from, and practice their developing craft with practicing teachers. This work will be shared throughout the state and beyond.

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the information shared in this section, ISBE will provide LEA guidance regarding professional learning that is most likely to be effective, aligned to adult learning best practice, is evidence-based, and has been demonstrated to be effective in developing knowledge and improving practice and/or outcomes for students.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, this includes, but is not limited to, the identification and appropriate supports for gifted children, English Learners, and children with other identified needs. It also includes an emphasis on supporting the social and emotional development of each and every child and resource development in core content areas that emphasizes the tenets of differentiated instruction (e.g., ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical education, and foreign language).

Between 2019 and 2022, ISBE provided five universities with \$2.25 million in grant funding to plan and implement teacher residency programs in state subject-area shortages. Each university partnered with one or more local education agencies to plan and deliver the residency programs.

In 2024, ISBE partnered with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to award \$1.5 million in grant funding to three universities to provide career pathways opportunities and supportive services through teacher apprenticeship programs. Funds allowed universities to work with local education agency partners to develop apprenticeship programs that provided workforce training and wrap-around services to current paraprofessionals who aspire to become teachers. The grant program will conclude in 2026 and results of the work will be shared throughout the state.

### **School Leaders and Administrators**

ISBE understands the importance of shared leadership within schools and districts in Illinois. School leaders include superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and, when appropriate, LEA leaders.<sup>7</sup> Below are examples of ways ISBE supported efforts focused on school leaders:

- Continues to support an educator leader network (ELN) to connect leaders between districts. These funds will be coordinated with state funding (Title II and state funding).
- Developed a competitive grant program wherein districts propose 30-60-90-day research projects. These projects assist Illinois in continuing to be a leader in advocacy for and approaches to teacher leadership, in particular. More specifically, in a 30-60-90-project, a district, school, or portion of faculty proposes a problem of practice important to teacher leadership at the school and/or district, develops a plan in which the problem of practice is investigated, and report findings. This work is used to increase clarity on the roles and work of a teacher leader. This work is shared through ELN among other spaces.<sup>8</sup>
- Created resources emphasizing the school leaders as instructional leaders, particularly for teachers in the early grades. School leaders need knowledge of child development, pedagogical content knowledge, differentiation of instruction, and knowledge of pedagogical practice and high-impact teacher-child interactions for young children (Title II, Early Childhood).
- Provided school leaders with opportunities to build their capacity as facilitators of continuous teacher learning and development (Title II).
- Professional learning opportunities provided to school leaders, ~~especially those identified for intensive or comprehensive services and through School/District Improvement~~, may include strategies regarding family and community engagement, as well as the use of referral mechanisms that link children to appropriate services.

### **Culturally Responsive and Evidence-based Instruction**

- In 2021, Illinois adopted [Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards](#). The standards come from research-based best practices for closing achievement gaps. Cultural responsiveness improves student outcomes across a range of indicators from math and reading scores to attendance, to postsecondary enrollment. The standards encourage future teachers to engage in self-reflection, to get to know their students' families, to connect the curriculum to students' lives, and to support student leadership. The standards will be implemented in educator preparation programs and will help aspiring educators build the skills they need to engage students who may come from different backgrounds and cultures than them, in order to create an environment most conducive to learning.

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<sup>7</sup> Additional clarification on this definition was provided by the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council.

<sup>8</sup> The Teacher and Leader Effectiveness subcommittee of the P20 Council has recommended pilot programs for both teacher residencies as well as school leaders. ISBE is continuing to ascertain the feasibility of one or both of these in the near future.

Additionally, professional learning is being developed for district and school leaders and regional office of education staff to support the implementation of the standards at the local district level.

- In 2024, the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan was adopted. The plan identifies three primary goals: 1) Every student receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction; 2) Every educator is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction; 3) Every leader is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction. This plan and associated suite of resources provide a framework for the adoption of local district literacy plans to support the integration of evidence-based literacy instruction. Differentiation of professional learning for administrators, school and district leaders, regional office of education staff, and classroom teachers will be offered with a focus on utilizing disaggregated student data to support meaningful organizational change supportive of the three primary goals of the plan.

## **B. Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs.**

- Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students, consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(J) of the ESEA.**

In addition to the information provided previously, ISBE will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students through systematic professional learning, training, technical assistance, and coaching that allows for differentiated services to LEAs through ~~the statewide system of success~~ ~~School/District Improvement~~, the ~~Illinois Data FIRST project~~, ~~MyDataDashboard~~ ~~Ed360~~, the Illinois Virtual School, and Online Impact.<sup>9</sup>

~~School/District Improvement is t~~ 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 ~~statewide system of success~~ ~~structure of School/District Improvement~~ 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 will be conducted by a learning partner selected by the school or district. by a state-procured expert vendor. Subsequent year n~~ Needs assessments ~~after the planning year~~ are conducted by the district and school as a routine element of the school improvement cycle. Progress is measured and reported locally and statewide ~~by comparing from the initial baseline, initiative~~ needs assessment data to annual performance over the course of the grant. Districts with schools identified for intensive or 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~~

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<sup>9</sup> While ISBE collects limited data on some of these initiatives, it intends to use the opportunity of ESSA to develop a more robust feedback loop to ensure relevance and quality of services.

~~a procurement or 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. ~~ISBE personnel~~ **The School/District Improvement Coordinators** will ensure that school-level needs drive how the requirement of maintaining an approved or primary 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 **selecting their** ~~partnering with approved~~ 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 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 years<sup>10</sup> in which to demonstrate consistent improvement in identified areas (one year for planning and three years for implementation).<sup>11</sup>~~

~~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 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

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<sup>10</sup> Schools identified as a part of Illinois first and second cohorts of comprehensive and targeted schools (i.e. cohort 18 and cohort 19) had 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>.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

compliance. Schools that are not making reasonable progress work directly with ISBE to determine additional interventions. ISBE monitors ~~each~~ the school's improvement plans to ensure that ~~the school is~~ they are 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.

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

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

ISBE also provides **MyDataDashboard (MDD)**, an **secure** educator dashboard, formerly known as Ed360 and **developed in conjunction with the Illinois Data FIRST project**. The former Ed360 was developed incrementally to allow preK-12 stakeholders to access an initial set of data while additional data sets, functions, and reports continue to be added based on stakeholder feedback. ISBE integrated Ed360 with existing technology in school districts to enable a single sign-on solution. In addition, Ed360 used existing data collections to populate the dashboards. The work and resources of Ed360 is being integrated into other ISBE-supported systems.

MDD is integrated with the acclaimed Illinois Interactive Report Card (IRC) and provides ~~Ed360 provided~~ information at the state, regional, district, school, and classroom levels. **MDD will also host a dynamically generated custom report for each school, that identifies important patterns and deviations from patterns in each school's accountability data. The report will, the extent appropriate, leverage the wealth of other data collected and reported by ISBE to suggest lines of inquiry that support continuous school improvement and provide links to resources, supports and services available through the statewide system of success.** ~~Ed360, which was also connected to the Illinois Open Education Resource platform, will have a formative assessment expansion with additional professional learning focusing on:~~

- Identifying and/or developing formative and summative assessments,
- Using technology and tools in the classroom,
- Content resources, including guidance on how to use resources developed to improve student achievement, and
- Professional learning regarding behavioral and mental health, equity, and diversity issues to support healthier school environments.

**The Illinois Virtual Course Catalog provides both** ~~In addition to credit recovery and access to Advanced Placement courses for students, the Illinois Virtual Course Catalog,~~ **and** provides free and low-cost, self-paced online professional development to Illinois teachers on a variety of topics, including teaching blended learning courses, understanding mobile learning, and reading courses for K-3 teachers. Facilitated courses do cost more, but generally include graduate credit.

### C. System of Certification and Licensing

- i. **(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B)):** Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.

Illinois licensure requirements for both in-state and out-of-state program completers can be found at: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Requirements.aspx>. The web page is inclusive of initial licensure requirements and requirements for adding subsequent endorsements after initial licensure is earned.

#### D. Data and Consultation

- i. **(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K)):** Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.

ISBE has a **robust data warehouse** state longitudinal data system that aggregates the data collected through other systems as data required under ESSA related to students and educators. This data is both reported on the IRC and in MDD. then compiled into an educator dashboard (Ed360).<sup>12</sup> This MDD dashboard assists educators in making instructional decisions about the students in the district and the classrooms. In order to ensure that MDD Ed360 meets the data needs of districts, ISBE will continue to consult with stakeholders through its educator leader cadre, the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Principal Association and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

### 5.3 Educator Equity

#### A. Definitions.

- i. Provide the SEA's different definitions, using distinct criteria, for the following key terms:

Key Term	Statewide Definition (or Statewide Guidelines)
Ineffective teacher*	A teacher who has received a "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory" on an evaluation and, in a subsequent evaluation, received a rating of "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement."
Out-of-field teacher*+	A teacher teaching in a grade or content area for which he or she does not hold the appropriate state-issued license or endorsement
Inexperienced teacher*+	A teacher with less than two years of teaching experience.
Low-income student	Students from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.
Minority student	A person who is 1) American Indian or Alaska Native, 2) Asian, 3) Black or African American, 4) Hispanic or Latino, or 5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (HB 332 effective 1/1/12).

\*Definitions of these terms must provide useful information about educator equity.

+Definitions of these terms must be consistent with the definitions that a state uses under 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.

#### B. Rates and Differences in Rates.

<sup>12</sup> Ed360 is currently being piloted in Illinois.

In Appendix D, ISBE has calculate and provided the statewide rates at which low-income and minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A using the definitions provided in Section 5.3. The statewide rate has been calculated using student-level data.

### C. Public Reporting

- i. **Provide the web address or URL of, or a direct link to, where the SEA will publish and annually update, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c)(4):**
  1. **The rates and differences in rates calculated in 5.3.B;**
  2. **The percentage of teachers categorized in each LEA at each effectiveness level established as part of the definition of “ineffective teacher,” consistent with applicable state privacy policies;**
  3. **The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37; and**
  4. **The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.**

ISBE is designing a webpage that will include this information. The web address will be:

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/EssaEducatorEquity.aspx>

### D. Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences.

- i. **If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the likely causes (*e.g.*, teacher shortages, working conditions, school leadership, compensation, or other causes), which may vary across districts or schools, of the most significant statewide differences in rates in 5.3.B. The description must include whether those differences in rates reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools.**

During 2015, ISBE worked with a variety of stakeholder groups in the development of the Educator Equity Plan for Illinois. One of the requirements of this plan was to determine probable causes in regards to why students who attended a high poverty and high minority school were more likely to be taught by an inexperienced or ineffective teacher than those students who did not attend such schools.

Three probable causes were identified:

1. Lack of an equitable funding formula for local school districts, which results in disparities in teacher salaries between districts (funding).
2. Lack of continuity in the recruitment and retention of educators (supports), and
3. Lack of awareness of community (practices and values) once in a high-needs school district (cultural competency).

### E. Identification of Strategies.

- i. **If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, provide the SEA’s strategies, including timelines and federal or non-federal funding sources, that are:**
  1. **Designed to address the likely causes of the most significant differences identified in 5.3.D and**
  2. **Prioritized to address the most significant differences in the rates provided in 5.3.B, including by prioritizing strategies to support any schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 that are contributing to those**

differences in rates.

Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences in Rates	Strategies (Including Timeline and Funding Sources)
Funding	<p><b>Strategies:</b> Throughout the 2017, Legislative Session in Illinois, stakeholders and lawmakers worked diligently to develop a new, evidence based funding formula for Illinois Schools. This work continues into the late summer/early fall of 2017.</p> <p><b>Funding Sources:</b> The majority of the funds supporting the public schools in Illinois derive from state and local funding sources.</p>
Recruitment and Retention Strategies	<p><b>Strategies:</b> Utilize current ISBE communications strategies to ensure that districts are aware of how they can use Title II funds to support professional development including, but not limited to: recruitment and retention programming (e.g., induction and mentoring programming), professional development (e.g., pedagogical, content, and the establishment of professional learning communities) and programming that would assist teachers in supporting the academic and social and emotional growth of their charges (Local Title II Funding).</p> <p>Develop, with teacher preparation institutions, best practices for preparing individuals who wish to teach in high-poverty and/or high-minority districts and ensuring that these individuals have ample opportunity to engage in regular and prolonged field experiences in these districts (State Title II Funding).</p>
Cultural Competency	Awarded grants to local education agencies (LEAs) for a three-year period that requires the development of programming focusing on retention, the use of teacher leaders as instructional leaders within the school, and programming that utilizes the talents of parents and community members (State Title II Funding).

