Illinois System of Support for Districts with High Priority Schools

Illinois State Board of Education
Teaching and Learning Center

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System of Support Requirements

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the most significant federal education policy initiative in decades. In the legislation, states have two levels of responsibility - schools and districts. Responsibilities to schools include providing technical assistance to schools identified as low performing, subject to district agreement and developing systems for schools using resources from regional centers and laboratories, as well as other technical assistance providers. Priority goes to districts with schools subject to corrective action and school improvement. The support system includes:

- Establishing and providing assistance through school support teams;
- Designating and using distinguished teachers and principals;
- Enlisting other service providers, e.g., local consortia, regional service agencies;
- Using distinguished schools that have made the greatest gains as models and sources of support for low-performing schools.

The ESEA legislation, commonly known as *No Child Left Behind*, requires states to adopt five goals.

1. By 2013-14, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
2. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
3. By 2005-06, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
5. All students will graduate from high school.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has made accountability focused on student performance a key priority. It began its work on a comprehensive accountability system in the early 1990's. Early on, a key idea was to expand educational accountability from simple regulatory compliance (measuring "inputs") to include a clear focus on student achievement (measuring results).

In 1992, the Illinois State Legislature approved legislation that created the Illinois Academic Watch List as one of a number of efforts to improve the state's recognition process and increase accountability of public schools. This section of law was amended in 1996 to include an Academic Early Warning List (AEWL). This amendment allows first for schools that are not meeting State Goals for Learning as specified by ISBE to be placed on an Academic Early Warning List and then on an Academic Watch List if they do not demonstrate significant academic improvement. Placement on the AEWL results in access to a variety of resources and services. Title 23, Illinois Administrative Code, Chapter 1, Subchapter a (Public School Recognition), Part 1, Section 1.80, Academic Early Warning and Watch Lists identifies the two groups of schools that are subject to placement and describes the circumstances under which they will be removed from and kept on the lists.

System of Support Eligible Districts/Schools

In the fall of 2001, the Illinois State Board of Education identified 593 elementary and middle schools in 64 districts for placement on the Academic Early Warning List (AEWL). See map in Appendix A. With the second administration of the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) in April 2002, it is projected that 128 high schools are highly likely to be added to the AEWL, with

an additional 35 high schools somewhat likely to do so. In analyzing the locations and patterns of the schools identified or projected to be identified:

- approximately 30% are small rural high schools, 40% are Chicago high schools, and 30% are high schools that have elementary AEWL schools that feed into them;
- 50% of the counties in Illinois have one or more schools;
- 371 elementary and middle schools are in Chicago, and 222 are in located in concentrated areas throughout the state;
- elementary schools identified on the AEWL represent 20% of elementary schools in the state and 29% of the student population;
- middle/junior high schools identified on the AEWL represent 9.5% of the middle/junior high schools in the state and 6% of the student population.

System of Support Premises

The System of Support (SoS) is the responsibility of all education support providers with the Illinois State Board of Education assuming the leadership of the system. Support to districts and schools is equally important to insure systemic and sustained changes in student achievement and organizational effectiveness. Both the consequences and rewards for student learning must be understood by the districts and schools. Given that federal requirements specifically state that support is made available to districts and schools upon request and that support will be effective only if all parties determine the need for support, the System of Support is a voluntary program.

Research conducted by the US Department of Education and Education Trust have identified problems specific to high priority schools and solutions to respond to these problems. The following premises of the System of Support are derived from this research on high priority

Problem	Solution
We teach different students different things.	High level and articulated curriculum and instruction aligned to state learning standards.
Premise: School support must be geared toward all students meeting standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Student achievement at each school level has a significant impact on later success.	
Problem	Solution
Schools serving poor and minority students have under-qualified teachers.	Increase teacher content knowledge, insure assignment of qualified teachers; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers.
Premise: Teacher quality is the single greatest school indicator for improving student performance.	
Problem	Solution
Schools serving poor and minority students have fewer reading and mathematics resources.	Increase reading and mathematics resources (time, money and people) in each classroom/school.
Premise: State and federal resources must be used strategically and effectively to support	

improvements.

