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# ESEA Flexibility

## Illinois Request

### Resubmission, January 2014

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Revised January 31, 2014

U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0708

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0708. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA’s reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This version of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* replaces the document originally issued on September 23, 2011 and revised on September 28, 2011. Through this revised version, the following section has been removed: 3.A, Option B (Option C has been renamed Option B). Additions have also been made to the following sections: Waivers and Assurances. Finally, this revised guidance modifies the following sections: Waivers; Assurances; 2.A.ii; 2.C.i; 2.D.i; 2.E.i; Table 2; 2.G; and 3.A, Options A and B.

**High-Quality Request:** A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA’s plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. **Key milestones and activities:** Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA’s plan to meet a given principle.
2. **Detailed timeline:** A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.
3. **Party or parties responsible:** Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

4. Evidence: Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA's progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.
5. Resources: Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.
6. Significant obstacles: Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (*e.g.*, State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

Preparing the Request: To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions*, which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- \* A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- \* The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- \* A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- \* Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

Process for Submitting the Request: An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>.

Electronic Submission: The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address:  
[ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

Paper Submission: In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

## REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SEAs have multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, February 28, 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility> for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at [ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

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Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA’s flexibility request.

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For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA’s request, indicate “N/A” instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

| LABEL | LIST OF ATTACHMENTS   | PAGE |
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| 2     | Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)  | 10   |
| 3     | Notices and information provided to the public regarding the request  | 61   |
| 4     | Evidence that the state has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the state’s standards adoption process   | 151  |
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| 8     | A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–11 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups (if applicable)  | 210  |
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## WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

- 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State’s priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
- 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
- 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
- 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
- 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State’s priority schools that meet the definition of “priority schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

- 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.
- 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA

and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

- 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

## ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
- 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
- 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

**If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

- 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

## CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State’s Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

A critical component of the process Illinois used to develop this waiver request hinged on engagement with stakeholders. Staff from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) initiated multiple forms of outreach, including workgroup meetings with technical experts, stakeholder meetings, surveys, and webinars. Additionally, ISBE staff created a website devoted solely to the waiver process and provided opportunities for public comment. ISBE staff met with the Committee of Practitioners on two separate occasions and provided the waiver request for their review and comment in February 2012.

With the help of the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center and other partners, such as the Illinois Parent Teacher Association, ISBE staff presented information and facilitated discussions at 29 meetings across the state between November 2011 and February 2012. Teachers and representatives from the state’s teacher associations—the Illinois Education Association (IEA) and the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT)—and educators from the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) were convened and served as an advisory group throughout the waiver process. Both administrator and teacher input and feedback influenced key aspects of this waiver request. Specifically, ISBE partnered with IEA to host meetings in the northern and central part of the state to solicit feedback. At these meetings teachers communicated their support for ISBE’s proposal of a Multiple Measures Index as the crux of our new differentiated accountability system and helped ISBE staff understand the types of assistance they need to better serve students with disabilities and English language learners.

Additionally, since April 2010, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), which consists of union and association leaders from Grades K–12 and higher education, including teachers, principals, and superintendents, has met monthly to advise ISBE on developing and implementing an improved performance evaluation system. PEAC meets on a monthly basis (and will continue to meet through 2017) and has provided ISBE with recommendations for minimum standards for principal, assistant principal, and teacher evaluations as well as model principal, assistant principal, and teacher evaluations. To help gather additional input, PEAC held eight forums across the state in October and early November 2011. Through a partnership with Teach Plus, a not-for-profit organization, PEAC employed live polling technology and an online forum for those who could not participate in person. In all, more than 2,300 educators offered their views, which led ISBE to phase in the minimum 30 percent student growth requirement over a two year period. See Attachment 13 for a specific listing of PEAC meetings, forums, and general outreach to the educational community around Principle 3.

ISBE affirmed that it was important to get feedback from teachers to assess whether or not our initial thinking was aligned with the values and the priorities of the educators in the state.



1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

ISBE leadership works diligently to engage practitioners to foster and model collaboration and collegiality and recognizes that a crucial aspect of a successful education delivery system is the engagement of broad representation from multiple stakeholder groups who are both dynamic and committed to improving student outcomes. Therefore, Illinois took the opportunity to engage stakeholders on substantial aspects of this request from its inception through submission to the Department of Education.

While ISBE staff has held numerous meetings over the past three years focused on transitioning to college- and career-ready standards, inclusion of a growth model in our accountability system, and teacher and principal evaluations, formal outreach for this waiver request officially began in September 2011 when ISBE staff attended a technical assistance meeting hosted by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Shortly thereafter, state superintendent Christopher Koch, Ed.D, invited a group of 30 stakeholders to assist ISBE staff in developing the waiver request. This group included superintendents of regional offices of education (ROEs), district superintendents, principals, teachers and district administrators, including Title I and curriculum directors. ISBE utilized this group throughout the development process to vet ideas and gauge the level of support for specific components of the request. Additionally, throughout the development process, this group reviewed and commented on various iterations of the request.

Moreover, in partnership with other associations and organizations, ISBE staff hosted 29 meetings across the state to engage in dialogue with teachers, principals, administrators, parents, and students about the flexibility options available to the state and the changes ISBE was proposing to the accountability system. These outreach efforts reached nearly 1700 people. Specifically, ISBE staff elicited feedback from our Title I directors, the Consolidated Committee of Practitioners (CCOP), the Bilingual Advisory Council, the State Advisory Council on the Education of Children With Disabilities, the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education, Illinois Afterschool Network, the Federation of Community Schools, educators who work with diverse learners (including students with disabilities and students learning English as an additional language), the Illinois affiliate of the Campaign for High School Equity (a coalition of leading civil rights organizations representing communities of color focused on high school education reform), the Catholic Conference of Illinois and the Catholic Schools at the Diocese of Springfield as well as respondents from Jewish and Lutheran schools.

District administrators and Title I directors were uniform in their desire to move away from the mandated set-asides for supplemental education services (SES) and choice requirements to a more customized and differentiated method of working with lower performing schools. SES providers and parents on the other hand, voiced concerns about losing tutoring services if the state did not mandate a set-aside specifically for SES.

The CCOP was very supportive of ISBE's effort to move toward a Multiple Measure Index to

assess school and district performance, and, like the Title I directors, were almost uniform in their support for a new way of offering interventions to lower performing schools. In one meeting targeted at educators who work with diverse student groups, stakeholders advocated for customized Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs for each school district, school, and student group), which is incorporated into the State's request. Additionally, the idea to add a new student group of former English Language Learners for reporting and accountability purposes was raised for consideration, and has been incorporated. Stakeholders also encouraged ISBE to identify a way to incorporate graduation rates for students with disabilities who have until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday to complete their education and would not necessarily meet the four-or five-year definition included in the index.

Non-Public school advocates requested that the state emphasize that continued provision of equitable services for eligible Title I students attending nonpublic schools is an important consideration in the implementation of this waiver request. As a result, ISBE is reminding each LEA with Title I eligible children attending nonpublic schools to conduct timely and meaningful consultation with nonpublic school officials on the unmet needs of the nonpublic school students during the design and the development of the school district's Title I plan and before any decisions are made. No statutory or regulatory requirement related to the equitable participation of private school students, teachers, and families can be waived.

Public Notice of the waiver process was provided through Superintendent Koch's weekly newsletter and other traditional communication channels utilized by the agency. The Illinois' application for ESEA Flexibility Waiver was available and open for public comments on the ISBE website from February 10, 2012, to February 17, 2012. At the close of the comment period, the comments submitted were reviewed and analyzed for modification and integration within the final request (see Attachment 2 for comments).

In addition to providing notice via the Superintendent Bulletin, notice that the draft was available for public comment was distributed via our IWAS system (see Attachment 1) that reaches users of the NCLB Consolidated Grant. There was also a website dedicated to the waiver that included information about the waiver in general, notices of upcoming meetings, archived webinars, and the draft waiver request for comment. That website is [http://www.isbe.net/nclb\\_waivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers/default.htm).

As a result of our targeted efforts to solicit feedback from stakeholders, ISBE is confident that this engagement is likely to lead to successful implementation of the request due to the input and the support at the outset of this process.

In the two years since our initial ESEA waiver submission, ISBE has continued to receive feedback in the many advisory groups and associations with which our teachers are members. Every presentation, meeting or workshop we present to our teachers includes a conversation regarding the waiver with our stakeholders: "If we get the waiver," is a regular part of these activities, with opportunities for the participants to provide feedback. In fact, the two years we have been waiting for waiver approval have allowed far more time to discuss the activities proposed in the waiver. We have a much clearer picture of how our waiver application will affect our districts as a result of these conversations:

- Annual teaching conferences in Career Tech Ed, English Language Learning, and Students with Disabilities have ISBE staff presenting multiple sessions on waiver topics.

- Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee meets monthly to create resources around the new teacher evaluation system and discuss issues with this implementation from the aspect of the members' associations (IEA/IFT).
- Content Area Specialists in English Language Arts and Math hold trainings throughout the state around implementation of the Common Core.
- Conferences by Illinois Math Teachers Association, Illinois Science Teachers Association and Illinois Teachers of English include presentations by ISBE and allow for content-specific conversations.
- Race to the Top-3 Districts have been required to implement many of the waiver activities even without the waiver. These districts are networking and sharing with ISBE staff during all RtT3 meetings. This feedback is documented through the required reports.
- Illinois Association of School Administrators meets quarterly with our Superintendent and waiver topics such as teacher evaluation, implementation of the Common Core and new assessments are always on the agenda for discussion. All of these discussions include comments about the impact of the pending waiver
- Illinois Association of School Boards holds bi-annual meetings with school board members in their regions and ISBE staff has consistently presented on teacher evaluation, implementation of the Common Core and new assessments.
- Illinois Principals Association conducts regular board meetings with administrator representatives from their regions and waiver topics are always included. One of the topics in January was around our new assessments and the impact on accountability as described in the waiver.
- Triple I Annual Conference held in November brings 12,000 administrators and school board members together and ISBE staff hold multiple sessions on waiver topics
- Illinois Association of Title I Directors annual conference and summer workshops provide specific Title I information to the field and each year has included conversations around the impact of the waiver on this application. If we would receive approval, our Title I Directors are far more informed of this impact than they were 2 years ago.
- Specific advisory groups for our underrepresented populations such as the Bilingual Advisory Council, the State Advisory Council on the Education of Children With Disabilities, and the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education have included a progression of conversations around the waiver topics.
- There are numerous other advisory boards, councils and meetings which have resulted in ongoing conversations about our pending waiver and have provided two years' worth of feedback regarding its provisions.

ISBE leadership collects numerous comments in the field and then shares those comments at our monthly Illinois Roundtable sessions. At those meetings, ISBE leadership, the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools and Illinois Center for School Improvement staff analyze the feedback and make decisions informed by that information, such as deciding to pull the current science assessment out of the Multiple Measures Index. The field felt that with the formation of the Next Generation Science Standards, including our former science assessment would not provide the most accurate information on student science achievement. The choice to submit a substantial change to the waiver was also due to ongoing concern from the field. Our star system rating was regularly referred to with derogatory and unpleasant feedback. Based on this strong negative reaction, the decision was made to submit the changes, even though we knew it might exacerbate or

delay waiver approval.

Upon approval, ISBE will post this most recent submission of our ESEA Waiver request on the website and notify the public through traditional means for additional comments. These comments will inform our first amendment.

## EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

## OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Organizational and systemic changes are difficult in the best of times, yet it is during these most difficult financial times that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and its stakeholder partners have initiated the greatest state-level educational changes in over a century. It is our continued commitment to the children of this generation and of future generations that necessitated the difficult self-examination of our educational systems, policies, procedures, and personnel. Tough questions and conversations have been ongoing. Real conversations, real compromises and the realization that significant changes in expected outcomes and opportunities for Illinois Students were the only acceptable answers.

Illinois has committed to establishing and maintaining stakeholder involvement and support on a continuous improvement journey. In many cases, long-term working relationships have always

existed and much has been accomplished. Relationships require intentionality, compromise, a common vision and a common vocabulary – ISBE leadership under the direction of State Superintendent Christopher Koch has worked tirelessly to establish and maintain positive *partnerships* with all stakeholder groups.

With fewer state resources at a time of great public accountability, the need for intense, focused, and authentic working relationships has never been greater. The work of ISBE and its stakeholder partners has resulted in significant changes to learning expectations for all Illinois students: teacher and administrator preparation and licensure, teacher and administrator evaluation systems, data reporting processes and procedures, school recognition systems' changes, culture surveys, professional development frameworks and, organizational structures.

True collaboration takes energy, commitment and TIME. Stakeholder dialogues result in high quality end product/processes, as well as deeper buy-in and public support. Working together we are changing the future for Illinois Students.

Above all, education leaders in Illinois understand that a culture of high expectations for all students is fundamental to creating and supporting environments that serve the best interests of students. Through this waiver process, Illinois will implement a holistic and comprehensive differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that will help the state ensure that each and every student is prepared for post-secondary success. As a first step, in January 2012 ISBE approved the use of a Value Table model to calculate growth. Additionally, Illinois has taken the following steps to ensure that our continuous system of assessments align to college and career ready benchmarks:

- Adjust the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) cut score to raise the academic achievement standard to align with College and Career Ready Standards.
- Augment current assessments by adding Common Core items to the ISAT.
- Add the third WorkKeys assessment for high school students (Locating Information), which will allow students to obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate.

Throughout this transition period, the agency remains committed to its participation in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), new ELL assessments through World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), a new alternate assessment for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities aligned to the Common Core, and the Next Generation Science Standards.

The centerpiece of the new accountability system includes a Multiple Measures Index comprised of four categories:

1. Student *outcomes*, including graduation rates;
2. Student *achievement* in reading/language arts and mathematics;

3. Student *progress* over time, including growth and English language proficiency; and
4. *Context*, including school climate and course offerings.

This new state accountability system is tied to clearer and measurable goals for the state, its school districts, and its schools and has two overarching goals: (1) reduce by one half the percentage of Illinois students not achieving or progressing toward college and career expectations within six years and (2) reduce by one half the state's achievement gaps within six years.

Upon calculation of the Multiple Measures Index, schools will be categorized into levels that align with various rewards, supports, and interventions. To increase the agency's capacity to meet the needs of all schools and districts, Illinois has established the Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) as the nexus of its Statewide System of Support (SSoS) to provide coordination and coherence to all of the state's regional delivery systems. There is also close alignment between the supports and systems described in this waiver request and the state's implementation of its recent Race to the Top Phase 3 award.

Finally, recognizing the connection between effective instruction and student performance, Illinois has embarked upon a mission to overhaul its teacher and principal evaluation processes and, as a result, create systems that more accurately recognize both excellence and deficiencies in individual educators. The foundation for the State's guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support is the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) [Public Act 096-0861]. This legislation, which passed in January 2010 with overwhelming bipartisan support, substantially re-visions the State systems for supporting and developing teachers and leaders by tightly aligning student outcomes and effective measures. The critical elements of PERA, from requiring all teachers and principal evaluation systems to include student growth as a significant factor in evaluations to employing actionable plans for building on reported strengths and addressing documented shortcomings, are fundamental in improving classroom instruction and school leadership.

The implementation of the waivers and principles described in this request will require focus and diligence by all stakeholders in the Illinois education system. By submitting this request, Illinois signals its long-term commitment to preparing all Illinois students for college and careers and ensuring that all populations of students are achieving at high levels.



## PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

### 1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> | <p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)</p> |
|---|---|

### 1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

The Illinois State Board of Education has ***always*** viewed this principle as a serious state responsibility. For what purpose does public education exist in the State of Illinois if not for the effective preparation of its children for citizenship? A commonly recognized definition of citizenship is: The status of a citizen with its attendant duties, rights, and privileges. Would not these duties include employability? What would be the destiny of a nation of unemployable citizens? These questions are not new questions for Illinois but neither is the State’s historical commitment to

an educated employable workforce.

Illinois' plan for transitioning to college- and career-ready standards no later than 2013–14 is driven by the following four guiding principles:

1. A culture of high expectations for all students is fundamental to creating and supporting environments that best serve the interests of children.
2. The state's approach to college and career readiness must address content knowledge and academic skills, as well as employability skills and pathway opportunities based on student career interests.
3. Teachers and school leaders need high-quality, sustained supports to change and improve instruction in response to the Common Core State Standards and the state's definition of college and career readiness.
4. State assessments must provide accurate and clear information to educators and parents on whether all students are on track to be college and career ready.

Based on these principles, Illinois is aggressively moving forward with a three-phase plan to transition to college- and career-ready standards, which includes the following:

- Phase I: Adoption of College- and Career-Ready Standards
- Phase II: Design of the Implementation System and Supports
- Phase III: Redesign of State Assessments

The state is fully leveraging its recent Race to the Top Phase 3 award to build out several implementation systems and supports for its college- and career-ready standards. Across all three phases, the state's implementation plan emphasizes communication and outreach to key stakeholders.

Illinois believes that the comprehensive alignment of systems, tools, and resources will ensure that all students, including English Learners (ELL), students with disabilities (SWD), and low-achieving students, gain access to and learn the content aligned to the college- and career-ready state standards by 2013–14.

### **PHASE I: ADOPTION OF COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STATE STANDARDS**

**Adoption of the Common Core State Standards:** Illinois' movement toward college- and career-ready state standards began in 2008 when the state partnered with Achieve inc. and joined the America diploma project. Achieve performed an analysis of the previous Illinois learning standards, adopted in 1997, which demonstrated the need to develop higher standards that would prepare today's students for life after high school. As a result of the findings, ISBE initiated a standards revision process with Illinois educators and institutions of higher education (IHES). This process brought together partners from across the p–20 spectrum to develop a common understanding of college and career readiness. Although readiness includes being prepared to take credit-bearing postsecondary courses in core subject areas, Illinois' college- and career-readiness objectives also extend to developing employability skills and opportunities for students to pursue a personalized education plan based on their academic and career interests.



New Illinois high school standards were in draft form prior to shifting to the Common Core State Standards. High school teacher teams and faculty from two- and four-year institutions had begun the process of revising the 1997 Grades 9–12 Illinois Learning Standards. Although a great deal of time and work had been put into the revision process, the consensus was to move forward with adopting the Common Core State Standards to serve as the state’s college- and career-ready standards, while continuing the state’s focus on employability skills and career pathway opportunities. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics in June 2010. The commitment of all the educators and the postsecondary partners involved laid a foundation for the collaborative work that continues today with transition planning and implementation.

**Common Core State Standards Gap Analysis.** Immediately following the official adoption of the Common Core State Standards, now the new Illinois Learning Standards, the Illinois Education Association (IEA) and Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) partnered with ISBE to perform a gap analysis. In July 2010, 34 classroom teachers and a group of ISBE staff and consultants were convened and charged with the task of analyzing the new standards and determining where curriculum and instructional changes might be needed. Specifically, the group addressed the following questions:

- Which concepts and skills required in the new Illinois Learning Standards are included in the old standards?
- Which concepts and skills required in the new Illinois Learning Standards are not included in the old standards?
- How similar are the new Illinois Learning Standards with respect to grade-level performance descriptors?

The final gap analysis, available at [http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/htmls/gap\\_analysis.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/gap_analysis.htm), includes an explanation of the process used to develop the analysis and an overview of the key findings. The key findings are as follow:

- The new standards are more specific, clearly stated, and focused. For example, a kindergarten standard for mathematics in the new Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics is as follows: *Understand addition as putting together and adding to and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from. Fluently add and subtract within 5.* This is much more specific than the 1997 Illinois Learning Standards: *Solve simple mathematics problems mentally or by using objects, drawing pictures, etc.*
- Some of the new Illinois Learning Standards may require schools to shift the grade level at which instruction takes place. Additionally, depth and rigor is evident in the new standards. In some cases, the content was found in a lower grade level, which provided more opportunities for deeper understanding in the upper grades.
- The mathematics standards include several additional standards that are needed for entry into advanced classes and also infuse the concept of modeling throughout all standard areas.

Information gleaned from the analysis was released on the ISBE website, discussed in the

Superintendent’s Bulletin, and addressed in all awareness presentations of the New Illinois Learning Standards. The analysis continues to be referenced today for local school districts to use as they continue planning and working more in-depth with the new State Standards. The gap analysis document is an informational tool. Local school districts are continuously encouraged to conduct their own review and analysis to facilitate discussion and data-driven decision making based on the current realities of their classrooms.

The gap analysis is also used to guide state-level activities. It was clear from the analysis that mathematics should be the priority for the state professional development rollout. The analysis continues to provide information for the state’s English language arts (ELA) and mathematics content specialist teams to help identify areas for resource development and additional professional learning opportunities.

**Adoption of English Language Proficiency Standards.** The adoption of the new Illinois Learning Standards and the array of initiatives for implementing them are elevating the curriculum in each Illinois classroom toward higher content in ELA and mathematics. This includes classrooms instructing ELLs and SWDs. To ensure that ELLs are able to access the high-level content of the new State Standards and remain at grade level while also developing English academic language proficiency, Illinois has a policy for educating students with limited English proficiency that requires the instruction of core content in the native language or, where the native language is lower incidence, at least support in the native language, together with instruction in English as a second language.

Without native language instruction or supports, students with low levels of academic English proficiency would be unable to comprehend, process, and interactively engage with the content of the new State Standards. ELLs, in addition to learning the same grade-level content as their peers, must also develop their proficiency in English, which requires coursework in English as a second language and often sheltering content instruction. In order to assist in this process, Illinois has adopted ELL-specific standards, policies, and supports over the years that have positioned the state in an optimal position to deliver the new Illinois Learning Standards content to ELLs.

Illinois has been a World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium member since 2004. Illinois has both contributed to and benefited from the work the WIDA consortium has undertaken since 2003 to develop English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). ELPS were developed using the Illinois Learning Standards and are linked to the Illinois Learning Standards as now revised to incorporate the college- and career-ready State Standards. Illinois officially adopted ELPS in 2004 and codified the 2007 version of the standards into the Illinois State Bilingual Rules and Regulations.

In 2010, the WIDA consortium conducted an alignment study to analyze the linguistic demands of ELPS to the college- and career-ready state standards. The study protocol was based on an adaptation by Dr. Gary Cook of the alignment framework of Dr. Norman Webb. Cook’s framework was used to examine the relationship between the college- and career-ready state standards in ELA and mathematics and the model performance indicators of ELPS. The alignment study between the college- and career-ready state standards and the 2007 edition of ELPS Grades PK–12 report was completed on March 14, 2011, and is available at <http://wida.us/Research/Agenda/Alignment/>. Grounded on the results of this study, the WIDA consortium launched an amplification project in

2011 in order to develop amplified standards metrics for areas where there was no strong linkage between ELPS and the college- and career-ready state standards.

The 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards K-12 is currently being used alongside the 2007 WIDA ELP standards edition to have more examples of how to use the standards appropriately in the instruction of ELLs and to emphasize alignment with the Common Core State Standards. This new edition ensures clearer representation of the connections between content and language standards. The standards matrices include elements containing (1) a direct connection to the college- and career-ready state standards and other state content standards; (2) a uniform cognitive function across the levels of language proficiency; (3) topical, grade-level vocabulary related to the content-based example; and (4) a context for language use descriptive of the genre/text type, register, roles and identities, and tasks in which a strand is situated.

The WIDA consortium's model performance indicators (MPIs) for language arts and mathematics are also strongly linked to the college- and career-ready state standards. Dr. Cook's study indicates that MPIs met the higher criteria of alignment to the ELA and mathematics standards as recommended in federal guidance.

One more step in the transition to the next generation of ELP standards involves aligning the standards to a new assessment for ELLs. Illinois is part of the Assessment Services Supporting ELLs Through Technology System (ASSETS) project, which is funded through a U.S. Department of Education Enhanced Assessment Grant. The ASSETS project is working to create a technology-based assessment system for ELLs anchored in the WIDA ELD standards. The new assessment system is scheduled to be fully operationalized in 2015-16. Illinois will maintain its affiliation as a WIDA consortia member to ensure that it continues to provide ELLs with high-quality ELPS aligned to the college- and career-ready state standards.

**Spanish Language Development Standards.** Approximately 160,000 (81 percent) of the students learning English as an additional language in Illinois are native speakers of Spanish. As an initiative to strengthen and support the instruction occurring in the native language, Illinois adopted Spanish language arts standards, which are academic language standards linked to the state's ELA standards. To further improve the implementation of these standards, on behalf of the WIDA consortium, ISBE applied for and was awarded an enhanced assessment grant in October 2010 to develop and implement academic Spanish Language Development Standards (SLDS) for students in Grades PK–12—addressing social and instructional language, the language of language arts, the language of mathematics, the language of science, and the language of social studies—and to develop a technology-mediated, reliable, and valid Spanish language proficiency assessment for Grades K–2 (PODER - (Prueba Óptima del Desarrollo del Español Realizado)).