#### F. Timelines and Interim Targets.

- i. If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the SEA's timelines and interim targets for eliminating all differences in rates.

Each year, Illinois will monitor the differences in rates, if any, between those teachers identified as ineffective, out of field, or inexperienced and who teach at high poverty and high minority schools. Like the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, the 2015 Illinois Equity Plan will be revisited and revised as new data becomes available. More specifically, identified probable causes and those strategies attached to these causes will be shared with stakeholders and, when applicable, be modified in order to most efficiently and effectively eliminate the differences in rates whereby students that attend high poverty and/or high minority school are taught by ineffective, out of field, or inexperienced teachers.

Currently, Illinois has data for the differences in rates for those teachers taught by out of field teachers in low/high poverty or minority districts. By October 31, 2017 ISBE will have baseline information on differences, if any, between ineffective teachers and inexperienced teacher who teach at high/low poverty schools and high/low minority schools.

Difference in Rates	Date by which differences in rates will be eliminated	Interim targets, including date by which target will be reached
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Ineffective Teacher –High/Low Poverty Schools	12.31.2021	The 2016-2017 school year was the first in which districts submitted data on teacher effectiveness. No later than October 31, 2017, ISBE will share benchmark data on effectiveness of teachers in low/high poverty districts and, from this, develop interim targets.
Ineffective Teacher –High/Low Minority Schools	12.31.2021	The 2016-2017 school year was the first in which districts submitted data on teacher effectiveness. No later than October 31, 2017, ISBE will share benchmark data on effectiveness of teachers in low/high minority districts and, from this, develop interim targets
Out of Field – High/Low Poverty Schools	12.31.2021	Percentage of students taught by Out of Field teachers (1.55% at high poverty schools and .3% at low poverty schools) Interim Goals: Assuming the .3% is stable at low poverty schools then the interim goals for high poverty schools are as follows: 2018: .1.24%; 2019: .73%; 2020: .42%; 2021: .3%
Out of Field – High/Low Minority Schools	12.31.2021	Percentage of students by Out of Field teachers (1.45% at high minority schools and .35% at low minority schools) Interim Goals: Assuming the .35% is stable at low minority schools then the interim goals for high minority schools are as follows: 2018: 1.09%; 2019: 73%; 2020: .36%; 2021: .35%
Inexperienced Teacher - High/Low Poverty Schools	12.31.2021	. Illinois is collecting data on inexperienced teachers during the 2016-2017 school year. This data will be available no later than October 31, 2017.
Inexperienced Teacher – High/Low Minority Schools	12.31.2021	. Illinois is collecting data on inexperienced teachers during the 2016-2017 school year. This data will be available no later than October 31, 2017.

## Section 6: Supporting All Students

### 6.1 Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students

In order to best support schools in providing opportunities for a well-rounded education, ISBE is dedicated to providing resources that enable schools to support the development of the whole child. This work consists of making sure that there are appropriate resources available to teach content in ways that afford multiple entries into curriculum as well as multiple ways to show their developing understandings.

As stated previously, the important work that occurs between teacher and student and the environment in which this work takes place supports two of the ISBE goals:

- All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

So, too, without the teacher and a safe learning environment, the possibility of each and every child in Illinois to meet the performance goals set by ISBE would be far less. In this way, the work that shall occur through the use of Title II dollars and the opportunities available to Illinois students through Title IV is intertwined. ISBE encourages districts to prioritize funds based upon identified needs. ISBE will work directly with those schools identified for comprehensive services to ensure that appropriate programming is aligned with Title IV funding.

For instance, ISBE intends to use Perkins V funding to support innovative, competency-based learning experiences with career technical education classrooms,<sup>13</sup> and it is of equal importance that the teachers mentoring students in each content area and school configuration are able to create a safe environment that affords students the opportunity to make mistakes and grow in competency and confidence as they continue their work.

***Instructions: When addressing the state's strategies below, each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of fund provided under those programs, to support state-level strategies and LEA use of funds. The strategies and uses of funds must be designed to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging state academic standards and career and technical standards, as applicable, and attain, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.***

#### A. State Strategies Addressing Academic and Non-academic Needs

- i. The descriptions that an SEA provides must include how, when developing its state strategies, the SEA considered the academic and non-academic needs of the following specific subgroups of students:
  - *Low-income students;*
  - *Lowest-achieving students;*
  - *English Learners;*
  - *Children with disabilities;*
  - *Children and youth in foster care;*
  - *Migratory children, including preschool<sup>14</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school;*
  - *Homeless children and youths;*
  - *Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA, including students in juvenile justice facilities;*

<sup>13</sup> ISBE will develop a competitive grant for districts that highlights innovative work that utilizes competency-based approaches to skill development and attainment. ISBE will work with other state agencies to connect this work with the employer community.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

- *Immigrant children and youth;*
- *Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School program under section 5221 of the ESEA; and*
- *American Indian and Alaska Native students.*

## **B. Continuum of Education from Preschool<sup>15</sup> Through Grade 12**

- The state's strategies and how it will support LEAs to support the continuum of a student's education from preschool through grade 12, including transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to postsecondary education and careers, in order to support appropriate promotion practices and decrease the risk of students dropping out.**

Illinois has a long tradition of local control and has adopted a standards-based approach, supplemented with technical assistance and the alignment of programs and funds, to support the continuum of a student's education. This continuum begins at birth and extends through to postsecondary education and careers.

All Illinois K-12 students have access to rigorous academic standards, which set high expectations for academic achievement. Illinois adopted new learning standards in all content areas. The Illinois Learning Standards<sup>16</sup> in math, science, social science, English language arts, Spanish language arts, fine arts, and physical education/health are intended to support collaborative, engaging, student-centered learning environments designed to unlock student potential. These standards promote both horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum, which ensures effective transitioning between grade levels and increases the probability that all learners will be prepared to pursue and achieve, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.

The Illinois Learning Standards serve as a ground upon which ISBE provides resources and opportunities for professional learning for educators. The resources and opportunities themselves are essential when thinking about the necessary supports for each and every child insofar as the content identified in the learning standards is an important vehicle through which an educator can meet the individual needs of each and every child.

The Illinois Learning Standards and the strategic support and guidance given to LEAs and schools regarding effective implementation ensure appropriate promotion practices as all students attain mastery of the standards. A caring and supportive environment, one in which a child feels safe and cared for and where they can learn, decreases the risk of students dropping out by supporting multiple pathways to postsecondary education and careers.

More specifically, ISBE has sought to use Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants), Part B (21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers), and Part F funds (Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Community School Programs) to coordinate state-level strategies in order to reduce exclusionary discipline, implement evidence-based behavioral health awareness training programs, expand access for school-based counseling and behavioral health programs, and improve outcomes of children living in the most distressed communities. These efforts will help ensure that each and every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to a well-rounded education in a safe, healthy, supportive, and drug free environment. Title funds will also be used to promote positive school climates and address childhood exposure to violence and the effects of trauma. These activities, in addition to the supports provided for the Illinois Learning Standards, are critical to address the needs of subgroups, such as homeless children and youth, neglected and delinquent children and others at risk, and create an ecology that supports and nurtures the whole child.

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<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> For additional information on the Illinois Learning Standards, please access <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Learning-Standards.aspx>.

An ecology that supports and nurtures the whole child requires a coordinated approach to best ensure each and every child continues to develop and build upon the fundamental skills they already possess and those skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. In addition, coordination during transitions from early childhood through high school graduation must deliberately identify and provide supports necessary for children and families so that the child may thrive.<sup>17</sup> When children are nested within whole, healthy systems that consider the child's areas of strength, the areas where additional support and nurturing may be required and the multiple avenues from where that support should occur are more likely to be identified. This increases the likelihood for improved student achievement and better overall student well-being.

Providing each and every student in Illinois' schools access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences -- beyond the Illinois Learning Standards -- is essential in order for a young person to explore interests and develop a sense of competence and sense of self. There are many opportunities for this to occur within Illinois' public schools. ISBE's strategic use of funds offers students a variety of academic and career and technical content in the public secondary setting in Illinois. Some courses are articulated with the postsecondary level and others provide dual credit opportunities for students, where applicable. Career pathways are available in 99 percent of the school districts in Illinois and are facilitated by the Education for Employment Regional Delivery System. These career pathways or programs of study include industry partnerships, a sequence of coursework, work-based learning experiences, credentials/certifications, career and technical student organizations, individualized career plans, dual and/or articulated credit, and other related pathway experiences. These activities help to connect secondary to postsecondary to careers for students.

In addition, ISBE believes that parent, family, and community engagement is a cornerstone of effective schools and a critical element for a child's education and well-being in order to ensure that the needs of the whole child are met. ISBE has an intra-agency collaborative team charged with developing greater cohesiveness and efficiency in this work. This team has developed a shared definition for family engagement: Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents, educators, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. This helps to frame the supports developed for ISBE, LEAs, and other key stakeholders. Family engagement is fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the school. It empowers adults to jointly support student growth, addresses any barriers to learning, and ensures college and career readiness. Foremost, effective family engagement systems, policies, and practices are mindful of diverse school-communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. They are responsive to student and family needs and improve their self-efficacy.

To that end, the agency continues to build internal capacity and a number of supports for LEAs, schools, and communities. This includes a recent (September 2024) update to the ISBE Family Engagement Framework and its companion tools.<sup>18</sup> The universal framework is designed for LEAs, schools, and their school boards, including, but is not limited to, charter, alternative, and community schools. It provides guidance on how to develop meaningful partnerships with families by developing family engagement systems, building welcoming and inclusive environments, enhancing effective communication with parents, and including parents in decision-making. The framework helps LEAs use family engagement as a strategy for school improvement. Efforts to engage families in meaningful ways with an asset-based mindset that are linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students occur on an ongoing basis and are embedded in school policies and practices. Additional tools and resources will be integrated into the framework for more targeted and intensive individualized engagement with

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<sup>17</sup> The Early Learning Council recommends and by way of example that individuals who work in ECE settings are trained and equipped to work with transition children from early intervention services and programs across the entirety of the school year. This work is especially important for two reasons: to aid in the smooth transition of the child and her or his parents/caregivers from one system into the next as well as to ensure those children that require additional services are able to receive these in a timely fashion.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Family-Comm-Engage-Framework-Guide.pdf>

families of students with disabilities, EL students, students with behavioral health issues, and/or students with trauma.

Through its Family and Community Engagement Department, ISBE provides professional learning workshops and networking for family-facing professionals statewide. The workshops and networking opportunities are aligned to the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. They are designed to help family-facing school and district personnel partner with families so that they are more readily able to meet student achievement and healthy development goals, leverage resources, build effective relationships between parents and teachers, develop ongoing community support for school and district improvement, and meet federal and state requirements for family engagement. ~~Family and community engagement is one of the core elements for the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure and as such it is important that ISBE work to ensure that all families are supported through this work, especially those that are traditionally underserved (e.g., families who are homeless, migrant families, among others).~~ The updated tools, professional learning opportunities, and resources will provide greater opportunities for meeting the accountability measures.

~~As one~~ such example, ~~is~~ ISBE's Multilingual/**Language Development** department published a guidance framework for schools and districts that integrated the four core principles of the ISBE Family Engagement Framework. The guidance document will be used to provide technical assistance. The department will also partner with external stakeholders, including WIDA and the Illinois Resource Center, to build capacity to engage EL families. There are a series of bilingual online trainings that are available to families to assist them in navigating the school system. ISBE will engage families, community members, schools, and districts through the **Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education** ~~Bilingual Statewide Advisory Council~~ to ensure that the needs of EL families and communities in the education of bilingual students are met.

ISBE is pleased that there remains a set-aside requirement for parent and family engagement, with an allocation of more than \$500,000 in Title I funds. Ninety percent of those set-aside funds must be distributed to the schools, with a priority for high-need schools. ISBE staff will verify compliance with specific statutes regarding allowable use of funds during their review of the Title I grant. This information will be shared through a webinar. Also, staff, in consultation with educators and others from the community, will continue to provide technical assistance and supports. ~~These supports~~ to ensure Title I funding that is dedicated for family engagement, ~~works to strengthen~~ school improvement efforts, ensures that there is ongoing communication, are offered at locations and at times that allow parents and families to attend without undue burden, and ~~in order to build~~ capacity for families in ways that are linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students.