Problem	Solution
We have lower standards for poor and minority students.	Develop grading and assessment systems that are standards-based and comparable to high performing districts.
Premise: The Illinois Learning Standards and respective state assessments (ISAT and PSAE) are the uniform basis for school performance measurements. Within the next three years, schools must be on a trajectory to meet or exceed the Illinois Learning Standards within the required federal 12 year limit.	

Problem	Solution
Students and parent voices are not heard.	Seek students and parents active participation in the planning and implementation for improvement.
Premise: Parent/family involvement is the single greatest out-of-school indicator for improving student performance.	

Problem	Solution
Use performance data to inform choices; and create a cycle of continuous improvement.	Work with districts and schools on a continuous improvement process using the Baldrige criteria as a framework.
Premise: Interventions must be based on data, research, and best practices. Districts/schools/classrooms must have systems to monitor student progress and provide extra support to students as soon as they need it.	

Problem	Solution
Schools serving poor and minority students lack a vision and focus and performance expectations..	Work with leaders to create and sustain organizational direction, expectations and a system that promotes excellence.
Premise: Leadership is key to improving performance in individual schools and a district/school system as a whole.	

Problem	Solution
Staff serving poor and minority students operate in isolation.	Work with districts and schools on building a sense of teamwork among staff and management.
Premise: Collaborative leadership and common learning experiences foster teamwork and ownership for results.	

System of Support Levels of Interventions

No Child Left Behind describes three stages of intervention (school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring), based on ability to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). These stages necessitate levels of interventions that correspond to the school improvement status.

	Third Priority Schools	Second Priority Schools		First Priority Schools	
	School Improvement—Makes AYP and Continues to Make AYP	School Improvement—Failure to Make AYP for 2 Years	School Improvement—Failure to Make AYP for 3 Years	Corrective Action—Failure to Make AYP for 4 Years	Restructuring—Failure to Make AYP for 5 Years
Develop 2 year improvement plan	X	X	X	X	
Children eligible to transfer to higher performing school in district		X	X	X	
District providing supplemental services to low income students outside regular school day			X	X	
District must conduct expert evaluation of SIP and/or adopt new curriculum and/or replace selected staff and/or modify school schedule.				X	
School must be restructured using one option: Charter school, Replace principal and most staff, Management by outside entity, State takeover.					X
Illinois Estimates for the 2002-03 school year	20 Districts with a Possible 26 new districts	44 Districts with 403 Schools	0	0	0

System of Support levels of intervention have been designed to correspond to the stages of school improvement and corrective action. Each of the three goals of the System of Support: Academic Intervention, Teacher Quality and Resources will apply to all stages; however, the intensity of support will progressively increase as the consequences for failing to make adequate yearly progress increase. As required in the federal legislation, the statewide system of support must be intensive and sustained to increase the opportunity for all students to meet state learning standards.

Schools in **Corrective Action**—First Priority Schools

Although Illinois will not have any schools in this status during the 2002-03 school year, it is anticipated that schools will be in this category beginning in the 2004-05 school year. In addition to the services provided for Second Priority Districts/Schools, these schools will receive the following assistance and support.

- The district and school improvement plans will be evaluated using state adopted rubrics by a team composed of state education, regional office of education and peers from high performing districts/schools. Each plan will be revised based on the review.
- Current curriculum will be analyzed by a team of content experts and adaptations made based on the analysis.
- The school day will be extended to ensure at least six hours of instruction and/or the school year extended to include 200 instructional days.
- The district will provide incentives to assign their highest qualified and effective teachers to the school to represent at least a majority of the faculty.

School Improvement—**Failure to Make AYP**—Second Priority Districts/Schools

Each district/school will have a support team that includes two or more staff from a variety of organizations. These individuals will work with each district to develop a performance agreement that describes how each organization will support the achievement of a common set of goals and strategies. The support team will conduct an analysis of each district/school prior to the development of the performance agreement. The complete process for working with first and second priority schools is described in the next section of this report.