The WIDA consortium is currently seeking additional funding to extend the PODER assessment to Grades 3–12 based on the SLD standards and develop a screening test for obtaining baseline measurements of students' Spanish language proficiency for Grades K–2. By using these standards and assessments, educators will gain knowledge about academic Spanish language development and their students' progress and will be able to shape instruction and develop curriculum to enable students to achieve high academic standards in Spanish. These standards enable students to develop the high-level Spanish academic language necessary to access the rigorous content of the New Illinois Learning Standards. The standards and the assessment will be applicable to any student

receiving content area instruction in Spanish, regardless of the student's native language. The PODER assessment is being developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics on behalf of the WIDA consortium. The PODER assessment for kindergarten will be available for districts in October 2013 and grades 1-2 during 2014. Illinois, Colorado, New Mexico, and Puerto Rico have participated in the initial piloting and field testing of PODER. A kick-off event for the new standards, where several districts had the chance to participate, took place in Illinois in the month of August 2013.

To ensure that these high-quality standards and assessments translate into classroom practice, Illinois modified its bilingual education laws in January 2010 to allow state bilingual funds to be used for targeted professional development. In January 2012, ISBE entered into a contract with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) to provide technical assistance and professional development to LEAs working with ELLs.

Through the Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) and collaboratively with Statewide System of Support (SSoS) staff (discussed in greater detail in Principle 2), IRC will use information obtained from compliance monitoring reports of the Division of English Language Learning, student performance data, and AMOs data to assist LEAs with developing their Title III district improvement plans. In addition, IRC will provide workshops, statewide institutes, and on-site professional development for LEAs to assist them with meeting the instructional needs of ELLs. The IRC has already begun to provide training on how to utilize the ELPS and the New Illinois Learning Standards together in instructional planning. SSoS staff will monitor district progress through the state's Web-based continuous improvement tool (Rising Star) to ensure that the targeted professional development provided by IRC is implemented and the resulting quality of instruction not only ensures that ELLs have access to quality programs but also become proficient in English and achieve high academic success.

**Analysis of Learning Accommodation Factors.** Additionally, Illinois currently ensures that SWDs have access to a rigorous curriculum aligned to high standards through its training and technical assistance projects: least restrictive environment initiatives and students' Individualized Education Plans. ISBE is using the new Illinois Learning Standards as it continues its efforts toward consistent exposure to materials and learning experiences through curriculum, instruction, teacher preparation, and other supports for student learning. In addition, ISBE will continue its focus on access to the general education curriculum in the general education environment, as appropriate, and post school success for SWDs.

Promoting a culture of high expectations for all students is a fundamental goal of the new Illinois Learning Standards. ISBE will continue to analyze learning and accommodation factors as a means of providing high-quality professional development in areas such as co-teaching, differentiated instruction, instructional accommodations that allow students to learn within the framework of the new State Standards, Universal Design for Learning principles, assistive technology, special education in terms of connections to the new State Standards, and secondary transition correlated to the new State Standards to assist SWDs in accessing the college-and career-ready standards. ISBE understands that the new State Standards provide goals for teachers to ensure that they are preparing students for success in college and careers as well as developing and implementing effective strategies via knowledge and skills benchmarks. ISBE also provides and makes available Web-based resources and guidance documents that address these factors, including secondary transition resources (<http://isbe.net/spec-ed/html/total.htm>), access to general education settings and

curriculum (<http://istacparents.org/index-2.html>), and Assessment Accommodations for Students With Disabilities: IEP and 504 ([http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/guidance\\_IEP\\_504\\_2010\\_2011.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/guidance_IEP_504_2010_2011.pdf)).

**Least Restrictive Environment Initiatives.** The Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center (ISTAC) is ISBE’s model of integrated technical assistance designed specifically to build the capacity of school districts to serve the needs of SWDs and their families. There are two components to ISBE’s Least Restrictive Environment Initiatives: Project CHOICES (Children Have Opportunities in Inclusive Community Environments and Schools), which supports school-age children, and Early CHOICES, which supports preschool-age children. Project CHOICES provides collaborative support to schools, families, children, and youth to ensure the following:

- All children have access to a general education curriculum aligned to rigorous academic content standards.
- All children and youth are assigned to general education classrooms and are treated by all staff as full participating members of the school community.
- Schools address social emotional development as a key part of academic outcomes.
- Schools develop and use data for decision making and problem solving.
- Schools make a concerted effort to involve family members.

In addition to Project CHOICES, ISBE began a pilot project with school districts focusing on access to general education environments for SWDs in conjunction with the Data Accountability Center. Due to the pilot’s success, ISBE will continue to promote and support local data use to improve least restrictive environment (LRE) results statewide by implementing an LRE data cohort. ISBE will continue to provide training to school districts that need assistance in making appropriate placement decisions for SWDs. ISBE also uses a focused monitoring system to target the issue of access to general education environments for SWDs. School districts with the lowest percentage of students receiving their special education services inside the general education classroom 80 percent or more of the school day receive an on-site review. The impact of ISBE’s focused monitoring process on the percentage of students receiving services in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day has been significant. Overall, 89 percent of LEAs monitored showed improvement.

**Individualized Education Plans for Students With Disabilities.** State special education regulations require that individualized education plans (IEPs) for SWDs in Illinois include a statement of measurable annual goals that reflect consideration of the state goals for learning and the Illinois Learning Standards. ISBE will continue discussions regarding the transition from the Illinois Learning Standards to the Common Core State Standards in relation to this regulation and SWDs to ensure that IEPs include annual goals that are aligned with the new Illinois Learning Standards and facilitate the achievement of grade-level academic standards. The state’s implementation systems and supports will be key to successful local implementations.

## **PHASE II. DESIGN OF THE IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPORTS**

To support the implementation of the CCSS and to prepare Illinois learners (adult and children)



ISBE initiated support teams to assist local educators – Statewide System of Support teams include: Data & Assessment, English Language Arts, Learning Supports, and Mathematics. Through regional trainings these Content Specialist team members have provided Common Core information and resources to more than 10,000 Illinois teachers and administrators. Although the pace at which school districts and schools work toward implementation will vary from school district to school district, all school districts will be required to address the transition to the college- and career-ready state standards through the state’s required continuous improvement process and demonstrate a local plan that results in implementation of the college- and career-ready state standards by the end of the 2013–14 school year. The design of the local implementation plans has been the key focus for ISBE since the 2011-12–12 school year, with the following expectations provided to guide work at the local level:

- Target communications with staff about the new standards and assessments.
- Provide administrative leadership on transition expectations to full implementation at the local level.
- Host local-level discussions related to the impacts on curriculum and the short-term/long-term implications.
- Develop and design connections between local instructional priorities to the new standards.
- Use school improvement days, grade-level meetings, staff meetings, and related events to provide opportunities for practitioners to discuss curriculum implications and promote teacher collaboration.
- Identify plans for curriculum changes.
- Detail plans to address instructional needs.
- Conduct needs assessment of staff based on local analysis of the new standards.
- Develop professional development plans addressing the needs of staff.
- Align implementation to current school improvement efforts.
- Determine anticipated support of the school district and the school based on data and teacher input.

### **Outreach**

When ISBE adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010, it assembled an internal standards implementation team consisting of the divisions of Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Career Preparation, English Language Learners, Special Education Services, and Innovation and Improvement, along with the director of Public Information. Externally, Illinois communicated with stakeholders and leveraged existing networks with teacher unions, content organizations, educator associations, institutions of higher education (IHE), and the regional delivery system to roll out a college- and career-ready state standards informational campaign.

The state’s higher education agencies—the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)—are a critical part of the outreach and transition efforts. ISBE, ICCB, and IBHE have worked together closely since the adoption of the college- and career-ready state standards to provide a unified message and collective responsibility as Illinois transitions to the new

standards and assessments. These agencies continue to work closely as details resulting from evaluation, new teacher standards, and licensure result in drastic changes to teacher education and principal preparation programs. As a part a coordinated outreach effort, a series of eight regional workshops on college and career readiness was hosted by the Educational Policy Information Center in spring 2011. This effort was followed by a fall series of four regional meetings on alignment between secondary, two-year, and four-year institutions. Additional details regarding outreach are available in the Common Core State Standards transition plan (Attachment 14).

ISBE believes that a continued focus and a unified message with the higher education system in Illinois will increase stakeholders' awareness of the state's transition to the new Illinois Learning Standards. Many of the recent changes and strategies are showing results in Illinois:

- **Licensing of teachers with a high mastery of content and pedagogy.** In September 2010, Illinois raised the cut score on the basic skills test for mastery in content so that the state moved from admitting teacher candidates from the lower half of college attendees to the top third of those attending college.
- **Principal preparation.** Raising the quality of principal preparation to ensure that principals are not only good managers but also strong instructional leaders. Illinois increased program selection rigor, expanded internship experiences, developed performance assessments, and raised the expectations of principals.
- **A fair evaluation system.** Assuring evaluation systems are fair and rigorous and that accountability for performance is shared among all involved with education. In 2010, Illinois enacted the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA; Public Act 096-0861), which requires that principal and teacher evaluations include student growth as a significant factor.

Another logical step for implementing the new State Standards is modifying Illinois teacher preparation programs so that new teacher graduates will be informed in the pedagogy that works best to translate the standards into student learning. To this end, together with IBHE, ISBE brought together the first of many meetings of stakeholders on February 14, 2011. These stakeholders included professors of teacher education, building principals, district superintendents, public and private school teachers, and union representatives to map out the necessary changes to teacher preparation programs. This collaboration focused on elementary and middle school teacher preparation programs. In August, 2013, new administrative rules went into effect for the preparation of elementary teachers (grades 1-6) and middle grade teachers (grades 5-8). These new requirements are based on the Common Core State Standards. Requirements also include the use of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the incorporation of the student standards for Social/Emotional Health, and other applicable national standards such as the National Middle Grades Standards for the middle grades teacher preparation programs. Stakeholder groups for early childhood education and superintendent preparation have submitted recommendations to ISBE in November 2013 and January 2014. ISBE is working on drafting rules for these areas. Work on ESL/bilingual redesign began in May of 2014 and will conclude in the fall of 2014. At that time, ISBE will consider the recommendations for the stakeholder group and begin drafting rules.

Work on special education redesign will commence in February of 2014. Recognizing the critical importance of the transition to the college- and career-ready state standards, a Higher Education Workgroup has been established involving representatives from IBHE and ICCB to coordinate on

behalf of their respective agencies, determine action steps, and communicate critical information within their individual statewide structures. The following key components were identified by the workgroup as priorities for supporting the transition to the college- and career-ready state standards:

- Communicate the definition of college and career readiness.
- Convene regional, cross-institutional work groups to align secondary and postsecondary curricula based on the new State Standards.
- Conduct a statewide meeting for institutions with teacher preparation programs to provide common core information and highlight current efforts underway in various institutions.
- Develop and implement a communications plan.

The workgroup has convened a joint planning committee to engage deans and faculty to inform long-term planning. Initially, a series of informational sessions on the new standards will be offered for teacher education preparation programs in collaboration with IBHE. These sessions will target teacher preparation program faculty at all institutions. The sessions were held during the fall of 2013. IBHE has secured additional funds to support additional sessions in June of 2014. These will focus on PARCC and the shifts in instruction. The sessions will be held in four areas of the state.

Finally, ICCB and IBHE continue to partner with ISBE to ensure that the standards of secondary and postsecondary institutions are not compromised in linking high school students with course offerings of local postsecondary institutions. The Dual Credit Quality Act, which went into effect in 2010, established guidance and standards for institutions that grant postsecondary credit to Illinois high school students (commonly referred to as dual credit). Opportunities for dual credit in Illinois have greatly expanded over the past 10 years, with over 87,571 Illinois high school seniors enrolled in dual credit coursework during the 2011-12 school year. Among other guarantees of quality, the Dual Credit Quality Act requires that instructors must meet the same academic credential requirements as faculty teaching on campus, students must meet the same academic criteria as those enrolled in credit-bearing college courses, course content and learning outcome objectives must be the same as those required for credit-bearing college courses, and every dual credit course must be reviewed annually by faculty through the appropriate department to ensure consistency with campus courses. With this strong emphasis on quality, dual credit in Illinois can continue to be an important vehicle for placing more high school students on an accelerated path toward college and career readiness.

Moving forward with implementing the college- and career-ready state standards will require a sustained communications and outreach effort by ISBE to stakeholders over a period of several years. To structure college- and career-readiness communication and outreach efforts, ISBE has identified its primary stakeholders and developed plans for each audience. These groups are identified in the following subsections, and brief summaries of the message points customized for each constituent group are provided. High-level activities in progress and completed are also listed in Table 1. Communication strategies for reaching these various groups will include direct engagement through regionalized or stakeholder meetings, press releases, ISBE's website, webinars, ISBE's weekly newsletter, social networking sites, and professional development workshops.

**Parents.** The adoption of the Common Core State Standards will better prepare Illinois students for success in college and careers. Although most members of the public may not notice an immediate



difference, it is important that those who are aware of a change understand that this will better prepare their children to succeed in life and prepare our state to compete in a global economy. The Illinois Parent Teacher Association (IPTA) is an active partner in outreach efforts. ISBE partnered with IPTA to co-brand the parent guides from the national organization and make them available to PTA associations statewide. Informational sessions on the new standards have been sponsored in conjunction with their statewide conference. ISBE and ILPTA continue to collaborate and share information. The most recent release of the Parent Guide to Assessment by PTA has been co-branded with ISBE. The dissemination of this resource will include utilizing the PTA Network and the P-20 Family and Community Engagement Subcommittee. A webinar on the ELA and Math standards is underway for parents. A long-term plan includes the development of parent ambassadors to share information on the new standards continues to be desired, however, challenges with resources and capacity exist.

**Teachers.** Teacher support and understanding of the Common Core State Standards is a key to successful implementation. Teachers should understand that previous work based on the Illinois Learning Standards has not been in vain. Instead, communication is being structured to articulate that they are improving the foundation to advance their work. Additional message points include that the new standards do not remove a teacher’s ability to instruct students in the best way to meet local needs. Clearly, teachers will still be responsible for teaching. The Common Core State Standards are merely a set of standards to guide teachers in preparing their students to succeed in college and careers. In addition to working directly with teachers in the state, ISBE will continue to partner with IFT and IEA to offer informational sessions and distribute messages on the transition to the Common Core State Standards.

**Regional Offices of Education.** ROEs and Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) are partners with ISBE to provide professional development and deliver information about the Common Core State Standards throughout the regional systems in the state. ISBE will continue to work with ROEs to ensure that they are updated on developments and the information they receive and provide to constituents is accurate.

**Administrators.** IPA, the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), and IASA work closely with ISBE to communicate with administrators and instructional leaders. IPA actively assists ISBE personnel with continuous communication and updates about the process and progress of implementing the Common Core State Standards statewide. Staff in this organization achieves this by employing a variety of communication vehicles, including: podcasts, webinars, newsletter articles, broadcast emails, and IPA website hyperlinks and updates. The IASA – ISBE Advisory Committee – is a standing committee that meets with the State Superintendent of Education and staff and will have an important role offering feedback and suggesting strategies for effective implementation.

**Business and Private Education Groups.** Illinois has many supportive business groups and private education groups that have been advocates for strengthening standards. It is important that ISBE maintains close associations with these groups, monitor their activities, partner where appropriate, and use formal and informal communication channels to reach their constituencies.

**The P–20 Council.** The Common Core State Standards link transition points along a students’ educational journey. Because they were originally developed as college and career standards and then back mapped down to preschool, they allow for better preparation and cohesion between

P–12 and the postsecondary community. Support from the P–20 Council is crucial because it is in a position to make recommendations to the governor, the General Assembly, and SEAs regarding a more seamless transition for students. This group must remain a vital partner as Illinois implements the Common Core State Standards. This stakeholder committee was legislatively created to coordinate the articulation and coherence of the education of all learners in the State of Illinois. The Council has acted as a sounding board for ideas, an approval body, an authoritative voice of experience and knowledge, challenging, questioning, and supporting the State’s desire to move Illinois into a position of excellence.

**The Illinois General Assembly.** Adoption of the Common Core State Standards is not needed from members of the General Assembly. However, their support is of utmost importance to ensure the necessary supports are funded for successful implementation. It is imperative to ensure regular communication on implementation of the college- and career-ready state standards is provided to General Assembly members so that they are informed and ISBE is able to clearly communicate the implementation plan and strategies to ensure successful outcomes.

### **Strategic Activities**

**Press Releases.** ISBE press releases have the potential to reach parents, educators, business leaders, and the general public. They are distributed to media outlets across the state and communicate positive information about the various aspects of the state’s implementation of the Common Core State Standards and new assessments. ISBE staff will continue to work with senior leadership to identify and promote important milestones and achievements.

**Website.** The ISBE website enjoys substantial traffic. Data indicate that, on average, the website receives nearly 20,000 visitors and more than 150,000 hits per day. The general public surfs the site often, and educators rely on it as a vital source of data and information. The website currently hosts a Common Core State Standards page ([http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm)) that is used for posting information about the standards, frequently asked questions, summary documents, and links to developing resources for practical application and implementation. Plans are to continue to update the website with new communication tools and professional development opportunities as additional resources become available. The website has been reorganized and compared to 9 months ago when the webpage was very difficult to navigate and there were very few supporting documents, the webpage has added over 500 pieces of information and resources for use by Illinois educators. Full statewide implementation of Common Core State Standards in ELA and Math is expected in the 2013-14 school year.

**Video Presentation.** ISBE developed a video for school districts to use as they begin to implement the Common Core State Standards. The video is posted on ISBE’s website, is directed at teachers and administrators, and provides general background information. As needs arise, ISBE will produce more videos for professional learning.

**Webinars.** ISBE used webinar capabilities to provide educators with professional development opportunities and answer general questions about the Common Core State Standards that may arise on a regional basis. These webinars are in addition to regional meetings that have been held and continue to be hosted.

**Regional Meetings.** ISBE worked initially with ROEs, ICCB, and IBHE to develop a series of regional meetings focused on the Common Core State Standards in summer 2011. The meetings were informational in nature and served as an official kickoff to the new standards. Due to their success and requests for an annual event for this purpose, a series of events were offered in the summer of 2012 and 2013.

**Electronic Newsletter.** ISBE's Weekly Message reaches educators across the state. Routine updates have built and continue to build a better understanding of the project within the education community. ISBE leadership works with communication staff to determine when information should be shared as a whole with the education community.

**Social Networking Sites.** Facebook and Twitter complement the ISBE website and e-newsletter by highlighting new items of interest. ISBE currently reaches more than 2,600 people on Facebook and more than 4,000 on Twitter. These sites will be used to direct stakeholders to additional information.

**Stakeholder Meetings.** The superintendent currently has semi-regular scheduled meetings with key statewide stakeholder organizations and labor unions. This is an opportunity for the superintendent to communicate directly with these stakeholders and receive valuable instantaneous feedback. The superintendent will be able to provide regular updates on the implementation plan and the progress of assessment development and gather feedback.

**Board Meetings.** ISBE meetings offer the superintendent and senior staff to interact and communicate directly with not only board members but also advocates, stakeholders, and the general public. Typical board meetings include substantial attendance from interested outside parties and are webcast by communications staff via ISBE's website. Senior staff members typically provide updates to ISBE during these meetings, and this opportunity provides these groups with real-time updates and also allows for board input and feedback.

**Legislative Correspondence.** ISBE has recently placed an emphasis on better communication with the Illinois General Assembly through written correspondence. This written correspondence allows leadership and staff to communicate directly with legislators. Because this correspondence is posted to the ISBE's website, it shows stakeholders what ISBE is attempting to communicate to legislators. Plans are to expand this practice to the Illinois federal delegation. Senior staff will work with legislative affairs staff and the federal liaison to identify opportunities to communicate with these key officeholders about implementation and ISBE needs.

### **Implementation Supports**

Implementation supports that ISBE has put in place to help school districts and schools transition to and implement college and career-ready standards by 2013-2014 includes developing a full array of supports for teachers and school leaders, including the adjustment of existing programs to better align to the college-and career-ready state standards.

The transition plan for the new Illinois Learning Standards includes a simultaneous rollout for all grade spans K-12 in both English language arts and mathematics. The activities specifically related to helping districts transition to the new Learning Standards, detailed in Table 1, began in 2010 following The State Board of Education's adoption of the Common Core State Standards in English

language arts and mathematics.

In addition to the cross divisional internal team at ISBE the agency utilizes its Statewide System of Support (SSoS), Regional Office of Education (ROE), the Illinois Principal Association (IPA), and Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) to provide professional development and other supports to prepare teacher to teach all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, and increase district level capacity and support administrators and teachers with the transition to the new standards.

- The Illinois SSoS includes more than 200 coaches that work directly with districts to support continuous improvement. Additionally, in July 2011 ISBE hired twenty-eight content area specialist in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Data and Assessment, and Learning Supports to design and support the use of a connected set of tools and resources to increase district-level capacity to improve teaching and learning and support the full implementation of the new Illinois Learning Standards. At the direction of ISBE these content area teams, each comprised of 5-6 people each, work with the Regional Offices of Education (ROE) and SSoS coaches to provide webinars, conferences, and professional development, for district and school administrators, and teachers. The design of the Illinois regional delivery system allows ISBE to provide information, tools, resources, and professional development statewide to district and school level leadership teams who then in turn work with their teachers to support the transition to the new learning standards. District and school leaders are supported by SSoS coaches and ROE staff who provide targeted assistance to districts based on identified need. The below list highlights the professional development, resources, and tools ISBE has put in place to support educators with their successful transition to the new Learning Standards.
- **Standards implementation planning tool.** To guide and monitor the efforts at the local level, ISBE created an online tool for school districts to use as a guide for their planning and transition to the college- and career-ready state standards. The planning tool leads local teams through a series of guiding questions, to help districts determine their current level of readiness, envision what full implementation of the new Learning Standards will look like and develop action steps that the district leadership will take to move toward their optimized implementation vision. ROE staff has provided support for the tool to date, and will continue to work with ISBE and will monitor the progress of district plans. The original tool was designed for the initial roll out of the new standards. The components of the tool are now reflected in current tools available on the ISBE website ([www.isbe.net/common-core/pls](http://www.isbe.net/common-core/pls)) A district rubric for implementation exists as well as implementation guides for the ELA and math classroom. To assist district with identifying professional learning, a needs assessment is also available. In 2011, Illinois added six new indicators of effective practice and revised fourteen indicators of effective practice in Rising Star system to reflect best practices related to the implementation of the new Illinois Learning Standards. Based on data collected from the needs assessments or the rubrics, ISBE or other technical assistance providers working with district staff will identify where gaps exist in moving implementation forward and align statewide resources and expertise to address areas of need. Additionally, ISBE's planning tool is connected to a professional development roadmap that will inventory the various initiatives throughout ISBE where technical assistance and support are provided for implementing the standards aligned to instructional systems.

- **Math Professional Development.** Professional development to support the transition to the new Mathematic Learning Standards is occurring in two phases. Phase one began in the winter of 2011 where at the direction of ISBE content area specialist developed a 14 hours professional development series focused on K-12 Mathematical practices. The modules are designed to help educators understand the new math standards, both content and practice; understand the progression of the standards; and assist teachers with transitioning to the new math standards. In October 2011 ISBE trained 220 trainers to deliver this content throughout the state. Phase two of the professional development rollout included a professional learning series that began in the summer of 2012 and ran through the summer of 2013. During the fall of 2013 ISBE hosted an Institute for Mathematical Leaders in two locations of the state with 160 participants. The Institute purpose was to support math leaders from the district level with research-based resources and provide grade level content. The leaders were asked to expected to commit to provide consistent, high quality professional development. The leaders then organized into regional networking groups for ongoing communication and information through an online course site. A second offering of the Institute is planned for June of 2014 to onboard additional participants and build capacity throughout the state. The math content area specialist in collaboration with the SSoS will offer several professional learning opportunities for teachers on the following topics: K-5 Teaching Mental Computation; K-5 Developing Algebra Thinking; K-12 Math Lesson; K-12: The Art of Questioning; 8-12 Functions and Modeling in the Common Core; K-12: Math Lesson Study. Additionally, content area specialists will create one model problem per grade level to address both content and practice standards. These model problems will be placed in a library on the ISBE website for teachers to use.
- **English Language Arts Professional Development.** In the fall of 2011 The ELA content specialists developed a 16 hour professional development series focused on supporting administrators and teachers with the transition to the new Illinois ELA standards. Specifically the training provided: a process for unpacking the new ELA standards; resources and tools to assist in designing lessons and assessments; and rubrics for monitoring implementation progress. From January 2012 thru April 2012 ISBE ELA content specialist provided nine workshops for 1000 people throughout the state. The ELA content specialists continue to provide regional sessions on the instructional shifts. A website was also developed for the shifts and a listserv for ELA teachers has been established with 1,200 members. In June of 2013 a summer conference was held where ELA and Math sessions were provided. There were 200 attendees at the conference. The ISBE English Language Arts content specialists will continue to conduct trainings, design resources, and help facilitate the implementation of the new Learning Standards across the state.
- **PARCC Educator Leader Cadre.** In August 2012 twenty-four Illinois educators participated in the PARCC Educator Leader Cadres meetings, a series of regional meetings designed to allow educators across states to test instructional tools and participate in professional development opportunities focused on the alignment of district curricula to the college- and career-ready standards. The cadre consists of a network of K-16 educators who have strengthened their content expertise in the CCSS and PARCC so that they in turn can support the implementation and rollout of the Common Core standards and PARCC



assessments in Illinois. Cadre members focus on three specific areas: conducting a close study of the CCSS, PARCC Model Content Frameworks, and PARCC prototype tasks; reviewing and providing feedback on PARCC-developed assessment and instructional tools, materials, and rubrics to ensure quality and alignment, and suggesting additional tools where necessary; and engaging in discussions with colleagues about the use and dissemination of those tools, which are made available for use in states, districts, and schools. The Illinois ELC has been an active group both statewide and on a regional basis. The cadre has organized as three regional groups to enhance their efforts. The northern Illinois ELC has sponsored two workshops in December (2013) and January (2014) focusing on standards and assessments. The central Illinois ELC has designed a monthly workshop series on standards and assessment that started in January (2014) and will continue through April. The southern Illinois ELC hosted a standard and assessment session in January (2014) and developed a newsletter that was distributed to all schools in their region reaching a total of 21,000 teachers. The IL ELC is an active group with plans to expand the network this spring and continue to offer assistance to the Student Assessment Division of ISBE.