The Title Grants Administration Toolkit, **updated August 2025**, provides dates and sample letters districts can use to ensure they meet Parents Right-to-Know requirements. ISBE will ensure that at the beginning of each school year districts are aware of their obligation to notify Title I parents that a parent has the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. In addition, a Title I school must also provide timely notice to a parent of a child who has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

Also, Title IV, Part B funds will be used to build capacity of subgrantees as they implement high- quality after-school programs for students and families. ISBE recognizes that after-school programming oftentimes is the first entry point for family and community engagement in the school building. Family engagement is regularly monitored through ISBE's standard grant monitoring activities and technical assistance is provided as appropriate.

In addition, ISBE **will** work closely with an Illinois after-school statewide network **to provide additional support to grantees**, ~~the ACT Now Coalition, which recently published quality standards for Illinois after-school program providers~~. Almost 50 percent of the providers are LEAs and schools. This is significant, given that this leverages the ability to better coordinate resources, staff, and funding to strengthen engagement efforts. There are dedicated standards for family and community engagement as well as for school partnerships. ISBE will work with the network in providing professional development and a community of practice to strengthen local connection

and capacity for meaningful engagement that is linked to learning and healthy development outcomes for students.

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. There are number of strategies that ISBE will be developing to continue and strengthen for young children and their families. Early Care and Education (ECE) providers can receive recognition of their work in family and community engagement from Early Childhood's Continuous Improvement Quality Rating System. This recognition boosts their quality rating and informs families of their quality practice. This gives families more opportunities to make informed decisions about their child's learning environment and the kinds of support they may receive as their child's first teacher.

ISBE, which has received a Preschool Expansion Grant, will work across the agency and in communities to build stronger systems and local capacity of ECE providers and families to better coordinate supports and increase confidence and opportunities for meaningful engagement.

ISBE is a key stakeholder on the Illinois Early Learning Council that, as a public – private partnership created by Public Act 93 – 380, strengthens, coordinates, and expands programs and services for children, birth to 5, throughout Illinois. There is a dedicated committee for family and community engagement that is working in partnership with ISBE to implement a strategic plan to support hard – to – reach families, help families achieve self – sufficiency goals, and support schools in better coordinating the transition for families when their children enter elementary school.

ISBE is also developing a framework for families in partnership with families, community resources, and faith-based partners because the agency recognizes that families are an integral part of a child's success from cradle to career. This work will align supports for children and families in efficient ways so community resources are strategically organized to support student success and so there is a focus on the whole child, integrating academics, services, supports, and opportunities. ISBE acknowledges the impact community resources and faith-based partners have in helping families become partners and leaders in supporting schools as well as their child's learning and healthy development. ISBE acknowledges the impact of the community school model as it embeds family engagement as a core pillar for school and student success. Community schools strengthen opportunities for schools and partners from across the community to come together to educate and support students and families in building thriving communities.

Family and community engagement is one of the central foci of the work of the Health and Human Services Transformation agenda and an integral part of the overall effort to build internal capacity and coordination for services targeting impacts for children and families statewide. ISBE, in partnership with the Governor's Office, will work to build stronger pathways for communication with families, community resources, and faith-based partners to optimize the efficacy of the work.

### C. Equitable Access to a Well-Rounded Education

- i. **The state's strategies and how it will support LEAs to provide equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English Learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are underrepresented. Such subjects could include English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, or physical education.**

ESSA places an unprecedented priority on the provision of supports for all young people struggling with barriers to learning, including programming that addresses academics along with the climate and culture of the school setting. Improving the educational outcomes for all students requires that schools -- the places where children spend most of their day -- promote the necessary conditions for learning, which include:

- A safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school/classroom climate;
- The development of academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical competencies;
- Effective and inclusive leaders;
- Ambitious instruction;
- Collaborative teachers;
- Supportive environment; and
- Involved families.

Barriers to learning and teaching, such as inadequate access to the general education curriculum, poverty, trauma, homelessness or instability in a living situation, disengagement, absenteeism, bullying, behavioral health issues, lack of or insufficient number of behavioral and physical health supports in the school environment (counselors, social workers, and school nurses), must be addressed.

Districts/schools will provide programming at three levels of care and instruction (promotion, prevention, intervention) as they develop a safe, caring, (re-)engaging, and participatory environment. These levels:

- Foster the well-being of all students through universal schoolwide approaches (core standards-aligned academic curriculum and instruction and practices that promote healthy development and prevent issues);
- Provide early intervention and identification strategies and supports to reduce the possibility of escalating issues (and evidence-based practices for content areas and social, emotional, behavioral, and physical supports), such as the use of early childhood mental health consultation, family support, and inclusion specialists;
- Provide intensive, individualized supports for those students demonstrating complex, multi-faceted needs, including developmental screenings that could lead to additional supportive services.

All of this work will be done within an integrated manner throughout the school and with the support of resources from the local district (inclusive of school health centers<sup>19</sup>, if available), community, and ISBE.

Illinois provides equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English Learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are generally underrepresented. ISBE embraces an educational model that offers a comprehensive educational program to meet each student's unique academic needs, learning styles, and interests. Providing a well-rounded education, including all areas in the Illinois Learning Standards, ensures that students have the knowledge and skills to fulfill this vision and be successful, globally engaged, and productive citizens. Struggling learners will be addressed through intervention strategies while advanced learners receive acceleration and enrichment based on individual student needs. In addition, school librarians support rigorous personalized learning experiences supported by technology and ensure equitable access to resources for all students.

For instance, ISBE supports these multiple pathways by providing funding and other program improvement-related resources to local districts through federal sources such as The Strengthening Career and Technical education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) and state Career and Technical Education Improvement funds for approvable programs as defined by the state's program standards. These grants require equitable access. Illinois also provides specific funding and resources for Agricultural Education programs in local districts, of which a portion is based on attainment of quality indicators. State leadership projects also are in place to help address various career pathways in Illinois by providing resources to local districts as well. Pathway courses' content in

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<sup>19</sup> ISBE is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate Medicaid dollars and the availability of health services at a school site for those children who may lack access to health care.

Illinois is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards. Other standards are used in local districts to meet local needs, such as Common Career and Technical Core, and various content-specific national and/or industry standards. ESSA provides a unique opportunity to work in collaboration with the Perkins V Act and other career programs to provide opportunities for each and every child.

As indicated previously, Illinois strives to increase student learning through the consistent practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student needs. Implementation of a multi-tiered continuum of student supports is a collaborative effort involving all district staff, general educators, special educators, counselors, behavioral health staff, and bilingual/English language staff. Student strengths and needs will be identified and monitored continuously, with documented student performance data used to make instructional decisions. The process of such identification and continuous monitoring are the foundational pieces of a successful prevention system. It is through the continuous use of progress monitoring and analysis of student academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical growth that ISBE can collect and compile information from LEAs in order to ensure that dollars and programming are tied to the supports LEAs need to ensure that each and every child has regular access to educational opportunities.

ISBE seeks to improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. This will ensure that each and every child has regular opportunities to meet challenging state standards in developmentally appropriate ways.<sup>20</sup> ISBE can utilize Title IV, A dollars to support LEAs in offering all students, through the Illinois Virtual School, direct access to standards-aligned courses for high school students, including AP and credit-recovery options.<sup>21</sup> In addition, LEAs will have access to the Illinois Open Education Resources project, a resource providing open, standards-aligned academic and career content to better allow for customized instructional opportunities for students.<sup>22</sup> Lastly, additional standards-aligned resources will be specifically designed to differentiate content for student consumption in order to increase academic achievement for each and every student by providing resources that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and responsive.

#### D. Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators

- i. **(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)): Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.**

Within the Consolidated District Plan, districts must describe the process through which they will identify and address any disparities that result in low-income and/or minority students being taught at rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. ISBE staff will review these responses to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance, when applicable. ~~ISBE will report by October 2017 statewide rates using school level data for the differences in the rates in which low income and non low income students and minority/non minority students are taught by ineffective, out of field, and inexperienced teachers.~~

<sup>20</sup> For instance, ECE students should have access to technology and this work should follow the joint guidelines from ED and the Department of Health and Human Services on technology and early education (<http://tech.edu.gov/early/learning/principles> )

<sup>21</sup> IVS is expanding its offerings to grades 3-12 during the 2017-18 school year in order to support LEAs in increasing access to coursework that may not be readily available in a student's home district.

<sup>22</sup> This work is currently being integrated with ISBE-provided district dashboards.

## E. School Conditions

- i. **(ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(C)):** Describe how the SEA agency will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A to improve school conditions for student learning, including through reducing: (i) incidences of bullying and harassment; (ii) the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and (iii) the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety.

Within the Consolidated District Plan, districts must describe the process through which the district will (i) reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, which may include identifying and supporting schools with high rates of discipline, (ii) reduce incidences of bullying and harassment, (iii) **reduce** the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom. ISBE staff will review responses to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance, when applicable.

## F. Use of Funds

- i. **(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(A)):** Describe how the SEA will use funds received under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 for State-level activities.

ISBE will use the 4 percent set-aside from the Title IV allocation to fund to support LEA activities and programs designed to meet the purposes of the Title IV, Part A program. The activities and programs will include monitoring and providing technical assistance to LEAs; identifying and eliminating State barriers to the coordination and integration of programs, initiatives, and otherwise supporting LEAs in carrying out activities in the three SSAE program content areas. This would include efforts to reduce incidents of bullying and harassment; the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety. For example, activities could support LEAs offering all high school students, through the Illinois Virtual Course Catalog and virtual course reimbursement program, direct access to standards-aligned courses for high school students, including AP and credit-recovery options.<sup>23</sup> Access to AP fees for low-income students may be supported with Title IV, Part A funds. ISBE is also considering using a portion of its 4 percent State Activities set-aside from the Title IV Part A allocation to fund a grant to support family engagement. All of these grant activities would provide support and technical assistance to ~~the 852~~ **all** districts in Illinois.

## G. Awarding Subgrants

- i. **(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B)):** Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).

ISBE follows a specific process in allocating Title **IV**, Part A funds to districts. ISBE continues to meet the requirement that no LEA will receive less than \$10,000 provided in Section 4105(a)(2) after the ratable redistribution is conducted. ISBE will be awarding funds to LEAs through a formula process.

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<sup>23</sup> This work is currently being integrated with the ISBE-provided district dashboard system.

## 6.2 Program-Specific Requirements

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

- i. **Describe the process and criteria that the SEA will use to waive the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold under section 1114(a)(1)(B) of the ESEA that an LEA submits on behalf of a school, including how the SEA will ensure that the schoolwide program will best serve the needs of the lowest-achieving students in the school.**

Schools may operate a schoolwide program if the low-income percentage is 40 percent or greater. Districts with a poverty percentage between 20 and 39.9 percent may be considered poverty as the initial threshold for schools to receive consideration for the schoolwide waiver. This waiver allows schools with high percentages of students with poverty the flexibility to use Title I dollars to serve the whole school. The current threshold for a schoolwide waiver is 40 percent students of poverty. For example, based on FY2025 data, there were 1563-1875 schools under the 40 percent threshold. Using the 20 – 39.9 percent poverty threshold would allow more than half of existing targeted assistance schools to utilize the schoolwide waiver (e.g., 1111 schools). Reasons that schools are not served may include lack of funding and/or the district did not want to offer targeted services. With the 20 percent poverty threshold a large number (e.g. 628) of additional un-served schools could take advantage of the schoolwide waiver. In this example, this would bring the total number of schools that could take advantage of the flexibility provided by the schoolwide waiver to 1739 out of 1875 or 93 percent of eligible schools. ISBE believes allowing schools with 20 percent poverty or more the option to apply to and receive a schoolwide waiver is aligned with the intent of the law and provides needed flexibility to schools.

The intent and purpose of ESSA is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps. Schoolwide flexibility allows a school to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves a high number of children from low-income families, in the instance of the waiver, 20 percent or more. The school will have to explain how taking advantage of the schoolwide waiver will allow them to use their funds to upgrade the entire educational program to provide a high quality education and close achievement gaps. As part of a simple waiver form, schools applying for this waiver would need to provide for the educational need to receive schoolwide status. Educational need will include the size and demographics of the school, the benefit the schoolwide status will provide to students and teachers, and how the schoolwide option funding will be used differently schoolwide to impact more students, improved educational outcomes, and close the achievement gap. More specifically, those schools with 20 percent poverty threshold or greater will need to provide information on the academic status of the students, budget, and other factors of the school. ISBE will provides a waiver template that must be completed and approved.