School Improvement—**Makes AYP and Continues to Make AYP**—Third Priority Schools

The statewide System of Support must ensure that all schools meet the Illinois Learning Standards. Schools that make AYP will receive the following services and resources:

- Tools and materials that assist districts and schools in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data;
- Access to professional development offered at the state, regional and organizational levels;
- Competitive grants that support district and school improvement plans;
- Communication about requirements and expectations of federal and state governments.

System of Support Process

Each child who arrives unprepared for elementary, middle, or high school leaves behind him or her a series of inadequate or lost opportunities for learning. At the same time, each school or teacher unable to help that child bridge the achievement gap also has a history that would explain this inability. Both children who do not meet standards and schools that fail to ensure all students meet standards need extraordinary support to move beyond that failure. The System of Support for these districts and schools seeks a multifaceted solution to a multifaceted problem. While taking into account the insights of citizens and experts, the goals and strategies are based on a solid foundation of educational research and proven and promising practices.

The System of Support attempts to maintain a balance between prescriptive solutions and accountability, and the need to tailor local actions to local needs. Local school districts are at different places in addressing the specific strategies. Each local school district and each school will view these goals and strategies from its own unique perspective, and that perspective will determine the specific implementation actions. The options range from those that will require few additional resources to those that will require significant additional support. It is anticipated

that interventions effective in raising the achievement of at-risk students will result from state or local retargeting of existing funds as well as the infusion of new money. These strategies require meaningful systemic change. Collaboration and resource sharing will be essential to successful implementation.

The following identifies the System of Support goals and strategies which will apply to all first and second priority schools.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION: (Applicable *NCLB* Goals: All students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics by 2013-14, All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English, and All students will graduate from high school.)
 I.   Establish an articulated, standards-based curriculum from early childhood through high school.
 II. Use multiple assessment to help determine and monitor individual student progress toward meeting state learning standards and to inform instruction.
 III. Ensure the development of individualized learning plans for students who are two or more years below grade level in reading and mathematics.
 IV. Ensure the involvement of parents and families in ways that advance the academic success of their children.
 V. Provide extended learning opportunities for students who are not proficient in reading, writing, and mathematics standards in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

EDUCATOR QUALITY: (Applicable *NCLB* Goal: By 2005-06, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.)
I. Assure teachers' expertise in assessing individual student progress, determining student needs, and applying appropriate instructional strategies to ensure student success.
II. Assure all teachers are qualified and have content expertise to deliver a standards-based curriculum.
III. Develop instructional leadership capacity in school administrators.
IV. Develop process for recruitment and selection of highly qualified teachers.
V. Develop mentoring and induction programs for teachers with less than four years experience.
VI. Develop continuing professional development systems that are results oriented.

RESOURCES: (Applicable *NCLB* references: All districts with schools in school improvement or corrective action will have a support team to review and analyze all facets of the school operation and assist in developing and implementing a plan for improving student performance.)
II. Leverage state and federal discretionary and competitive financial resources to assist the district/school in implementing their plans.
I. Use school support teams including distinguished teachers and principals chosen from schools that have been successful in improving academic performance to develop and implement plans that can improve student performance, including achieving adequate yearly progress.
III. Work with local boards of education and central office staff to ensure policies, practices and resources are directed toward improving student performance in reading, mathematics and science.

Each first and second priority district/school will follow a Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle of improvement as outlined in the four phases below. Further explanation of each phase and the tools to complete each phase are identified on the following pages.

		Timeframe	Deliverable
Phase I: Analysis of District and School Operation			
Prepare district and school profiles aligned to plan goals/strategies using ISBE available data.		Within 10 school days of school identification	Completed profile
Complete a district-level systems analysis using the Baldrige framework and aligned to plan goals/strategies.		Within 30 school days of school identification	Completed report and inventory
Complete a school-level audit aligned to plan goals/strategies.		Within 45 school days of school identification	Completed audits
Analyze resources to determine the degree to which they support *NCLB* and SoS goals.		Within first semester of school identification	Complete report and inventory
Phase II: Develop improvement plans and performance agreement			
Develop district performance agreement that responds to the issues and recommendations identified in Phase I, and a plan for achieving System of Support goals/strategies that improves high priority schools.		Within 75 days of school identification	Written performance agreement
Approve school improvement plans aligned to district goals/plans and performance agreement.		Within 60 school days of school identification	Approved plans scoring 20 or higher
Phase III: Implement the agreement/plan			
Analyze the need for additional resources or referrals, e.g., CSR, 21st CCLC.		From September—February during first year of identification	Successful applications and grant awards
Facilitate, broker and/or deliver resources/services to implement plan.		Ongoing through period of performance agreement	List of resources/services identified in performance agreements