- **Principal training.** ISBE is partnering with IPA to develop a series of webinars for principals on implementing the Common Core State Standards. IPA and IARSS will then leverage their professional development and communications structures to support messaging and training opportunities for standards implementation.
- **Achieve alignment rubrics.** Illinois worked with Achieve Inc. in developing rubrics to help determine the degree of alignment of open educational resources to the Common Core State Standards. These eight rubrics are highlighted as available resources for principals, teachers, and other educators who are responsible for curriculum development.
- **Career technical education.** Illinois has joined a pilot initiative sponsored by Achieve Inc. and the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education to develop a process to evaluate and develop instructional tasks that demonstrate how career technical education content can be leveraged throughout high school mathematics. The classroom-based tasks were reviewed and developed by teachers for use by teachers and identified key opportunities for mathematics teachers to use real-world examples and exercises in their classrooms as they transition to the college- and career-ready state standards. ISBE piloted a training session for this initiative in summer 2011. The session participants included secondary mathematics and architectural drafting instructors; industry representatives from architecture and construction were also involved.
- **Shared Learning Infrastructure.** Illinois is two years into the process of developing and implementing a statewide instructional technology infrastructure—the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE). When fully implemented, ISLE will offer teachers across the state access to several software applications including student data dashboards, learning maps, and common core tagged content discovery. The State’s pilot LEA implemented the student dashboard application in January 2014 and plans to implement use of the other software tools later this Spring. Planning for professional development of teachers around the use of these tools is underway, and an additional 10-15 Race to the Top-funded LEAs will implement ISLE in SY2014-15. The remaining Race to the Top-funded LEAs will implement ISLE is SY2015-16. Along with the state-supported applications, participating LEAs will also gain access, at their discretion, to inBloom, the technology infrastructure developed an alliance formed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Bill &

Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

- **Assessments for learning.** ISBE has issued a Request for Proposals to engage a partner to support work around assessment literacy and implementation of appropriate local assessments. The RFP outlines a strategy of working with local schools and districts to increase educators' assessment literacy. This strategy will support the sustainability of the implementation of assessments for learning. Professional development materials will be developed and distributed to Race to the Top districts and provided to other Illinois districts as resources allow. Included in the proposal was also the convening and facilitation of district personnel to develop Type II and Type III assessments in non-tested grades and subjects. These assessments will be used to inform instruction as well as to determine student growth. At the current time, a successful bid was received and contract negotiations are proceeding.
- **Technical assistance projects for SWDs.** Three of the main training and technical assistance projects supported by ISTAC include Project CHOICES, PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), and the Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project. These projects analyze data and learning accommodation factors to ensure rigor and relevance in the curriculum for SWDs. ISBE is partnering with ISTAC to continue to analyze learning and accommodation factors as a means of providing high-quality professional development in areas such as co-teaching, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning principles, special education in terms of connections to the Common Core State Standards, and secondary transition correlated to the Common Core State Standards to assist SWDs in accessing college- and career-ready content. In addition, ISBE provides intensive LRE technical support, focused data collection, and monitoring to increase the capacities of school districts to educate SWDs in the preschool, school, and community environments in which they would participate if not identified as having a disability. ISBE is taking steps to integrate the ISTAC projects into the statewide system of support. The addition of the Illinois Center for School Improvement will allow ISBE and regional services providers to provide all districts materials, assistance and professional development for teachers of students with disabilities so that they can strengthen instruction aligned to college- and career-ready standards for students with disabilities.
- **English Language Learners.** In January 2012, ISBE entered into a five year contract with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) to provide technical assistance and professional development to LEAs working with ELLs. Working through the SSoS the IRC will provide workshops, statewide institutes, and on-site professional development for LEAs to assist them with transitioning to the new Illinois Learning Standards and meeting the instructional needs of ELLs. The IRC and the WIDA Consortium co-presented at four full-day Regional Institutes on “The Common Core, English Language Development Standards, and the Spanish Language Arts Standards: Implications for English Language Learners”. The 2012 Regional Institutes were free of charge and took place on June 19<sup>th</sup> in Alsip, June 20<sup>th</sup> in Arlington Heights, June 21<sup>st</sup> in Chicago, and July 26-27 in Rock Island. A presentation on Common Core implementation for ELs was presented to all bilingual program directors at the State Bilingual Program Directors’ Meeting on September 10, 2012, along with a more intensive optional breakout session. Subsequently, additional trainings and webinars have addressed implementation of the Common Core and ELD standards. Additional trainings

which also explicitly addressed Common Core implementation with ELs include the following:

- Exploring the 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development (ELD) Standards, Tuesday, October 8, 2013
  - Regional Institute: English Learners and Standards Wednesday, November 13, 2013
  - Webinar: Overview of Language Standards Tuesday, April 15, 2014
  - Workshop: Language Development Standards Wednesday, March 5, 2014 **and** Tuesday, May 6, 2014
- The ELL division works closely with the Statewide Bilingual Advisory Council and their Project Directors to identify and monitor the needs of the field. As such the council's input and the findings gleaned from the compliance monitoring process will continue to inform the professional development delivered statewide.
  - **ASSETS project.** The ASSETS project is a next-generation comprehensive and balanced assessment system for ELLs in development by the WIDA consortium. The project aims to create an innovative technology-based assessment system anchored in ELPS that is aligned with the college- and career-ready state standards, informed by rigorous ongoing research, and supported by comprehensive professional development and outreach. The computer-based summative test will cover the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also integrates ELPS and will be administered annually. The formative assessment resources will consist of language learning progressions correlated to the college- and career-readiness state standards for integration into instructional assessment for ELLs. The WIDA consortium also seeks to develop technology-based training programs, create professional development, and design outreach materials to supplement the assessments.

### Statewide System of Support

While ISBE has offered and will continue to offer direct opportunities for districts and schools to engage in professional development workshops to support the transition to the new learning standards the implementation supports described above will be sustained and coordinated through Illinois SSoS. The purpose of SSoS is to supply a comprehensive continuum of research-based support, services, and resources designed to improve student outcomes for **all** Illinois school districts and schools. The main crux of the SSoS is the regional service delivery system, which consists of 44 ROEs and 3 ISCs. Within these areas, more than 200 coaches and 30 content area specialists in mathematics, ELA, data and assessment, and learning supports offer professional learning, assist with curriculum development, and consult with the coaches and/or teachers regarding information related to implementing the Common Core State Standards. Strong partnerships with IPA and the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) further support the SSoS. Additionally, ISBE funds other regional service delivery systems, including special education cooperatives, the Response to Intervention Network, and ISTAC, for which services are coordinated through the SSoS.

ISBE has established The Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) as the nexus of the SSoS to provide coordination and coherence to all the state's regional delivery systems. Illinois CSI's mission is to provide high-quality, coordinated, and consistent support to school districts and



schools across the state.

Coordination among the regional delivery systems involved with professional development across the state will continue to be a priority to ensure that appropriate instructional strategies for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and low achieving students are addressed as resource development and professional development for implementing the Common Core State Standards continue.

### **Instructional Materials**

The ELA, mathematics, and learning support content specialists described previously were hired to assist with developing instructional materials to support the successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards for all districts. A structure has been established to review all resources and includes feedback and collaboration from projects currently in place, including ISTAC, RTI Network, the Curriculum Revitalization Project, and the English Language Learners Professional Development project. As a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) governing state, Illinois will rely and fully use the resources released by the WIDA consortium. Additionally, Achieve Inc. has initiated for American Diploma Project Network states a Quality Instructional Materials Collaborative. Opportunities such as this will provide an opportunity to develop products for statewide use that otherwise would have taken additional time and resources not currently available. As the work of this collaborative emerges, Illinois will formulate a process for teacher feedback, input, and the dissemination of materials as they are developed. Feedback, input, and dissemination will include ELL and special education teachers. ISTAC will examine materials through a special education “lens” and provide input about high-quality instructional materials appropriate for SWDs.

Furthermore the P–20 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs of study are a sequence of courses and applied learning experiences organized around a career cluster, where students pursue their academic and career interests, starting from an orientation experience and continue through advanced pathway courses. There are opportunities to connect to professional networks through work-based learning experiences as well as opportunities to earn stackable credentials. For additional details, refer to the following Web-based resource: Aligning STEM Education to 21st Century Knowledge and Skills (<http://www.keepingillinoiscompetitive.niu.edu/ilstem/align.shtml>).

STEM Learning Exchanges bring educators and the private sector together in a meaningful enterprise that will support student learning and real world application of knowledge and information. Five implementation and three planning grants have been awarded and will support the creation of STEM Learning Exchanges.

Illinois is among six states participating in the Pathways to Prosperity Network to increase the number of high school graduates who attain a postsecondary credential with value in the labor market while also leaving open the prospect of further education.

In addition, Illinois has joined a consortium of states building upon the work of the Tri-State Rubric (EQuIP). The focus of their work has been to develop shared tools for aligning assessments, instructional materials, and other resources.

Finally, alongside the 2007 edition of ELPS, the 2012 edition of ELDS and the CAN DO descriptors will be a vital component of instructional materials available to Illinois educators through various online resources, the Statewide ELL Professional Development Contract, and/or professional development days awarded under the master Illinois WIDA consortium contract. Because the majority of the WIDA consortium states have adopted college- and career-ready state standards, a new 2012 edition of ELPS was developed to ensure the connections between content and language standards are clear.

### **PHASE III: REDESIGN OF STATE ASSESSMENTS**

#### **The Evaluation of Current Assessments**

Illinois currently administers continuous assessments for Grades 3–11, including the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in Grades 3–8, the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) in Grade 11.

Additionally, the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) measures the learning of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students take IAA if participation in the state’s regular assessments is not appropriate, even with accommodations. IAA is based on alternate achievement standards in reading, mathematics, science, and writing at the grades corresponding to ISAT and PSAE.

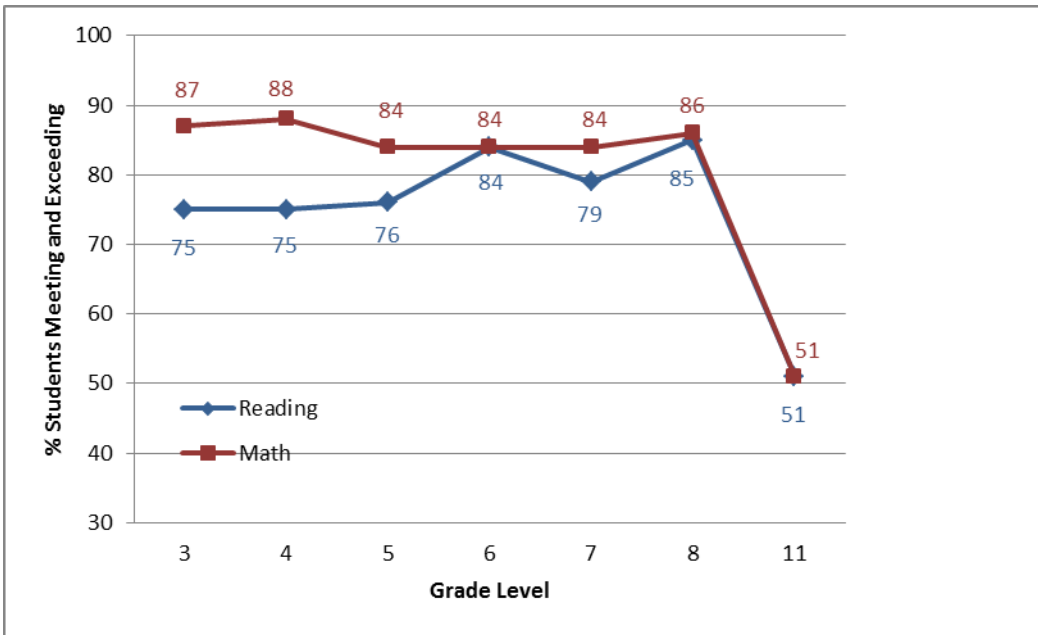
All public school districts in Illinois are also required to assess, annually, all identified ELLs and limited English proficient (LEP) students in Grades K–12 using the ACCESS for ELLs assessment until students test as English language proficient. Furthermore, in spring 2013 for the 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12 grade clusters, the Alternate ACCESS will be available in Illinois to more appropriately assess content proficiency for ELLs with disabilities.

To provide valuable and meaningful information to educators, parents, students, and stakeholders, Illinois needs to ensure that our continuous system of assessments aligns to college- and career-ready benchmarks.

**Raising Illinois’ Academic Achievement Standards on Current Assessments.** To ensure that our continuous system of assessments aligns to college- and career-ready benchmarks, Illinois has raised the cut score for the ISAT assessment. Student performance levels have now been adjusted on the state assessments used for accountability to better align with expectations of college and career readiness in grades 3-8 and the ISAT will be 100% aligned to CCSS in 2014. These new higher performance levels were used to calculate accountability on the Spring 2013 test administration. Previously, ISAT results were not aligned to PSAE results, thus students at Grades 3–8 were not getting accurate, aligned information about their college and career readiness. 85 percent to 86 percent of students in 2011 were meeting or exceeding mathematics and reading standards in Grades 3–8 on ISAT, and this percentage dropped to 51 percent of students meeting or exceeding mathematics and reading standards in Grade 11 on PSAE. We do not attribute this drop

in proficiency to a drop in student learning in Grades 9 and 10. To the contrary, we are confident that this drop in proficiency reflected the misalignment between the ISAT “meets standards” scores and the PSAE “meets standards” scores.

Figure 1. Mathematics and Reading Performance on ISAT Compared to PSAE (2011)



Illinois’ PSAE, administered at Grade 11, measures students’ college and career readiness. It includes three subtests: ACT (a measure of college readiness), WorkKeys (a measure of career readiness), and Illinois-developed Science (to ensure that PSAE fully assesses the full Illinois Learning Standards for science). Illinois is one of five states using the ACT as a part of its high school accountability measure. The cut scores on PSAE were carefully set in 2002 by Illinois educators and stakeholders to reflect the Illinois Learning Standards.

To determine whether the PSAE score is aligned with ACT’s college benchmarks, our current PSAE scores for mathematics, reading, and science were compared to the ACT college benchmarks using standard equipercentile equating. In general, the PSAE scores differed little from ACT’s college benchmarks. Thus, we are confident that high school students are college ready in reading, mathematics, or science when their PSAE scores fall in the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” categories.

Next, to predict whether Grades 3–8 students are on track for college and career readiness, we back mapped from both the PSAE “meets standards” scores and also back mapped from ACT college readiness benchmarks to determine more appropriate ISAT cut scores. Both sets of new ISAT cut scores were very similar, regardless of the assessment used for back mapping.

ISBE finalized the new cut scores with our Technical Advisory Committee in summer 2012. ISBE anticipates that the new cut scores will result in approximately 50 percent of Grades 3–8 students meeting or exceeding standards on ISAT (in contrast to the current 85 percent to 86 percent meeting and exceeding standards on ISAT). Although we strongly believe that raising the ISAT cut scores will ensure that ISAT reflects an accurate level of postsecondary readiness, we are aware of the significant obstacle we face in communicating this change to educators, students, parents, and the public. Yet by aligning the ISAT cut scores with college benchmarks, ISAT will provide more valuable and meaningful information to educators, parents, students, and stakeholders so that we all can better prepare Illinois’ students for college and careers.

### **Augmenting Current Assessments**

To further ensure that our continuous system of assessments provides Illinois with valuable and meaningful information regarding student preparedness for college and careers, Illinois has augmented its current assessments by adding Common Core State Standards items to ISAT and also required an additional WorkKeys subtest (Locating Information) for Grade 11.

Beginning with Illinois’ early adoption of the Common Core State Standards in June 2010, Illinois has been working to develop, pilot test, select, and implement Common Core State Standards items for ISAT. For spring 2012, all ISAT field test items (approximately 30 percent of ISAT) were aligned to the Common Core State Standards in reading/language arts and mathematics. After the spring 2012 test administration, ISBE carefully selected Common Core State Standards items to be used as operational items. In spring 2013, approximately 50 percent to 60 percent of ISAT consisted of Common Core State Standards items (30 percent field test, 20 percent to 30 percent operational). By spring 2014, this proportion will further increase to approximately 70 percent to 80 percent Common Core State Standards items on ISAT.

In addition, Illinois joined as a lead state for the Next Generation Science Standards and will revise existing state assessments in science (Grades 4, 7, and 11) after the new science standards have been adopted. The NGSS were adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education on January 22, 2014 and replace the previous Illinois Learning Standards for Science.

**Additional Strategies for Increasing the Rigor of Illinois’ Assessments.** Previously, PSAE included two WorkKeys. Three WorkKeys subtests are required for eligibility for the National Career Readiness Certificate. To augment the information students, educators, and parents receive about career readiness, Illinois has added a third WorkKeys assessment for high school students. This will allow students to obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate. Further, Illinois will require schools and school districts to disseminate certificate status to students and also include certificate status on high school transcripts. As described later in this document, schools and school districts will also be held accountable for the percentage of students receiving a National Career Readiness Certificate as part of the state’s new Multiple Measures Index (see Principle 2.A.i).

Illinois is confident that by raising Illinois’ cut score on ISAT, augmenting current Illinois assessments by adding Common Core State Standards items to ISAT, and implementing additional strategies (including reinstatement of ACT writing and adding a WorkKeys subtest, the rigor of Illinois’ current assessments will increase, and our continuous system of assessments will align to the

college- and career-ready state standards. Throughout this transition period, ISBE also remains committed to its participation in PARCC, new ELL assessments through the WIDA consortium, a new alternate assessment aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards (and subsequent assessment development). As such, Illinois will better prepare students for college and careers as these changes will drive instructional decisions; educators, students, and parents will be equipped with valuable information about student performance and readiness for college and careers; and schools and school districts will be held accountable for their preparation of students for college and careers.

**Table 1. College and Career-Ready Expectations Timeline**

| <b>Key Milestone or Activity</b>   | <b>Detailed Timeline</b>  | <b>Party or Parties Responsible</b>   |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| 2007 English Language Proficiency Standards Adoption   | August 2010               | ISBE's Division of English Language Learners DELL and WIDA  |
| Adopted Common Core Standards now known as the new Illinois Learning Standards                                       | June 2010                 | Illinois State Board of Education   |
| Gap analysis performed between previous standards and new Illinois Learning Standards                                | July 2010                 | Illinois Federation of Teacher; Illinois Education Association; Illinois Community College Board; Illinois Board of Higher Education and ISBE staff |
| Development of Introduction to new Illinois Learning Standards workshops (Awareness)                                 | July 2010 – February 2012 | Illinois State Board of Education/ SSoS/ROE/ IPA/ IASA  |
| Alignment study between new Illinois Learning Standards and the WIDA ELPS, 2007 Edition, PreK-12 completed           | March 2011                | WIDA and Illinois State Board of Education  |
| WIDA standards amplification project conducted   | 2011                      | WIDA and Illinois State Board of Education  |
| Assets Consortia   | November 2011             | ISBE/DELL WIDA  |
| Development and delivery of webinars series on the K-12 ELA, K-12 math and implementation process for administrators | July 2010 – June 2012     | Illinois Principals Association   |
| Delivery of ten summer institutes to teacher and principals about the new Illinois Learning Standards                | June 2011– August 2011    | Illinois State Board of Education/Regional Delivery System  |

|  |                                |   |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Delivery of secondary/postsecondary alignment workshops in conjunction with Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Board of Higher Education. Includes three facilitator trainings for 300 Community College and Regional Office of Education staff to discuss and review alignment of high school expectation and first year college courses syllabus Trainers will held alignment meetings in their local area Fall 2012  | October 2011-<br>November 2011 | Illinois State Board of Education/Illinois Community College Board/Illinois Board of Higher Education |
| Regional Offices of Education host Administrators Academies for<br>for K-12 Administrators (Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors) focusing on implementation of the new Learning Standards  | May 2011–<br>July 2011         | Illinois State Board of Education/ROEs  |
| Phase one math professional development rollout with focus on mathematical practices for K-12 district and school leadership teams and teachers.   | October 2010 -<br>January 2011 | SSoS math content specialist/ISBE   |
| State contract with Illinois Resource Center to support rollout of new Illinois Learning Standards for ELL teachers  | January 2012                   | Illinois Resource Center and Illinois State Board of Education  |
| Phase one ELA professional development rollout with focus on unpacking the ELA standards and standards alignment processes.  | January 2012 –<br>April 2012   | SSoS ELA content specialist/ Illinois State Board of Education/                                       |
| Dissemination of K-2 and 3-5 Math Critical Area checklists. instructional resources posted on common core website for classroom teachers to help re-design or amend lesson plans   | March, 2012                    | Illinois State Board of Education/ Content area specialist  |
| Follow-up for Phase one math and ELA professional development occurring through webinars and direct technical assistance from SSoS coaches and ROE staff.  | October 2012 –<br>June 2012    | SSoS coaches/ ROE staff/ Illinois State Board of Education/ Content specialist                        |
| Development and dissemination of K-12 ELA and K-12 math lesson plan strategies and formative assessment charts   | March 2012 –<br>June 2012      | Illinois State Board of Education   |
| Phase two math Professional Learning Series<br><br><b>K-5 Teaching Mental Computation:</b> Teachers will learn strategies for teaching mental computation through Number Talks and other models. Using their understanding of place value, properties of numbers and models, students develop multiple strategies. Students share solutions verbally, while the teacher records their methods for the other students to see and discuss.<br><br><b>K-5 Developing Algebra Thinking</b><br>Discover how Algebraic Thinking can be a | October 2012 –<br>August 2013  | Illinois State Board of Education/ Content area specialist/ SSoS/ROE                                  |



powerful tool for your K-5 students. Teachers will explore the Operations & Algebraic Thinking Strand of the Common Core Standards and discover how to maximize student potential with your colleagues across grade levels.

**K-12 Math Lesson Makeover**

This workshop is designed to support teachers in day-to-day lesson writing. After increasing their familiarity with the mathematical practice and content standards, teachers will rewrite a current lesson increasing the rigor and alignment. Teachers will evaluate tasks and define a quality example as being aligned to the standards, has multiple solutions/methods, is built from a context, and has a rubric for assessment.

**K-12: The Art of Questioning**

This workshop provides a modeled discussion of questioning tactics for teachers to implement the Mathematical Practice Standards. Teachers problem-solve issues in a traditional math classroom and create questions that lead to a higher level of student learning.

**8-12: Functions and Modeling in the Common Core**

This workshop will help mathematics teachers inspire students to appreciate and develop an understanding of Functions 7-12 through the CCSSM. This interactive workshop will include samples of real world applications.