Staff in the Title Grant Department review these waiver requests in context to the Districts Consolidated Plan, the Consolidated Application, and their unique knowledge of the circumstances of the district. This is to ensure the waiver is in the best interest of the students and the schools. Further, within the goals of the Consolidated District Plan and the schoolwide plan that is based on a comprehensive needs assessment, the school, district and ISBE will monitor their progress at improving the educational outcomes for students. ISBE will continue to support all schools – including those that are not eligible for schoolwide programming, those that have not received a waiver to operate such a schoolwide program, or those that choose not to operate a schoolwide program – in addition to our schoolwide buildings.

### B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

- i. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will establish and implement a system for the proper identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children on a**

**statewide basis, including the identification and recruitment of preschool<sup>24</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the SEA will verify and document the number of eligible migratory children aged 3 through 21 residing in the state on an annual basis.**

For the purposes of the Migrant Education Program (MEP), eligible children/youth are defined as those who:

- Are younger than the age of 22 who have not earned a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate from a granting institution in the United States; and
- Are migratory agricultural workers or fishers or have a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher; and
- Have moved due to economic necessity from one school district to another; and
- Have changed residence within the preceding 36 months with/to join a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher or on their own for youth who are migratory agricultural workers or fishers.

Only certified MEP recruiters and individuals hired and trained by the **Illinois Migrant Education Services – Northern Illinois University (IMES-NIU)** ~~Illinois Migrant Council or local MEP project~~ can determine if a child/youth is eligible to be identified for MEP. Trained recruiters interview each family to determine program eligibility.

Illinois has a state identification and recruitment (ID&R) coordinator employed by **IMES-NIU** who oversees statewide activity to ensure that migrant recruiters cover the areas of the state where migrant families reside and reach out to all eligible populations, including ~~preschool children and~~ migratory youth who have dropped out of school. The state ID&R coordinator, in consultation with ISBE and local Illinois MEP operating agencies, develops, implements, and coordinates a plan to effectively identify and recruit all MEP-eligible children/youth residing in the state. The state ID&R coordinator works with a state recruiter as well as regional and local recruiters employed by **IMES-NIU** ~~local MEP projects~~ to ensure that all MEP-eligible children and youth in the state are identified and recruited.

Qualified recruiters *must* complete identification and recruitment training each year to receive certification and participate in other scheduled training sessions, as required.

Recruiters document specified eligibility information on the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and maintain records relating to identification and recruitment. Information used for eligibility and enrollment is gathered from self-eligible youth, parents/guardians, spouses, employers, social service agencies, and community members and organizations, documented on the COE, and entered into the migrant database, **MIS-2000** ~~the New Generation System (NGS)~~. **MIS-2000** NGS transmits data to the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) and also generates the counts of eligible migratory children for the Comprehensive State Performance Report that is submitted annually.

ID&R staff verify and document those individuals who may be eligible for services each September by contacting families previously recruited to verify and document the continued residency in the state of eligible migratory children from birth through 21 under a process called Residency Verification.

The coordinator oversees the state quality control efforts, which are designed to strengthen the accuracy of the ID&R processes through use of a variety of checks and balances. The Illinois quality control plan requires that the COE be checked by a local COE reviewer and a state reviewer before the final eligibility determination is made. An annual re-interview process of a sample of families previously identified is carried out to verify the accuracy of the

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<sup>24</sup> 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.

state eligibility determinations. Illinois has developed a comprehensive identification and recruitment manual, updated annually, that describes the responsibilities of recruiting staff and ensures high-quality practices in the state.

In addition, recruiters serve as a link among the MEP, schools, parents/guardians, employers, and community agencies. The recruitment of MEP-eligible children and youth is the first step toward the provision of supplemental educational and supportive services by local operating agencies and the State of Illinois. Proper eligibility determinations ensure that eligible children and youth receive needed services. A coordinated statewide effort among key personnel responsible for identification and recruitment is critical to ensure that all MEP-eligible children and youth in the state are identified and recruited in order to obtain necessary supports.

- ii. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will identify the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool<sup>25</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school.**

The MEP planning and implementation is guided by a continuous improvement cycle comprised of a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA), a service delivery plan (SDP) and an evaluation. Joint planning with local, state and federal programs will occur through the processes in place to develop the CNA and SDP and to inform the evaluation. To integrate services and ensure that migrant children receive the full range of services available to address their unique needs, the MEP will consult with other programs that serve migrants on an ongoing basis. These programs include Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, state and federally funded language instruction programs for English learners (Title III Part A and state Transitional Bilingual Education), Summer Food Service Program, and McKinney Vento. Committees formed to update the CNA and the SDP will include representation from the MEP as well as other local, state and federal programs that work with migrant children and families in the areas of education, health, and other support services. The committees' membership and contributions will be recorded in the CNA, SDP and evaluation reports.

Throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation phases, the MEP focuses on the unique needs of migrant children. Specific service delivery strategies and objectives for preschool children, out-of-school youth and those who have dropped out of school are developed and included in the state plan.

Illinois developed a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) in 2022-2015 as part of a continuous improvement process. It includes identification and an assessment of:

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

This analysis of needs provides a foundation for the future direction of the Illinois MEP through the service delivery planning process and supports the overall continuous improvement and quality assurance processes of the Illinois MEP and the overall ESSA State Plan for Illinois. The CNA serves as a springboard to set rigorous goals for the MEP and to better serve migrant students in Illinois. Doing so strengthens the plan.

The CNA will be updated periodically as necessary to respond to changes in the characteristics of the program and migrant population in Illinois. The CNA process will involve the collection and review of data on migrant student achievement and outcomes, the perceptions of migrant staff and parents related to migrant students' needs, and relevant demographic and evaluation data. A committee of stakeholders and experts will use the data to

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

formulate a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the migrant student population in Illinois and describe and quantify their needs as well as solution strategies to guide the MEP.

When children arrive during the summer, local and comprehensive summer school projects assess newly identified migrant children and youth to determine their individual strengths and areas for growth and support in mathematics and reading. Out-of-school youth who are not proficient in English take an English language proficiency screener. These assessment results are used to guide summer school instruction. During the regular school year, migrant students enroll in the local school and are screened and assessed with the instruments used for all students.

- iii. **Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool<sup>26</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, are addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, state, and federal educational programs.**

A service delivery plan (SDP) designed to address the needs identified in the CNA guides the implementation of the MEP. The SDP is developed in consultation with other local, state and federal education programs to determine the unique educational needs of migrant children that are not addressed through existing services and to identify ways to collaborate to more effectively promote academic success for migrant children.

The SDP provides distinct strategies and measurable program outcomes targeted toward school readiness for preschool children, services tailored for out-of-school-youth and youth who have dropped out of school, secondary youth and high school graduation, and reading and mathematics education for elementary and middle school students.

Each year, local projects implement the program as specified in the plan in communities where migrant families are living. Local migrant project staff link children and families to existing programs and services including state and federal Title III funded language instruction programs for English learners. The MEP offers supplemental education and support services to respond to the unique needs of migrant children and youth that are not addressed through existing state, local, and federal educational programs. The supplemental services are designed to provide continuity of instruction for students who move from one school district or state to another.

Many migrant children are present in Illinois only during the summer months and return to their home state during the school year. As a result, most MEP services are offered during the summer months through both center-based and home-based or itinerant programs. These services include:

- ~~Preschool developmentally appropriate programs designed to prepare migrant children for a successful school experience,~~
- Grades K-12 integrated classroom instruction – math; reading/language arts; English as a second language; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (summer school); and tutorial support (during the regular academic year),
- Secondary school services to assist high school students in achieving graduation, as well as postsecondary and career preparation,
  - Outreach and instruction in HSED preparation, life skills, and English as a second language for out of school youths and those who have dropped out of school,

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<sup>26</sup> 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.

- Ancillary support services, including health, nutrition, and transportation, and
- Parent involvement activities.

During the regular school year, the local MEP project provides supplemental services, such as:

- Outreach and assistance to enroll in regular school year programs,
- Supplemental instructional or tutorial support,
- A migrant advocate who works with schools and families in areas of high concentration to make sure their needs are addressed, and
- An annual meeting with the migrant staff, high school counselor, and the student to review and update the student's graduation plan.

- iv. **Describe how the state and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use funds received under Title I, Part C to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the state will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year (e.g., through use of the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), among other vehicles).**

Local operating agency data entry specialists enter information for eligible migrant children and youth in ~~MIS-2000 NGS~~. ~~MIS-2000 NGS~~ files are transmitted daily to MSIX. ~~MIS-2000 NGS~~ student records include demographics, enrollments, course history, health and immunization information, and assessment results. Illinois has established timelines for entry of information in line with the MSIX regulations. Local operating agencies use ~~MIS-2000 NGS~~ and MSIX to gather information about newly arrived migrant children and youth to facilitate school placement and provision of appropriate services.<sup>27</sup>

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

- Two migrant incentive grant consortia: Identification & Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium and Graduation and **Innovative Strategies for OSY and Secondary Youth Outcomes for Success for Out-of-School Youth**.
- ~~Illinois is part of the NGS consortium that collects and shares data among several states, including Texas, which is home to a large number of migrant families that come to Illinois.~~
- Illinois also participates in MSIX.

Being part of these consortia has enabled Illinois to establish a system that ensures that school records are transferred from one school to another in a timely manner when migrant students cross state borders. Illinois is in contact with neighboring states to ensure that migrant students are identified and provided with services. Further, Illinois has developed relationships with school districts in sending states as well as other migrant programs, ~~such as the Texas Migrant Interstate Program~~, to ensure continuity for migrant students who leave Illinois' schools in the middle of the academic year. ~~Illinois administers the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exam, which is the Texas state academic test, during the summer for migrant students required to take it.~~

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<sup>27</sup> This includes children identified through Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

- v. **Describe the unique educational needs of the state’s migratory children, including preschool<sup>28</sup> migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, based on the state’s most recent comprehensive needs assessment.**

Based on the most recent CNA, the following are indicators of the unique education needs of Illinois migratory children:

**For English Language Arts-Reading and Mathematics**

- Migratory student proficiency rates in ELA need to increase by 27 points on the IAR and 33.4 points on the SAT to be on track with non-migratory peers.
- Migratory student proficiency rates in mathematics need to increase by 21.3 points on the IAR and 29.6 points on the SAT to be on track with non-migratory peers.
- ~~The migrant student attainment in reading needs to increase by 26.6 percent in grades 3-8 and 23.2 percent in high school to close the performance gap between migrant and non-migrant students.~~
- ~~The migrant student attainment in math needs to increase by 23.2 percent in grades 3-8 and 26.1 percent in high school to close the performance gap between migrant and non-migrant students.~~
- ~~The percentage of migratory children receiving supplemental instruction needs to increase.~~

**For School Readiness for Preschool Children**

- Beginning July 1, 2026, the Early Childhood Block Grant and associated programs will be administered by the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.
- ~~Migrant children need to increase alphabet and emergent literacy skills.~~
- ~~Preschool migrant children need to increase math skills to prepare for school.~~

**For High School Graduation and Services to Out-of-School Youth and Those Who Have Dropped Out of High School**

- The percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students passing Algebra 1, which is required for graduation, needs to increase by 26.9 points to meet long-term graduation rate target of 90%.
- ~~Attainment on state assessments needs to increase by 23.2 to 26.1 percent to close the performance gap between migrant and non-migrant students.~~
- ~~High school you and out-of-school youth participation in instructional services needs to increase.~~
- ~~Understanding of high school graduation requirements needs to increase.~~
- ~~The percentage of migratory secondary students who are on track for graduation needs to increase by 56 percent.~~
- ~~Out-of-school youth need to increase knowledge and abilities related to basic life skills and English language skills.~~

**Out-of-School-Youth Achievement**

- OSY participation in instruction aligned to pathways toward their goals and graduation need to increase.

**For Ancillary and Support Services**

- Migratory family and child access to support services and health and nutrition information needs to increase.

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<sup>28</sup> 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.