Phase IV: Monitor the agreement /plan			
Evaluate the effectiveness of school personnel, identify outstanding educators, and make findings and recommendations to the school and district.		Verify twice annually	Written reports reflecting status of agreement implementation
Recommend additional assistance needed by the school or support team.		End of each year	Written letter with recommendations
Recommend continuing or additional support or alternative actions to support the school.		End of each year	Revised performance agreement or letter of alternative action

Phase I. Review and Analysis of District/School Operation

Every district/school regardless of the stage of intervention will be reviewed using criteria common to continuous improvement systems and directly aligned with the Baldrige *Education Criteria for Performance Excellence*. The process uses seven criteria to gather information on a district's/school's systems for improving its high-priority (HP) schools.   The chart below identifies the specific areas examined during the review and analysis process. The district analysis is conducted by the System of Support Division to gain an understanding of the district's systems to support HP schools. A district feedback report and inventory is used to document the status and target areas of improvement (Appendix B). A separate analysis of district resources is conducted (Appendix C). The school analysis is conducted by the school support team using several tools and results in a school feedback report. Appendix D is the rubric used to judge the school improvement plan. Appendix E is the district and school interview protocol. Upon completion of the district/school analysis, a performance agreement (Appendix F) is developed that outlines the specific services and support to be provided from each support team member based on the System of Support goals.

	District Analysis		**School Analysis**	
Stakeholder Focus	Requirements of parents, students, faculty, community, feeder schools or employers Satisfaction of stakeholders Connections with stakeholders		Family involvement to support reading and mathematics at homes Support from business and community to support reading and mathematics	
Strategic Planning	Goals Measures Action Plan Support for HP schools Continuous improvement process		School improvement plan (SIP) and process (analyzed using state rubric) including but not limited to reading and mathematics improvement	

Leadership	Communication Monitoring progress of plan Reporting of progress of plan Collaborative decision making structure Data driven decision making Policies to support student achievement in HP schools		Time spent on instructional leadership (51%)Data driven decision making Monitoring progress of SIP Reporting progress of SIP Collaborative decision making structure	
Information and Analysis	Data collection and analysis and data-based make decisions Comparative data Data to measure progress of the ILS District, school and classroom achievement data		Collection, analysis and interpretation of how instructional time is used, grouping practices, reading and mathematics best practices, classroom resources, use of achievement data on a periodic basis (6-8 weeks)	
Human Resources	Allocation of Human Resources to goals Collaboration and teamwork to achieve goals Recognition and rewards for improvement Continuing professional development Evaluation process Employee well being and motivation		Allocation of HR to improve reading and mathematics Professional development on reading and mathematics Teacher evaluation process linked to goals and classroom performance	
Instructional Process Management	Recruitment, selection, assignment of staff Mentoring and induction of staff Continuous professional development Alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessments in reading and mathematics Allocation of resources		Mentoring and induction of staff Professional development plan/process Allocation of resources Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments Support for struggling learners	
Results	District and school results in reading and mathematics		Disaggregated school results by subgroups in reading and mathematics	

Phase II— Develop District/School Continuous Improvement Plan and Agreement

The district/school support team works with the district, parents/families and school staff to design a district improvement plan aligned to the Baldrige framework and a school improvement plan to improve student performance based on the SoS goals/strategies, and help the school meet its goals for improvement, including adequate yearly progress (AYP). The district/school support team may have the expertise to facilitate the design of the plan or may broker resources to aid in the design of the plan. Each plan will be integrated and demonstrate how resources

are dedicated to the achievement of the plan.