**K-12: Math Lesson Study**

Lesson study is a professional development model where teachers meet once a month to write a single lesson. With the aid of a facilitator, teachers collaborate to find a need addressing the CCSS, research materials and write a lesson plan. Then, a single teacher teaches the lesson while the other teachers observe, collecting data to effectively conduct a post-lesson discussion and revise the lesson. Lesson study is effective professional development: intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice with a focus on student learning and achievement. (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009)



|  |                               |   |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Summer Conference Series<br><br>Math Lesson Make-Over with deliverable to include on-line math task library available fall 2012<br><br>ELA- Text complexity, close reading, digital literacy, and writing across the discipline        | June 2012 – August 2012       | Content area specialist/<br>Illinois State Board of Education   |
| PARCC Educator Leader Cadres   | August 2012                   | PARCC/ Illinois State Board of Education  |
| 2012 English language proficiency standards released   | July 2012                     | WIDA  |
| Delivery of New Illinois Learning Standards workshops for ELA teachers K-12 focusing on curriculum alignment   | January 2012 – April 2012     | Illinois State Board of Education/ Content areas specialist/ SSoS/ROE                                 |
| Professional Development initiative for teachers on design of model curriculum units for mathematics K-12  | September 2012- December 2012 | Illinois State Board of Education   |
| Development and delivery of secondary and postsecondary course Alignment Workshops facilitated by teams of community college faculty, four year institution faculty, regional delivery system representative and high school teachers. | April 2012 - July 2015        | Illinois State Board of Education/Illinois Community College Board/Illinois Board of Higher Education |
| Design and delivery of meeting series on new Illinois Learning Standards for teacher preparation programs to highlight successful strategies and methods of integration  | May 2012 –July, 2012          | Illinois State Board of Education/Illinois Community College Board/Illinois Board of Higher Education |
| Delivery of three new Illinois Learning Standards regional conferences for K-12 ELA and math teachers  | June 2012 – June 2014         | Illinois State Board of Education/Regional Delivery System  |
| Development and delivery of monthly K-12 ELA and K-12 math instructional strategies series   | August 2012 – ongoing         | Illinois State Board of Education   |
| Development and delivery of K-12 Math Lesson Makeover Series for teachers  | September 2012- December 2012 | Illinois State Board of Education   |
| 4 full-day Regional Institutes on Common Core, English Language Development Standards and English Language Learners  | June & July 2012              | Illinois State Board of Education/ Illinois Resource Center/ WIDA                                     |
| Professional development for teachers of English Language Learners on Common Core, second language acquisition, new curriculum frameworks and WIDA standards   | Ongoing                       | Illinois State Board of Education   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>In addition to the Regional institutes specifically focused on Common Core, ISBE has had a range of offerings that explicitly address the Common Core (full descriptions are available in the attached PD catalogue):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development (ELD) Standards</li> <li>• Regional Institute: English Learners and Standards</li> <li>• Webinar: Overview of Language Standards</li> <li>• Workshop: Language Development Standards</li> </ul> | <p>October 8, 2013</p> <p>November 13, 2013</p> <p>April 15, 2014</p> <p>March 5 &amp; May 6, 2014</p> | <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p> <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p> <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p> <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p> |
| <p>Development and delivery of regional assessment institutes with the PARCC Educator Leader Cadre</p>   | <p>July 2013 – March 2014</p>  | <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p>  |
| <p>Development and release of transitional supports for moving to integrated math pathway</p>  | <p>July 2013 – July 2015</p>   | <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p>  |
| <p>Development and delivery of 9-12 Integrated Math Model Math Curriculum Transitional Sessions</p>  | <p>January 2014- March 2014</p>  | <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p>  |
| <p>Delivery of K-12 ELA Common Core Shift Kits</p>   | <p>March 2013- July 2015</p>   | <p>Illinois State Board of Education/Regional Delivery System</p>   |
| <p>Development and delivery of professional development resources for the EQUIP rubrics for math and language arts</p>   | <p>July 2014 – July 2015</p>   | <p>Illinois State Board of Education</p>  |
| <p>Delivery of K-12 Math Common Core Shift Kits</p>  | <p>July 2014-2015</p>  | <p>Illinois State Board of Education/Regional Delivery System</p>   |
| <p>Resources and professional development for Student Learning Objectives according to Student Growth</p>  | <p>Jan 2014-2015</p>   | <p>Illinois State Board of Education - Assessment</p>   |
| <p>Best Practices Webinar Project on Educator Leaders Network Online Platform</p>  | <p>Jan 2014-ongoing</p>  | <p>Illinois State Board of Education/Illinois Principals Association</p>  |
| <p>Implement new ISAT cut scores for grades 3-8 to align with college and career ready benchmarks</p>  | <p>Summer 2012 (Transition)<br/>Spring 2013 (full implementation)</p>                                  | <p>Assessment Division</p>  |
| <p>Add 3<sup>rd</sup> WorkKeys and provide National Career Readiness Certificate</p>   | <p>Spring 2013</p>   | <p>Assessment</p>   |
|  | <p>Fall 2012 and Fall 2013</p>   | <p>Assessment</p>   |

|  |             |            |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Participation in PARCC & DLM Field Test  | Spring 2014 |            |
| PARCC Assessment<br>DLM Assessment<br>ACCESS 2.0 Assessment<br>ASSETS Alternate Assessment | 2014-2015   | Assessment |

## 1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p>i. Attach the State’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p> | <p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Provide the SEA’s plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014-2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.</p> | <p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)</p> |
|--|---|--|

Illinois Selected Option A- No Description Required. Illinois serves on the Governing Board for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and is committed to full implementation of the next generation assessment in 2014-2015.

The Illinois State Board of Education included a FY 2015 budget request for 3-11 administration of PARCC and voluntary district administration of ACT and WorkKeys.

## PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

### 2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

- 2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA’s plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Illinois currently educates 2,054,155 students in 3,862 schools incorporated in 863 school districts. To provide a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system for educators, parents, students, and stakeholders, Illinois’ accountability system must be holistic and measure student outcomes, achievement, and progress while focusing on the reduction of achievement gaps, and cultivating the necessary conditions for learning.

The current Illinois accountability system relies on a snapshot of student achievement on state reading and mathematics assessments to make judgments about education quality. Although status measures are appropriate for making judgments about the achievement level of students, they are inappropriate for judging educational effectiveness. Instead, Illinois will implement an accountability system that incorporates multiple measures. Susan Brookhart (2009) noted two important reasons for using multiple measures for educational decisions: (1) Multiple measures enhance *construct validity* because several measures, rather than one measure, are more likely to accurately measure educational quality. (2) Multiple measures enhance *decision validity* by providing several relevant types of information regarding educational quality, which is more than just performance on reading and mathematics assessments.

As such, Illinois will implement a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system for all schools and LEAs in the state based on the following:

- Student outcomes, including graduation rates
- Student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics
- Student progress over time, including growth and English language proficiency
- School and district reduction of achievement gaps
- Context, including school climate, course offerings, and additional indicators



## Illinois' Multiple Measures Index

Illinois will implement a holistic and comprehensive differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system to better serve the school districts, schools, parents, and students of Illinois. The accountability component of this new system will be phased in over two years, and full implementation is scheduled to occur in the 2014–15 school year. The centerpiece of the new accountability system is a Multiple Measures Index consisting of four main categories:

1. Outcomes (for high schools and high school districts only)
2. Achievement
3. Progress
4. Context

Each category has related subcategories and measures. For ease in viewing, we include our Multiple Measures Index for elementary schools (Grades 3–8) in Table 2 and for high schools (Grades 9–12) in Table 3. See Attachment 16 for additional details regarding Illinois' Multiple Measures Index. Continuous refinements of a Multiple Measures Index (MMI) and student growth continue to be a focus of the assessment work at ISBE.

**Table 2. Illinois' Multiple Measures Index: Elementary Schools (Grades 3–8)**

| Multiple Measure Category | Multiple Measure Index Name   | Student Groups Included in Accountability Calculation  | Multiple Measure Index Definition   | Multiple Measure Index Target   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Achievement               | College and Career Readiness  | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage meeting and exceeding standards on PARCC (Grades 3-8) in mathematics and reading | Reduce by one half the percentage not proficient within 6 years                 |
|                           | College and Career Mastery    | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage exceeding standards on PARCC (Grades 3-8)  | Reduce by one half the percentage not exceeding (yet proficient) within 6 years |
|                           | Achievement Gap Reduction     | Racial and ethnic minorities, Economically disadvantaged, ELLs, Students with Disabilities and High Needs if none of the above groups is present | Percentage achievement gap reduction on PARCC (Grades 3-8)                                  | Reduce by ½ one half the % achievement gap within 6 years                       |
| Progress                  | Growth in Content Proficiency | All student group  | Growth on PARCC (Grades 4–8) in mathematics and reading                                     | Meet expected target each year  |
|                           |                               |  |   |   |
| Context (Bonus)           | Climate Survey                | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | School rating of an “excellent” climate for learning (when available)                       | Meet expected target each year  |

**Table 3. Illinois' Multiple Measures Index: High Schools (Grades 9–12)**

| Multiple Measure Category | Multiple Measure Index Name                                  | Student Groups included in Accountability Calculation  | Multiple Measure Index Definition  | Multiple Measure Index Target  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Outcomes                  | College and Career Bound (High Schools and School Districts) | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage of students graduating within 4 years   | Reduce by one half the difference from 90% within 6 years                    |
|                           |  | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage of students graduating within 5 years   | Reduce by one half the difference from 95% within 6 years                    |
| Achievement               | College and Career Readiness                                 | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage meeting and exceeding standards on PARCC (grade 9), PARCC (grade 10) and PARCC (Grade 11) in mathematics, reading | Reduce by one half the percentage not proficient within 6 years              |
|                           | College and Career Mastery                                   | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks  | Reduce by one half the percentage not meeting benchmarks within 6 years      |
|                           |  | All student group, High Needs group, Former ELLs group   | Percentage receiving WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate <sup>a</sup>   | Reduce by one half the percentage not receiving a certificate within 6 years |
|                           | Achievement Gap Reduction                                    | Racial and ethnic minorities, Economically disadvantaged, ELLs, Students with Disabilities and High Needs if none of the above groups is present | Percentage achievement gap reduction on PARCC (grade 9), PARCC (grade 10) and PARCC (Grade 11) in mathematics and reading,   | Reduce by one half the percentage achievement gap within 6 years             |
| Progress                  | Growth in Content Proficiency                                | All student group  | Growth from PARCC (Grades 9–11) in mathematics and reading   | Meet expected target each year   |
|                           |  |  |  |  |
|                           |  |  |  |  |

|                            |                         |  |  |  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Context<br/>(Bonus)</b> | Climate Survey          | All student group,<br>High Needs group,<br>Former ELLs group | School rating of an<br>“excellent” climate for<br>learning (when available)  | Meet expected target<br>each year                    |
|                            | College<br>Preparedness | All student group,<br>High Needs group,<br>Former ELLs group | Percentage of students<br>scoring a 3 or higher on<br>Advanced Placement or<br>International<br>Baccalaureate exams <sup>a</sup> | Increase by 5% each<br>year or attain 25%<br>overall |
|                            | Career<br>Preparedness  | All student group,<br>High Needs group,<br>Former ELLs group | Percentage of students<br>taking dual credit or<br>honors courses <sup>a</sup>   | Increase by 5% each<br>year or attain 25%<br>overall |
|                            |                         | All student group,<br>High Needs group,<br>Former ELLs group | Percentage of students<br>receiving industry<br>credentials <sup>a</sup>   | Increase by 5% each<br>year or attain 25%<br>overall |
|                            |                         |  |  |  |

<sup>a</sup> Available Spring 2013, which served as a pilot year for Survey administration – the current year is the first data collection

While the Multiple Measure Index has been split into an index for elementary schools and an index for high schools, the measures (including assessment data) will be used in accordance with the grades that are offered at each Illinois school, as some schools are K–12, 6–12, and so forth.

In general, schools will receive three scores of 100 points each: one score for outcomes (if applicable), one score for achievement, and one score for progress. Schools will not receive an index score for context; rather, schools will be designated as having “met” or “not met” context targets, which will count as bonus points for our recognition and rewards system. More details about the point calculations and the recognition system are provided at the end of Principal 2.A. The minimum group size for each measure will be reported by all traditional ESEA subgroups at a subgroup size of 10 students (reduced from our current subgroup size of 45 students) and 30 students for newly identified high needs and former English language learners subgroup. The high needs group includes students with disabilities, English language learners, and low income students. Creating the high needs group holds an additional 287 schools and 37 districts accountable for improving the performance of subgroups.

Schools must meet a 95 percent participation rate for all students on required state assessments in order to receive *any* points in the components of the index for which the participation requirements are not met. A school can meet the 95 percent participation requirement through a 95% confidence interval. Participation in state assessments is imperative for a valid and reliable accountability system. Statewide in 2011, only 45 schools and 4 school districts did not meet this participation rate; thus, we expect all schools to meet the Participation requirements.

**Outcomes.** The first category of the Multiple Measures Index is outcomes (which applies only to high school Grade 12). This category will include two graduation rates: one based on a four-year cohort rate and another based on a five-year cohort rate. Illinois is committed to preparing students for college and careers, and we acknowledge that a student graduating within five years is a laudable accomplishment and should be recognized. Graduation rate targets will be set for all students in which the school must reduce by one half the difference from 90 percent (for the four-year rate) or

95 percent (for the five-year rate) within six years. These targets will differ by school and will be reported for traditional ESEA subgroups, the high needs group and former ELLs. The 90 percent four-year and the 95 percent five-year targets are based on a report by the Education Trust (2010). In 2013, our statewide average graduation rate (using the federal four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate) was 83.2 percent, and our graduation rate has been increasing (under a different definition) since 1997. We are confident in the ability of our schools and school districts to improve graduation rates for Illinois’ students and subgroups.

| Points | Outcomes Category          |
|--------|----------------------------|
| 100    | Met Target                 |
| 50     | Improved, but below target |
| 0      | No change or decline       |

**Achievement.** The second category of the Multiple Measures Index is achievement. This category consists of three subcategories: college and career readiness, college and career mastery, and the reduction of achievement gaps. All measures in this category are based on data from Illinois’ state assessments. All targets in this category will differ by school, and all measures will be reported by traditional ESEA subgroups.

For college and career readiness, we will hold schools accountable for the percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards on state assessments. As mentioned in Principle 1.B, our PSAE “meets standards” score is aligned to college benchmarks, and we raised the cut score on ISAT to better align with college benchmarks. As such, we feel that meeting and exceeding standards on our state assessments is one indicator of students’ college and career readiness.

As described in more detail in Principle 2.B, we will set new AMOs for students’ college and career readiness. Schools will be expected to reduce by one half the percentage of students in the all students group and in each subgroup that is not proficient within six years. Schools will be held accountable for meeting the new AMOs for the all students group, high needs group and former ELLs group and AMOs for each traditional ESEA subgroup will be reported annually for all schools.

| Points | College and Career Readiness                              |
|--------|---|
| 100    | Met target  |
| 95     | At least 90% of student meeting/exceeding state standards |
| 75     | Met target through 95% confidence interval                |
| 50     | Improved, but below target                                |
| 25     | No change within 75% confidence interval                  |
| 0      | Decline   |

For college and career mastery, we will hold schools accountable for college and career readiness (the percentage of students meeting PARCC college readiness benchmarks). Targets for college and career mastery have similarly been set at reducing by one half the percentage of students not meeting benchmarks. Throughout our meetings with Illinois stakeholders, many agree on the value and the importance of ACT and WorkKeys mastery indicators; they also agree that schools and school districts must be held accountable for achievement on these indicators. The 2014 education budget

request includes funding for voluntary district administration of ACT and WorkKeys.

| Points | College and Career Mastery                 |
|--------|--|
| 100    | Met target                                 |
| 75     | Met target through 95% confidence interval |
| 50     | Improved, but below the target             |
| 25     | No change within 75% confidence interval   |
| 0      | Decline                                    |

For achievement gap reduction, we will hold schools accountable for reducing the achievement gap by one half within the next six years, an ambitious yet achievable target. Illinois strongly believes that achievement gaps must be reduced in our state, and schools should be held accountable and recognized for doing so. For instance, although Illinois has seen an increase in ISAT performance for African American/black students (an increase of 7.6 percent in mathematics and 7.2 percent in reading since 2008, based on new cut score results), we still have a long way to go; Illinois currently has a black/white achievement gap of 32.9 percent in mathematics and 30.8 percent in reading.

Achievement gaps in mathematics and reading will be calculated based on four groupings of students. For each grouping, a subgroup size of 30 students must be met (this will be reduced from our current size of 45 students).

- 1. Racial and ethnic minorities.** Schools will be held accountable for reducing the achievement gap between a racial or ethnic group comprised of black, Hispanic, and Native American students and a racial or ethnic group comprised of white, Asian, Hawaiian Pacific Islander and multiracial students. In an analysis of Illinois' assessment data from 2006 to 2011, black, Hispanic, and Native American students have consistently underperformed compared to white, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students. The target to reduce this gap by one half within six years will differ by LEA and school. With a subgroup size of 30 students, 59 percent of our schools will qualify for this achievement gap comparison group.
- 2. Economically disadvantaged.** Schools will be held accountable for reducing the achievement gap between a group of low-income students and a group of non-low-income students. The group of low-income students will include students ages 3 to 17, inclusive, from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. The target to reduce this gap by one half within six years will differ by school. With a subgroup size of 30 students, 79 percent of our schools will qualify for this achievement gap comparison group.
- 3. English language learners.** Schools will be held accountable for reducing the achievement gap between a group of ELLs and a group of non-ELLs. The group of ELLs will include students who are determined to be limited English proficient, as well as students who became proficient within the last two years. The target to reduce this gap by one half within six years will differ by LEA and school. With a subgroup size of 30 students, 17 percent of our schools and 22 percent of our school districts will qualify for this achievement gap comparison group.

4. **Students with disabilities.** Schools will be held accountable for reducing the achievement gap between a group of SWDs and a group of non-SWDs. The group of SWDs will include students who fit eligibility standards and who are eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and have an IEP. With a subgroup size of 30 students, 54 percent of our schools will qualify for this achievement gap comparison group.

| Points | Achievement Gap Reduction                  |
|--------|--|
| 100    | Met target                                 |
| 75     | Met target through 95% confidence interval |
| 50     | Improved, but below the target             |
| 25     | No change within 75% confidence interval   |
| 0      | Decline                                    |

The achievement gap measure as part of the Multiple Measures Index, will include targets for all achievement gap student groups represented in a school. After analyzing 2013 data, 3 percent of our schools (approximately 116 schools) do not meet a subgroup size of 30 students for any of the four comparison groups. In order to still hold these schools accountable for reducing achievement gaps, Illinois will create a high-need subgroup of all low-income, ELL, and SWD students. The target to reduce the gap between the high-need group and other students by one half within six years will differ by school. Again, only those schools that do not qualify for at least one of the four comparison groups described above, will be held accountable for reducing the achievement gap for a high-need subgroup. By implementing a high-need subgroup with a reduced subgroup size of 30 students, we will be holding an additional 287 schools and 37 school districts accountable for reducing achievement gaps, thereby ensuring all schools and districts are included within the achievement gap reduction measure

**Progress.** The third category of the Multiple Measures Index is progress. Specifically, this category is included in the Multiple Measures Index to emphasize school improvement over time toward preparing students to be college and career ready. This category includes two subcategories: growth in content proficiency and progress in English proficiency. All measures in this category will be reported by traditional ESEA subgroups.

For growth in content proficiency, we will hold schools accountable for student growth over time. Illinois will calculate the growth for students in Grades 4–8 for the 2013–14 school year (using ISAT) and for Grades 4–11 in the 2015–16 school year (using PARCC), which will allow educators, students, parents, and the public to have a sense of the progress being made by schools toward college and career readiness. Growth metrics will not be available for the first year of implementation of PARCC (2014-15).

In January 2012, ISBE approved the Value Table model to calculate growth for the state. For more information about Illinois’ selection of a Growth Model, please visit:

- 1) the ISBE State Fiscal Stabilization Fund webpage (<http://www.isbe.net/SFSF>),
- 2) the ISBE Growth Model Working Group webpage (<http://www.isbe.net/gmwg>), and



- 3) the ISBE growth model website (<http://www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm?col6=open#CollapsiblePanel6>).

Although the Value Table model was adopted in 2012, the precise technical methods and value point weightings were finalized in 2013. ISBE continues to consult with our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to refine the plan to implement the Growth Model. The actual Value Table constructed to determine school- and district-level growth, along with information about the implementation of the Value Table, can be found at <http://illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=Trends&source2=StudentAcademicGrowth&Stateid=IL>.

To calculate growth using Value Tables at the high school level, data in addition to the Grade 11 assessment (PSAE, which includes both ACT and WorkKeys) are needed. In the 2012-13 school year, ISBE piloted the EXPLORE (Grade 9) and the PLAN (Grade 10) assessments on a voluntary basis with the intention of moving to mandated testing for the purposes of calculating a high school growth metric. However, ACT has since decided to retire the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments. Illinois now plans to begin measuring growth for accountability purposes in 2016 using the PARCC assessment during the second year of its administration.

To calculate growth using value tables for all schools and districts, we will use the PARCC assessment data beginning in 2014-2015.

| According to the results from growth model, schools and districts will be given progress points for all students group based on how much progress that schools and districts have made. Points | Growth in Content Proficiency              |
|--|--|
| 100  | Met target                                 |
| 75   | Met target through 95% confidence interval |
| 50   | Improved, but below the target             |
| 25   | No change within 75% confidence interval   |
| 0  | Decline                                    |

For progress in English proficiency, we will hold all schools accountable for progress in English proficiency for their limited English proficient students. Currently, only school districts receiving Title III funds are held accountable for ELP and progress. In contrast, under state and federal law, all school districts in Illinois are responsible for providing services and supports to ELLs, to enable students to access content and become proficient in English. As such, we strongly feel that all schools and school districts must be held accountable for their ELLs and their bilingual education programs.

English proficiency is currently assessed in Illinois for all students with limited English proficiency by administering ACCESS. As part of the progress category, progress in English proficiency will be

measured as the percentage of students achieving a .5 score increase or a maximum score of 6 on ACCESS, a method currently used to measure Title III AMAO1. This calculation does not include ELLs who are not served, and the minimum subgroup size of 30 students must be met. In terms of targets for progress in English proficiency, we will use the same targets as those used for Title III AMAO1, with an approximate 3 percent increase each subsequent year.

| Points | Progress in English Proficiency            |
|--------|--|
| 100    | Met target                                 |
| 75     | Met target through 95% confidence interval |
| 50     | Improved, but below the target             |
| 25     | No change                                  |
| 0      | Decline                                    |

**Context.** The fourth and final category of the Multiple Measures Index is context. This category provides additional recognition for schools that establish a learning environment and support systems to prepare their students to be college and career ready. As mentioned earlier, schools will receive bonus points for meeting context targets, and these bonus points will factor into recognition.

Metrics that comprise this category include the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher on Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate exams, the percentage of students taking dual credit or honors courses, the percentage of students receiving industry credentials, and a school rating of excellent on a culture and climate survey.

Known as the 5Essentials Survey, this an online tool that will yield data about the culture and climate of a school and district. The well-researched survey was piloted and made available to all districts in February of 2013. Student, teacher and parent perception survey data will be communicated to district leadership and is scheduled to be reported on the 2013 School Report cards (<http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>). The 5Essentials survey reliably measures changes in a school organization, predicts school success, and provides individualized actionable reports to schools, districts, parents, and community partners.

Once the measures are fully developed, ambitious yet achievable targets will be set. The targets listed in the Multiple Measures Index are examples only. Additional context measures may include the percentage of students who enroll in an IHE, the percentage of students who attain one year’s worth of college credit, and/or the percentage of students who matriculate into the military or jobs.

| Points | Context Category           |
|--------|----------------------------|
| 100    | Met Target                 |
| 50     | Improved, but below target |
| 0      | No change or decline       |

### English Language Learners and Students With Disabilities

Illinois is committed to ensuring that our differentiated recognition, accountability, and support

system is focused on improving the performance of ELLs and SWDs. To do so, Illinois will do the following:

- \* Reduce the subgroup size in Illinois from 45 students to 30 students.
- \* Hold ELLs and SWDs to high standards and targets, while expecting schools and school districts to make greater rates of annual progress for ELLs and SWDs who are further behind.
- \* Hold schools and school districts accountable for closing achievement gaps for Racial Ethnic Minority Students, Economically Disadvantaged, ELLs and SWDs by including specific comparison groups and targets as part of the Multiple Measures Index.
- \* Hold an additional 287 schools and 37 school districts accountable for closing achievement gaps for a high-need group that includes ELLs, SWDs, and low income students.
- \* Report all measures in the Multiple Measures Index by all of the traditional ESEA subgroups and add two additional sub groups, high needs and former ELLs for reporting on a total of 16 groups.
- \* Add a reporting subgroup of former ELLs.

Regarding the addition of former ELLs as a reporting subgroup, we want to ensure that schools and school districts are continuing to make progress for ELLs after they exit from English language education programs. ELL or LEP classifications are typically temporary classifications. Tracking the continued progress of those students longitudinally, even beyond reclassification, requires a classification of transitioned or former ELLs. This will allow the tracking of a variety of outcomes for ELLs, including content test scores after achieving proficiency, graduation rates, and growth on state assessments. This is particularly beneficial given that currently most of the Illinois students classified as ELLs are in the younger grades, limiting the amount of data available for middle school and high school ELL outcomes.

### **Implementing the Multiple Measures Index**

Illinois' Multiple Measures Index will be used to drive interventions and supports that will occur at district and school levels. The Multiple Measures Index will offer a broader understanding of where schools and/or school districts fall along a trajectory of improvement. Each category will be color coded red, yellow, and green for ease of determining the strengths and weaknesses of a school in terms of outcomes, achievement, progress, and context.

The results of the Multiple Measures Index will be used to calculate three separate indexes for schools serving Grades 9–12 (outcomes, achievement, and progress) and two indexes for schools serving Grades K–8 only (achievement and progress).

As shown in Attachment 16, each measure within the Multiple Measures Index (i.e., each measure represented by a row) will be assigned point values, which then aggregate into three index scores, with each index score worth 100 points. In addition, each measure in the context category will be designated as “met” or “not met” for all schools. These indexes and the context category (Table 4) will collectively serve as the method for communicating accountability status to the public and determining accountability classification levels for rewards and interventions.

**Table 4. Calculations for School and District Accountability**

| Category                     | Accountability Calculation  |
|------------------------------|---|
| Outcomes (high schools only) | Performance for each measure will average to a range from 0 to 100-point score:   |
| Achievement                  | Performance for each measure will average to a range from 0 to a 100-point score: |
| Progress                     | Performance for each measure will average to a range from 0- 100-point score:     |
| Context                      | Each context metric will be designated as “met” or “not met.”                     |

The three index scores will then be used to classify select schools into one of three levels: Reward, Focus and Priority. The majority of schools will not be designated Reward, Focus or Priority but will receive a Multiple Measures Index score which will be publicly reported.