- ~~• Migratory children need additional assistance with health services.~~
- ~~• Migratory parents need additional access to family engagement opportunities and educational materials.~~
- ~~• Migrant families need access to educational materials and school supplies in the home.~~

- vi. **Describe the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Title I, Part C, and the strategies the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes consistent with section 1304(b)(1)(D) of the ESEA.**

ISBE has established Measurable Program Outcomes to determine whether the program has met the unique educational needs of migrant children and youth as identified through the CNA. These outcomes are updated periodically as part of the continuous planning process. The current Service Delivery Plan establishes Measurable Program Outcomes for the following areas:

### **English Language Arts-Reading and Mathematics**

**1a:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, migratory students in grades K-8 participating in a summer program for at least 3 weeks will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in reading / literacy between pre- and post-test using an appropriate performance-based reading / literacy assessment.

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

**1b:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 70% of migratory students in grades K-8 participating in the MEP regular year reading / literacy instructional services for at least 3 months will demonstrate above average performance or one level gain in reading / literacy skills as measured by a classroom teacher observation tool that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of reading / literacy achievement.

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

**1c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, migratory students in grades K-8 participating in a summer program for at least 3 weeks will demonstrate a statistically significant gain (at the .05 level) in math between pre- and post-test using an appropriate performance-based math assessment.

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

**1d:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 70% of migratory students in grades K-8 participating in the MEP regular year mathematics instructional services for at least 3 months will demonstrate above average performance or one level gain in math skills as measured by a classroom teacher observation tool that considers classroom performance, grades, and other indicators of math.

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

**1e:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, the percent of identified migratory children in grades K-12 who participate in MEP instructional services will increase to 44%.

~~The percent of identified migratory children who participation in MEP instructional services will increase to 55%.~~

### **School Readiness for Preschool Children**

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

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

### **High School Graduation and Services to Secondary-aged Youth (including out of school youth and those who have dropped out of school)**

**3a:** By the end of summer 2026, the percentage of eligible migratory students in grades 9-11 who participate in summer programs will increase to 35%.

~~Forty one percent of 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade students who are migrant-eligible will participate in summer programs.~~

**3b:** By the end of summer 2026, 75% of secondary-aged migratory students (those attending a field-based program and those in a center-based program for a sufficient amount of time to show progress [about 3 weeks in summer programs or 3 months in the regular term]) will make progress toward instructional learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Services Plan.

~~Seventy percent of secondary aged migratory students in a summer program for at least three weeks will make progress toward the instructional/learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Services Plan.~~

**3c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, 80% of migratory high school students enrolled in schools served by migrant projects for at least 3 months during the regular school year will work with MEP staff and their counselor to complete or update and sign their graduation plan.

~~Seventy percent of out of school youth and secondary aged students who completed OSYmigrant.org lessons will gain five % or more on a curriculum based assessment or score 80% or higher on the post test.~~

~~3d:~~ Seventy five percent of migratory high school students enrolled in schools served by migrant projects for at least three months during the regular school year will work with MEP staff and their counselor to complete or update and sign their graduation plan.

### **Out-of-School-Youth Achievement**

**4a:** By the end of summer 2026, 70% of migratory OSY engaged in instructional services for a sufficient amount of time to show progress (typically 3 weeks) will make measurable progress toward the instructional / learning goals identified on their Secondary Student Service Plan.

**4b:** By the end of summer 2026, 70% of the migratory OSY who completed OSY lessons during the regular year or summer will gain 5% on curriculum-based lesson assessments.

**4c:** By the end of the 2025-26 reporting period, the percentage of migratory OSY identified who participate in instructional services will increase to 50%.

### **Ancillary and Support Services**

**54a:** As a result of MEP coordination / collaboration activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents who engage in parent activities and complete the parent survey will report that they received information about support and academic services (e.g. health, nutrition, transportation, other support services) to promote the health, well-being, and knowledge of support services and community resources for their children.

~~Ninety percent of summer MEP staff and migratory parents will report that migratory families received information about support and academic services to promote the health, well-being, and knowledge of support services and community resources.~~

**54b:** As a result of MEP-sponsored parent engagement activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents participating in MEP activities will report satisfactory ability to support their child's success in school as measured on the parent engagement survey.

~~The percent of identified migratory children who receive needs-based support services will increase to 61 percent.~~

**5c:** As a result of MEP-sponsored parent engagement activities provided in 2025-26, 80% of migratory parents participating in MEP activities will report satisfactory ability to support their child's success in school as measured on the parent engagement survey.

### Evaluation

Illinois conducts an evaluation of the MEP to ensure that services are implemented as intended; to document the success of services for program validation; and analyze information to identify the strengths of services and the areas targeted for improvement. To address the impact of the full range of federal, state and local education services that are available to migrant students in Illinois, migrant student performance relative to state targets is reviewed to determine the gap between actual and expected levels of performance. The evaluation utilizes the measurable program outcomes, developed through the SDP planning process in consultation with other local, state and federal programs, to review the impact of migrant specific services in Illinois. As such, the evaluation considers program outcomes for preschool children, elementary and middle school students learning reading and mathematics, high school students, out-of-school youth and those who have dropped out of school through separate measures. In addition to outcomes, the evaluation also encompasses a review of the implementation of SDP strategies by local projects.

- vii. **Describe how the SEA will ensure there is consultation with parents of migratory children, including parent advisory councils, at both the state and local level, in the planning and operation of Title I, Part C programs that span not less than one school year in duration, consistent with section 1304(c)(3) of the ESEA.**

Illinois convenes a Migrant Parent Advisory Group at the state level and requires local projects that operate for one school year in duration to also convene a local parent advisory group. These groups provide advice and feedback about the MEP and how it could better serve their children's needs. All MEP projects conduct parent surveys during the summer to gather information about their satisfaction with the program and to ascertain ways to improve the academic quality of the programs. Survey responses are analyzed and the results are included in the annual program evaluation. Illinois has developed a series of parent workshops based on survey responses that focuses on topics of interest that are offered in different locations throughout the state.

- viii. **Describe the SEA's priorities for use of Title I, Part C funds, specifically related to the needs of migratory children with "priority for services" under section 1304(d) of the ESEA, including:**

- 1. The measures and sources of data the SEA, and if applicable, its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use to identify those migratory children who are a priority for services; and**
- 2. When and how the SEA will communicate those determinations to all local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, in the state.**

The state establishes Title I, Part C funding parameters aligned with the results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the Service Delivery Plan that specifically target the needs of migratory children with “priority for services” (PFS). The Title I, Part C grant application requires local funded entities to identify and give priority for service to PFS children and youth and to provide services that address the special needs of migratory children in accordance with the Illinois Service Delivery Plan.

Beginning July 1, 2017, PFS migratory children will be those who have made a qualifying move within the previous one-year period and who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet state academic standards or have dropped out of school. Currently, Illinois utilizes the following student characteristics to identify those who are most at risk of failing or have dropped out of school:

- Failed to meet state standards on state reading and/or math assessments ;
- English Learner;
- Over-age for grade (e.g., student is older – two-plus years – than a typical student in that grade);
- Retained in grade;
- Failed one or more core high school courses;
- Out-of-school youth or dropped out of school;
- Special education student
- Homeless / Eligible for McKinney-Vento Services

Data documenting previous moves and age is taken from the COE. Failure to meet state standards comes from assessment results on the state academic assessments. ~~Standardized assessment results from another state reported on the NGS (e.g., Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills and STAAR scores) may be used as well.~~ ELs are identified with state screening tools or annual English language proficiency assessment results. School records are used to document other criteria, including students being retained in a grade, students failing one or more high school courses, and students with IEPs or 504 Plans.

When a migrant child/youth is first identified, the recruiter collects information on the COE that relates to PFS. Local project staff compile relevant information from school records, migrant student databases (including MSIX), and family interviews. PFS data for each migrant child and youth is entered in the state database by data entry specialists following timelines that conform to MSIX regulations. The state database uses current data to make PFS determinations for each migrant child/youth and produces a PFS report that includes the criteria used to make the determination for each child. Local projects generate the PFS report and use the detail provided to tailor services to the particular needs of each child/youth. Should the availability of migrant program services be limited, PFS children/youth receive priority for services.

### C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

- i. **Describe the SEA’s plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.**

ISBE provides technical assistance to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) and the LEAs concerning transitional services to ensure ongoing academic engagement of the youth between the two entities. Transition coordinators for youth in the facility help youth and families as they enter and exit facilities. The goal of these coordinators is to reduce the time between the transition of records for some of the state’s most vulnerable youth and to improve coordination across school districts for services and supports available for these youth. The services should include IDEA, workforce, and training services.

The state's plan is to assist the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs, including supporting comprehensive strategies to re-engage these youth, and offer community supports that improve the likelihood of success in communities with significant numbers of disconnected youth. ISBE will coordinate with IDJJ, neglected and delinquent institutions, and service agencies to coordinate services on behalf of youth served under this part. This will provide opportunities for successful school re-entry and/or employment after they leave the institution and return to the local community.

Detailed transition plans are required for LEAs and agencies to complete in their application for funding. ISBE continues to **support** ~~provide~~ in-service training on programs and activities that IDJJ and the LEA may use to promote transitional services. These programs and activities can assist the LEA and the correctional facilities in developing a working relationship to accomplish a high-quality transitional program for the neglected or delinquent population.

IDJJ, in applying for these funds, completes an application that describes the type of transition services that will be used for students entering or leaving the institutions for schools served by LEAs, postsecondary institutions, or vocational and technical training programs. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Replacement programs that allow adjudicated or incarcerated youth to audit or attend courses on college, university, or community college campuses or through programs provided in institutional settings.
- Work-site schools in which institutions of higher education and private or public employers partner to create programs to help students make a successful transition to postsecondary education and employment.
- Essential support services to ensure the success of the youth such as:
  - Orientation programs, including transition centers in high schools and institutions;
  - Pupil services, including counseling, psychological, and social work services designed to meet the needs of neglected or delinquent children and youth;
  - Tutoring and mentoring programs;
  - Instruction and training at alternative schools and learning centers;
  - Services of in-school advocates on behalf of individual neglected or delinquent youth;
  - Information concerning and assistance in obtaining available student financial aid; and
  - Job placement services.

ii. **Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the state that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program, including the knowledge and skills needed to earn a regular high school diploma and make a successful transition to postsecondary education, career and technical education, or employment.**

The targets that ISBE has established for its use in assessing the effectiveness of Title I, Part D in improving the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students being served by the program are:

1. Educational services for children and youth in local, tribal, and state institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth that increase the opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic content standards and challenging state academic standards that all children in the state are expected to meet in order to obtain a high school diploma as measured by increased performance on annual state assessment and graduation rates;
2. Children and youth services which provide successful institutional and further schooling or employment transition. This will be measured by reducing the number of students in secure facilities; and
3. Youth services which include support systems to ensure continued education and the involvement of their families and communities as measured by increased attendance rates after reentry into an LEA or transition program.

The performance indicators and the data sources are a combination of ISBE academic indicators and LEA information. The LEA will submit to ISBE a comprehensive assessment of individual students which may consists of standardized tests, informal measures, observations, student self-reports, parent reports, and program monitoring (i.e., response to intervention approaches). Each individual institution/LEA collects achievement data based on the tests given at that institution and submits its assessment plan as part of its application. The LEA/institution is responsible for evaluating the results of the data and maintaining this information on file. The neglected or delinquent ~~program application process~~ requires the applicant to describe its assessment plan, including the tests that will be administered to the youth and how the results of the tests will help to improve the neglected or delinquent program. ~~ISBE currently collects the results of the tests. In the FY 2027 grant application process, ISBE will require the applicant to describe its assessment plan description.~~ Only those students attending a public school, although they live in the institution, will take the state tests. Agencies and LEAs will be required to submit a report biannually that reflects growth toward performance and assessment goals and targets. Additionally, ISBE collects demographic information and monitors the number of students participating in the neglected or delinquent services and the services provided. ISBE also collects information and data while providing technical assistance, such as on-site visits, to correctional institutions and local neglected or delinquent institutions. These program objectives and outcomes will assess the effectiveness in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of youth served in local or state secure-care institution.