Phase III— Implement District/School Continuous Improvement Plan and Agreement

The focus of the school support team is on the implementation of the school improvement plan. An agreement between the state education agency, regional office of education/intermediate service center, other partners, and district with the school will be developed that describes the resources from each party to support implementation of the plan. Each district with one or more schools in priority 1 or 2 status will be assigned a support team, including educator(s)-in-residence (EiR) who have been recruited, selected, and prepared to support the school. Educators-in-residence are further described on pages 14-15. Each support team will have four EiRs, one each with experience and expertise in reading, mathematics, early childhood, and secondary curriculum and instruction.

Phase IV— Monitor Continuous Improvement Plans and Performance Agreement

As with the initial review and analysis of the district and school, the responsibility for monitoring implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of the System of Support Division. Each school will have a process for monitoring and reporting on their progress to their school community, district, and the state education agency. Performance agreement reviews and monitoring of the plans will occur semiannually.

Effectiveness of School Personnel

The district/school support team is required to evaluate, at least semiannually, the effectiveness of school personnel assigned to the school, including identifying outstanding teachers and principals and make findings and recommendations to the school, district, and state. This review will only be conducted in Priority 1 schools at an individual level. For these schools, a state consultant team will be used to conduct these evaluations using criteria and tools developed for this purpose. In priority 2 schools, this evaluation will occur at the school level. Instructional leadership teams internal to the district and school will be trained in observation techniques and content (scientifically based research in reading and mathematics, grouping practices, classroom management). These teams will conduct semiannual observations and record observation findings. The SoS team will conduct similar observations using random sample techniques. Targets for improving personnel will be included in the school improvement plan.

Continuation of Assistance

After one school year of activities, generally ending on June 30, the SoS team will make recommendations for continued assistance through modification of a second year performance agreement. Depending on the degree of improvement, the district and/or state education agency may take alternative actions with regard to the school.

District/School Support Teams

NCLB defines the competencies of district/school support teams as persons knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice on teaching and learning and about successful school wide projects, school reform, and improving educational opportunities for low-achieving students. The following organizations have been identified as meeting these requirements. The degree of services from each organization will vary from district/school to district/school based on the ability and will of the district/school to achieve the goals and implement the strategies identified on the preceding pages.

SUPPORT TEAM ORGANIZATION	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SERVICE, RESOURCE
STATE EDUCATION AGENCY	
SYSTEM OF SUPPORT	Each district/school will have a designated ISBE staff person from the System of Support Division that will work with the following ISBE divisions to garner and coordinate services and resources. This person will be each district/school's point of contact with the state education agency and be responsible to: Assist districts/schools in using data to identify specific scientifically based and research proven practices to improve student achievement; Approve district and school improvement plans that meet requirements and are based on data, research, and proven practices; Negotiate district/school performance agreement to insure implementation of plan; Monitor district/school progress based on agreement/approved plans; Programmatically approve all federal and state resources to insure they are directed toward increasing student achievement and implementation of plans; and Coordinate technical assistance and services from ISBE and other sources.
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	Provide Reading First grants to support reading/writing, Summer Bridges grants for extended learning, and Comprehensive School Reform grants; arrange for regional and/or district training on scientifically based reading and mathematics programs, e.g. Meeting the Challenge, M2T2.
EARLY CHILDHOOD	Provide funding for early childhood and full day kindergarten programs; offer technical assistance to establish quality programs.
CAREER DEVELOPMENT/PREPARATION	Provide funding for service learning, career academies, and small learning communities and technical assistance to establish quality programs.
CERTIFICATE RENEWAL & LEADERSHIP	Provide technical assistance on the development of results-oriented staff development programs; broker training for leadership development; provide Title II grants to increase teacher and principal quality.
PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION & RECRUITMENT	Provide funding for mentoring and induction programs; provide data on highly qualified teachers; give advice on recruitment/selection processes; provide access to preparation programs for paraprofessionals to meet federal requirements.
SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ENGLSIH LANGUAGE LEARNERS	Provide materials, training and technical assistance to assist districts in serving these sub-group populations.
GRANT PROGRAM SUPPORT	Approve federal and state budgets based on programmatic review by SOS district/school coordinator; offer technical assistance to insure fiscal compliance with state and federal laws; provide 21st CCLC grants.
ASSESSMENT	Provide materials and training on how to effectively use the state assessment results for district and school improvement.

| EDUCATORS-IN-RESIDENCE | Educators knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice on teaching and learning, successful school reform and improving educational opportunities for students who do not meet state learning standards. Educators may be highly qualified or distinguished teachers and principals, pupil services personnel, representatives of higher education, consultants, regional organization staff or others who meet the following competencies.

