

Preface

Vision for Illinois Education: 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.

In September 2001, the State Board of Education adopted this vision for Illinois education in the 21st Century. Although it is a vision that reflects the traditional responsibilities of public schools to prepare students for adult life, it focuses on a future that will be profoundly different from the future for which students were prepared in the past.

A majority of jobs already require some kind of post-secondary education or training, and that trend is expected to accelerate in the future. Students must be prepared to be life-long learners who are able to keep pace with the rapid explosion and obsolescence of knowledge in the workplace, as well as in virtually all other aspects of their lives.

Increasingly, the future for Illinois students will require that they know much more than just facts and figures. Illinois young people must be able to access, analyze, evaluate and use information. They must be able to think critically, work collaboratively with others throughout the world, and solve problems in creative and innovative ways. They must be able to use current and emerging technologies to support these applications of learning, and they must be prepared to use their knowledge as the basis for active participation in the democracy and the economy.

Ultimately, it is not enough to educate well those students who have high abilities and strong motivation. The Illinois school system must ensure that all students develop the knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed in a complex and global society.

Ensuring that all Illinois students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the 21st Century is a challenge both broader and more difficult than the challenges that have faced our public schools in the past. Achieving success will require long-term strategic plans that seek quantum leaps as well as continuous improvement, and actions that combine research and educational best-practices with creativity and innovation.

The role of the State Board of Education in relation to this challenge is defined by law and by the Board's mission statement. This statement, and the goals that accompany it, emphasize the leadership responsibility of the Board within a context of collaboration with all of the other stakeholders. The goals also emphasize the role of local school districts as the primary agent for delivering education to Illinois' two million students.

MISSION: The Illinois State Board of Education will provide leadership, advocacy, and support for the work of school districts, policymakers and citizens in making Illinois education *Second to None*.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

Student Achievement -- The Illinois State Board of Education will support local districts in helping *all* students meet the *Illinois Learning Standards* and in closing the achievement gap.

Policies and Services -- The Illinois State Board of Education will generate policies, programs, products and services that support local district efforts to ensure student success.

Funding -- The Illinois State Board of Education will provide advocacy and leadership for adequate and equitable funding of Illinois public schools.

Collaboration -- The Illinois State Board of Education will work with partners in all sectors of government, education and private enterprise to support continuous improvement of Illinois education.

***No Child Left Behind* Aligns with Illinois' Standards-Led System and Identified Gaps**

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the new federal law. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

Relating *NCLB* to Illinois issues and concerns, the *2001 Annual Report for the State Board of Education -- Proposed Budget for FY03 (January 2002)* (available at <http://www.isbe.net/pdf/FY03budgetbook.pdf>) addressed key issues within the state. They are consistent with the principles of *NCLB* and direct the actions of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and education partners statewide, with particular emphasis on the achievement gap, the educator gap, and the funding gap.

Overview of Illinois Education

Illinois can take justifiable pride in many aspects of the education being provided for its two million public school students. Overall, however, there are extreme variations among the nearly 4000 school buildings in terms of student achievement, and much remains to be done to assure that all students are able to succeed in the 21st Century.

At one end of the continuum, some Illinois students and schools are achieving at very high levels in relation to both the *Illinois Learning Standards* and other students and schools.

- ▶ Illinois led the country in the number of students with perfect ACT scores. Fifty-eight students achieved perfect scores in 2001.

- ▶ Illinois students' Advanced Placement scores in 2001 were the nation's highest for the second year in a row.

- ▶ Illinois scores on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for 1999 (announced in 2001) were above the national and international averages. Students at Naperville District #203 scored higher in science than the students in any other country, state or district in the world.

- ▶ Illinois received a grade of "A" for its college preparation rate on *Measuring Up 2000, the National Report Card for Higher Education*.

Across *all* grades and subjects, 69% of Illinois districts increased the number of students who met or exceeded the *Illinois Learning Standards* on the 2001 ISAT.