#### D. Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

- i. **Describe the SEA's standardized entrance and exit procedures for English Learners consistent with section 3113(b)(2) of the ESEA. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the state. At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must:**
  1. **Include a score of proficient on the state's annual English language proficiency assessment**
  2. **Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the English Learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes; and**
  3. **Not include performance on an academic content assessment.**

Each district administers the home language survey (HLS) to all students enrolling for the first time in ~~preschool~~, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 through 12. Illinois plans to maintain the current practice of identifying ELs early and providing quality early childhood education that matches a child's cultural and linguistic needs. It is vital to consider native language screening and assessment in early childhood settings; teachers will not capture a full understanding of a student's knowledge and skills if they only assess children in the language in which they are least proficient. The HLS is administered in order to identify students who have a language background other than English, based on the language(s) used at home. A student is given a prescribed screening instrument to assess English language proficiency within 30 days of the student's enrollment. ~~or for preschool programs after first participating in the program. Preschool and f~~ First semester kindergarten are tested in aural language (Listening and Speaking) while students in second semester kindergarten to grade 12 are tested in four domains of English; that is, speaking, listening, reading, and writing . Each student whose score on the prescribed screening instrument is "not proficient" shall be considered an English Learner and thus eligible for, and placed in, an appropriate language assistance program.

All kindergarten to grade 12 English Learners are assessed annually with the state's English language proficiency assessment. This assessment tool includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills components. ISBE revised the state definition in 2017 for English language proficiency to be applied to all English Learners. As a result, English Learners who obtained an overall composite score of 4.8 on the state's English language proficiency assessment are considered English language proficient. Students are then exited from the program of bilingual services and no longer identified as English Learners.

English Learners will be assessed annually for English proficiency in grades K-12 and for English language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11 and in science in grades 5, 8 and 11. Illinois will assess newly arrived ELs,

enrolled in their first year in US schools in the identified grades in academic content areas: English language arts, mathematics and science. Data from the first year assessments will not be included in accountability determination but serve solely for baseline purposes.

ii. **SEA Support for English Learner Progress (*ESEA section 3113(b)(6)*): Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:**

- 1. The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and**
- 2. The challenging State academic standards.**

ISBE will assist school districts in appropriately targeting English learners that have demonstrated significant lags in academic progress although having participated in a Transitional Bilingual Program or Transitional Programs of Instruction for five years or longer while. ISBE will work directly with or provide technical assistance to districts to concentrate ongoing goals that identify long-term English learners and specifically provide instructional learning strategies for secondary students that address growth in reading and math. Further assistance will include backward planning to provide appropriate cultural and linguistic strategies for English learners starting in middle schools and is inclusive of professional learning for teachers in general education classrooms.

ISBE will provide assistance to school districts struggling to have their English Learners meet the rigorous challenges set forth in the Illinois State Standards. By building on the English learners' cultural and linguistic strengths, ISBE will aid school districts by providing sustained professional learning to professional staff.<sup>29</sup>

iii. **Monitoring and Technical Assistance (*ESEA section 3113(b)(8)*): Describe:**

- 1. How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and**
- 2. The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.**

ISBE will monitor the progress of English learners in attaining English language proficiency by collecting and analyzing data regarding students' growth and proficiency on the state's language proficiency assessment (viz., ACCESS 2.0).

Programming monitoring of the ESSA programs (specifically Title III) for English Learners is performed by the staff of the Multilingual Department at ISBE. In addition, state required programming for English Learners is performed during this review. The monitoring review includes both desk auditing of data and evidence required to be supplied by districts as well as on-site visits by department staff. Districts are chosen for English Learners program monitoring through an annual risk-based selection process using various data inputs, such as the district's English Learner progress to proficiency, disproportionality of dually identified students (special education and English Learner), and number of prior issues noted during applications to ISBE (i.e. high number of parent refusals for EL services). Stakeholder input (such as formal complaints) from ISBE program employees, district employees, and community members is included in the risk assessment, as appropriate.

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<sup>29</sup> Some of this assistance can occur through School/District Improvement. Additional assistance may occur through other TA and professional learning provided directly by ISBE.

Additionally, ISBE will oversee student data that crosswalks both English learners and former English learners' performance on the ACCESS 2.0 and the IAR. Districts in which scores of English learners and former English learners lag behind their non-EL counterparts on the IAR will be provided interventions and supports. Districts consistently demonstrating a lag in EL progress will be monitored to ensure native language programs are in adherence to research-based interventions and strategies that are consistent with WIDA's English Language Development Standards and services are conforming to the 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 228, Article 14C and Title III

#### **E. Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

##### **i. Describe how the SEA will use its Title IV, Part B, and other federal funds to support state-level strategies that are consistent with the strategies identified in 6.1.A starting on page 60.**

Title IV(b) funding will be leveraged with other federal funds to increase the state's ability to address performance gaps in learning and healthy development for the most vulnerable children; meaningfully engage families as critical partners; connect community systems with schools and districts in sustainable ways; and, in partnership with the afterschool statewide network, ensure implementation of high quality out of school time programming throughout the state that leads to increased student achievement.

Two percent of the funds will be used for state administration. This includes using funds to pay for administration and peer reviewers of the subgrant applications. Peer reviewers will be used in the review of the proposals using a rubric based on the criteria for review in the Request for Proposal. No less than three peer reviewers will read each proposal. Each peer reviewer's score will then be averaged to determine the score of the grant. Each reviewer will fill out a conflict of interest and a confidentiality agreement before they will review the grant proposals. These administrative activities will be done in consultation with the Governor's Office and other state agencies responsible for administering youth development programs and adult learning activities.<sup>30</sup>

Five percent of the funds will be used for state activities. The funds will be used to pay for the following as outlined in ESSA, Title IV, Part B, Section 4202 (c)(3):

- Monitoring and evaluating programs and activities.
- Providing capacity building, training, and technical assistance.
- ~~Peer Reviewers for review of the request for proposals~~
- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation (directly or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities assisted.
- Providing training and technical assistance to eligible entities that are applicants for or recipients of awards.
- Ensuring that any eligible entity that receives an award under this part from the state aligns the activities provided by the program with the challenging state academic standards.
- Ensuring that any such eligible entity identifies and partners with external organizations, if available, in the community.

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<sup>30</sup> These agencies include, but are not limited to, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Illinois Community College Board.

- Working with teachers, principals, parents, the local workforce, the local community, and other stakeholders to review and improve state policies and practices to support the implementation of effective programs.
- Coordinating funds received with other federal and state funds to implement high-quality programs.
- Providing a list of prescreened external organizations, as described under Section 4203(a)(11).

The remaining 93 percent of funds will be awarded to eligible applicants through competitive subgrants using a peer review process. A financial and programmatic risk assessment will need to be completed in order to receive the funds.

ii. **Describe the SEA’s processes, procedures, and priorities used to award subgrants consistent with the strategies identified in 6.1.A. starting on page 60 and to the extent permitted under applicable law and regulations.**

Illinois awards subgrants on a competitive process to school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers, state-authorized charter schools, and other public and private entities. An eligible entity must serve schools with 40 percent or higher low-income student population. A Notice of Funding Opportunity is released on the ISBE website and through the GATA website. The applicants have 45 days to submit their proposal. The applications are scored by a minimum of three peer reviewers using a merit-based review. Applications are also reviewed by ISBE staff to ensure eligibility and meeting past performance criteria.<sup>31</sup> Applicants are required to describe in the narrative how they will meet the needs of student subgroups, including how activities are expected to improve student academic achievement, which aligns to the Illinois Learning Standards as well as overall student success, integrate quality programming standards, and engage stakeholders on an ongoing basis. ISBE or an external technical assistance provider will provide support to grantees around areas of needs including a focus on how the learning centers will align their programs with the Illinois Learning standards. This will be done through such activities as site visits, webinars, Project Directors meetings or conferences. Following the initial award of a subgrant, continuation beyond the initial funding period is based on whether a subgrantee has made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives stated in its approved proposal. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees will be monitored on what they proposed in their grant to ensure the fidelity of the program, specifically on evidence that the programming will support students in achieving local and state academic standards.

Grantees will also conduct 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program monitoring, fiscal and programmatic risk assessment each year when they apply. The programmatic risk assessment includes the review of the grantees proposed target of their activities to improve the student achievement in their programs. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff will monitor these grants through the ISBE monitoring plan. If programs are found to not be achieving their goals, they will be provided with technical assistance to address the potential impediments to them doing so. The grantee could be at risk of not being funded in future years if this is not corrected. Monitoring of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees will be connected to the required risk assessments completed as part of the awarding of the grant process.

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

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

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<sup>31</sup> The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has a provision that includes priority points for serving lowest-performing eligible schools. Information is included in the NOFO to coordinate with other programs that work with the subgroups.

Districts ~~deemed eligible for primarily use Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) Program funds by the U.S. Department of Education are expected to use their funding~~ for activities to increase the academic achievement of students. ~~Thus, the program objective will be to measure~~ ISBE will continue to use the academic achievement of students, as described in Illinois' multi-measures accountability system, ~~to evaluate fulfillment of and annual summative designations will be used to drive the RLIS program objectives.~~

- ii. **Outcomes and Objectives (*ESEA section 5223(b)(1)*): Provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards.**

Districts primarily use Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) Program funds for activities to increase the academic achievement of students. As part of their annual Consolidated District Plan application, grantees are required to provide a description of how the funds are linked to student achievement and the budgeting for funds must reflect the information provided in the programmatic descriptions. Thus, the program objective will be to measure the academic achievement of students, as defined in the states academic achievement indicators, to drive the program.

- iii. **Technical Assistance (*ESEA section 5223(b)(3)*): Describe how the SEA will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222.**

ISBE shall provide technical assistance to districts to assist in implementing approved program activities and tie fiscal decisions to improved student achievement; Technical assistance may be offered through webinars, conference presentations, and telephone conferences ~~via telephone and video options~~, and may include one on one assistance to LEA staff by ISBE staff.

## G. McKinney-Vento Act

- i. **Consistent with section 722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act, describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the state and assess their needs.**

ISBE has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same educational opportunities to be successful learners as all other children and youth. Ensuring that all Illinois students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the 21st century is a challenge that public schools face because of the large increase in homelessness over the past five years. Cross-coordination of programs is essential to the goal in ESSA that all students, including homeless children and youth, will meet state academic standards.

ISBE will prepare and disseminate to LEAs guidance documents, notices, or letters summarizing the new and existing Education for Homeless Children and Youth program requirements and share McKinney - Vento guidance provided by ED. Notices will be provided on the ISBE website, ~~by teleconferencing~~, and through trainings and workshops.

Illinois is a regionally designed state that has established procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same opportunities to be successful learners as all children and youth. The landscape for providing those opportunities is coordinated by the Illinois' state coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth. The state coordinator oversees an Office of the Coordinator and Lead Area Liaisons (LALs). The LAL will provide professional development and technical assistance to the LEA homeless liaisons and school staff on removing the barriers to homeless children and youth education. The barriers (e.g., lack of immunization

and health records, birth certificates, school records and other documents, residency documents required for non - homeless students, guardianship issues) must be removed and the homeless children and youth must be immediately enrolled. The LAL and the LEA liaison must work together to meet the requirements. Uniform dress code requirements will be addressed by the LAL and LEA homeless liaison. Title 1, Part A funds may be used to remove this barrier.

Homeless children and youth in Illinois will be identified by school personnel and through coordination of activities with other entities, such as homeless shelters and community service agencies. The Common Form<sup>32</sup> was created for LEAs to use when enrolling homeless children and youth. ~~In addition to information on enrolling children and youth into school, it also asks for other children and youth residing in the home to be listed. That allows LEA homeless liaisons to reach out to families with preschool - aged children to assist with finding preschool placement for that child. It also allows LEAs to work with families who may need early intervention services for children ages birth to 3 years of age.~~

The homeless education liaisons are trained to educate and work closely with all personnel in the school district as well as with community social service agencies and Continuum of Care programs to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified<sup>33</sup>. Continuum of Care programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are represented in every Illinois community and are responsible for locally coordinating services to homeless families.

A close working relationship between homeless education liaisons and staff of the Continuum of Care programs is critical to meeting the educational and support services needed by homeless families. A key part of training for school personnel and social service agencies will be to emphasize the need to sensitively identify families in homeless situations and the need to be respectful of the families' privacy. Sensitive questions to ask when dealing with homeless families can be found on the [Schoolhouse Connection National Center for Homeless Education](https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/determining-mckinney-vento-eligibility-guiding-questions-for-liaisons) website at <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/article/determining-mckinney-vento-eligibility-guiding-questions-for-liaisons>. [http://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sc\\_eligibility.php](http://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sc_eligibility.php)

- ii. **Describe the SEA's programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, school counselors, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are runaway and homeless youths.**

All school personnel continue to gain in understanding of the specific needs of homeless children and youths by participating in ongoing trainings on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Program conducted by LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons.

LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will work collaboratively to identify homeless youths not currently attending school. The liaisons will work to ensure that these youths are connected to available services in the community and will help them to enroll in available before- and after-school programs, as appropriate.

The LAL will be responsible for providing technical assistance to the LEA homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth receive counseling services either through the school district or community services providers. The LAL and the LEA homeless liaison will work collaboratively with the School Counselor to advise and assist homeless children and youths to prepare and improve their readiness for college. Furthermore, the MVSSC shall include in its charge additional resources and guidance for school districts to make connections with institutions of higher learning.

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<sup>32</sup> To access the Common Form, go to <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-01-common-form.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> To access the Continuum of Care Contacts go to <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/illinois/homeless/cocontacts>

Unaccompanied youths include young people who have run away from home, been thrown out of their homes, and/or have been abandoned by parents/guardians/caregivers. Unaccompanied youths have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness. These young people are separated from their parents for a variety of reasons. They face unique barriers to enrolling and succeeding in school. Without a parent or guardian to advocate for them and exercise parental rights, they are sometimes denied enrollment and remain out of school for extended periods of time. They may not understand their educational rights or know how to acquire this information. Removal of barriers to transportation, immediate enrollment, and the right to return to the school of origin must be addressed.<sup>34</sup> ISBE ensures that schools are doing this through monitoring and through continuous trainings and contact with LEA homeless liaisons.

State law 110 ILCS 131/1 mandates that each institution of higher education shall designate at least one staff member to serve as a liaison to assist homeless students and youth in care enrolled at the institution. The colleges are to collaborate with LEA liaisons to facilitate the efficient transition of homeless students and youth in care from secondary to postsecondary education.

Unaccompanied youths with special needs: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 offers guidelines pertaining to unaccompanied youths with disabilities as defined by IDEA.<sup>35</sup>

Activities	Timelines
LALs provide technical assistance and training to school districts to provide effective district-higher education collaboration.	Ongoing
Monitoring of sub-grantees annually to ensure post-secondary referrals and assistance to students.	Ongoing
LALs conduct monitoring within their regional area to ensure LEA referrals and assistance to students.	Ongoing

**iii. Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths are promptly resolved.**

Ensuring that families have equal access to educational opportunities is of critical importance to Illinois' McKinney-Vento program. Equally as important is the ability of students and families to be afforded procedural due process rights in cases where a district disagrees with an assertion of homelessness or issues related to homelessness. The Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act [105 ILCS 45] provides the basis for dispute resolution procedures by requiring that the applicable regional superintendent of schools "appoint ombudsperson who is fair and impartial and familiar with the educational rights and needs of homeless children to provide resource information and resolve disputes at schools within his or her jurisdiction relating to the rights of homeless children under this Act."<sup>36</sup> In furtherance of the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act and in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, ISBE's Dispute Resolution for Students Experiencing Homelessness was

<sup>34</sup> For additional information on the rights of unaccompanied youths, please access <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/youth.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> For additional information on unaccompanied youths with special needs, please see <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 45/1-25 (a).

added into the Illinois Administrative Code effective February 5, 2024<sup>37</sup>. An overview of the dispute resolution process is outlined below.

### **Overview of Dispute Resolution**

The dispute resolution process must be the last resort used to bridge disagreements between a school district and a student/family. Prior to initiating dispute resolution, the district's local homeless liaison shall attempt to resolve the disagreement informally.

#### **The dispute resolution process contained herein is:**

- The only process to formally determine the outcome of a homeless-related dispute between an eligible student and a district;
- A method of sensitively resolving disagreements with respect to eligibility;
- To be used for resolving disputes regarding enrollment, full participation in school activities, transportation, and any other issue related to a pupil's homelessness;
- To be structured as informally as possible in order to allow parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth as much assistance as possible in navigating the process.

#### **The dispute resolution process contained herein is not:**

- A formal legal proceeding, administrative hearing (under the Administrative Procedures Act) or judicial hearing;
- An opportunity to vet disagreements about any other matter other than issues related to homelessness;
- An opportunity for a district to intimidate, scorn or otherwise marginalize a pupil or family;
- An opportunity for pupils or parents to unlawfully gain access to a district's educational program.

### **Topics and Scenarios Covered Under Dispute Resolution**

Any issue related to homelessness or the homeless-related claim of a student or family shall be eligible for dispute resolution. Topics eligible for dispute resolution include, but are not limited to, homeless or alleged homeless impacts on eligibility, registration, enrollment, transportation, access to curricular and extracurricular programs, and fee waivers. Nothing in this plan shall be construed as intending to vet issues not related to homelessness through dispute resolution.

### **Immediate Enrollment, Transportation and Services**

The student must be enrolled, provided transportation or otherwise provided services sought immediately upon request. Enrollment, transportation or services cannot be delayed prior to or during dispute resolution and such enrollment, transportation or services shall be provided until the conclusion of dispute resolution.

### **Dispute Resolution in Detail**

The district must issue a letter to the parent/guardian or youth explaining, with a degree of specificity, the district's position as to the homelessness-related dispute. In this letter, the district must also include referrals to free/reduced cost legal help and an outline of the dispute resolution procedure. The district must copy on such letter the applicable regional superintendent of schools and Illinois' State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth ("State Coordinator"). Within ten (10) school days after receiving such notice, the regional superintendent of schools shall appoint an ombudsperson to hear the dispute.

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<sup>37</sup> 23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.241

If possible, within ten (10) school days of his or her appointment, the ombudsperson shall convene a meeting with the district and student or family. The regional homeless liaison and lead area liaison may also attend such meeting.

The ombudsperson shall be responsible for setting clear rules, timelines and expectations for all parties and may:

- Require each party to make an opening statement;
- Limit the amount of time per party to present information;
- Ask questions of each party as he or she feels fit;
- Limit redundant testimony or testimony not directly related to homeless claims;
- Make allowances for parents who might not be experts in limiting their argument or knowing how to put on a presentation of facts;

The Ombudsperson shall, as part of the meeting, allow for a complete presentation of relevant facts by all parties. The child and/or his or her parent or guardian should be allowed to have assistance from a legal representative knowledgeable of federal and state laws pertaining to homeless students' educational rights.

Prior to the dispute resolution meeting, the ombudsperson must inform all parties that they may request copies of documents that will be used by the other party during the meeting. Such requests must be received within five (5) school days of the meeting.

Within ten (10) school days after the conclusion of the dispute resolution meeting if possible, the ombudsperson shall make a written determination on a form supplied by the ISBE as to the issue under disagreement. The form, at a minimum, shall include the following:

SECTION	CONTENT
Background Information	Name of the district and school; name of the parent/guardian and student(s); and the nature of the dispute.
Individuals in Attendance	A complete listing of all individuals present for the dispute resolution meeting and their professional titles.
Case-Specific Timelines	Timeline of procedural events, including: the date the district invoked dispute resolution; the date the dispute resolution meeting was convened; and the date of the final determination of the Ombudsperson.
The Arguments	The arguments and positions of each party, including the evidence, testimony and documentation used in support.
Discussion	The Ombudsperson's discussion of the parties' arguments, including the weight to be given to each. If the Ombudsperson does not agree with or support an argument made by one of the parties, a discussion of why s/he feels such should be discounted in making a final determination.
Fixed, Regular and Adequate Analysis	The Ombudsperson must complete an analysis as to the current living situation of the student(s) and make findings as to whether or not such living situation is fixed, regular and adequate.
Final Determination	The final determination, finding the student(s) either "homeless" or "not homeless" pursuant to federal law and state law/policy. The date of the final determination must be explicitly noted.

Notice of Right to Appeal	Notice of the parties' right to appeal the final determination to the State Coordinator for Homeless Education. Such notice must include all of the language referencing appeals in the State Policy.
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### Appealing the Determination of the Ombudsperson

Either party may, within five (5) school days of the ombudsperson's determination, send a written request to the State Coordinator asking the State Coordinator to review such decision for compliance with applicable law. Such request must include any documentation related to the dispute resolution proceeding. The request may be made via U.S. Mail or via email.

Upon receiving a request for review, the State Coordinator shall direct the ombudsperson to submit all documents, notes, transcripts, and other materials used by all parties to present their respective cases. The State Coordinator may also request from either party any additional information that he or she deems relevant to determining compliance with applicable law.

No later than fifteen (15) school days after receiving the request for review, the State Coordinator shall make a final decision regarding the ombudsperson's decision and the appropriate placement of the student (deferring, in this review, to any and all findings of fact by the Ombudsperson).

If the State Superintendent of Education or designee determines that the district's action giving rise to the dispute is inconsistent with applicable law, he/she may order the district to take any action necessary for such district to be in compliance with applicable law. Should the district not comply with such order, the State Superintendent shall place the district's recognition status on probation in accordance with 23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.20(b).

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES
Train LEA homeless education liaisons in dispute resolution processes via LALs.	Ongoing
Train homeless education liaisons in their duties to represent homeless youth who may be involved in a disagreement related to their homeless status and education via LALs.	Ongoing

- iv. **Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that that youths described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youths described in this paragraph from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.**

LEA homeless liaisons are required to ensure that homeless youth, unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as non-homeless children and youths, and are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965. Youths must be assured that they may obtain assistance from the LEA homeless liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (Section 722(g)(6))A(x)). Liaisons must assist unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools in receiving the help they need from counselors to advise and prepare them for college and ensure that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent students from receiving credit for full

or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.

To ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including identifying and removing barriers that prevent the youth from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies, LEA's are expected to review a student's previous school records to calculate, award, and receive partial credits from the prior school and participate in credit recovery opportunities, e.g. online learning, leaning labs, and computerized modules. The LEA Homeless Liaison will lead the review process, along with school counselors, administrators, and other school staff, as designated by the LEA. The LAL may also be included in the process at the request of the LEA or at the request of the parent/guardian or youth

Illinois does not currently have a uniform plan to ensure appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. Through a McKinney-Vento Student Services Advisory Committee (MVSSC), ISBE will focus on developing formal state guidance and procedures for granting partial and/or full credit for school work satisfactorily completed in a previous school/district by a youth experiencing homelessness. When addressing such guidance, the MVSSC will take into account the following variables with respect to prior completed coursework: course length, rigor of the program, comparability of standards and grading system. However, if a dispute should arise between the LEA and the parent/guardian or youth regarding acceptance of the appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, the parent/guardian or youth has the right to appeal the decision through the Dispute Resolution process.

Per [105 ILCS 5/10-22.39](#) and as a requirement of the McKinney-Vento sub-grants, the LALs are required to provide outreach to homeless children and youth not in the public schools. During school district homeless liaison and administration trainings, the LALs train the districts on assistance in identifying homeless youth not currently enrolled in or attending school. The LALs and the school district liaisons partner with community service agencies and local community group to assist with identifying homeless youth not attending school.

The LAL and the LEA homeless education liaison will be responsible for annual trainings for district and program staff on the needs of runaway and homeless youth, including youth separated from the public schools. They will disseminate information about homeless youths and update information on unaccompanied youths and youth separated from public schools to all sites where youths may gather to educate and inform them of their rights. The LAL and LEA liaison will develop collaborative relationships with shelters and services providers focusing on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools. School district personnel will receive training on the educational right of unaccompanied youth, including guardianship issues that cannot exclude enrollment. Abiding by the guidelines, defined in the IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youth with a disability of special education needs will be addressed as well as the need for referral to social service agencies for needed services.

v. **Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths:**

1. **Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the state;**
2. **Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities; and**
3. **Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in federal, state, and local nutrition programs.**

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 Dept of Early Childhood agency.

**Preschool Programs**

The LAL for each of the seven regions must ensure that homeless children receive the services that they need to become successful, lifelong learners. The LAL should work with other service providers in their region, such as Continuum of Care, shelters, food banks, and health and housing providers to assist families in homeless situations. Active working partnerships will allow all entities to be able to provide services that address the needs of homeless families and to identify children age birth to 5 who are in need of early childhood education services.

