

Executive Summary

Illinois Context

The Vision for Illinois Education states that:

The Illinois public schools will enable all students to succeed in post-secondary education and career opportunities, to be effective life-long learners, and to participate actively in our democracy.

This vision acknowledges that it is not enough to educate well those students who have high abilities. Instead, the Illinois school system must assure that all students develop the knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed in a complex and global world.

Based on a variety of achievement data, it is evident that some Illinois students are being educated extremely well and a majority of students are meeting the *Illinois Learning Standards*. However, at a time when all students need to meet new and higher standards for success in the 21st century, more than one-third of Illinois students are not achieving at acceptable levels. The learning discrepancies are particularly evident when achievement data is disaggregated by income and race.

Although many factors contribute to this problem, the State Board has identified three steps that are considered critical to meeting the Vision for Illinois Education:

- Eliminating the achievement gap;
- Eliminating the educator gap (both quantity and quality); and
- Eliminating the funding gap.

These actions have been established as priorities for Illinois and the State Board, guiding policy, legislative, leadership and technical assistance actions.

The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 (*NCLB*) presents Illinois with an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate its efforts to eliminate the three “gaps.” *NCLB*, which gives priority to standards-based educational achievement for all students and focuses state and local attention on those students who need special assistance in order to achieve, is closely aligned with the Vision for Illinois Education and many of the specific school improvement strategies that have been initiated over the past several years. It is therefore possible to build on our progress to date and fully integrate local, state and federal programs in support of reaching the goal of 100% of Illinois students meeting standards by 2013-2014.

Overview of Illinois’ Consolidated Application

The Illinois Consolidated State Application addresses the federal requirements for funding in fourteen program titles (see Table of Contents).

Every effort has been made to design the separate program components so that they will become part of a comprehensive strategy for improving the Illinois school system and the achievement of its students. In addition, the development of this application has considered and attempted to acknowledge as appropriate, the role to be played by other *NCLB* programs, such as Reading First and the Homeless Education Program.

Fully achieving this goal of aligning and linking the various programs in a seamless, synergistic strategy will require time and systematic continuation of the collaborative planning and consultation with stakeholders that produced this application. The plan outlined here is a beginning point.

To assist the reader in viewing this application as a whole, this Executive Summary is organized around the following topics:

- Goals, Indicators and Targets
- Standards/Assessment/Accountability
- Comprehensive Programs
- Supplemental Programs
- Targeted Population Services

Italicized print has been used to highlight strategies of the state application aligning Illinois with *NCLB* requirements.

Goals, Indicators and Targets

The State Board of Education has adopted the federally-required goals and indicators shown in Part I, along with Illinois-specific targets.

Standards/Assessment/Accountability

The State Board of Education adopted the *Illinois Learning Standards* (see Appendix A) in 1997, providing a common framework of learning expectations in seven areas. Since then, the Board has supplemented the five benchmark levels with performance standards for ten progressive performance stages. *During the next year, the grade level expectations implicit in these performance standards will be formalized through action by the State Board of Education.*

Illinois has a standards-based state assessment system which annually identifies student achievement levels for Illinois public school students. The four assessments used in the state system – the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), the Illinois Measure of Growth in English (IMAGE), and the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) – have been reviewed through the USDE process and meet the 1994 federal requirement for assessing all students. However, additional assessments will be needed to cover the newly-required grades -- 4, 6 and 7 in reading/language arts and mathematics. *During the next year, the State Board will work with key stakeholders to refine the state assessment system so that it will meet this NCLB requirement and provide information to local school districts in a timely and useful fashion.*

Illinois has a standards-based accountability system which includes public reporting of student and school data (school report card) and a series of consequences for schools that do not meet standards. *The school report card has been revised to meet the NCLB requirements for reporting disaggregated student achievement data and information about the qualifications of teaching staff. The state's accountability system will be aligned with the federal system so that there is a single accountability system.*

Meanwhile, Illinois has selected one of the two possible *NCLB* formulas for determining whether schools are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward the goal of 100% of students meeting

standards by 2013-2014 (see Part II). Using 2001 data for an estimate, that formula projects a baseline of 40% in 2002 and AYP increments of 5% annually thereafter. *The 2002 state assessment data will be used to establish the official baseline and AYP expectations. The new AYP formula will be applied for the first time to the 2003 assessment.*