Standards-Led Education: Implementation of standards guides school and classroom decisions focusing on student learning with the same expectations for all students and where assessment results are used to inform the teacher about the effectiveness of curricular and instructional decisions.
Knowledge: Understands major concepts, principles, and theories that are central to the teaching profession, scientifically based research and practice as it applies to the Illinois Learning Standards, particularly reading, writing and mathematics. Knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment strategies and how to use them to support continuous development of all students in a standards-led system.
Skills: Able to model effective teaching strategies and the use of the Illinois Learning Standards in a classroom setting. Uses knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development to make decisions for instruction. Able to adapt to different learning situations and act as a support to teachers and administrators in a school setting. Can help teachers create learning experiences that make content meaningful to all students. Critically evaluates own performance and capabilities; actively engages in own professional development.

Continuous Improvement: Strategic planning, evaluation and monitoring progress.
Knowledge: Understands change and its effect. Knows how to apply strategies and tools to facilitate continuous improvement (data collection, strategic planning, goal setting, etc.). Understands the school improvement process and how to create a meaningful school improvement plan. Can objectively evaluate personnel and program implementation.
Skills: Can create a sense of urgency with schools and communities about the need for change yet respect and honor past and current practice. Skillful in dialoguing with staff to help clarify their thinking and to help staff think beyond currently defined boundaries. Able to analyze trends and help school staff learn how to measure progress and change and predict future challenges.

Public Engagement and Educator Quality: Provides leadership in facilitating learning community members commitment to individual and organizational learning.

Knowledge: Understands factors that influence motivation and engagement. Knowledgeable about components of an effective learning environment (includes teamwork, networking, knowledge acquisition). Understands collaboration and teamwork as the preferred means to achieve organizational goals.
Skills: Able to influence staff and students to work cooperatively and productively. Able to motivate staff to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction. Able to help staff make decisions that are best for the school without dictating solutions. Negotiates effectively to accomplish common goals. Able to facilitate groups to build teams and reach consensus. Provides frequent and effective communications. Builds relationships by demonstrating behaviors that others view as honest and credible. |
| REGIONAL OFFICES OF EDUCATION/INTERMEDIATE SERVICE CENTERS | Arrange for the delivery of professional development on scientifically based reading and mathematics content and strategies, standards-aligned classrooms, school improvement processes/plans. |

ILLINOIS FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER/SOLID FOUNDATION	Train teacher facilitators in each school to support family reading and home links; train and support parent educators to train parents on how to support reading at home; offer Parents As Teachers program.
TECHNOLOGY HUBS	Provide technical assistance and support to districts/schools on developing their technology infrastructure and incorporating instructional technology.
ILLINOIS LEARNING PARTNERSHIP	Provide training for district/school learning leadership teams that support shared-decision making.

Preparation and Ongoing Development for Support Teams

System of Support teams participate in learning opportunities prior to and during their involvement with high priority districts/schools. Teams participate in opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills in the areas including but not limited to:

- Observation techniques,
- Working with diverse populations in high poverty environments,
- School culture and public engagement,
- Analysis and interpretation of data,
- Improvement planning that drives improved instruction and academic improvement,
- Cognitive coaching for instructional improvement including observation skills,
- Team building – problem solving, interpersonal/intrapersonal skills, decision making, meeting management,
- Instructional processes grounded in research in reading and mathematics, instruction and assessment,
- Standards-led classrooms,
- Professional development systems.