**Table 5. Rewards, Supports, and Interventions**

| Level           | School  |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Reward</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Documentation of best practices for online database</li> <li>• Subset designated as one of four types of Honor Roll schools (see Principle 2.C) and/or</li> <li>• Subset designated as Academic Improvement Award or Academic Gap Reduction Award schools (see Principle 2.C)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Focus</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent notification required explaining rating</li> <li>• Comprehensive audit conducted</li> <li>• Improvement plan must address area(s) of deficiency (as identified by Index scores and AMOs for all ESEA subgroups) and continuous improvement objectives</li> <li>• Targeted for supports and interventions through SSoS provided by the district assistance team (DAT)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Priority</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent notification required explaining rating</li> <li>• Comprehensive audit conducted</li> <li>• School transformation plan required, Priority Schools must address Turnaround Principles</li> <li>• Targeted for supports and interventions through SSoS: lead partner or district assistance team assigned</li> </ul>  |

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.</p> | <p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and</li><li>b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.</li></ul> |
|--|---|

As part of our differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, Illinois will include student achievement on the PARCC assessments for reading/language arts and mathematics, grades 3-11.

Lastly, regarding the use of ACCESS for ELP, Illinois will hold all schools and school districts accountable for progress in ELP, not just school districts receiving Title III funds. Because only ELLs take ACCESS and also because proficiency levels vary greatly depending on grade level and the number of years in the United States, proficiency levels are not reported here. Weighting for this measure will be a subset of the progress category of the Multiple Measures Index.

## 2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> | <p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> | <p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> <p>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups.<br/>(Attachment 8)</p> |
|--|--|---|

Illinois has chosen option A and will set new ambitious but achievable AMOs for reading/language arts and mathematics for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. Specifically, ISBE will set unique targets for each school and ESEA subgroup with the goal of reducing by one half the percentage of students who are not proficient within six years. We will use 2013 assessment data as a base level of proficiency and set AMOs for the next six years. Schools and subgroups that are further behind must make greater rates of annual progress.

After the new ISAT cut scores are set, Illinois will calculate new AMOs using 2013 as a benchmark. As an example, we have calculated example AMOs at a statewide level using our current ISAT cut scores, as well as our PSAE and IAA proficiency levels.

For illustrative purposes we have calculated AMOs for all schools and school districts using 2010 as a benchmark and examined the number of schools and schools districts that met their appropriate AMOs in 2011. As shown in Tables 6, 6a, 7 and 7a, 50 percent of the schools and 50 percent of the school districts met their presumed AMOs in 2011 with or without using a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus, we remain confident that our new AMOs for schools, school districts, and subgroups are ambitious yet achievable.

**Table 6. Number of Schools Making AMOs by Subgroup**

| Point                                      | All Students |         | High Needs |         | Former LEP |         |
|--|--------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|
|  | Math         | Reading | Math       | Reading | Math       | Reading |
| 0  | 773          | 634     | 829        | 828     | 19         | 25      |
| *25  | 610          | 450     | 450        | 438     | 5          | 11      |
| 25   | 0            | 2       | 0          | 2       | 0          | 0       |
| 50   | 18           | 15      | 37         | 30      | 0          | 0       |
| 75   | 542          | 389     | 533        | 434     | 3          | 3       |
| 95   | 266          | 621     | 10         | 79      | 8          | 25      |
| 100  | 1449         | 1547    | 1291       | 1340    | 145        | 116     |
| zero due to not meeting participation rate | 7            | 7       | 7          | 4       | 0          | 0       |

\*No change within 75% confidence interval

**Table 6a. Percentage of Schools Making AMOs by Subgroup**

| Point | All Students |         | High Needs |         | Former LEP |         |
|-------|--------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|
|       | Math         | Reading | Math       | Reading | Math       | Reading |
| 0     | 21.1         | 17.3    | 26.3       | 26.3    | 10.6       | 13.9    |
| 25    | 16.7         | 12.4    | 14.3       | 14.0    | 2.8        | 6.1     |
| 50    | 0.5          | 0.4     | 1.2        | 1.0     | 0.0        | 0.0     |
| 75    | 14.8         | 10.6    | 16.9       | 13.8    | 1.7        | 1.7     |
| 95    | 7.3          | 17.0    | 0.3        | 2.5     | 4.4        | 13.9    |
| 100   | 39.6         | 42.3    | 41.0       | 42.5    | 80.6       | 64.4    |



**Table 7. Number of Districts Making AMOs by Subgroup**

| Point                                      | All Students |         | High Needs |         | Former LEP |         |
|--|--------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|
|  | Math         | Reading | Math       | Reading | Math       | Reading |
| 0  | 214          | 172     | 238        | 232     | 14         | 9       |
| *25  | 163          | 139     | 127        | 123     | 3          | 0       |
| 25   | 4            | 0       | 5          | 2       | 0          | 0       |
| 50   | 13           | 8       | 30         | 28      | 1          | 0       |
| 75   | 176          | 146     | 134        | 133     | 3          | 1       |
| 95   | 46           | 118     | 0          | 8       | 5          | 13      |
| 100  | 249          | 282     | 269        | 277     | 38         | 41      |
| zero due to not meeting participation rate | 0            | 0       | 0          | 0       | 0          | 0       |

\*No change within 75% confidence interval

**Table 7a. Percentage of Districts Making AMOs by Subgroup**

| Point | All Students |         | High Needs |         | Former LEP |         |
|-------|--------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|
|       | Math         | Reading | Math       | Reading | Math       | Reading |
| 0     | 24.7         | 19.9    | 29.6       | 28.9    | 21.9       | 14.1    |
| 25    | 19.3         | 16.1    | 16.4       | 15.6    | 4.7        | 0.0     |
| 50    | 1.5          | 0.9     | 3.7        | 3.5     | 1.6        | 0.0     |
| 75    | 20.3         | 16.9    | 16.7       | 16.6    | 4.7        | 1.6     |
| 95    | 5.3          | 13.6    | 0.0        | 1.0     | 7.8        | 20.3    |
| 100   | 28.8         | 32.6    | 33.5       | 34.5    | 59.4       | 64.1    |

Illinois has carefully considered the Education Trust’s 2010 report and is eagerly anticipating the application of the new AMOs in the 2014–15 school year. During our stakeholder meetings, Illinois stakeholders embraced the tailored AMOs for each LEA, school, and subgroup, particularly when considering our geographically and demographically diverse state.

## 2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Since 2003, ISBE has recognized schools for their continued academic progress through the Illinois Honor Roll system. Illinois plans to meet the federal requirement for identifying reward schools through its current system that recognizes schools in three categories: spotlight, academic excellence, and academic improvement. ISBE has modified the state’s criteria for Spotlight Awards to include the highest performing Title I schools in the state and also modified the definition for Academic Improvement to include high progress Title I schools. In addition, ISBE has created a new Gap Reduction award category. Schools will receive recognition for each category in which they meet the qualifying criteria.

### **Spotlight Award**

The Spotlight Award is designed to recognize high-poverty, high-performing schools that are closing achievement gaps and excelling in academic achievement. The criteria used to identify spotlight schools meets the Department of Education’s definition of “Highest Performing School”. To earn a Spotlight Award, schools must:

- Receive Title I funds and have a student population that is at least 50 percent low income for two consecutive years; and
- Be in the top 10 percent of elementary or secondary schools in the state, with the highest absolute performance of the “all students” group and for all subgroups on the state assessment in reading or mathematics, for the last two academic years; or
- At the high school level, have a graduation rate of 80 percent or higher; and
- Have no achievement gaps greater than 10 points across subgroups.
- A spotlight school must have made AMO targets for the “all students” group and all traditional ESEA subgroups.

### **Academic Excellence Award**

The Academic Excellence Award is designed to recognize schools that have sustained high performance over at least three years. To earn an Academic Excellence Award, schools must do the following:

- Have at least 90 percent of the students in the all students group meet or exceed state standards in either reading or mathematics for the three most recent school years in elementary and middle schools.

- Have at least 80 percent of the students in the all students group meet or exceed standards on the state assessment for the three most recent school years; and have an aggregate five-year cohort graduation rate of 90 percent or higher for three consecutive years in high schools.
- Rank within the top 10 percent of schools with similar grade spans on the achievement index.

### **Academic Improvement Award**

The Academic Improvement Award recognizes schools for substantial gains in performance over the last several years. The award winners represent every type of school: large and small schools; elementary, middle, and high schools; regular and charter schools; all funding levels; urban, suburban, and rural schools; and low-performing and high-performing schools. The criteria for receiving an academic improvement award meet the Department of Education’s definition of a “high progress school”. To earn an Academic Improvement Award, a school must do one of the following:

- Be a Title I school and be among the top ten percent of Title I elementary and secondary schools in the state in improving performance of the “all student group” by at least 6 percent over three years on the state assessment in reading or mathematics. At the high school level, be among the Title I schools making the most progress in increasing graduation rates; and have no achievement gaps greater than 10 points across subgroups.
- or
- Show improved progress in language proficiency for the LEP subgroup, by having 80 percent of the ELL students meet or exceed the progress criteria (.5 gain on ACCESS composite from the previous year or achieving the highest possible score on ACCESS).

### **Gap Reduction Award**

Gap Reduction Award schools are those that have demonstrated the most progress over a two-year period in narrowing the achievement gaps among any of the following comparison groups: Racial or ethnic minorities, ELLs, SWDs, low-income students, or high-need students. See Principle 2.A.i for further description. To be eligible, a school must:

- Not be a Focus or Priority school
- Rank within the top 10 percent of schools with similar grade spans in its two-year rate of closure of the achievement gap.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA’s list of reward schools in Table 10.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

ISBE publicly recognizes Honor Roll schools each year with a letter and a certificate from the state superintendent. In addition, the superintendent travels to various regions in the state to host

a ceremony that honors the schools in that region. ISBE also sends press releases to local media. Additionally, ISBE staff created a special website that lists the Honor Roll recipients and highlights the best practices from these award winning schools. Beginning in the 2014–15 school year, ISBE will use ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) funds to provide a limited number of Promising Practice grants to encourage Honor Roll schools to participate in communities of practice with their peers from schools with similar demographics. Additionally, ISBE will seek to establish a new Spotlight Educator program to reward and acknowledge effective principals and teachers in Spotlight Schools who are substantially contributing to a school’s success. To be eligible, the principal or teacher must do the following:

- Work in a Spotlight School.
- Receive an overall performance evaluation of excellent in his or her most recent evaluation, using an evaluation system that incorporates student growth as a significant factor.
- Be nominated by the school district superintendent as substantially contributing to the spotlight school’s success.

In 2012, Illinois began participating in the National Title I Distinguished Schools program. This program has honored schools across the country for their innovation in helping Title I populations achieve high educational standards. The Spotlight School that demonstrates the highest student performance and the Gap Reduction School that has the largest gap reduction will receive the National Title I Distinguished Schools Award. ISBE will provide a stipend to each school so that staff can attend the national conference where they will be honored and celebrated. Distinguished schools are also included in national and local press releases and receive a certificate and banner to display at their schools.

The reward and public recognition described above will provide an opportunity for honor roll schools to share best practices with other schools across the state. Additionally, educators will appreciate the recognition of their honor roll schools in a public arena that reaches local, state, and national audiences.

## 2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Illinois currently has a strong system for identifying and intervening in our lowest performing schools and school districts. This waiver will allow ISBE to integrate our state system with federal accountability requirements and, in turn, expand the supports available to the lowest performing schools. The Illinois method for identifying priority schools is described below and meets the federal requirement for identifying the number of lowest performing schools equal to at least 5 percent of the state’s Title I schools.

### **A Priority School:**

- Is a Title I school that:
  - Is among the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools in the state based on a three-year average (i.e., from 2012 to 2014) performance of the “All student groups” category for the percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards in reading and mathematics combined; and
  - Demonstrates a lack of progress; *or*
- Is a Title I participating or eligible secondary school that has an average graduation rate of less than 60 percent over the last three years (i.e., from 2012 to 2014).

### **Lack of Progress**

A school demonstrates a lack of progress if there:

- Has been a decrease in the percentage of the “All students” group meeting/exceeding standards on the state assessments from any one year to the next; or
- Has had less than a 10 percent increase in the “All students” group meeting/exceeding standards on the state assessments for the most recent school year when compared to the immediate preceding school year and less than a 20 percent cumulative increase for the all students group when compared to the previous two years.

Based on 2013-14 data, Illinois had 2,553 Title I schools in the state, which means the priority school list will contain at least 128 schools. Illinois identified 147 schools. Of these 147 schools:

- 23 schools are currently served Tier I or Tier II SIG 1003(g) schools.
- 9 schools are Title I–eligible or Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over three years.

- 139 schools are among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on both achievement and lack of progress of the “all students” group.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA’s list of priority schools in Table 10.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Illinois will enhance its current Statewide System of Support (SSoS) and structures to establish a comprehensive intervention system for its school districts that have priority schools to ensure meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles are implemented in all priority schools no later than the 2015–16 school year. ISBE will concentrate support and assistance at the district level to increase district level capacity to improve student outcomes in the state’s lowest performing schools. Although the Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) will coordinate the oversight of interventions in the majority of priority schools through district-level engagement, the state superintendent recognizes that in some chronically underperforming districts, there are some extraordinary circumstances that require a greater level of state directed intervention. In 2006, ISBE embarked on its first district takeover by using a cooperative intergovernmental agreement. Such agreements cede control of the school district to the state for at least three years to improve academic performance and establish financial stability. Within IL CSI the unit for District Accountability and Oversight will be established to continue and expand ISBE’s comprehensive interventions in the state’s chronically lowest performing districts, which are hereafter referred to as high-priority school districts.

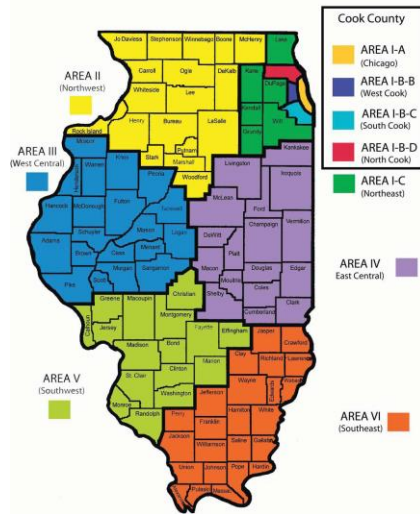
### **The Statewide System of Support**

The purpose of SSoS is to supply a comprehensive continuum of research-based support, services, and resources designed to improve student outcomes for all Illinois school districts and schools. The time, intensity, and duration of services are differentiated based on the needs of each school district.

The main crux of the SSoS is the regional service delivery system, which consists of 44 Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and 3 Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs). The 44 ROEs serve 101 of Illinois’ 102 counties, and the 3 ISCs serve the densely populated suburban region of Cook County. This regional delivery system formed 10 area support providers, each of which has a full time area coordinator that oversees the coordination of services and assistance provided to school districts in their area (see Figure 2). Six of the area support providers cover the geographical areas of multiple ROEs, three align to the three ISCs, and the remaining one provides support solely to the Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

**Figure 2. Statewide System of Support Regions in Illinois**

**System of Support Regions**



Within these 10 areas, more than 200 coaches and 30 content area specialists provide direct assistance to school districts and their schools. Strong partnerships with the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) and the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) further support the SSoS. Additionally, ISBE funds other regional service delivery systems, including special education cooperatives, Response to Intervention (RtI) Network, and the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center (ISTAC) for which services are coordinated through the SSoS. Figure 3 is a visual representation of the SSoS structure.

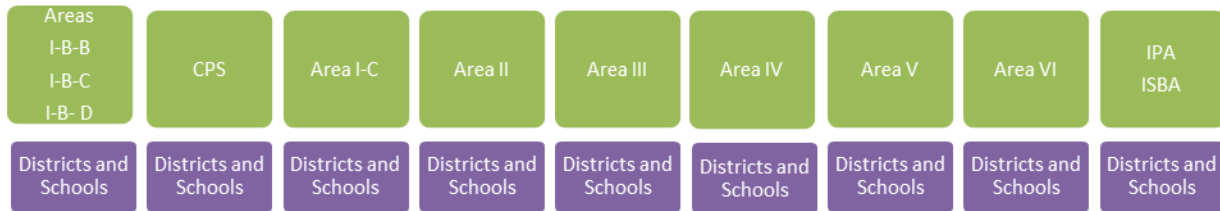
**Figure 3. The Illinois State Board of Education SSoS Organizational Chart**



# Illinois State Board of Education

The Center for School Improvement

Regional Coordinators      Content Area Experts      Turnaround Specialist  
Special Education Cooperatives      RtI Network      ISTAC      Illinois Resource Center  
Unit for District Accountability and Oversight



The assistance provided through the SSoS includes programs and processes representing best practices in four areas:

1. Developing and implementing standards-aligned instructional systems aligned to the New Illinois Learning Standards in Mathematics and ELA.
2. Analyzing data to inform strategic decision making in the eight essential elements identified for effective school districts and schools which include: comprehensive planning, conditions for learning, community and family engagement, professional development, leadership, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
3. Cultivating educator talent and effectiveness.
4. Implementing interventions in and providing intensive supports for low-performing schools and school districts.

One of the foundational principles of SSoS is that the people working within the system focus on increasing the capacity of school districts to assume, with confidence, greater responsibility for the continuous improvement of instruction and student achievement within their schools. As such, coaches intentionally link systems from the state to the school district, to the school, and to the classroom to influence variables that will accelerate student achievement. ISBE is modifying the SSoS services delivery structure to ensure that priority schools and high-priority school districts engage in meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. In June 2012, ISBE issued a request for sealed proposals for Illinois CSI. Through this procurement, ISBE established Illinois CSI for the purpose of providing high-quality, coordinated, and consistent support to the current SSoS and other regional assistance centers to ensure that school districts and schools receive expert, timely, and relevant assistance to increase district level capacity to improve student performance. One primary responsibility of Illinois CSI is to hire and train turnaround specialists and district assistance teams to work with school districts that have priority schools.

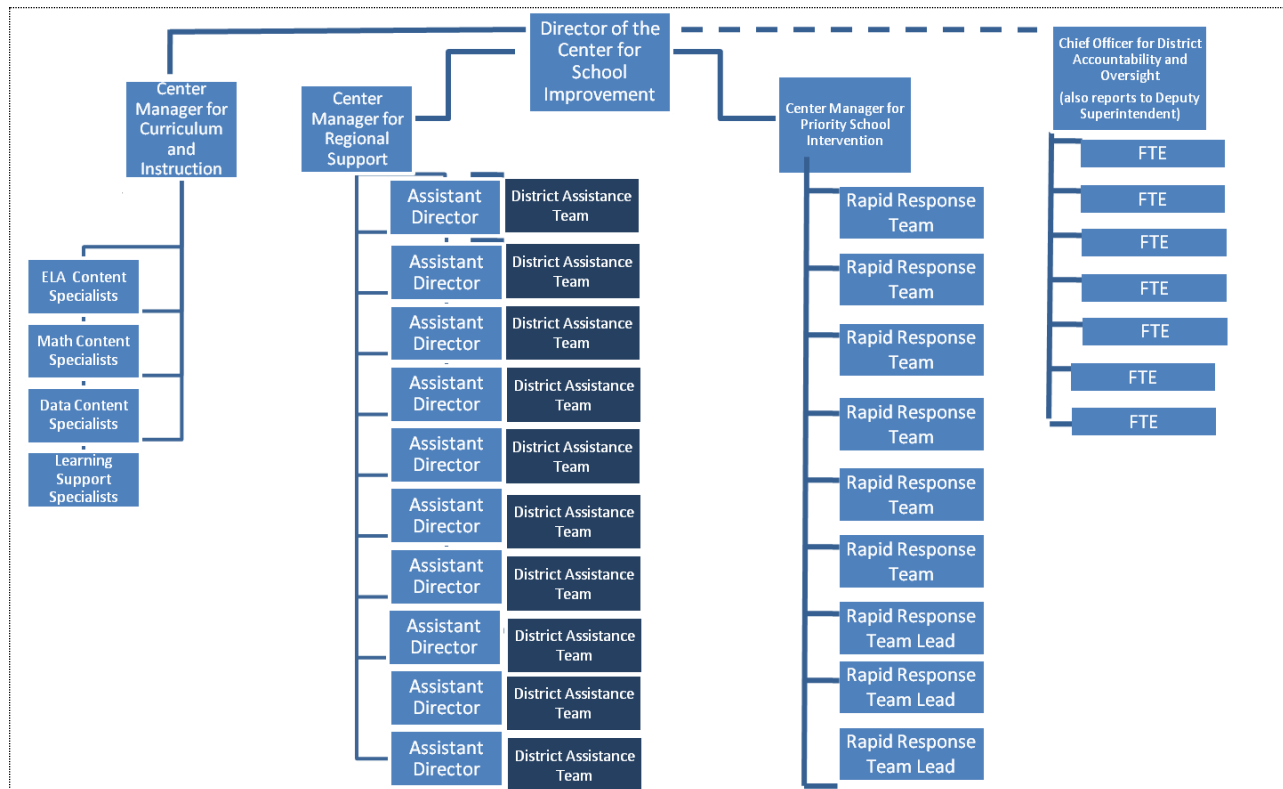
Illinois CSI is operated as a partnership between ISBE (Deputy Superintendent's Office) and the

American Research Institute (AIR), the contractor selected for its proven track record of effectively and efficiently providing high-quality, research-based supports, interventions, and resources that improve education outcomes for all students. Additionally, Illinois CSI is supported by guidance from the *ISBE Roundtable*, a cross-divisional leadership team responsible for oversight of the SSoS, to identify targeted assistance for schools and districts and help prioritize resources based on identified needs. Figure 1 illustrates the organizational structure for Illinois CSI.

With the establishment of Illinois CSI, ISBE is enhancing the current SSoS to ensure that the state can effectively meet the needs of school districts and support meaningful interventions intended to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind including an intense focus on ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, and SWDs. Such changes are impacting the current organizational structure, staffing, operational frameworks, and the accountability system as discussed below in detail.

1. **Organizational Structure.** Illinois CSI is organized into four operational units. A staffing chart is provided in Figure 4.
  - A. ***Curriculum and Instruction Unit.*** Designated to design and support the use of a connected set of tools and resources to increase district-level capacity to improve teaching and learning.
  - B. ***Regional Support Unit.*** Designated to assist in deploying specialized staff to work with identified districts and develop customized continuous improvement plans.
  - C. ***Priority Schools Intervention Unit.*** Designated to assist in deploying specialized staff, such as district assistance teams lead by turnaround specialists, to work with identified districts with priority schools to develop customized intervention plans to turn the school around.
  - D. ***District Accountability and Oversight Unit (DAO).*** Designated to continue and expand ISBE’s comprehensive interventions in the state’s chronically lowest performing districts, namely high priority districts. The DDAO is outlined in detail in Principle 2 of the Illinois ESEA Flexibility Request, available at [http://www.isbe.net/nclb\\_waivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers/default.htm).

**Figure 4. Organizational and Staffing Chart for The Illinois Center for School Improvement**



**Staffing.** In collaboration with ISBE, AIR has hired a director who will be responsible for staffing Illinois CSI as well as directing and evaluating the work of Illinois CSI staff. ISBE and Illinois CSI director have hired a cadre of staff including managers, regional assistant directors, content area specialists, district liaisons, and turnaround specialists with specific expertise in working with ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, and SWDs. Illinois CSI is responsible for building and increasing the capacity of its staff to ensure that effective practices are widely disseminated and replicated across regions of the state and that the regional delivery systems provide timely, high quality, and effective support to schools and districts.

For districts that have priority schools, ISBE, through Illinois CSI, will assign a district assistance team to the district. The team will include a turnaround specialist, a school coach(es) with expertise in working with ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, or SWDs depending on the identified need, and content specialists whose skill sets align with the needs identified via the comprehensive audit. District Assistance teams are selected in collaboration with ISBE and Illinois CSI staff, and will be required to utilize evidence based strategies that support school turnaround. Illinois CSI will provide ongoing training and professional development for district assistance teams and ensure that school districts with the lowest performing five percent of schools (i.e., priority schools) receive high-quality support and assistance. ISBE with assistance from Illinois CSI will incorporate the district assistance teams into the network of lead partners approved to work with schools funded by School Improvement Grants to help ensure the sharing of resources, tools, and best practices.

All title I schools will receive services and supports through the SSoS, directly from Illinois CSI and

from ROEs/ISCS. These entities will support improved student achievement in reading and mathematics and are known as foundational services.

### Diagnosis Using the Eight Essential Elements

ISBE believes that successful school districts and schools have as their foundation eight essential elements for effective education. SSoS staff assists school districts in evaluating the presence of these essential elements by using a specified set of indicators. These indicators are derived from research and assist in identifying visible, tangible, and behavioral evidence to measure the strength of an element’s presence in a school district or a school. These research-based indicators provide a common language statewide to identify gaps and measure progress for continuous improvement. Formerly unidentified and absent in the system, these elements and indicators provide substantive direction for all Illinois school districts and schools through diagnosis followed by targeted interventions to improve student achievement. During the 2011-2012 school year, ISBE added indicators of effective practice that correspond to the turnaround principles identified by the Department of Education.

The eight essential elements are mapped to one of four categories (Table 8): continuous improvement, educator quality, learning environment, and teaching and learning.