These strong performances are counterbalanced by the fact that a critical number of Illinois students and schools are performing below – and in many cases, well below – the standards set for them.

- ▶ 25% of grade 11 Illinois students did not meet the *Illinois Learning Standards* in any area assessed on the PSAE in 2001. 11% of Illinois students meet standards in just one area.

- ▶ Across all subject areas and grade levels, 36.9% of all ISAT scores and 44.3% of all PSAE scores were in the lowest or next to lowest proficiency categories.

- ▶ Statewide, nearly 600 elementary schools (out of 4000 schools K-12) in more than 60 districts (out of nearly 900 districts) were placed on the state's list of schools in academic difficulty (the Academic Early Warning List, explained in Part II), consistent with the 1994 ESEA requirements and Illinois' previous consolidated application.

The bottom line for Illinois education is that some students are being educated extremely well and a majority of them 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.

In addition, statewide performance averages mask critical achievement differences among students related to language background, economic background, and other conditions.

- ▶ White and Asian/Pacific Islander students performed significantly better than Black, Hispanic or Native American students on both ISAT and PSAT tests of reading. 86% of White students met or exceeded the 3rd grade reading standards, compared to 33% of Black and 47% of Hispanic students.

- ▶ Students with “at-risk” characteristics -- including those who are disabled, LEP, migrant, and economically disadvantaged -- had considerably lower scores than students not considered to be “at risk.” Only 16% of Black students and 23% of Hispanic students meet the 8th grade math standards, compared to 60% of White students.

These disaggregated achievement data, which were available and used prior to *NCLB*, are particularly troubling when examined in the context of Illinois’ student population. As the enrollment in Illinois schools has increased during the past decade, the number and proportion of Illinois students with characteristics that are strongly correlated with being at risk of academic failure have also increased.

- ▶ More than one-third of Illinois students (36.9%) are from low-income families.

- ▶ 6.3% of Illinois students are LEP.

- ▶ 14.9% of the students have one or more disabilities requiring an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

In addition, Illinois students are increasingly diverse. Students who are Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American made up 39.9% of the enrollment in 2001, up from 34.1% in 1991. The increase in minority percentage was accounted for mainly by increases among Hispanic students.

These factors do not represent insurmountable barriers. Two separate analyses of Illinois data have identified a group of schools in which students are succeeding in spite of high-poverty and other risk factors. Illinois minority students are making greater improvement on the ACT (a nationally-recognized college entrance exam) than minority students elsewhere in the nation, and a recent State Board analysis of reading achievement by Illinois’ Hispanic students showed improvement in reading across the grades.

Nonetheless, the increased diversity and “at-risk” characteristics of Illinois students substantially increase the challenge for the public schools and make it all the more critical that all students have high-quality and equitable learning opportunities. All students need to meet state standards and be proficient by 2013-2014.

Improving Achievement and Closing The Achievement Gaps

Standards Define Expectations

The *Illinois Learning Standards*, adopted in 1997, define what Illinois students should know and be able to do in six fundamental learning areas: Reading and Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social

Sciences, Fine Arts and Physical Development/Health. Additional standards are available for Foreign Languages.

ISBE has further developed grade-by-grade performance standards (see Appendix D) that include detailed descriptions of student knowledge and skills, ways of teaching and measuring their achievement, and samples of student work that meets and exceeds the Standards. These materials are available online via the State Board Web site.

The predominant standards implementation activities at all levels were teacher professional development and integration of the standards into district and school policies and procedures. Some improvements are evident in the alignment of curriculum and instruction with the standards, but more work is needed in this area. As more teachers gear their lessons to the standards, more students will have the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after high school.

The Illinois School Report Card was recently redesigned to provide disaggregated achievement information. The goal of this action was to provide information to the public about the performance of groups of students, e.g., by racial/ethnic background. Additionally, beginning in 2001, district and state report cards were produced. This is consistent with the public reporting requirement of *NCLB*.