Although the primary foundation for determining AYP are the aggregated and disaggregated student achievement levels, federal law allows schools to use other variables to provide a "safe harbor." *Illinois will use high school graduation rates (by cohort group) for the secondary school "safe harbor" indicator (as required by NCLB) and writing scores for the elementary school "safe harbor" indicator.*

Schools that do not make AYP will be subject to a series of progressive consequences (see Part II, Table 12). *Illinois will implement the NCLB public school choice provisions consistent with federal and state law. The State Board recommends that local boards of education develop a policy for implementation of the choice program, with priority attention by those schools/districts that will be subject to this provision in 2002-2003.* Since Illinois has so many single-school school districts, all such districts will be expected to make a good faith effort to develop an intergovernmental agreement with neighboring districts so that students in failing schools have a public school choice.

The State Board of Education will develop criteria for and a list of acceptable providers of supplemental educational services. These services must be provided for students in schools that do not make AYP as outlined in Part II. *Local boards of education will be encouraged to develop a policy for implementation of this program, which is not expected to affect any Illinois school district until at least 2003-2004.*

An adjunct to the accountability system is the System of Support for schools that do not make AYP. This system is described below under "supplemental programs."

Comprehensive Programs

Improving Basic Programs

Title I - Basic funds can be used by eligible schools for a variety of purposes, so long as they are consistent with the local school improvement plan. However, schools designated for school improvement must use a portion of the funds for transportation of students exercising the public school choice option and, later, for supplemental educational services.

The State Board will use the state share for grants to districts for schools that are in school improvement or corrective action status and to support the System of Support teams (see below).

Educator Training and Recruitment

Title II, Part A - Illinois has already made substantial progress toward a standards-based preparation, certification and continuing professional development system for Illinois educators. *The priorities for NCLB funds will be to increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals, the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development, the percentage of districts that are building their capacity to provide induction and mentoring of beginning teachers, and the percentage of effective district recruitment programs, especially in special education, mathematics and science (see Part III).*

Professional development for teachers is a pervasive theme across *NCLB*. *To avoid fragmentation and assure a common focus, the State Board will align and integrate the professional development opportunities provided for Illinois educators so that they are consistent with high standards of quality and the overall program direction (e.g., research-based initiatives).*

The State Board will also work with institutions of higher education and regional offices of education (ROEs) (see brochure in Appendix B) to address the educator gap. Priority attention will be given to the development of a training program for paraprofessionals that will meet NCLB requirements and provide a cadre of individuals who are well-qualified to assist in the instruction of students, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Attention will also be focused on helping local school districts assure that all of their teachers meet the requirements for "highly qualified." Particular attention will be given to addressing the issue of out-of-field teachers.

Improving Education through Technology

Title II, Part D - Illinois was designated as the #1 state in the use of digital technology in K-12 education this year. The Illinois 2002-2007 State Plan for Technology builds on the accomplishments that won that recognition, while focusing on several new issues, including technology literacy for students. *The State Board has adopted the International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) National Education Technology Standards for use in Illinois. These will be integrated into performance standards for the academic learning areas.*

The new plan also focuses on

- *transforming teaching and learning through the use of technology;*
- *improving student achievement in reading and math;*
- *using research-based technology strategies that have been proven effective;*
- *strengthened professional development for administrators and educators*
- *expanding student learning opportunities through the Illinois Virtual High School (IVHS);*
and
- *assuring all students equitable access to technology.*

Safe and Drug Free Schools

Title IV - The Illinois plan for assuring that student learning environments are safe and conducive for learning will build on a strong record of initiatives related to violence prevention, drug and alcohol prevention, and inter-agency collaboration. *Students attending schools that are identified as "persistently dangerous" or who are victims of a violent criminal offense (see Part III) will have the option to choose to attend another public school in the district.*

Innovative Programs

Title V - The State Board will allocate 70% of the funds targeted for local districts to all eligible schools based on enrollment; the remainder will be allocated on a low-income census count basis. The funds may be used for purposes as diverse as prekindergarten programs, academic intervention, smaller learning communities, parental involvement, and cardio-pulmonary training.

