



## Resource Bank for Illinois Resource Allocation Reviews

The [Properties of Effective Resource Allocation Systems](#) document identifies and describes four generalizable standards of effective resource allocation systems to help anchor the Resource Allocation Review process and increase districts' understanding of strong practices. This document provides a bank of resources aligned to each of the four standards. The resources can be used to support improvement after a Resource Allocation Review. ISBE staff will continue to add new resources to this document.

### **1. Equitable: *Provides resources based on the needs of students and schools so that those with higher needs receive additional resources.***

- Review the Equity Journey Continuum (EJC) to identify trends in the equitable distribution of resources and support for students.
  - The EJC is an informational tool districts can use to track their progress toward closing gaps in student achievement, opportunities, and supports. The tool analyzes a continuum of district-level data points that already have been collected and reported to ISBE through the lens of equity to ensure that data are useful for improving outcomes for all students. ISBE developed the tool using national research and examples from other states. ISBE refined the tool through a pilot with districts across Illinois. The equity elements included in the continuum are consistent, statewide, measurable, and within each district's control. These data points illustrate a district's current progress in its equity journey — from Step 1 (large gaps) to Step 4 (minimal gaps) — in the three areas of ISBE's Strategic Plan: student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. The [Illinois Report Card](#) includes a district-level summary. The Data Review and Verification Tool (located within [MyIRC](#) and available to administrators) provides additional details and business rules. The EJC can be a valuable tool to support school improvement planning with a focus on equity. More information can be found [on ISBE's Equity Information and Resources webpage](#).
- Consider opportunities to braid and blend resources.
  - ISBE, in partnership with the Region 9 Comprehensive Center, recently released [Braiding and Blending Federal Funds: A Step-by-Step Guide for Illinois Schools](#), a new resource to support school districts in delivering cohesive programming through the coordinated use of federal, state, and local funds. The guide includes an overview of braiding and blending concepts and provides state-specific

guidelines, planning tools, and other helpful resources. In addition to scenarios provided by ISBE staff, the guide includes examples from three Illinois school districts.

- ISBE hosted an Illinois Association of School Business Officials Lunch and Learn webinar to discuss the ways districts can consider opportunities to blend and braid resources equitably. Links to presentation resources are below.
  - [Recording Link \(on Illinois IASBOnline\)](#)

**2. Transparent: *Provides resources through a simple, well-defined, and clearly documented process such that stakeholders understand how resources are allocated to schools and how resource levels are differentiated.***

- Utilize the [Community Financial Meeting Toolkit](#) to hold a community presentation.
  - Holding a community presentation gives you an opportunity to build transparency and engage the community in important information that is vital to the health of your district. This presentation toolkit will allow you to tell your story and explain how important decisions are being made. The toolkit materials use real data to explain the current status of multiple programs and structures within your district and give you a chance to discuss how you are planning for equity in your schools. These materials provide general information and a structure for the conversation. They allow for customization of details in your local context. Toolkit materials are linked below.
    - [Facilitator Guide](#)
    - [Presentation Template](#)
    - [FAQs](#)

**3. Engages Stakeholders: *Allows for input in the budgeting and planning process from various education stakeholders, such as school site leaders and staff, parents, and community members.***

- Use research-informed messaging frames to build stakeholder trust.
  - Georgetown University Edunomics Lab has conducted research demonstrating that [principals benefit from strong community trust](#) when it comes to communicating financial messages. Supporting school leaders in effective financial communication strategies may prove useful as a way to direct school-level conversations about how to make the most of available funds.
  - This [“messaging” resource](#) can be a great professional development tool to provide your team with sample sentence frames and scenarios to practice communicating with various stakeholders about resources. The communication template focuses on the use of federal relief funds, but it can be flexibly adapted to suit different contexts for financial decision-making.

- Explore frameworks for parent engagement.
  - ISBE has published resources designed to help districts evaluate and improve parent engagement. The [Family Engagement Framework Guide](#) (2025) provides an overview of standards for parent engagement and includes a [self-assessment tool](#). Additional resources are available on [the ISBE Family and Community Engagement webpage](#). These strategies and resources may be useful as district staff evaluate parent engagement data from the [5Essentials Survey](#) (or other district survey data) to support improvement planning.

**4. Aligns with District Goals and Priorities: *Integrates and aligns with planning and school improvement processes, focuses on improving student outcomes, and offers flexibility to respond to new or shifting goals and priorities.***

- Develop theories of action and logic models to articulate the costs and desired outcomes of strategic initiatives.
  - The [Logic Model Development Guide](#) is a framework intended to help district leaders and staff evaluate investments aligned with their goals. The guide outlines five steps Local Education Agencies can use to clarify inputs and outputs and develop a roadmap for evaluation. The guide also includes suggestions for communicating with stakeholders about strategic initiatives.
- Translate decisions about resource allocation into per-pupil figures and connect investments to specific student improvement goals.
  - [Now is a Great Time to Consider the Per Unit Cost of Everything in Education](#) by Dr. Marguerite Roza of the Edunomics Lab provides helpful examples of how this practice can optimize spending decisions and support stakeholder engagement.
  - [This worksheet](#) can be used to evaluate and monitor various program options. (See [webinar](#) with tips for using the tool.) And this [ESSA Action Guide](#) on improving fairness in school funding includes strategies for school and district leaders to build capacity around school expenditure data and connect resource allocation to School Improvement Plans.
- Review one-pagers on best practices for building a strong teaching workforce in your district.
  - ISBE has published 12 [Teacher Pipeline Grant — Best Practice One-Pagers](#) that include practical strategies for strengthening your district's teacher workforce. These one-pagers were created as guidance for 170 recipients of the \$45 million Teacher Pipeline Grant, but any district can implement these strategies to improve teacher recruitment and retention. Topics of the one-pagers include teacher residencies and apprenticeships, mentorship and induction programs, creating career advancement opportunities, creating a positive school culture, and teacher planning and collaboration.

- Leverage best practices in scheduling to align on district goals and eliminate inefficiencies in resource allocation.
  - In [Unlocking Resources through Scheduling](#), Education Resource Strategies explores how Lubbock Independent School District used the scheduling application [Timely](#) to drive strategic planning. The article highlights how the district established discrete priorities, made deliberate decisions in service of these priorities, and implemented more efficient district-wide planning.