

15. Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2 -- Rural and Low-Income School Program [Goals 1, 2, 3 and 5]

a. Identify the SEA's specific measurable goals and objectives related to increasing student academic achievement; decreasing student dropout rates; or improvement in other educational factors the SEA may elect to measure, and describe how Rural and Low-Income School program funds will help the SEA meet the goals and objectives identified.

The Rural and Low-Income School Program will provide additional resources for the 48 eligible districts (see map, Appendix C; the areas that are shaded indicate eligible districts [either as rural or as low income] located within those counties) to address obstacles toward meeting the *NCLB* goals for all students to achieve Illinois standards within 12 years and for all schools to have a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. ISBE will measure the success of this program in relation to improving student academic achievement, decreasing student dropout rates, and increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers.

All districts participating in this program will show improved academic achievement, decreased student dropout rates, or increases in the percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers. Performance data will be used to report district progress each year, and trend data will be used to demonstrate Illinois' progress. Baseline assessment and dropout data are available for school year 2001-2002. Baseline data for highly qualified teachers will be available for the 2002-2003 school year. Illinois will have met this goal if three-year trend data show that every district has shown improvement in at least one of the following:

- Increased percentage of students meeting standards on the state assessments (ISAT and PSAE) in reading and mathematics.
- Increased percentage of students meeting standards on the state writing assessment (ISAT) at the elementary level.
- Decreased high school dropout rate.
- Increased percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers.

b. Describe how the State elects to make awards under the Rural and Low-Income School Program.

At least 95% of the grant must be distributed to the 48 eligible districts for teacher recruitment and retention, teacher professional development, educational technology, parental involvement activities, or for activities authorized under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, Part A of Title I, or Title III. The state intends to distribute the funds by formula proportionate to the number of students in eligible districts (see map, Appendix C). The full listing is available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/reap/statespreadsheet.html>. Districts were notified of their eligibility in May 2002.