State Tests Measure Achievement

The state measures student achievement in grades 3-8 using the ISAT. First administered in 1999, these tests measure students' mastery of the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Performance data are available by student groups (racial/ethnic, low-income, and students with IEPs.)

Students in 11th grade took the PSAE for the first time in April 2001. Illinois was the first state to embed a nationally recognized college entrance exam (the ACT Assessment) and workplace readiness exams (ACT's Work Keys tests) into the state standards-based high school test.

The IAA, a portfolio-based assessment of students with disabilities whose participation in other state assessments would be inappropriate even with accommodations, was implemented for the first time in 2000-2001.

With the introduction of these assessments and improvements to IMAGE, which is administered to students with LEP, the achievement of all Illinois students is being measured against the *Illinois Learning Standards*. New federal requirements will result in increased testing in reading and math by the 2005-2006 school year.

The State Board of Education Web site provides viewers with **online sample tests** [<http://tp1.clearlearning.com/ISBE/>] for the ISAT and PSAE series. All assessment information is available at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/default.htm>.

Elementary Achievement Data – ISAT

A majority of elementary students meet or exceed the *Illinois Learning Standards* in each of the learning areas tested by the ISAT in 2001. For any grade level and for any subject tested, between one-half and two-thirds of students meet or exceed these standards.

Given the varying degrees of implementation of the standards in local curriculum, these results are not necessarily surprising – and some would say they are encouraging. However, these achievement levels are well below where the state wants and needs to be. ISBE initially set a state goal of 80% of students meeting and exceeding state standards by 2006. *NCLB* requires annual improvement, over a twelve-year period, for 100% of students to meet state standards by 2013-14.

Reading and mathematics are essential foundations for other learning, so student achievement in these areas is particularly important. Overall, 62% of the 2001 ISAT scores in reading and math reflect students who achieved 50% or greater on the state test. However, this means that almost 40% of Illinois students are not meeting the standards in either of these subjects.

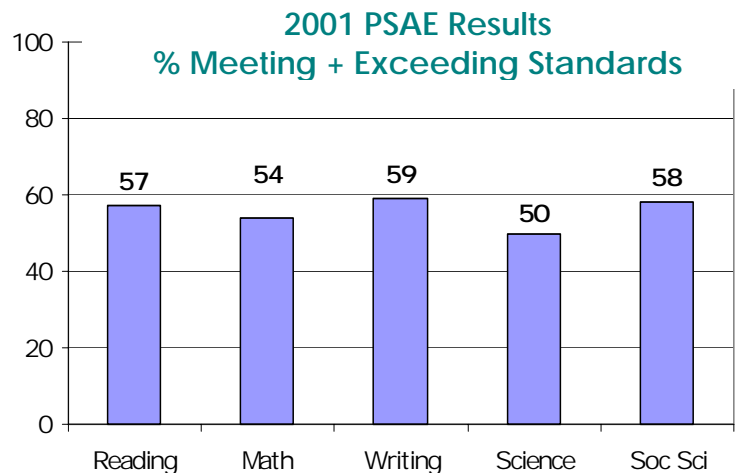
While student mathematics performance on the 2001 ISAT improved over last year, it declined at each successive grade level, i.e., from 3rd to 5th to 8th grade. Reading performance similarly declined for students from 3rd to 5th grade, with 5th graders performing more poorly against the standards than did 3rd graders.

These data indicate that additional efforts are needed to assure that local curricula are aligned to the *Illinois Learning Standards*, that all teachers are able to bring about adequate reading and mathematics development in their students, and that additional support is provided to students who are not performing well in reading or mathematics.

PSAE Achievement Levels - 2001

More than half of the students participating in the first administration of the PSAE in 2001 achieved at the 50% level or greater in meeting or exceeding the state standards. These performance results will now serve as the baseline for 11th graders' mastery of the state standards.