**Table 8. Eight Essential Elements for Effective School Districts and Schools**

| Category               | Essential Elements  |
|------------------------|---|
| Continuous improvement | Comprehensive planning                                      |
| Educator quality       | Professional development and leadership                     |
| Learning environment   | Conditions for learning and community and family engagement |
| Teaching and learning  | Curriculum, instruction, assessment                         |

Table 9 illustrates the alignment between the eight essential elements and the federal turnaround principles. The middle column gives examples of the indicators of effective practice that school districts and schools assess, plan, and monitor against. For a complete list of indicators, refer to the Operations Manual for the Statewide System of Support (Attachment 18).

**Table 9. Alignment of Eight Essential Elements and Turnaround Principles**

| Essential Elements for Effective School Districts and Schools | Examples of Indicators of Effective Practice   | Turnaround Principles |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Leadership  | An LEA has determined whether an existing principal in his or her position for two years or less has the necessary competencies to be a transformation leader. | Leadership            |

|                          |   |                    |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
|                          | <p>The LEA has an established policy and process/rubric for screening principal candidates.</p> <p>The LEA has an established process for preparing to interview candidates.</p> <p>The LEA has an established criteria and format for interviewing candidates.</p> <p>The LEA selects and hires qualified principals with the necessary competencies to be change leaders.</p>   |                    |
| Professional development | <p>The LEA/School has created several exit points for employees (e.g., voluntary departure of those unwilling, unable to meet new goals, address identified problems).</p> <p>The LEA/School has established and communicated clear goals and measures for employees' performance that reflect the established evaluation system and provide targeted training or assistance for an employee receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation or warning.</p> <p>The LEA has reformed tenure protections, seniority rights, and other job protections to enable quick performance-based dismissals.</p> <p>The LEA has negotiated expedited processes for performance-based dismissals in transformation schools.</p> <p>The LEA has formed teams of specialists who are familiar with the rules and regulations that govern staff dismissals.</p> <p>The school district recruits, trains, supports, and places personnel to competently address the problems of schools in need of improvement. The principal regularly evaluates a range of teacher skills and knowledge, using a variety of valid and reliable tools. Professional development is built into the school schedule by the school district, but the school is allowed discretion in selecting training and consultation that fit the requirements of its improvement plan and its evolving needs.</p> <p>The LEA/School provides sustained and embedded professional development related to implementation of new programs and strategies.</p> <p>The LEA/School sets goals for professional development and monitors the extent to which it has changed practice.</p> <p>The LEA/School directly aligns professional development with classroom observations (including peer observations) to build</p> | Effective teachers |

|                            |  |                              |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
|                            | <p>specific skills and knowledge of teachers.</p> <p>The LEA/School creates a professional learning community that fosters a school culture of continuous learning.</p> <p>The LEA/School promotes a school culture in which professional collaboration is valued and emphasized</p>   |                              |
| Continuous improvement     | <p>An LEA or school has allocated funds to support extended learning time, including innovative partnerships. Which may include time before school, after school, vacations, weekends, and summers to provide a broad array of academic and/or enrichment opportunities to students</p> <p>The principal is familiar with research and best practices associated with efforts to increase learning time.</p> <p>The principal has assessed areas of need, selected programs/strategies to be implemented and identified potential community partners.</p> <p>The LEA/School has allocated funds to support extended learning time, including innovative partnerships.</p> <p>The LEA assists school leaders in networking with potential partners and in developing partnerships.</p> <p>The LEA/School creates and sustains partnerships to support extended learning.</p> <p>The LEA/School ensures that teachers use extra time effectively when extended learning is implemented within the regular school program by providing targeted professional development.</p> <p>The LEA/School monitors progress of the extended learning time programs.</p> | Extended learning time       |
| Curriculum and instruction | <p>The school district provides a cohesive district curriculum guide aligned with state standards or otherwise places curricular expectations on the school.</p> <p>The district curriculum encompasses a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors of appropriate content and rigor to prepare students for both college and careers.</p> <p>The school has established a team structure among teachers with specific duties and time for instructional planning.</p> <p>All teachers monitor and assess student mastery of standards-based objectives in order to make appropriate curriculum adjustments.</p> <p>All teachers, working in teams, differentiate and align learning</p>   | Strong instructional program |

|                                 |  |                                 |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|                                 | <p>activities with state standards.</p> <p>All teachers provide sound instruction in a variety of modes: teacher-directed whole-class; teacher-directed small-group; student-directed small group; independent work; computer based; homework.</p> <p>All teachers employ effective classroom management.</p>  |                                 |
| Assessment                      | <p>The school's leadership team regularly looks at school performance data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.</p> <p>The school has established a team structure among teachers with specific duties and time for instructional planning.</p> <p>All teachers monitor and assess student mastery of standards-based objectives in order to make appropriate curriculum adjustments.</p> <p>All teachers, working in teams, differentiate and align learning activities with state standards.</p> <p>All teachers provide sound instruction in a variety of modes: teacher-directed whole-class; teacher-directed small-group; student-directed small group; independent work; computer based; homework.</p> <p>All teachers employ effective classroom management.</p> | Use of data                     |
| Conditions for learning         | <p>The district improvement process is aimed at student academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development.</p> <p>The LEA has reoriented its culture toward shared responsibility and accountability.</p> <p>The LEA/School has established a positive organizational culture.</p>   | School environment              |
| Family and community engagement | <p>The school district builds partnerships with parent and community organizations in district and school improvement planning and maintains regular communication with them.</p> <p>All teachers demonstrate sound homework practices and communication with parents.</p> <p>The LEA/School has assigned transformation team members the task of creating a plan to work and communicate with stakeholders prior to and during implementation of the transformation.</p> <p>The LEA/School has announced changes and anticipated actions publicly; communicated urgency of rapid improvement, and signaled the need for rapid change.</p> <p>The LEA/School has engaged parents and community in the transformation process.</p>  | Family and community engagement |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>The LEA/School has support for transformation from all stakeholders.</p> <p>The LEA/School helps stakeholders overcome resistance to change.</p> |  |
|--|---|--|

The Illinois system requires that school districts and schools develop continuous improvement plans derived from a diagnostic review of the eight essential elements and the indicators of effective practice. For priority schools, the school district will partner with an external team coordinated by Illinois CSI to engage in an in-depth diagnostic review that will lead to the development of a transformation Plan.

### **Creation and Implementation of the School Transformation Plan**

Using the results of this comprehensive audit, the school district, on behalf of the priority school, will then be required to submit a detailed school transformation plan that addresses all the following elements. The school district must ensure that the school

- Provides strong leadership by (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong effective leadership or demonstrating to ISBE that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget.
- Ensures that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teacher from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs.
- Implements a coherent, comprehensive, research-based, whole school reform model that incorporates the requirements of the turnaround principles and has the greatest likelihood of increasing student achievement.
- Strengthen the schools instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research- based and aligns curriculum, instruction, and interim assessments with the New Illinois Learning Standards.
- Uses data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration and the use of data.
- Aligns sustained professional development with the curriculum and instruction to build rigor, foster student-teacher relationships, and provide relevant instruction that engages and motivates students.
- Establishes strategies to improve student transitions from middle school to high school.

- Develops and implements evidence-based discipline programs that minimize time out of school and/or class and cultivate a safe learning environment for students establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as a students’ social, emotional and health needs.
- Provides staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program. Professional development must be designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
- Redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and ensures that teachers have time to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.
- Designs and implements a rigorous, transparent, and equitable performance evaluation system for teachers and principals that takes into account data on student growth as a significant factor.
- Recruits, hires, and places teachers and leaders who have a proven record of increasing student performance.
- Secures parental commitment and involvement and increases parental capacity to support student engagement, motivation, and learning within the school, at home, and in the community.
- Identifies and implements strategies that provide for increased learning time in core academic areas by lengthening the school day, week, and/or year.

After the plan has been approved by local stakeholders and the state superintendent, then either the school district will select a lead partner that is preapproved by ISBE to lead interventions in SIG-funded schools to support implementation of the plan or ISBE’s Center for Innovation and Improvement through Illinois CSI will assign a district assistance team to support effective implementation of the transformation plan.

The district assistance team will include a turnaround specialist a school coach, and a content specialist whose skill sets align to the needs identified in the transformation plan. District assistance team members are selected in collaboration with ISBE and Illinois CSI staff. Illinois CSI will provide ongoing training and professional development for district assistance teams and ensure that school districts with priority schools receive high-quality support and assistance. ISBE will incorporate the district assistance teams into the network of lead partners working with SIG-funded schools to help ensure the sharing of resources, tools, and best practices. ISBE will dedicate the district assistance team for no less than three years, even if within these three years the school is no longer designated as a priority school.

### **Interventions in Chronically Underperforming High-Priority School Districts**

The intervention framework to support the state’s chronically underperforming school districts will consist of both new statewide structures as well as intensive on-the-ground supports. The

centerpiece of the state’s framework for supporting these school districts is the unit for District Accountability and Oversight (DAO). The DAO will lead state efforts within its chronically underperforming school districts and identify a cohort of high-priority school districts. Although the DAO unit will be housed in the Illinois CSI, it will be a distinct and autonomous unit within the overall Illinois CSI organizational structure, and will have a close relationship to ISBE to ensure coordination across ISBE divisions and guarantee the unit's ability to quickly leverage the full authority of ISBE as it relates to interventions in high-priority school districts. The state superintendent and director of Illinois CSI will jointly appoint a DAO unit chief. The DAO unit chief will organize and lead the work of the DAO, oversee the DAO's day-to-day operations, and be accountable to the state superintendent for dramatically improving outcomes within the state's high priority districts. The unit chief will participate in ISBE's senior leadership team meetings and report directly to both the state superintendent and Illinois CSI director. Specifically, DAO will:

- Identify and prioritize high-priority school districts for interventions aligned with the turnaround principles.
- Oversee performance management and accountability for each intervention.
- Develop and support lead partners working within high priority school districts.
- Leverage all available federal, state, and private resources to support high priority districts.

### **Identification of High-Priority School Districts**

Although some high-priority districts will have the leadership and management structures in place necessary to improve student outcomes on their own, others will need an additional level of state intervention to place the school district on a new trajectory. Therefore, from among the high-priority districts, the DAO will use the following factors to select a cohort of high-priority school districts that will be the focus for the state’s intensive intervention activities:

- Adequacy of the district’s board and administrative leadership, including the stability of the leadership
- Fiscal irregularities and mismanagement
- Failure to comply with federal and state regulatory requirements
- School safety incidents
- Learning conditions at the schools within the school district
- Building safety and compliance
- Teacher credentials
- Special education placement rates
- Number of priority schools and inability or unwillingness to turnaround or close one or more failing schools

No single factor will be determinative; rather, a comprehensive analysis across all these factors will demonstrate which districts should move into the high-priority school district categorization. The DAO's selection of high priority districts must be approved by the state superintendent.

Over the last five years, ISBE has undertaken intensive interventions in three Illinois school districts that have been generally consistent with the high-priority school district framework. See Attachment 19 for a further description of these interventions. Over the course of the next three years, ISBE anticipates allocating the resources necessary to expand this framework to additional high-priority school districts.

### **On-the-Ground Support Structures**

For the state-level support structures to have an impact on the ground, DAO will have a presence within each high-priority school district through a priority district liaison, efforts will be undertaken to transform the district leadership, and high-caliber lead partners will lead the work of intensive school-level interventions. DAO will assign a priority district liaison to each high-priority school district; the liaison will report directly to the DAO unit chief. The liaison's primary responsibilities will include the following: overseeing the development of a comprehensive intervention plan; reviewing and approving in writing all proposed personnel, contracting, and budgeting decisions of the high-priority school district prior to final action; and advising on general operations and administrative matters. The liaison will be responsible for monitoring the plan over time. In addition, the liaison will be responsible for ensuring that a clear and constant line of communication exists between the high-priority school district leadership team and appropriate DAO and ISBE staff. The liaison will have prior experience working in school districts with similar demographics as the high-priority district and have an in-depth understanding of district personnel and administrative processes. In the event of a dispute between the liaison and the district, the state superintendent will have final decision-making authority.

While the liaison will help steer the on-the-ground work within the high-priority school district, a capable district leadership team working with a high-caliber lead partner is necessary to lead dramatic local transformation that will result in improved student outcomes. By definition, a high-priority school district will have failed to demonstrate that it has the requisite administrative leadership and, as a result, in most if not all instances a high-priority school district intervention will include the replacement of the superintendent. Furthermore, to ensure the local school board does not serve as a roadblock to implementing necessary action, the local school boards in each high-priority school district will be transformed into an advisory board with the authority previously vested in the local school board exercised by both the local superintendent and DAO unit chief, in consultation with the liaison.

To assist high-priority school districts with their priority schools, ISBE will use a lead partner to oversee the intervention within the high-priority school district. Although the lead partner's entry point will be a particular school or schools, each lead partner assigned to a high-priority school district will be responsible for working with the district leadership to develop an aligned, district wide instructional system, a professional development system, and a talent recruitment and human capital management system. As a result, a subset of the previously approved SIG lead partners will be prequalified specifically to serve as lead partners for high-priority school districts. Also, except in instances where necessary to support numerous school-level interventions, only one lead partner will operate within a high-priority school district to ensure consistency and coherence across school-level interventions within the school district.

## **Intervention Governance**

After a high-priority school district is identified, it will be encouraged to enter a voluntary intergovernmental agreement with ISBE that will include the following elements that are aligned to the state's high-priority school district intervention framework:

- Identification of a lead partner, as well as a general description of the partner's role within the intervention framework and its responsibility for intervening in one or more schools
- Details regarding the components, timeline, and sequencing of intervention activities
- A framework for accountability for all actors in the intervention.

If a high-priority school district chooses not to enter into an intergovernmental agreement, ISBE will exercise its intervention authority under the Illinois School Code to involuntarily establish, by ISBE resolution, the intervention framework. (Note: Although ISBE currently has broad intervention authority under the Illinois School Code, it intends to seek legislative modifications to better tailor this authority to the framework described in this request.)

In addition, a separate lead partner agreement will be established between ISBE, the district, and the lead partner working in the priority school(s) within the school district. This agreement, among other items, will address the following:

- Lead and advisory services to be provided by the lead partner
- The lead partner's roles and responsibilities with respect to evaluating and recruiting staff at the priority school(s)
- The lead partner's rights to review and approve all district-supported instructional programs and third-party agreements at the priority school(s)
- A process and timeline for developing of a school transformation plan for each priority school
- Terms addressing compensation, accountability, and termination

Together with the intergovernmental agreement or ISBE resolution, the lead partner agreement will establish the legal underpinnings for the planning and implementation processes needed to transform administrative and instructional systems at district and school levels within the high-priority school district.

After a high-priority school district is designated, the DAO will conduct a comprehensive, in-depth audit of the district's instructional practices, fiscal management, district and school leadership, personnel, regulatory compliance, and facilities. After this analysis is performed, a district transformation plan (DTP) will be developed by the liaison, the district superintendent, and the lead partner in consultation with the local school board and the collective bargaining unit of the district's teachers. This plan will be aligned to the school district indicators of effective practice identified by ISBE, with the specific components of the plan described in Attachment 20. After finalization and approval by the state superintendent and the DAO unit chief, DTP will become the basis for the taking the necessary district-level actions and evaluating the appropriateness of individual budgeting, staffing, instruction, and procurement decisions. Furthermore, for each priority school within the

high-priority school district, the liaison, the superintendent, and lead partner, in consultation with the collective bargaining unit of the school district, will develop a school transformation plan (STP) aligned with the turnaround principles described earlier.

To limit the points of negotiation in an STP and enable the lead partner to hit the ground running, the lead partner should be clearly empowered to implement certain out-of-the-box elements in Year 1 of the intervention. Ideally, these elements would occur after an extensive engagement and planning process, but an accelerated implementation will reduce the scope of required planning and negotiations and allow key systems impacting teaching and learning to be put in place as quickly as possible. The out-of-the-box turnaround elements could include the following:

- A new teacher and principal performance evaluation system based on the state default model
- The lead partner's curriculum and assessment system, as preapproved by ISBE
- Data reporting and dashboard systems based on state defaults or an acceptable alternative provided by the lead partner and preapproved by ISBE.

To avoid statutory and regulatory barriers that may impede implementing aspects of a DTP or an STP, ISBE intends to seek legislative authority to implement a streamlined waiver authority that will be vested in the state superintendent to enable the approval of waivers or modifications supporting a DTP or an STP in an accelerated and streamlined process. In regard to collective bargaining constraints, ISBE will incentivize local agreement on collective bargaining provisions that impact a DTP or an STP while preserving the state superintendent's authority under Section 2-3.25f of the Illinois School Code to reassign or replace staff deemed relevant to the school's or the district's failure to achieve AYP.

### **Consequences for Continued Lack of Progress in High-Priority School Districts**

To effectively incentivize local buy-in and participation in the intervention within high-priority school districts, ISBE will impose the following ultimate consequences if the chosen intervention effort does not result in improved student outcomes over a three- to five- year period:

1. The state will take over the school district by establishing of an independent authority to operate the failing district.
2. The state will remove one or more schools within the school district to permanently remove the district's control over all or a portion of the district's student population and convert those schools into state-authorized charter schools.
3. The state will reorganize or dissolve an existing school district and combine it with other neighboring districts. When ISBE identifies reorganization or dissolution as a potential ultimate consequence option, planning will commence within Year 1 or 2 of the intervention because such actions require significant advance analysis and preparation.

Although many of these ultimate consequences are available to ISBE under current law, ISBE will seek legislation to further define and target these consequences for high-priority school districts. ISBE is confident that the interventions described in this section that will occur through both Illinois CSI and DAO will result in dramatic, systemic changes in priority schools and high-priority



school districts.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.

There are 30 districts that are designated to receive priority services through the Illinois CSI that meet the ESEA Flexibility Request definition. ISBE is currently working with 24 schools in 10 districts in a manner that aligns with the turnaround principles. These 24 schools are funded through the SIG 1003(g) and each grantee is required to fully implement one of four reform models: turnaround, transformation, restart or closure.

In Illinois, school districts that are awarded 1003(g) funds are required to work with a preapproved lead partner to implement the selected intervention model. Lead partners are entities with proven expertise in school reform and demonstrated success in turning around persistently low-performing schools. Both an LEA and the lead partner share accountability for successful implementation of the selected intervention model, with the ultimate goal of substantially raising student achievement. Lead partners are responsible for implementing coherent, whole school reform efforts that integrate structural and programmatic interventions. The lead partner role goes beyond technical assistance and professional development, providing daily on-site support, leadership and assistance in the participating school and LEA.

ISBE will continue its interventions with the 24 SIG funded sites and support targeted interventions that align to the turnaround principles in the remaining thirty districts designated to receive priority services. To accomplish this, ISBE will host a subsequent competition for the SIG 1003(g) and award additional grants for FY15 and staff the Illinois CSI. The structure of the Illinois CSI includes a unit for Priority Services which will include a Unit Manager and District Liaisons for Priority Services and District Assistance Teams, both comprised of individuals with deep expertise in one or more of the Eight Essential Elements with a specific emphasis in:

- Turnaround and Transformation
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in alignment with the Common Core
- Data analysis and development of data systems

Therefore, interventions aligned with ED’s reform priorities may be implemented in many more schools and districts during the 2014-15 school year.



SSoS coaching teams will continue their work with priority districts and schools during the 2013-14 school year. In addition to the support provided by the SSoS, ISBE will oversee a comprehensive audit for the remaining districts which will assist district leadership teams in developing continuous improvement plans intended to accelerate dramatic and systemic change aligned to the turnaround principles. The local superintendent will be required to submit the transformation plan to stakeholder groups, the local school board, and the State superintendent for approval by 2014, with the expectation for full transformation plan implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Beyond supporting districts in the development of these transformation plans, the state will provide targeted assistance through the assignment of a district assistance team or lead partner to assist in the plan implementation, define exit criteria, assess fidelity to the federal turnaround principles, and provide additional resources to support rapid and sustained improvement.

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2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

A school designated as a priority school can exit that status if all the following criteria are met:

- The school has met its achievement and outcomes targets for two consecutive years.
- It is no longer within the bottom 5 percent of schools within the state.

IL CSI will continue to provide support through the district assistance team for two additional years after a school exits priority status to help sustain the improvements. These criteria require the school to show substantial achievement gains over the course of two years and ensure that the school is not remaining within the lowest tier of performance relative to all other schools in the state.

## 2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Although Illinois has made progress in reducing achievement gaps between student groups, it recognizes the importance of focusing improvement efforts on gap reduction. The racial and ethnic makeup of students in Illinois has changed over the last five years. From 1997 to 2011, the white student population decreased by almost 12 percent, while the Hispanic population increased by 10 percent. The other racial and ethnic groups in the state have remained relatively the same. If trends continue in the same directions, racial and ethnic minority students will comprise more

than 50 percent of the students enrolled in Illinois schools by 2012.

Between 2008 and 2013, black students experienced a 7.6 point increase on the Grades 3–8 state assessment in mathematics and a 7.2 point increase in reading. Additionally, during the same time period and assessment, the black/white achievement gap was reduced by 5.4 points in mathematics and 2.9 points in reading. Hispanic students also experienced a decrease in mathematics and reading between 2008 and 2013, the achievement gap between white and Hispanic students reduced by 5.5 points in mathematics and 6 points in reading. The achievement gap between IEP and non-IEP students increased by 5.1 points on the ISAT in mathematics and 5.9 points in reading between 2008 and 2013. The achievement gap in 2013 between IEP and non-IEP students was still a staggering 40.2 point in mathematics and 44.2 points in reading.

Illinois will use two methods to identify the number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the state’s Title I schools as focus schools.

1. ISBE will identify schools in the state with the largest within-school gaps in the achievement or outcomes index at the high school level between the highest performing subgroup(s) and the lowest performing subgroup(s) for any of the following groups when compared to their counterpart group: racial and ethnic minority students, ELLs, SWDs, low-income students, or high-need students (see 2.A.i for description of groups). or
2. ISBE will identify Title I schools in the state (which are not already identified as priority schools) with one or more subgroups with low performance on the achievement index with a subgroup score of 25 or less. Or at the high schools demonstrating an average four-year graduation rate in the outcome index of less than 60 percent for the most recent three consecutive years for any subgroup.

Each school year, ISBE will calculate the number of focus schools required for designation equal to 10 percent of the state’s Title I schools. By way of example, since Illinois has 2,553 Title I schools during the 2013-14 school year, 255 focus schools would be designated based on that year’s assessment results. Within these two methods, ISBE will rank Title I schools from highest to lowest performing based on that particular method. For example, under the first method, schools with larger achievement gaps would be ranked lower than schools with smaller achievement gaps. Under the second method, schools with the lowest graduation rates would be ranked lower than schools with higher graduation rates.

In addition to identifying focus schools, ISBE has set the expectation that the achievement gap for racial and ethnic minority students, ELLs, SWDs, low-income students, or high-need students will be reduced by 50 percent over the next six years.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 10.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA’s focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Through SSoS, ISBE is currently working and will continue to support improvement practices with schools identified as focus schools. During the 2014-15 school year, focus schools will continue to receive support from their SSoS coach while also undergoing a comprehensive audit. During the 2015-16 school year, the SSoS coach will be replaced by a District Assistance Team that will focus schools to implement the targeted intervention strategies that will support the school with closing their achievement gaps.

As detailed in Principle 2.D.iii, ISBE believes that successful school districts and schools have as their foundation eight essential elements, which, when present, ensure effective education systems. The eight essential elements are leadership, comprehensive planning, professional development, conditions for learning, community and family engagement, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The SSoS coach assists school districts and schools in evaluating the presence of these essential elements by using a specified set of indicators. These indicators are derived from research and assist in identifying visible, tangible, and behavioral evidence to measure the strength of an element's presence in a school district or a school. These research-based indicators provide a common language statewide to identify gaps and measure progress for continuous improvement.

ISBE staff in the Division of Innovation and Improvement and the Division of English Language Learners have worked to identify indicators of effective practice that specifically addressed best practices for meeting the needs of ELLs. ISBE partnered with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) to review, develop, and update the state's Web-based continuous improvement tool so that the system included indicators of effective practice tailored to help educators meet the needs of students learning English. A similar process has also occurred to identify best practices for educators working with SWDs. Additionally, through the conditions for learning essential element, ISBE created several indicators that focus on cultural proficiency and will continue to identify culturally responsive policies and practices to support educators in meeting the needs of their racial and ethnic minority students.

ISBE, through Illinois CSI, will focus on equipping the SSoS coaches with the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise to effectively support schools in reducing achievement gaps. Focus schools will use the state's continuous improvement process to develop plans to rapidly address factors that contribute to their achievement gaps. School districts with one or more focus schools will be required to reserve up to 20 percent of their Title I funds to support the implementation of the interventions identified through the planning process. This set-aside will be based on a sliding scale and will vary depending on the scope of the problem and the number of students that must be served.

## **Interventions**

ISBE's approach to intervening in focus schools is grounded in the work of Sprencoy (2005), which asserts that the two most important factors for closing achievement gaps are increasing the capacity of the intervening body and strengthening the leadership in the school district and the school. To accomplish this, ISBE is in the process of restructuring its current SSoS framework and working with the Illinois Principal Association (IPA) to customize a series of professional development opportunities for principals in focus schools.