Most of the state portion of these grant funds will be used for statewide initiatives that are aligned with and supportive of the goals and targets of this application. That will include expansion of

student learning opportunities through the IVHS, strengthening of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment, and other reform initiatives.

Supplemental Programs

System of Support

Schools that are designated as in school improvement status will receive support from the state through a multi-faceted strategy known as the System of Support (see Part II). A support team assigned to each district and their high priority school(s) will assist in review and analysis of district/school operation and the subsequent development of a performance agreement with the State Board of Education. This performance agreement and related school improvement plan(s) will identify the goals and strategies to be pursued in order to improve student achievement.

The System of Support will focus on three primary aspects of school improvement:

- *academic intervention*
- *teacher quality*
- *resource allocation and use.*

To achieve maximum impact, all state and federal programs focused on these schools will be integrated and aligned through the System of Support.

Comprehensive School Reform

Title I, Part F - The Comprehensive School Reform program will be an essential element of the System of Support. State Board staff will inform districts/schools about the eleven components of school reform models and resources and provide technical assistance appropriate for the individual circumstance (see Part III).

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Title IV - This program (see Part III), formerly administered directly by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), will now be administered at the state level and fully aligned with Illinois goals for after-school programs. These programs are expected to include core elements such as academic enrichment; nutrition support; life skills development; positive youth development; mentoring opportunities; safe and appropriate environments; and transportation support.

Targeted Population Services

Migrant Education

Title I, Part C - The education of migrant students in Illinois will be supported through full-service, literacy-rich local education programs, particularly in the summer months, and close collaboration and communication with other states educating these same students. Students who are most mobile and at risk of school failure must receive priority for instructional and supportive services; among this group, credit-deficient secondary migrant youth whose education has been disrupted within the current year have first priority and other eligible migrant children whose education has been disrupted within this year must be given second priority for service. Third and fourth priorities will go to students whose education has been disrupted within the last two and three years, respectively (see Part III).

English Language Acquisition

Title III - Illinois will improve the existing programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students, as it does with other populations, by focusing on strategies that are based in scientific research. The State Board will provide technical assistance to school districts by drawing on resources such as the National Reading Panel report, the Rand Report on reading comprehension and several "clearinghouses" specific to reading improvement and "what works."

Consistent with NCLB, increased attention will be given to measuring the attainment of English proficiency (AEP). School districts not meeting the AEP and AYP criteria during the first two years will be required to target Title I and Title II funds for the diagnosis and remediation of deficiencies.

Programs for Students who are Neglected and Delinquent

Title I, Part D - This program provides funding for supplemental educational services for neglected and delinquent students who reside in various state and local institutional settings. Some 32 districts serving 62 institutions have received these funds in the past, along with the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC). Funds may be used for after-school tutorial programs, year-round programs, summer programs, pull-out and inclusion programs, and services in detention and residential facilities (see Part III).

Community Service Grants

Title IV - This competitive request for proposals (RFP) will use program funds to assist the at-risk population of suspended or expelled students. Students who meet specified criteria will engage in required community service projects designed to help resolve non-academic concerns that prevent academic achievement (see Part III).

Even Start Family Literacy

Title I, Part B - The goal of the Even Start Family Literacy program (see Part III) is to increase the literacy level of families with low income by meeting their educational needs. The Illinois Family Literacy Consortium has developed a common definition of family literacy and twelve performance indicators for the Even Start Family Literacy Program.

Most of the funds available for this program will be distributed to local projects for at least a four year period; however, each project will be carefully evaluated against the performance indicators to determine whether it requires technical assistance and/or should be ended.

Rural and Low-income Schools

Title VI - This program will provide additional resources for the 48 districts in Illinois (see map in Appendix C) that meet the criteria (see end of Part III). The funds will be distributed by formula proportionate to the number of students in eligible districts. All districts participating in the program will be expected to show improved academic achievement, decreased student dropout rates or increases in the percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers

Data collection and evaluation strategies for each of the parts of this plan are described in the respective sections. However, during the next year, ISBE will develop an integrated data collection and evaluation system that will meet federal requirements and state needs with greater efficiency and effectiveness.