System of Support Academic Achievement Awards

Outstanding Teachers and Principals

School support teams are required to identify outstanding teachers and principals through the semiannual review of school personnel. These individuals will be identified through the school review and analysis process based on pre-established criteria. Criteria are identified in Appendix H. These teachers and principals will be recognized at the state annual Those Who Excel awards banquet and receive a certification of recognition for their contributions to student learning. Individuals will also be afforded one of two leadership opportunities: 1) He/she may elect to serve as an ambassador of their school to other Illinois schools who may request their assistance. Travel expenses and salary/substitute reimbursement will be provided by the state for up to five days. 2) He/she may elect to become a candidate to serve as an educator-in-residence for the next school year.

School Recognition

Schools that significantly close the achievement gap between the groups of students (low-income, English language learners, students with disabilities, or the various racial/ethnic groups) or schools that exceed their adequate yearly progress will receive a financial reward. The

annual award will be $5,000 and may be used for rewards and incentives for students and teachers who have demonstrated commitment and contributions to increasing achievement.

Schools with Distinguished Improvement

Distinguished schools that have made the greatest gains in closing the achievement gap or exceeding adequate yearly progress will serve as distinguished schools if they meet the following criteria:
1. Have been recognized as stated in section B above.
2. Have met the criteria for Organizational Effectiveness identified in Appendix I.
3. Have completed an independent review to document the above.

These schools will serve as models for and provide support to other schools, especially schools identified for improvement, to assist such schools in meeting the Illinois Learning Standards. Distinguished schools will receive the highest recognition afforded through the Those Who Excel program and receive a one-time financial award to further support the school's improvement efforts and serve as a mentor to schools not making adequate yearly progress.

System of Support Evaluation

Accountability for the System of Support seeks to determine added-value results, using quantitative and qualitative sources of information. Results are about actual measurable changes and benefits that students experience because of the efforts made by adults. Measuring results will require varied and multiple sources of data to triangulate findings. Document review, surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, and achievement data are needed for a comprehensive analysis to ensure increasing results for all students. The evaluation of the system of support intends to use an integrated data collection and evaluation system that has the following characteristics:

- Efficiency
    - o Minimize data collection and reporting burdens on local districts, particularly the SoS schools/districts
    - o Minimize number of on-site reviews and the visits/visitors to SoS districts and schools
    - o Make efficient use of agency resources (staff, time and $)
    - o Promote sustainability of programs and initiatives
- Effectiveness
    - o Provide comprehensive understanding of teaching and learning in SoS schools/districts
    - o Determine impact and effectiveness of state and federal programs, with emphasis on student achievement
    - o Determine the quality of state and federal programs
    - o Provide information for continuous program improvement at school, district and state levels
- Accountability
    - o Comply with all federal and state data and reporting requirements
    - o Align with agency procedures for Compliance and External Assurance
    - o Provide data source for accountability of district/school
    - o Provide data source for evaluating programs and determining their continuation
    - o Responsive to local circumstances and needs; produces data useful to school/district

This integrated system will focus on the following programs, which are targeted to districts/schools in the SoS. While other programs may also support the designated districts/schools, this list represents those with the most direct impact and the greatest financial investment.

- Federal Reading First and State Reading Block Grant Program
- Title I - Basic
- Comprehensive School Reform
- Federal Safe and Drug Free and State Drug and Violence Prevention
- Federal and State Technology
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The evaluation questions for the system of support may include:
- To what degree are teachers implementing the Illinois Learning Standards in the classroom?
- What schools are making adequate yearly progress and closing the achievement gap?
- What strategies and practices have resulted in achieving AYP?
- Are teachers highly qualified, competent in their content area and using scientifically research based practices in reading and mathematics?
- What interventions are used for struggling learners in increasing reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills?
- How is staff development improving teacher knowledge and skills in the classroom?
- Is the system of support adding value to the system?
- Are district policies, practices and resources in place to support high priority schools?

The first step in the evaluation process will be to construct a framework to answer the above questions. This involves selecting indicators, creating working definitions, and identifying traits. The second step will be to build, revise or adopt data tools aligned to measure the indicators. The third step is to build the capacity for the system to implement the evaluation process. ISBE staff will work with evaluators across funding areas, e.g., CSR, Technology, Reading First, to design an evaluation process that builds on the common areas while recognizing the unique needs of each fund source

[Appendices available upon request.]