The composite ACT score for students who took the PSAE was 19.4. In 2000, the ACT composite score for students who self-selected based on their intent to enroll in higher education was just two points higher, at 21.5.



The test identified 10,000 students who indicated they had not intended to attend college, yet scored well enough on the exam to qualify for college entrance at many Illinois institutions of higher education. The test opened up new opportunities for these students and provided others with a valuable credential regarding high school achievement, workplace readiness and college preparation.

Despite these encouraging results, more than 40% of Illinois' 11th grade students who took the PSAE did not meet the *Illinois Learning Standards* in any of the subject areas.

Focus: Achievement Gaps

One of the most useful features of state assessment is that it highlights those areas where students are not achieving. Like most states in the nation, Illinois data show several disturbing achievement gaps, especially for low-income and minority students.

Poverty is by far the biggest factor accounting for differences in student performance. Nearly 70% of the variation in test scores can be attributed to income status. However, the achievement gap is also evident when data are analyzed by ethnic and racial groups.

Bolstering the Educator Workforce

Educator quality is one of the most critical factors in student learning. Once students begin their formal education, teachers and administrators are the key purveyors of learning. They create and control the conditions in which learning takes place, and their individual knowledge and skills have a determinative impact on what, how much and how well their students learn.

Numerous studies indicate that student achievement is shaped by the educator workforce. In New York, differences in teacher qualifications accounted for 90% of differences in student performance within similar student populations. Other studies in Boston, Dallas and New York show that having consecutive years of effective teachers resulted in strong cumulative learning gains for elementary students.

The Education Summit

In December 2001, Governor Ryan convened an Education Summit to study the status of Illinois' educator workforce and make recommendations for resolving identified problems (see follow-up notes from Summit in Appendix E). The Governor's action recognized the critical role educators play in student achievement and that Illinois and the nation are facing two critical challenges: assuring sufficient numbers of teachers and administrators to staff schools and maintain and improve the quality of that workforce. The Summit delegates reconvened in January 2002 to develop a legislative and budget agenda for consideration during the Spring 2002 session of the Illinois General Assembly. This report, *Improving Illinois' Educator Workforce*, defines the issues, outlines four strategic components of systemic change, and sets out short- and long-term proposals for the components of recruitment, preparation, retention, and professional development (see Appendix F). The short-term proposals are intended for consideration by the General Assembly in the spring session of 2002, along with budget proposals for Fiscal Year 2003. The long-term proposals are intended to provide a platform for systemic solutions to the twin concerns of educator quality and quantity in Illinois. ISBE continues to work closely with all parties to support the implementation of the Summit proposals.

Focus: Educator Workforce Gaps

More than 42,000 Illinois public school students began the 2000-2001 school year without qualified teachers in their classrooms. There were 2,104.8 unfilled teaching positions in Illinois during the 2001-02 school year.

According to the October 2001 Illinois State Report Card on Teacher Preparation, almost 3% of the Illinois teaching force – 3,520 individuals – were teaching in Illinois schools on a certificate

that meets the federal definition of a “waiver.” These under-qualified teachers were concentrated in high-poverty districts, where 5.4% of the teachers held temporary or provisional certificates.

Repeatedly, state and national evidence indicates that the least-qualified teachers are often teaching in the lowest performing schools, where students struggle with a lack of early education opportunities and home support for learning. The report is available on the state agency's Web site. In addition to the *Illinois Learning Standards* for students, ISBE has adopted new standards-based requirements for certification and teacher preparation programs (see online appendices listing) and is collaborating with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to assist higher education institutions in redesigning their programs. Together, all parties are also working together to apply rigorous requirements for certification, increase alternative routes to certification, and expand opportunities for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The Educator Supply Gap

Research reports and testimony from local district administrators confirm that Illinois is experiencing a shortage of appropriately qualified educators in many specific subject areas and in specific types of districts or parts of the state. That shortage is expected to worsen as 16% of the teacher workforce in Illinois will be eligible to retire by 2004. Retirements have been increasing 1% annually in the past several years.