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

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

The Preschool for All initiative focuses on providing high-quality educational programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failures. First priority is given to children at preschool screenings who are determined to be at risk of academic failures due to environmental and developmental delays. A disproportionate share of children come from low-income working families, homeless families, teen parent families, or families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home. Homeless children and youths are a priority in this high-risk category and if slots are available at the time of enrollment, homeless children must be enrolled immediately. If no slots are available, the child must be placed at the top of the program's waiting list. Children who are at a greater risk of academic failure may be rescreened within the first 30 days of school attendance.

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

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

ISBE collects data for LEAs and ISBE-funded birth to 3 and preschool programs (e.g., Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, Preschool Expansion Grant, and other district-funded programs) through the Student Information System (SIS). Data collected through SIS for kindergarten through grade 12 is significantly higher than birth to age 5 data. Based on research, there are more children between birth and age 5 that are in a homeless situation than any other age group. A focus will be placed on training all LEA and ISBE-funded Early Childhood programs personnel to collect and enter data on homeless children that they serve as they identify, enroll, and provide services for the children.

## **Barriers to Academic and Extracurricular Activities**

Homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels.

Procedures in Illinois law eliminate barriers to academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)). Such legal provisions will be enforced via each LAL, who will monitor compliance and provide technical assistance to the districts in his/her charge. Further, information regarding the rights of homeless pupils with respect to equal access to such programs will be disseminated by the SEA and LALs via webinars, materials, guidance and formal updates/communications.

Magnet schools, summer school programs, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs may be highly motivating or a necessary option for homeless children and youth to reach their highest education potential. The LAL will work with homeless children and youth and their families to assist in gaining access to these programs. In addition, the LAL will work with staff within the programs through trainings on the McKinney-Vento program and also through ongoing technical support to the programs.

Extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, theater, debate, and clubs often a key to engaging child and youth in school. They can provide students with a sense of belonging, stability, pride, and responsibility and strengthen a student's application for higher education admission and scholarships. Homelessness can create barriers to participation in extracurricular activities. Homeless students who change schools during the school year may not meet residency requirements related to sports or may enter school in the middle of the season. They may lack birth certificates, physical examinations, and other documents normally required prior to participation and may not be able to pay for equipment or fees. The McKinney-Vento Act provides legal rights and support to help ensure that students experiencing homelessness can participate fully in extracurricular school activities.

LEAs are required to enroll children and youths experiencing homelessness immediately. "Enroll" is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as specifically "attending classes and participating fully in school activities." Therefore, homeless students must be allowed to enroll and participate immediately in class and other academic activities and extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, and clubs.

Ongoing and close collaboration with the Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Elementary School Association to ensure alignment with policy and procedures regarding homeless children and youth will be an ongoing process for both ISBE and the LALs. Further, the Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Elementary School Association will have membership on the MVSSC. Trainings will be provided on the value of academic and extracurricular activities for homeless children and youth. The LAL and LEA homeless liaison will provide guidance to schools regarding removing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Nutrition Programs**

Materials developed and disseminated online include information regarding the right of homeless children and youths to receive services under the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program. These materials are reviewed and revised on a continuous basis to ensure that information is current and effectual and meets the needs of students experiencing homelessness and their families. School officials may accept documentation that the children are homeless from the local education liaisons or directors of homeless shelters where the children reside to expedite the delivery of nutritional programs. Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the child's name or a list of names, effective date(s), and the signature of the local education liaison or the director of the homeless shelter. This documentation is acceptable in lieu of a free and reduced-price meal application.

Additionally, implementation of these expedited procedures encourages public school determination officials to work closely with the homeless education liaison to ensure that homeless children and youths are provided free meal benefits as promptly as possible. School food service personnel must be promptly advised when homeless

children and youths leave school or are no longer considered homeless. Households or unaccompanied youths must be provided with an application for free and reduced-price meals when the family or youths are no longer considered homeless. The homeless education liaison must carefully evaluate each child's situation.

Homeless children and youths residing with another household application process will not include the size and household income of the "host family" to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meal eligibility. The "host family" may now also be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on the total number in the household and can be provided temporary approval for this eligibility until the homeless family leaves the "host family" residence.

Unaccompanied youths or youth separated from public school who live alone are to be considered a household of one based on the definition of "emancipated child" in the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual. Section 107 (Runaway, Homeless, and Migrant Youth Directive USDA update from the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265, which amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act). It states that effective July 1, 2004, homeless, runaway, and migrant children are categorically eligible for free school meals. No application is required for these children, as they may be directly certified based on lists provided by the local shelter director, a school district homeless education liaison, a migrant education coordinator, or similar officials. The lists must contain the child's name and a signature and date of the official making the determination. The eligibility lasts for the full school year regardless of changes in status as runaway, homeless, or migrant.

All homeless education liaisons are trained in using ISBE, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and McKinney-Vento guidance and materials. The USDA guidance also is used as a guide to state and local food programs. ISBE staff members who work with school nutrition programs are trained on an ongoing basis to maintain the most current information related to the USDA regulations pertaining to families with children or youths who are experiencing homelessness, on the McKinney-Vento Act, and on the role of the homeless education liaisons. They work with their contacts at local schools to make sure that local nutrition staff members are familiar with the local homeless education liaison.

A focus of all trainings provided to school districts is to best assist homeless families by ensuring that school forms brochures, websites, handbooks, and instructional materials reflect accurate information about homelessness and rights and are easily accessible. Further, training all staff, board members, and administrators responsible for school enrollment on Illinois and federal residency and homeless laws will be encouraged and will be offered via the LEA liaison and LAL.

Activities	Timelines
Train LAL and LEA homeless education liaisons on specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.	Ongoing
Distribute homeless youth posters.	Ongoing
Distribute updated information on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools to all sites where youth may gather to educate and inform them of their rights.	Ongoing
Development of collaborative relationships with shelters and services providers focusing on unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
Train school district personnel on the educational rights of unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools, including guardianship issues that cannot exclude enrollment.	Ongoing
Establish enrollment procedures to accommodate unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools with direct referral to the LEA homeless education liaison to provide assistance to develop a surrogate educational advisor relationship for the youth regarding education decisions and use of the Caregiver Form <a href="https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf">https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf</a>	Ongoing

Abide by the guidelines defined in the IDEA 2004 relative to homeless unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools who have a disability or special education need.	Ongoing
Provide referral to social service agencies for services needed by unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
Present at regional and statewide meetings of school counselors on removing barrier to receiving full or partial coursework in accordance with State, local, and school policies.	Ongoing
Train districts on the responsibilities to identify, provide equal access and support services to unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools.	Ongoing
LAL will assist unaccompanied youth, youth separated from public schools, families/caregivers and school counselors in accessing secondary education for the youth.	Ongoing
Collaborate with IHSA and IESA to ensure alignment with policy and procedures regarding homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
Provide training on the value of academic and extra-curricular activities for homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
LALs and LEA homeless education liaisons will provide trainings and guidance to school district administrators, coaches, teachers, club sponsors, faculty advisors and other district personnel regarding removing barriers to accessing academic and extra-curricular activities.	Ongoing
LALs will share district and local policies and procedures which expedite and support full participation of students experiencing homelessness, including magnet schools, summer school, career and technical education, advance placement, online learning, gifted and talented, and charter school programs.	Ongoing
SEA reviews current policy and adopts a modified one, as needed, to support federal and state law.	Ongoing
Collaborate with school districts to revise any local policies that are barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
Monitoring of sub-grantees annually to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.	Ongoing
LALs conduct monitoring within their regional area to ensure LEA compliance with McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.	Ongoing
Training of Lead Area Liaisons and district liaisons on the removal of barriers for students experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing

**vi. Describe the SEA’s strategies to address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays and retention, consistent with sections 722(g)(1)(H) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.**

Ongoing trainings are provided to liaisons and district staff on the removal of barriers for homeless children and youth. This information is shared with all district liaisons and addressed at all area trainings by the LAL’s. School districts are advised to review their school policy and make any revisions to policies that may not address barriers to homeless student enrollment.

ISBE considers the school enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth throughout Illinois as a high priority. It is the policy of the ISBE that every homeless child and youth be sensitively identified as required by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (“McKinney-Vento”), 42 U.S.C. § 11431 *et seq.*, that every such child or youth be enrolled in and attend the appropriate school on every school day, and that

school admission for such children and youth be immediate and be handled sensitively and in a child and family-centered manner in accordance with McKinney-Vento and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act (IEHCA), 105 ILCS 45/1-1 *et seq.* This policy is promulgated with the intention of minimizing educational disruption for homeless children and youth and promoting stability and continuity in education as well as providing social supports during a period of housing in stability. Illinois law and regulations contain multiple provisions to remove barrier to education access for children and youth experiencing homelessness. ISBE specifically requires that barriers related to outstanding fees, fines, or absences be waived for homeless families. Furthermore, regardless of housing status, a student in Illinois cannot be denied educational services based upon outstanding school fees, fines or absences. It is the expectation of ISBE that districts and LEA homeless liaisons will identify the needs of homeless pupils in this regard and ensure compliance with the law and regulations. In addition to fee, fines and absence provisions, each of the issues below will be enforced through LAL or ISBE intervention through normal compliance, monitoring and enforcement procedures. Failure to comply may result in the reduction in a school district's state recognition status. Further, information regarding the rights of homeless pupils with respect to equal access to such programs will be disseminated by the SEA and LALs via webinars, materials, guidance and formal updates/communications.

#### **Requirements of Immunization and Other Required Health Records;**

LEAs must not delay the enrollment of homeless children or youth. If required health records are not readily available, the LEA homeless liaison must work with the parents/caregivers, unaccompanied youth, and youth separated from public schools to meet the health records requirement. The LAL may also provide assistance to the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth to obtain the necessary health records. Under no circumstance may a homeless student be denied enrollment because the inability to produce such documentation was caused by homelessness.

#### **Residency Requirements**

When responding to residency questions, districts need to think about whether the pupil at issue may be homeless as defined under federal (McKinney-Vento Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431) and Illinois (the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, 105 ILCS 45/1-1, or IEHCA) laws. Under both federal and Illinois law, school districts have an affirmative duty to identify homeless families within the district. Each school district's homelessness liaison must be involved to provide assistance to families who may be homeless, so that they are aware of their right to enroll their children in school. In all cases, however, the provisions of McKinney Vento supersede state laws on residency requirements.

#### **Lack of Birth Certificates, School Records, or Other Documentation;**

The LEA homeless liaison and the LAL will work with the parents/caregiver, unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools to obtain the birth certificate. However, under Illinois law, no student may be denied enrollment based on not presenting a birth certificate or previous school records. The one exception is that transferring students must present a form that indicates that they are in "good standing" with respect to immunizations and not being disciplined by suspension or expulsion. However, it is the policy of ISBE that homeless students must be enrolled even without this form and the district should work to receive the document after enrollment.

State law [410 ILCS 535/25.3](#) provides free birth certificates to McKinney-Vento youth after certification from a public school homeless liaison or social worker.

**Guardianship Issues;**

With the exception of students with IEPs, guardianship of children or youth is not a requirement to enroll children and youth in school. The child is enrolled based on where they are currently residing, or their “school of origin” (the school that they last attended when permanently housed.) The Caregiver Form [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J\\_caregivers.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/83-04J_caregivers.pdf) will provide necessary documentation for enrolling as a caregiver.

**Uniform or Dress Code Requirements.**

The LEA homeless liaisons and the LAL will work together to ensure that the children and youth to meet the schools uniform or dress code requirements, Title 1, Part A funds may be used to remove this barrier.

**In General**

The LAL for each of the seven regions must ensure that homeless children receive the services that they need to become successful, lifelong learners. The LAL will work with other service providers in their region, such as Continuum of Care, shelters, food banks, and health and housing providers to assist families in homeless situations. Active working partnerships will allow all entities to be able to provide services that address the needs of homeless families and to identify children age birth to age 5 who are in need of early childhood education services.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES
LALs will provide training to school districts on removing barriers that could result in enrollment delay.	Ongoing
Collaborate with school districts to revise any local policies that are barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.	Ongoing
LAL will assist families/caregivers, unaccompanied youth and youth separated from public schools to relieve any barriers that might cause delay in enrollment.	Ongoing
SEA will work with IDPS and IDHS to inform them of McKinney-Vento rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and address the five barriers that may cause delay in enrollment.	Ongoing
LEA policies and procedures are reviewed as part of the LEA McKinney-Vento monitoring process conducted by the LAL.	Ongoing