



Illinois State Board of Education

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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

ISBE Supports the Whole Child, the Whole School, and the Whole Community

Statement on Fair Access and Equitable Support

The Illinois State Board of Education commits to promoting and implementing comprehensive policies, practices, and programs that ensure fair access to quality for all students in our state. When we act equitably, we raise whole, healthy children nested in whole, healthy schools and communities with differentiated support and equal opportunity to learn and succeed, irrespective of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, language, income, or ability. By investing in equity, we maximize all students' educational attainment, opportunities for success in the workforce, and contributions to their communities, and thus strengthen the whole state.

Past, Present, Future

ISBE recognizes and acknowledges the role that historical and ongoing institutional policies, programs, and practices have played in contributing to disparate and statistically predictable educational outcomes for all Illinois students and, specifically, for historically marginalized and underserved student populations.

To counter the impact of past policy means not only rectifying where possible the effects of these policies, programs, and practices, but also proactively and positively encouraging fair access and equitable support for our future.

ISBE Leads for Schools and Districts where all Children and Families are Included

ISBE has a unique statewide vantage point to view the state's landscape - and while we see progress on many metrics, our achievement and opportunity gaps remain stubbornly large. On August 31st, 2017 Illinois law established the common definition of adequate support for public school students in our state. The law considers 34 factors that research has determined are most effective for ensuring students develop content mastery. As of August 2018, we have a very wide gap in Illinois regarding community resources that are needed to provide an adequate education. The range of capacity begins with one district that has 47 percent of the resources required to provide that statutory minimum all the way to a district with 280 percent of what is required. Children and families in Illinois do not currently have fair access to schools that can provide what is detailed in state law. Over 80 percent of Illinois public school students go to schools in districts with less than 90 percent of what educators and families know all students deserve. We believe sharing data and discussing the implications of data is a critical role for the State Board to play in the effort to improve life outcomes for all families in Illinois.

In that statewide context, there are significant gaps in performance outcomes for low-income students, English Learners, and African-American students. In 2016, only 20 percent of students in low-income circumstances demonstrated readiness to move on to the next grade level, as measured by the

PARCC exam, as compared to 47 percent of students not identified as low-income. Amongst African-American students, only 15 percent demonstrated readiness to move on to the next level on PARCC, and English Learners were at 11 percent. Twenty-one percent of high school students in low-income circumstances met or exceeded standards on the SAT, compared to the 56 percent of students not identified as low-income who met or exceeded standards. Additionally, 16 percent of African-American students and 3 percent of English Learners met or exceeded standards on the SAT. In addition to performance gaps, as a percentage of the student population, Illinois continues to disproportionately discipline African-American and Hispanic students as well as diverse learners. Given the current state of inequity in educational outcomes, ISBE is committed to doing better in our work to create policy, advocate for funding, and support practices that nurture the whole child, the whole school, and the whole community.

Illinois educators are using the opportunities provided through the Every Student Succeeds Act to reduce barriers to learning in order to achieve fair access to high-quality educational opportunities for each and every child in every community in Illinois. Evidence-Based Funding is a tool that allows Illinoisans to have honest dialogue about who is situated nearer or further from high-quality educational opportunities and who is included or excluded from opportunities to learn. The Illinois State Board of Education and the agency it directs are committed to advocating for fair access to quality and the equitable supports all children in Illinois deserve.

VALUES AND BELIEFS (Draft ideas for Board consideration)

- We believe that everyone has the right and ability to learn and that we have ethical, moral, and legal responsibilities to set high expectations and ensure that every student achieves success.
- We believe in high expectations for all students and set our Board goals accordingly.
- We believe that we must provide equity, access, and opportunity for every student and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps in all public schools across Illinois.
- We believe that while racial disparities exist in virtually every key indicator of child, family, and community wellbeing and that individual, institutional, and structural impacts of race, racism, and other biases are pervasive and significantly affect key life indicators of success these differences can change when directly addressed.
- We believe that the rich history and culture of individual learners is a strength and resource to leverage.
- We believe that speaking a language other than English is an asset and that our education system must celebrate and enhance this ability for all students.
- We believe that English Learners must be recognized for strengths they bring and supported in well-implemented programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.
- We believe that students receiving special education services are an integral part of our educational responsibility and that we must ensure recognition of assets with inclusion and appropriate accommodations.
- We believe that ending disparities and gaps in achievement begins with the delivery of quality early learning programs and appropriate parent engagement and support.
- We believe that communities, parents, teachers, educational leaders, and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improve outcomes for our students.