One factor contributing to the shortage is a decline in the image of teaching as a profession. Only 3% of Illinois' 11th graders indicated on a recent questionnaire that they are “fairly certain” they would like to teach as a career. ISBE's Student Advisory Council's 2001 survey of more than 300 student council members in Illinois indicated that few had any interest in becoming a teacher. The survey also found that the most critical detriments to teaching as a career choice are the salary teachers receive, which is perceived as insufficient for the challenge, and the school environment, which is perceived negatively due to student behavior and lack of respect for teachers.

Support for the Beginning Teacher

The number of teachers who leave the profession after a few years represents a serious problem. Nationally, 15% of new teachers exit during their first year, another 15% depart after the second year, and an additional 10% do not return for their third year. In urban and rural areas, the attrition rate approaches 50%.

Statewide 30% of Illinois teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years. Although this aggregate attrition rate is below the national figures, it represents a serious drain on the supply of teachers in Illinois schools. Research indicates that this situation can be changed. Programs that provide intensive support for beginning teachers can reduce attrition by at least 60%. Several studies report that 95% of beginning teachers who experience the support of effective “induction and mentoring” programs during the initial years remain in teaching after three years, and of those, 80% remain in the field after five years.

State Accomplishments

The program of support for certification of Illinois teachers by the NBPTS continues to demonstrate success.

- ▶ More than 550 Illinois teachers participated in one or more aspects of the NBPTS program in 2002.
- ▶ As of December 2001, Illinois had 347 National Board-certified teachers, including 162 certified this year. This figure is up from 20 in 1997-98.
- ▶ Illinois is ninth in the nation in the number of NBPTS-certified teachers.

Requirements for certification were redesigned and significantly strengthened. A multi-tiered certification system was enacted in Illinois in 1998 that established a four-year, non-renewable Initial Certificate, a Standard Certificate that is valid for five years contingent upon continuing professional development, and a Master Certificate available only to National Board Certificate holders. Each certificate is standards driven.

Requirements to ensure the quality of Illinois' educator preparation programs were also redesigned and strengthened.

- ▶ ISBE has adopted and implemented the 2000 Standards of the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as the performance standards for teacher preparation programs in Illinois.
- ▶ ISBE completed the design of a rigorous new procedure for review and accreditation of educator preparation programs and conducted training for participants in that program, including members of the State Teacher Certification Board. The new program review system began in Fall 2001.
- ▶ Technical assistance and support, including several statewide workshops, have been provided for teacher preparation institutions to help them align their programs with the new standards and procedures. This process will result in a major transformation of all teacher training programs.
- ▶ ISBE adopted policies that allow teacher preparation programs to require students to pass the Enhanced Basic Skills Test as a condition for admission to the program, and/or to require that students pass all of the tests for the Initial Certificate (i.e., the Enhanced Basic Skills Test and the common core and content area tests) prior to official program completion. In 2002, the Illinois General Assembly passed a bill requiring teacher candidates to pass the basic skills test before admission to a teacher preparation program and to pass the subject matter exam for their particular field prior to student teaching.
- ▶ A system of data collection and analysis was implemented to support the development of an annual report card on teacher preparation. The first such report card was submitted to USDE in October 2001.

ISBE collaborated with several partners in the development of an online system of educator recruitment. This system, implemented in FY02, allows job seekers to review vacancies and school district demographics, while employers may review resumes and email candidates for employment.

In summary, two of the three identified gaps -- academic achievement and educators in the workforce -- will be addressed through this application for federal entitlement funds as well as on an ongoing basis by the State Board of Education along with educational partners statewide. The third gap -- funding -- will be addressed in part with the additional federal funds coming to Illinois in the coming year and years.