Illinois has established several robust regional services delivery systems that target specific student groups—ELLs and SWDs—with explicit improvement processes, such as data-driven decision making, RTI, improvement planning, and/or family and community engagement. However, the state lacked an entity that could bring coordination and coherence to these separate systems. For example, ISTAC is ISBE’s model of integrated technical assistance designed specifically to build the capacity of school districts to serve the needs of SWDs and their families.

Likewise, since 1972, IRC has provided assistance to teachers and administrators serving linguistically and culturally diverse students. With support from ISBE, IRC has emerged as a major, statewide, intermediate service agency, and its educational and professional development programs have helped thousands of educators throughout Illinois and the nation develop effective learning environments for ELLs.

Previously, the link between SSoS, ISTAC, and IRC was nonexistent. To bring coherence and coordination to the various regional delivery systems in the state, ISBE has established Illinois CSI to provide high-quality, coordinated, and consistent support to the current SSoS and other regional assistance centers to ensure that school districts and schools receive expert, timely, and relevant assistance. Illinois CSI is operated as a partnership between ISBE and AIR, that has a proven track record of effectively and efficiently providing high-quality, research-based services and resources that improve education outcomes for students. Illinois CSI is supported by guidance and direction from the ISBE Roundtable, a cross-divisional leadership team responsible for SSoS oversight. The ISBE deputy superintendent is responsible for convening the Roundtable, and Illinois CSI’s director reports directly to the deputy superintendent.

By establishing Illinois CSI, ISBE has made several modifications to the current SSoS to ensure that the state can effectively meet the needs of school districts with focus schools and support meaningful interventions to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind, including the following:

- Hiring regional coordinators, content area specialists, coaches, and turnaround specialists with specific expertise in working with ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, and SWDs.
- Providing continuous professional development to SSoS staff to improve their capacity to effectively meet the needs of school districts with ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, and SWDs.
- Coordinating existing state resources to support teachers, administrators, and parents to better meet the needs of ELLs, low-income students, racial and ethnic minority students, and SWDs.
- Developing robust system wide evaluation processes for SSoS to promote its continuous improvement to better serve school districts and schools.

The state’s support for focus schools will occur through district-level interventions directed by District Assistance Teams (DATs) through SSoS. Each DAT will have one district leadership coach to facilitate the ongoing continuous improvement of the school district and its focus

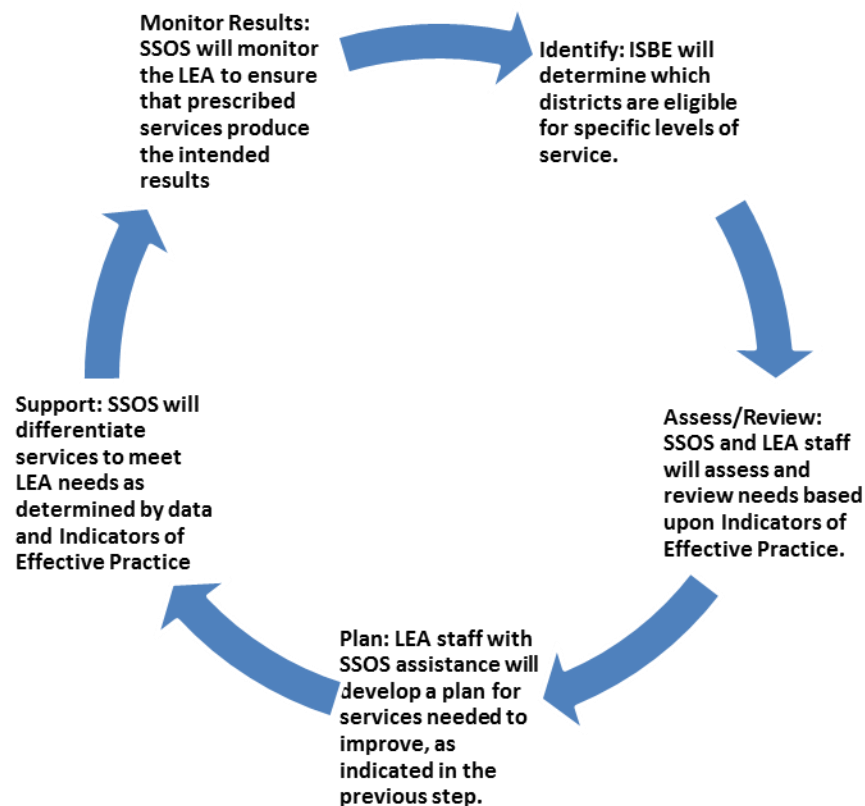
schools. Additionally, each school district will have a gap specialist who works with the district leadership team to support and coordinate interventions based on the identified needs for the focus schools. School districts that have focus schools will receive DAT support and assistance for at least three years.

DATs will do the following:

- Based on diagnostic findings, work with district and school improvement teams to customize an intervention plan that specifically identifies the intensity and duration of services to meet agreed-on outcomes.
- Support the use of a connected set of tools and resources to improve instructional practice, leadership, and student performance. Illinois CSI's DATs will articulate a systemic and coherent approach to improving school districts and schools for the short term and help change fundamental structures and processes that will lead to sustainable improvement over the long term.
- Cultivate district and building leadership teams.
- Determine areas of need related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment and work with the leadership team to develop research-based strategies to close achievement gaps.
- Assist with the implementation of research-based strategies, noting intensive focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment data.
- Monitor progress and correct the implementation plan.
- Collaborate with regional partners to share and disseminate best practices.

Furthermore, DATs will use a five-step problem-solving model that provides a cyclical approach for the team members and LEA administration to promote rigorous continuous improvement (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. SSoS Service and Support Cycle**



Achievement gaps between student groups are a long-standing and persistent problem. Although quantitative assessments and data from standardized tests clearly indicate that problems exist, these measurements do not readily explain why the problems exist. A multitude of factors influence the perverseness of achievement gaps between students, including the following: teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Kaplan & Owings, 2003; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004), student and parent background (Calda & Bankston, 1997; Coleman, 1966; Hossler & Stage, 1992), funding (Benabou, 1996; Greenwald, Laine, & Hedges, 1996; Lee & Wong, 2005; Mintrom, 1993), teacher attitudes and expectations, and student-teacher relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ferguson, 1998). These factors are interconnected and overlap, making it difficult for educators and administrators to identify practical solutions that will adequately address the problems(s), reduce gaps, and make effective systematic changes.

Furthermore, it is important to understand a school's achievement gap problem within context. Hence, to identify factors that contribute to achievement gaps within schools, it is necessary to take an in-depth and contextualized look at the environment by using a comprehensive diagnostic tool. The information collected will help school leadership teams make informed decisions about professional practices and strategies that either need to be improved or implemented to raise student achievement and reduce gaps. As such, Illinois will not mandate a one-size-fits-all intervention strategy for focus schools; rather, it will assist school districts with pinpointing the



nature of the problem at the school and provide targeted assistance through a DAT.

### **Examples of Interventions**

Interventions for focus schools are driven by a process of continuous improvement supported by using the indicators of effective practice through a tool called Rising Star. Rising Star is a Web-based, continuous improvement tool organized around indicators of effective practices at both the district level and the school level. Improvement teams assess indicators of effective practice by reading the corresponding Wise Way research evidence and then evaluating the level of development of that practice as fully met, partially met, or not met. The eight essential elements and the indicators of effective practice will guide focus schools through a diagnostic review of policies, procedures, and practices to help leadership teams pinpoint factors that contribute to their achievement gaps. The following examples of interventions that focus schools may engage in are derived from the Wise Way research base that accompanies each indicator of effective practice.

- **Indicator of effective practice: The principal challenges, supports, and monitors the correction of unsound teaching practices.**
  - A principal provides supports and interventions to correct unsound teaching practices. Learning-focused leaders devote abundant time to supporting colleagues in their efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in and across classrooms. Foremost, they are aggressive in identifying and removing barriers that prevent teachers from doing their work well. They provide intellectual stimulation and make certain that teachers have a high-quality stream of job-embedded opportunities to expand, enhance, and refine their repertoires of instructional skills. In supplying performance feedback, learning-focused leaders rely on personal knowledge developed through numerous classroom observations, both informal and formal, and employ a variety of supervisory and evaluation strategies. They make student learning the calculus of the exchange process. Effective leaders are especially expert in opening up a wide assortment of improvement opportunities for teachers, and they are relentless in counseling poor teachers to leave the profession. In a related vein, improvement-focused leaders aggressively monitor the instructional program in its entirety, assuring alignment between learning standards and objectives and classroom instruction. On a parallel track, learning-focused leaders undertake an array of activities that protect valuable instructional time from interruptions, including assigning academic subjects time slots that are the least likely to be disturbed by school events; protecting teachers from distractions from the school office; developing, implementing, and monitoring procedures to reduce student tardiness and absenteeism; and ensuring that teachers are punctual. They also foster more productive use of time by coordinating time usage among teachers and across classes (e.g., all language arts instruction unfolding during the first two hours of the day).
  - Principals in effective schools are committed to helping teachers improve their skills and teaching strategies. They focus staff development activities on the entire staff and on the specific goals and curriculum programs of the school. They are especially adept at using informal coalitions of teachers in implementing new programs. They take an active role in planning, participating in, and evaluating professional development activities with their staffs. Research also reveals that learning-focused leaders provide



- both direct aid (e.g., concrete technical assistance and materials) and indirect support (e.g., encouragement) to teachers as they attempt to integrate skills learned during staff development programs into their repertoire of instructional behaviors. Effective principals facilitate opportunities for professional growth by enabling teachers to attend conferences, establishing mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of professional dialogue, and personally sharing ideas and materials with staff.
- The principal establishes continuous opportunities for job-embedded professional development for the staff. When classroom observations by the principal or other teachers (as in peer observation and collegial learning) indicate a general need for improvement across the faculty, well-planned professional development is a way to improve. When classroom observations by the principal or another teacher show that an individual teacher needs improvement, that teacher’s personal development plan can include training or coaching to assist the teacher in the areas of need. Continuous improvement of each teacher’s skills is achieved through a variety of means, including whole-faculty workshops, consultations with instructional teams, the principal’s work with individual teachers and with teams, and collegial learning (teacher to teacher, including peer observations, study groups, coaching, and mentoring). Although teacher evaluation is apart from professional development, evaluation should include an examination of a teacher’s proficiency with the same indicators used to plan professional development for each individual teacher and the faculty as whole.
- **Indicator of effective practice: Teachers individualize instruction based on pretest results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.**
    - The school provides support to help teachers differentiate instruction to enhance student learning. Learning activities, the assignments given to each student targeted to that student’s level of mastery, should be carefully aligned with the objectives included in the unit plan to provide a variety of ways for a student to achieve mastery as evidenced in both the successful completion of the learning activities and correct responses on the unit posttest. An instructional team’s unit plans include a description of each leveled and differentiated learning activity, the standards-based objectives associated with it, and the criteria for mastery. These activities become arrows in the teacher’s quiver of instructional options for each student. The unit plan aligns the curriculum to standards and benchmarks. The next step is to align the curriculum to instruction. Unit plans level each objective into three tiers: target, enhanced, and prerequisite. The unit plans also differentiate learning activities among various modes of instruction: whole-class instruction, independent work, small-group and center-based activities, and homework. The activity instructions provide the detail that enables any teacher to use the learning activity and also become a means of explaining the activity to students.
    - Instructional teams should discuss how to differentiate instruction for specific students based on assessment evidence—including the enrichment of any students who are already proficient prior to unit instruction. Select strategies accordingly. Identify specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention strategies to use with at-risk students and those specific language acquisition strategies (including sheltered instruction) to use with ELLs. Consult with special educators to create specially designed instruction

- for special education students that is based on students' identified disabilities (cognitive and behavioral). Determine the results indicators and the means for determining the effectiveness of the selected instructional strategies. Decide how to monitor the application and effectiveness of those strategies throughout the unit of study.
- Schools must ensure that teachers are trained on how to interpret and analyze assessments so that they can accurately measure linguistic development and academic achievement; make the necessary interventions, adaptations, and modifications; and differentiate instruction for ELLs. Expectations should not be lowered for ELLs, and they should not be offered less challenging coursework based on assessment data. Instead, instructional supports should be put in place to differentiate instruction and allow ELLs to achieve the same high standards as all students. Supports, such as using native language instruction, modeling the use of academic language and formal structures in English, and considering both content and language objectives when planning instruction, can lead to higher levels of achievement for ELLs.
  - **Indicator of effective practice: Instructional teams use student learning data to plan instruction.**
    - The school modifies the day to allow time for teacher collaboration and establishes systems to support data-based decision making. Schools have invested heavily in curriculum alignment, mapping their curricula to standards, benchmarks, and specific items of standards-based assessment. The resulting alignment is a set of data, a carefully organized body of information that helps answer the question “What do we expect a student to know?” The challenge that lies ahead for most schools is to draw further connections between the aligned curriculum, the taught curriculum, the most efficacious instructional strategies, and the mastery evidenced by the individual student. This must be done in a way that assures that all students achieve the expected level of mastery while allowing each student ample opportunity to soar beyond that minimum expectation. The linkage from curriculum to instruction is tenuous in many schools, and insufficient systems are in place for capturing information about what is taught, how it is taught, and how individual students might best learn it. The research literature provides a wealth of information on instructional practices, but the usefulness of this information cannot be assumed from its abundance. Matching particular practices to the subject area, the grade level, and students' prior learning can be a massive undertaking, leaving too much unproductive chaff in the bushel of productive grain. In the end, the teacher must hit the target where content, instructional mode, and learner requisites optimally meet. A data-based decision-making system can help a teacher hit the target. Monitoring the application of targeted learning strategies by teachers can help a school refine its professional development processes and improve teacher effectiveness. Some decisions are best made by the teachers responsible for particular groups of students—grade-level teams or subject-area teams, which we call instructional teams. Instructional teams are manageable groups of teachers by grade level or subject area that meet to develop instructional strategies aligned to the standards-based curriculum and monitor student progress in the grade levels or the subject area for which the team is responsible. Instructional teams need time for two purposes: meetings and curricular and instructional planning.

A 45-minute meeting twice a month is ideal for maintaining communication and organizing the work at hand, operating with agendas, minutes, and focus. In addition, a block of 4–6 hours of time once a month is necessary for curricular and instructional planning, and additional whole days before and after the school year are a great advantage.

In addition to the above examples already included in the Rising Star tool, ISBE is currently in the process of compiling a set of diagnostics and supports for schools identified as focus schools due to achievement gaps between white students and racial and ethnic minority students. These diagnostics will pinpoint the needs of schools and the supports will increase their capacity to provide culturally responsive education.

A growing body of research demonstrates the importance of culturally responsive education for all students and particularly for racial and ethnic minority students (Gay, 2002; Banks et al, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The structures, policies, procedures and practices of culturally responsive education have a significant impact not only on academic achievement but on the very ways in which students experience school. The following elements and indicators were derived from Richards, Artilles, Klingner, & Brown’s 2005 school self-assessment for culturally responsive education.

- **Culturally Responsive Education: School Governance, Organization, Policy and Climate**

Governance, organization, policy, and climate are all essential to culturally responsive education. According to Richards et al (2005) “The overall administration and organization of the school provide the structure for delivering instruction and programming that meet the needs of students. Effective governance requires distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000) that (a) works to improve instructional practice and performance by providing opportunities for building knowledge and skills; (b) creates conditions that value learning as both an individual and a collective good, such that continuous learning occurs; (c) models the values and behaviors that represent fairness and equity for all regardless of cultural, linguistic or economic background; (d) acknowledges and utilizes differences in expertise at all levels so that everyone contributes to a culturally responsive environment; and (e) operates on the premise of mutual accountability for achieving goals and objectives.”<sup>1</sup> The following are just some of the indicators of culturally responsive education offered by Richards et al. (2005) under the heading of governance, organization, policy, and climate:

- The school accepts the responsibility for the achievement of all students.
- Administration, faculty and support personnel are well informed of the influence of culture, language, and ethnicity on school achievement.
- New reforms are implemented with sensitivity toward the diverse learning needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The school sponsors professionally conducted workshops where faculty and support

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<sup>1</sup> Page 10.

personnel can identify their cultural and/or linguistic biases and work to address them.

- The school establishes school and district-wide professional development training in cultural competence (i.e., the ability to interact meaningfully and respectfully with individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds).
- The administration creates a school culture in which students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel they are listened to, their opinions valued, and they are involved in decision-making.

- **Culturally Responsive Education: Family Involvement**

The importance of family involvement in schools is well documented, and it is an essential element of culturally responsive education. According to Richards et al (2005), “Schools must actively work to ensure that parents remain informed and involved. Additionally, schools must create a hospitable environment for parents to feel welcome when they visit school. The less parents feel threatened by the school, the more likely parents will view school as an ally in their children’s educational experience.”<sup>2</sup> The following are just some of the indicators of culturally responsive education offered by Richards et al. (2005) under the heading of Family Involvement:

- The school has developed an effective ongoing communication system with families.
- The school provides professional development to staff and teachers on effective communication with parents from diverse cultural, language, and ethnic groups.
- The school is a welcoming environment for families from diverse backgrounds, for example, with front office personnel who speak the same language as parents, and security and other personnel who are friendly and welcoming, greeting parents with a smile.
- The school surveys families from diverse backgrounds to gather suggestions on ways to involve parents in their children’s education.
- The school involves parents in the governance of the school.

- **Curriculum: The curriculum is inclusive and culturally response.**

Curriculum is never neutral. According to Richards et al (2005), “What is taught in the school reflects the values and disposition of the school system. The curriculum may be monocultural or multicultural in its scope, reflecting history, contributions and perspectives of one group in society or that of many.”<sup>3</sup> The following are just some of the indicators of culturally responsive education offered by Richards et al. (2005) under the heading of Curriculum:

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<sup>2</sup> Page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Page 14.

- The curriculum reflects an integration of ethnic and cultural content throughout programming, rather than assigning the study of diverse cultural groups to a single unit or one month.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for students to investigate and understand how cultural assumptions and biases influence subject areas.
- The curriculum supports and values the experiences and information students have learned within their cultural groups.
- The curriculum helps students make connections between what they are learning in school and their personal experiences.
- The curriculum is made interesting and challenging for all students
- The curriculum explicitly teaches cultural capital (the norms, behaviors, and attitudes) that provides access to achievement.

- **Culturally Responsive Education: Organization of Learning**

The way students experience the classroom impacts their achievement. According to Richards et al (2005), “Teachers play a major role in establishing the classroom setting and determining what knowledge is important and how it will be taught. Criteria for achievement and methods of assessing that achievement are an integral part of this process. Finally, classroom behavior management is key to creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning.”<sup>4</sup> The following are just some of the elements of culturally responsive education offered by Richards et al. (2005) under the heading of Organization of Learning:

- Teachers understand the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, language and social class interact to influence student behavior.
- Teachers have high expectations for all students regardless of their background or differences.
- Teachers work from the premise that “all children can learn” and continue to attempt different instructional approaches until each child is reached.
- Teachers modify their instruction so that students from diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, language, and ability groups will have an equal opportunity to learn.
- Teachers relate content and instructional strategies to the cultural background of their students.
- Teachers utilize instructional materials that reflect images and perspectives from diverse groups.
- Teachers help students to appreciate current and historical events from multiple perspectives.

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<sup>4</sup> Page 15-16.

These example interventions represent only a sliver of the type of work focus schools will engage in after they have completed a comprehensive diagnostic of all eight essential elements. With assistance from a DAT, a school will pinpoint areas for improvement and create a comprehensive transformation plan that will help close its achievement gaps and improve student outcomes. The flexibility of the ESEA waiver will enable Illinois to provide its school districts with a differentiated support system ground in shared tools, processes, and resources, allowing us to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

A school designated as focus school can exit that status if it has risen above the measurement that placed it in the focus category for two consecutive years and has met the Multiple Measure index target for three consecutive years demonstrating progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps for the subgroup(s) of students for which the school was identified. IL CSI will continue to monitor and provide support for two additional years after a school exits focus status to help sustain the improvements. This approach requires that a school demonstrate for a two-year period that the basis for focus designation has been addressed in addition to meeting designated targets for three years to reduce by  $\frac{1}{2}$  the percentage achievement gap within six years.

If a focus school does not make progress after their third year of implementation of interventions ISBE will provide targeted assistance similar to a District assistance Team or Lead Partner to provide more direct and targeted assistance.

**TABLE 10: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS – PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT 9**

Provide the SEA’s list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

**TABLE 10: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS**

| LEA Name                   | School Name      | School NCES ID #    | REWARD SCHOOL | PRIORITY SCHOOL | FOCUS SCHOOL |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Ex. Washington</i>      | <i>Oak HS</i>    | <i>111111100001</i> |               | <i>C</i>        |              |
|                            | <i>Maple ES</i>  | <i>111111100002</i> |               |                 | <i>H</i>     |
| <i>Adams</i>               | <i>Willow MS</i> | <i>222222200001</i> | <i>A</i>      |                 |              |
|                            | <i>Cedar HS</i>  | <i>222222200002</i> |               |                 | <i>F</i>     |
|                            | <i>Elm HS</i>    | <i>222222200003</i> |               |                 | <i>G</i>     |
|                            |                  |                     |               |                 |              |
|                            |                  |                     |               |                 |              |
|                            |                  |                     |               |                 |              |
|                            |                  |                     |               |                 |              |
| <b>TOTAL # of Schools:</b> |                  |                     |               |                 |              |

Total # of Title I schools in the State: 2,350

Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: 9

| Key   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Reward School Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Highest-performing school</li> <li>B. High-progress school</li> </ul> <p><b>Priority School Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the “all students” group</li> <li>D-1. Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years</li> <li>D-2. Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years</li> <li>E. Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model</li> </ul> | <p><b>Focus School Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>F. Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate</li> <li>G. Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate</li> <li>H. A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school</li> </ul> |



## 2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

- 2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

ISBE has focused on building systemic capacity for district and school improvement through four areas: an assessment system, a longitudinal data system, a continuous improvement framework, and SSoS.

All the state’s school districts and schools are expected to make steady progress toward improving student outcomes, and the Multiple Measures Index (MMI) will be used to differentiate, recognize, and support schools and school districts to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that are not making progress.

The MMI will result in an index score for all schools which will be published on the new Illinois Report Card for all schools. Specifically, Title I schools will have to notify parents of the score, explain how they are addressing the needs of their students, and provide opportunities for parent involvement. .

SSoS Foundational Services will be available for all schools. Support in key waiver activities will be provided throughout the state through the regional delivery system. The five areas of concentration for the first year are: Continuous Improvement Planning, Common Core Standards in ELA and Math, PARCC and Teacher Evaluation. For example, trained Continuous Improvement Planning providers will deliver professional development supports by using indicators of effective practice through a tool called Rising Star, a Web-based, continuous improvement tool organized around indicators of effective practices at both the district level and the school level. Rising Stars guides improvement teams to commence their work with extensive data analysis, including a review of the district's or school's achievement of all AMOs for all ESEA subgroups. Rising Star will be used to guide Title I districts in their continuous improvement planning. Required indicators will be based on AMO results. Improvement teams assess indicators of effective practice by reading the corresponding Wise Way research evidence and then evaluating the level of development of that practice as fully met, partially met, or not met. The system allows the team to apply a priority (indicates importance) and opportunity (ease for accomplishment) index score for each assessed indicator, enabling the team to gain quick wins as well as establish more involved improvement work goals. Moreover, Rising Star allows the team to design a plan and self-monitor the progress of tasks. After tasks are completed, the system prompts the team to judge whether the objective (the indicator of effective practice) has been met. If met, the team must provide a status report describing evidence of completion levels. For objectives not met, the system prompts the team to develop additional targeted tasks that will lead to a fully met objective. In addition, the National Center for Innovation and Improvement provides indicators in action—video modules demonstrating the practices.

Rather than focusing on only improvement in areas where the last annual test showed weakness, a

framework grounded in continuous improvement examines schoolwide professional practices and seeks to elevate performance across the board, including the most recent areas of deficiency. Rather than creating a plan once a year, the team engages in a continuous improvement process that is always assessing current practice relative to indicators of effectiveness, planning immediate steps to full implementation, and monitoring progress.

All of our federal programs require identification of districts based on the performance of identified students. Whether Title I, ELL or SWDs, all districts are held accountable and must submit continuous improvement plans in our Rising Star Platform.

Additional SSoS Foundational Services for Common Core Standards in ELA and Math will be delivered through technical assistance, workshops and networking sessions around the many tools and resources our Content Area Specialists have provided. In particular, training that supports implementation of our Model Math Curriculum and Transitional Supports Units will be delivered through professional development sessions this summer to groups of teacher leaders who will then lead local sessions throughout the school year. Additionally, in English Language Arts, specific sessions regarding the instructional shift kits and the EQUiP rubric were provided to the field. Based on the district's AMOs, teachers will attend various sessions in alignment with their continuous improvement plan.

SSoS Foundational Services for PARCC presents PARCC as a summative assessment in a Balanced Assessment System. Training around high quality assessments will be delivered as we transition to an evaluation system that uses classroom and district assessments for teacher evaluation. A collection of high quality assessments will be created and available for use by local districts.

Finally, SSoS Foundational Services for Teacher Evaluation is delivered to district teacher evaluation committees. Implementation of the student growth requirements is based on district performance. Teachers in schools with low performance (needs improvement, unsatisfactory) will be required to attend professional development sessions according to their improvement plan.

The Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) Foundational Services support all school districts in Illinois. Foundational Services are designed to target student achievement and continuous improvement through the Eight Essential Elements of Effective Education, starting with the topics described above. An analysis of the AMOs of districts each year will guide ongoing delivery of professional development supports and resources and requirements regarding progress in their applicable AMOs.

## 2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

- 2.G Describe the SEA’s process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:
- i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
  - ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
  - iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.
  - iv. Local districts will have the option to re-direct CHOICE/SES allocation to support local school and district improvement efforts.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

The state’s district-level approach for accountability and assistance, which was detailed in earlier sections, establishes a comprehensive and coherent structure for monitoring and holding school districts accountable for improving school and student performance. Since 2003, regionalized support services in Illinois have focused support and intervention services at schools, often bypassing school districts and at times working in contradiction to district reform efforts. Additionally, although regional service providers have experienced success in their work with schools, it has been difficult to replicate the success or bring it to scale systemwide. Illinois CSI is responsible for implementing a performance management system that provides frequent, formative, and summative reports on Illinois CSI’s effectiveness and its impact on improving student achievement, which will include priority schools. Additionally, working with an independent evaluator contracted by ISBE to assess the overall effectiveness of the SSoS as well as levels of service delivery. Finally, ISBE staff from the Innovation and Improvement Center will utilize its current monitoring protocol for SIG 1003(g) grantee to conduct monitoring visits in priority schools. The purpose of the monitoring visit will be engage in a comprehensive review of the implementation of the turnaround principals identified by the Department of Education, gauge the continuity and fidelity of implementation of required components, identify areas for corrective action, and identify areas of strength to share with other grant recipients across the state.

ISBE will ensure sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system by ensuring monetary set-asides are directed for the interventions identified by the district through the improvement plan developed with the District assistance team or District Assistance team. Upon approval of the flexibility waiver, ISBE will

reissue the NCLB Consolidated Application with the inclusion of focus and priority set-aside options in the targeting step 4 page. This will require the district to target funds off the top to schools in focus, up to 10% of Title I Basic, and priority status, up to 20% of Title I Basic, to support the implementation of the identified interventions. The remaining funds would be distributed to all schools in rank order according to the law. In the budget detail page, the district would articulate how those funds for priority and focus set-asides would be used. ISBE consultants will make sure this aligns to what had been approved in their improvement plan. Districts that have already submitted an application will simply submit an amendment to make the adjustment for the new set-asides.

With the creation of Illinois CSI and the addition of the Unit for District Accountability and Oversight, ISBE will increase the state's capacity to ensure sufficient support for the implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools.

Furthermore, within the last several years, a cross-divisional team from several ISBE divisions—Innovation and Improvement, Special Education, English Language Learners, Career and Technical Education, and Curriculum and Instruction—have joined together to bring greater coordination and coherence to SSoS. Each division has developed tools, processes, and resources to support targeted areas of improvement, but ISBE as a whole never brought the pieces together to define one, coherent, comprehensive approach for improvement. Illinois CSI will bring greater coordination and coherence to SSoS to ensure that all state initiatives adhere to a set of guiding principles and directly connect with the comprehensive framework. Illinois CSI will be able to capitalize on the lessons learned and best practices that exist in and among special education cooperatives, RTI, technical assistance centers, IRC, and school and district improvement coaches. For example, over the last several years, IRC has developed high-quality resources and materials to support educators with improving their instructional programs and practices for ELLs, and school and district improvement coaches have developed high-quality resources and materials to support school improvement. However, the two areas have not intersected in a meaningful way. As such, a school district could have at any given point in time two to three coaches providing support—all proposing different frameworks for improvement and all asking for similar resource commitments. Illinois will be better equipped to meet the needs of school districts by leveraging and coordinating support and interventions through one DAT that customizes support based on the identified need.

An additional tool that will be made available is the Illinois Shared Learning Environment. Illinois has developed a teacher dashboard tool that is now in use in the State's pilot school district. This application and several others will be implemented in 10-15 additional school districts in SY2014-2015. This resource will provide Illinois educators real-time interventions, strategies, and resources to support student achievement.

## PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

### 3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

| <b>Option A</b>   | <b>Option B</b>   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;</li> <li>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).</li> </ul> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;</li> <li>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul> |

ISBE and its stakeholder partners have worked diligently to reconstruct an effective teacher/leader bridge. Simultaneous work on realigning the agency, certification to licensure changes, changed expectations for principal and teacher preparation program approval guidelines, and much more reflect the seriousness of this work.

***Increased Expectations for the Teaching Profession.***

The State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that every student is supported by highly effective teachers throughout their education. One important decision was made by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2012, when they voted to raise the Basic Skills cut score for teacher certification.

In addition to a passing score on the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) ISBE will now accept score reports for the ACT plus writing of at least 22 and SAT application/ submission with a minimum score of 1030.

Applicants will now be limited to the number of re-take attempts and have a maximum of 5 attempts to pass the Test of Academic Proficiency.

In order to ensure our teachers are prepared to teach to the level of rigor in the Common Core, 2013 Statute requires Professional Educational License Changes, including an increased emphasis on reading methods and additional content in Mathematics and Literacy.

- ***Regional Alignment Pilot Projects*** – Twenty-two community college have committed to a high school through college CCSS alignment project. Four year institutions are also partnering in this work. High School teachers are planning curriculum instruction together with their colleagues from postsecondary institutions.

Illinois students deserve a seamless transition from one level of education to the next.

Our intentional work to improve upon teacher and principal preparations will lay a solid foundation for attracting and retaining top talent to the education profession.

- **Redefined Professional Teaching Standards**

In 2013 Illinois refined Teacher Standards to include differentiation, diversity, and assessment literacy.

In addition, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) – have been aligned to the research-based Danielson Framework.

The Illinois State Board of Education is working **aggressively** and **collaboratively** with our stakeholders to ensure Illinois educators have the necessary resources and support to implement these new evaluation systems no later than the 2015-16 school year.

Clearly, improving the instructional performance and capabilities of Illinois educators has long been a focus of ISBE. Recognizing the nexus between competent instruction and student performance, Illinois has embarked on a mission to overhaul its teacher and principal evaluation processes and, as a result, create systems that more accurately recognize both excellence and deficiencies in individual educators. Reforms currently underway in Illinois were instituted in earnest prior to the submission of this waiver application and will continue in the coming years.

The foundation for the state’s guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support is



PERA (Public Act 096-0861). This legislation, which passed in January 2010 with overwhelming bipartisan support, substantially re-envisioned the state systems for supporting and developing teachers and leaders by tightly aligning student outcomes and effective measures. The critical elements of PERA, from requiring all teachers and principal evaluation systems to include student growth as a significant factor in evaluations to employing actionable plans for building on reported strengths and addressing documented shortcomings, are fundamental in improving classroom instruction and school leadership. PERA and its implementing regulations establish the requirements and guidelines Illinois school districts must follow for local teacher and principal evaluation support systems. These requirements and guidelines have been established and completed through the state's administrative rule-making process.

### **The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and Teacher and Principal Engagement**

PERA authorized and directed the state superintendent to establish PEAC, requiring that it be composed of teacher representatives, school district management representatives, experts in evaluation systems, and other interested stakeholders to advise ISBE on developing and implementing improved performance evaluation systems and supports. PEAC has been meeting monthly since April 2010 and is required, by PERA, to continue to do so at least through 2017.

At the core of the PEAC's mission is to ensure that consistent and accurate information is being disseminated to appropriate stakeholders and feedback from such stakeholders is received, reviewed, and incorporated into constructive dialogue. To help gather additional input, PEAC held eight forums across the state in October and early November 2011. Through a partnership with the nonprofit organization Teach Plus, the state employed live polling technology, as well as an online forum for those who could not participate in person. In all, more than 2,300 educators offered their views, which PEAC and ISBE then used to develop the PERA implementing regulations. The majority of the respondents from across the state were teachers, followed by principals, and then other administrators. Please see Attachment 13 for specific listing of PEAC meetings, forums, and general outreach to the educational community.

As PEAC meets monthly, it will continue to provide recommendations for more detailed implementation tools and supports for local districts. For example, PEAC has recommended and ISBE has adopted a state model plan for principal and assistant principal evaluations. This plan has student growth comprising 50 percent of the overall performance evaluation rating (30 percent will be academic assessments and 20 percent will be other objective measures of student growth, such as graduation rate, attendance, and dual-credit earning rates). PERA legislation requires all principals and assistant principals to be evaluated under the guidelines of the PERA legislation to ensure every principal and assistant principal be provided a fair and accurate evaluation of their effectiveness as an instructional leader. Consequently, the specific needs of each principal's or assistant principal's professional development should be based on the areas of improvement shown to be present through the evaluation process. Because there is no "phase-in" of this plan, it must be implemented by every public school district in Illinois starting September 1, 2012. New principal induction and mentoring supports will be available through 2017 to new principals through the Illinois State Board of Education via Race to the Top Phase 3 funding. This will provide support that is needed for new principals within their first and second



year in the position. Because Section 24A-3 of the School Code requires that an individual who conducts evaluations of teachers, principals, or assistant principals after September 1, 2012 be prequalified before undertaking any evaluations and participates in a regularly scheduled retraining program, either of which must be developed or approved by the State Board of Education the principals and assistant principals will have an informed evaluator and support system through the evaluation system to provide school and instructional leadership.

PEAC is also working diligently with national experts in the fields of assessment and teacher evaluations to recommend a model teacher evaluation plan that provides additional depth to the guidelines and recommendations included within PERA and its promulgating regulations. This model plan will specify how student growth must be measured and accounted for in teacher performance evaluations in circumstances where a school district's cannot achieve consensus through the joint committee process discussed below.

### PERA Requirements

Article 24A of the Illinois School Code, as amended by PERA, includes several requirements that directly address local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, including the following:

- **Inclusion of student growth.** All teacher and principal evaluation systems must include student growth as a significant factor by the applicable implementation date. Principle 3.B discusses the implementation timeframe for school districts to incorporate student growth.
- **Development of a local evaluation plan.** Local teacher performance evaluation systems must be developed through a process involving the establishment of a joint committee that includes equal representation from a school district's teachers and administrators. However, to ensure timely implementation, if agreement is not reached on the evaluation plan within 180 days of convening the joint committee, the school district defaults to a state model on those aspects of student growth on which there is no agreement; student growth comprises 50 percent of the overall evaluation rating in the state model. (In CPS, if the district and the union do not reach agreement in 90 days, CPS can implement its last best proposal.)
- **Four rating categories.** By no later than the 2012–13 school year, school districts must use a four-category rating system for both principal and assistant principal evaluations and teacher evaluations (excellent, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory) instead of the three-category rating system that had been required (excellent, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory).
- **Frequency of evaluations.** As of September 1, 2012, all principals and assistant principals must be evaluated at least once each school year, no later than March 1. Article 24A of the Illinois School Code requires that non-tenured teachers be evaluated at least once every school year, and tenured teachers be evaluated at least once in the course of every two school years (except that a tenured teacher whose performance is rated as either needs improvement or unsatisfactory must be evaluated once in the school year following the receipt of that rating). A school district may evaluate teachers more frequently than the law requires; the law establishes the minimum number of evaluations a

teacher may receive.

- **Professional development for teachers needing improvement.** Teachers who receive an overall performance rating of needs improvement must receive professional development supports directed at the areas of need. Specifically, under Article 24A, within 30 school days after assigning a tenured teacher a needs improvement rating, the evaluator must develop, in consultation with the teacher (and taking into account the teacher’s ongoing professional responsibilities) a professional development plan directed at the areas that need improvement and any supports that the school district will provide to address the areas identified as needing improvement. Any professional development provided as part of a professional development or remediation plan under Section 24A-5 of the School Code shall align to Standards for Professional Learning (2011) published by Learning Forward, 504 South Locust Street, Oxford, Ohio 45056 and posted at <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/index.cfm>.
- **Remediation for teachers rated unsatisfactory.** Tenured teachers who receive an overall performance rating of unsatisfactory must successfully complete a remediation plan. Specifically, within 30 school days after assigning a tenured teacher an unsatisfactory rating, the school district must develop and commence a remediation plan designed to correct the deficiencies cited, provided the deficiencies are deemed remediable. The remediation plan for unsatisfactory, tenured teachers shall provide for 90 school days of remediation within the classroom, unless an applicable collective bargaining agreement provides for a shorter duration. Any professional development provided as part of a professional development or remediation plan under Section 24A-5 of the School Code shall align to Standards for Professional Learning (2011) published by Learning Forward, 504 South Locust Street, Oxford, Ohio 45056 and posted at <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/index.cfm>.

**Focus on Best Practice.** The Illinois evaluator training is ground in the Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) of 2010 (096-0861), Senate Bill 7 (097-8), general requirements of Articles 24A and 34 of the Illinois School Code, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS), as well as common frameworks of professional teaching standards, including the 2011 Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument. The training is available through the Growth Through Learning Illinois evaluator training modules available at <http://www.growththroughlearningillinois.org>.

Section 24A-3 of the School Code requires that an individual who conducts evaluations of teachers, principals, or assistant principals after September 1, 2012 be prequalified before undertaking any evaluations and participates in a regularly scheduled retraining program, either of which must be developed or approved by the State Board of Education. Through the Illinois evaluator training, the best practice of conducting an ongoing annual review cycle of observation/feedback and data driven decision making is detailed. The training stresses that school leaders should evaluate every teacher at least once a year, regardless of their ability level or years of experience to ensure all teachers receive ongoing feedback on their performance. Additionally, the training highlights that an evaluation system should not be limited to a single rating assigned at the end of the year. Stressing, that frequent, informal observations and regular conversations to discuss performance and student progress should occur with consistency. The evaluator training establishes expectations for tenured teachers that receive proficient or excellent

rating, which include the evaluator providing:

- Clearly defined expectations as outlined in the teacher evaluation plan and district determined IPTS-Aligned Teaching Evaluation Framework.
- Ongoing conversations based upon evidence gathered by both Teacher and Evaluator (e.g., Data Logs, reflection forms, lesson planning, student work, formal and informal observations).
- A minimum of two (2) observations during each evaluation cycle, of which one (1) must be a formal observation (formal observations include both a pre-and-post observation conference).
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses based upon formative feedback, planning and reflecting conversations, as well as attendance and subject competency when determining a Summative Evaluation Rating.

The Illinois Performance Evaluation Model, also known as Growth Through Learning Illinois, is based on the learning cycle of “Understanding, Planning, Collaborating, Reflecting, Measuring, and Evaluation.” Through this training, principals are provided consistent instruction on best practices of instructional leadership with a built-in assessment system to insure that participants who have completed the training have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide the appropriate level of feedback and mechanisms for improving the effectiveness of all teachers.

Teachers not rated as underperforming will develop their own professional development plans. The Model System that ISBE is developing includes guidance on how educators can align the professional development they pursue under their educator plans with the professional development required for re-licensure. Additionally ISBE has established expectation that evaluators use data from the evaluation rubric, other evidence collected, and best practices relative to evaluating professional practice to link teacher and school-level professional development plans to evaluation results; and creates, in collaboration with teachers, supportive, targeted professional development plans that consider past results, contribute to professional growth, and assist teachers in aligning professional development and goal-setting to school improvement goals.

It is incumbent upon building principals to insure that all staff members within their building receive appropriate, timely, effective feedback and assistance in improving their effectiveness. Between 25 to 50 percent of a principal’s summative evaluation will utilize the student growth of all the students in their yearly performance evaluation. Since student growth is a significant portion of the principal’s evaluation, it is imperative that the principal provide excellent instructional leadership to every teacher regardless of what evaluation cycle a teacher is placed and regardless of their past performance on evaluations. The principal has a vested interest and significant motivation to provide continuous feedback to improve instruction as well as provide effective professional development to all teachers differentiated to their specific areas of weakness or needs.

To fulfill this goal, the following strategies and resources will be available for use by local districts

no later than the 2013-14 school year.

- Development of a professional learning community consisting of the 35 Race to the Top districts, Chicago Public Schools and the additional 12 School Improvement grant districts. This network of early adopters will identify lessons learned and best practices that will be shared with all Illinois districts. Professionals from these districts will provide support and assistance to districts throughout the state as they finalize local evaluation systems.
  
- Development of Type II and Type III assessment items and frameworks for grade levels and subjects not assessed by the state system are currently under development and will be available to every district. With the understanding that the new PARCC assessments will not provide needed assessments in all areas, Illinois is aggressively working to develop quality resources that can be used for evaluation and improvement purposes.
  
- A panel of technical experts has been convened to address and provide statewide guidance on the following:
  - Alignment of Assessments to College and Career ready expectations.
  - Appropriate use of the assessments including instructional, evaluative, predictive or multiple purposes.
  - Technical quality of assessments, including item quality
  - Design of reporting systems ensuring accessibility to actionable data relating to appropriate uses.
  - Recommendations for professional development necessary to effectively use the assessments and results for instructional change
  - Guidance on best practice for using assessment with English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

### **Administrative Rule Requirements**

Article 24A of the Illinois School Code requires that ISBE will adopt administrative rules further defining the requirements for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, following ISBE's receipt of recommendations from PEAC. PEAC's process for involving teachers, principals, and other stakeholders in the development of guidelines and requirements is described above.

As of February 21, 2012, ISBE adopted implementing regulations for PERA (23 Ill. Adm. Code Part 50). The proposed regulations were initially posted for public comment on November 19, 2011. ISBE made various revisions in response to public comment received before submitting the proposed rules for official adoption. Under the state's administrative rule-making process, the

rules were submitted to a legislative committee—the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR)—before taking effect. JCAR did not issue objections or suggestions for revising the rules, including the addition proposed by ISBE that student growth—including, for grades and subjects for which assessments are required under ESEA, student growth on such assessments—is a significant factor in determining performance levels, and that Illinois has a statewide approach for measuring growth on such assessments. Because JCAR’s review period expired and notification from JCAR of no objection was issued, ISBE filed a certified copy of the rules with the Secretary of State. The final version of the rules adopted by ISBE is attached as Attachment 10.

The PERA implementing regulations include the following additional specifications and guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems:

- **Definition of student growth constituting a significant factor.** The regulations define “significant factor” for any school district implementing PERA as at least 25 percent of the overall evaluation rating for the first two years of implementation and at least 30 percent of the overall evaluation rating thereafter.
- **Using multiple valid measures of student growth.** Under the regulations, performance evaluation plans must be based on at least two assessments, each of which must include one or more metrics to be used to determine student growth. Further, each assessment and the associated metrics must conform to and align with improvement goals of the school and the school district. The types of assessments defined in the regulations are delineated in Table 10.

**Table 10. Assessment Types Defined in 23 Ill. Adm. Code Part 50**

| Assessment Type | Description  | Examples  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Type I          | Reliable assessments that measure a certain group or subset of students in the same manner with the same potential assessment items are scored by a non-district entity and are administered either statewide or beyond Illinois.  | Assessments available from the Northwest Evaluation Association, the Scantron Performance Series, the Star Reading Enterprise, the College Board’s SAT, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate, ISAT, PSAE examinations, or ACT’s EPAS.  |
| Type II         | Any assessment developed or adopted and approved for use by the school district and used on a districtwide basis by all teachers in a given grade or subject area.   | Collaboratively developed common assessments, curriculum tests, and assessments designed by textbook publishers.  |
| Type III        | Any assessment that is rigorously aligned to the course’s curriculum and the qualified evaluator and teacher determine measures student learning in that course. Note: A Type I or Type II assessment may qualify as a Type III assessment if it aligns to the curriculum being taught and measures student learning in that subject area. | Teacher-created assessments, assessments designed by textbook publishers, student work samples or portfolios, assessments of student performance, and assessments designed by staff who are subject area or grade-level experts that are administered commonly across a given grade or subject. |



- **Teacher evaluations and student growth.** With respect to teacher evaluations and student growth, the school district’s joint committee must identify a measurement model employing multiple data points from at least one Type I or Type II assessment and at least one Type III assessment. Assessments used for each data point in a measurement model may be different, provided that they address the same instructional content. If the joint committee determines that neither a Type I nor a Type II assessment can be identified, then the joint committee must identify at least two Type III assessments to be used.
- **Principal evaluations and student growth.** In regard to principal and assistant principal evaluations and student growth, the school district must identify at least two assessments from either Type I or Type II. Type III assessments may be used for schools serving a majority of students who are not administered a Type I or Type II assessment. In these situations, the qualified evaluator and principal may identify at least two Type III assessments to be used to determine student growth.
- **Requirements for professional development or remediation plans.** The regulations require that professional development provided as part of a professional development or remediation plan under Section 24A-5 of Illinois the School Code align to the National Staff Development Council’s Standards for Professional Learning (2011; see <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>).
- **Frequency of observations for teachers rated needs improvement or unsatisfactory.** The regulations require for each tenured teacher who received a needs improvement or an unsatisfactory performance evaluation, a minimum of three observations must be completed in the school year immediately following the year in which the needs improvement or the unsatisfactory rating was assigned, of which two must be formal observations.

Teacher and principal evaluation systems are used to inform a wide array of personnel decisions. Under Section 10-23.8a of the Illinois School Code, all principals must serve under either a one-year contract or a performance-based contract not to exceed 5 years. The performance-based contract must be linked to student performance and academic improvement attributable to the responsibilities and duties of the principal. As described in Section 3.B, both PERA and Senate Bill tie performance evaluations to teacher and principal certification and a range of other personnel decisions involving teachers.

### 3.B ENSURE LEAs IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- 3.B Provide the SEA’s process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA’s adopted guidelines.

Illinois is undertaking a series of aligned strategies to ensure LEAs develop, adopt, pilot, and implement teacher and principal evaluation systems with appropriate state assistance and support. In addition, Illinois is putting in place systems and processes to review, revise, and improve these

systems through a robust system of public reporting, a comprehensive evaluation of implementation, and the state’s general compliance and monitoring systems.

### Implementation Timeline

Under PERA, all school districts must implement principal evaluation systems that incorporate student growth and are otherwise compliant with PERA by the start of the 2012–13 school year. As the result of PERA, ISBE’s administration of the SIG program, and the state’s Race to the Top Phase 3 plan, schools and school districts throughout Illinois will implement teacher performance evaluation systems incorporating student growth as a significant factor and otherwise comply with PERA on a phased timeline (Table 11).

**Table 11. Performance Evaluation Systems**

| School Year | Implementation of Teacher Performance Evaluation Systems  |
|-------------|---|
| 2012–13     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth in 300 schools.</li> <li>• All school districts must move to a four-category rating system compliant with PERA.</li> <li>• All individuals assigned to serve as an evaluator of teachers or principals after the start of the 2012–13 school year must complete a rigorous prequalification process.</li> <li>• In any school receiving a SIG grant, the school district must pilot a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth.</li> </ul>   |
| 2013–14     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth in the remainder of its schools (375 additional schools).</li> <li>• In any school receiving a SIG grant, the school district must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth (approximately 35 schools throughout the state).</li> <li>• In any school district participating in the state’s Race to the Top Phase 3 application, the district must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating a no-stakes student growth component (i.e., student growth is measured for all teachers but is not used in the final summative evaluation).</li> </ul> |
| 2014–15     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All school districts participating in the state’s Race to the Top Phase 3 application that are also within the lowest performing 20 percent of school districts (as defined by ISBE) must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth.</li> </ul>  |
| 2015–16     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All school districts within the lowest performing 20 percent of school districts (as defined by ISBE), regardless of participation in Race to the Top Phase 3, must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth.</li> <li>• All school districts participating in Race to the Top Phase 3, regardless of performance,</li> </ul>   |



|         |  |
|---------|--|
|         | must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth.  |
| 2016–17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All remaining school districts must implement a PERA-compliant teacher evaluation system incorporating student growth.</li> </ul> |

Recognizing the fundamental and critical shift new teacher performance evaluation systems will represent across the state, Illinois believes this timeline will allow the state to learn from the early adopters and effectively adjust implementation across multiple school years to ensure the long-term success of this reform. In addition, the state has significantly ratcheted up the consequences associated with PERA-compliant evaluations, thereby increasing the pressure to ensure adequate supports and the most effective implementation possible before high stakes are attached. Senate Bill 007, signed into law as Public Act 097-0008 by the governor on June 13, 2011 (see Attachment 11), ties significant teacher employment decisions to performance evaluations by

- Allowing the state superintendent to initiate certificate or license action against an educator for incompetency based on performance evaluations.
- Streamlining the tenured teacher dismissal process based on an unsatisfactory performance evaluation rating.
- Placing a greater emphasis on performance evaluations in key decisions, such as the filling of new and vacant positions, awarding tenure, and determining the order of dismissal in a reduction in force.

Prior to SB 7, reductions in force (RIF) in all school districts and joint agreements (e.g., special education cooperatives) subject to Section 24-12 of the School Code (all school districts other than Chicago) occurred strictly based on seniority. Non-tenured teachers were required to be reduced prior to tenured teachers. Then, if necessary, tenured teachers were reduced by seniority. SB 7 amended Section 24-12 so that performance, based on performance evaluation ratings, now takes precedence over seniority in the context of a RIF. The process for determining the order of dismissal will—among other things—involve: (a) categorizing employees in one or more position lists by certification and qualifications; and (b) placing employees on each position list in one of four “Groups” based on performance evaluations, if any. The tenured teacher dismissal system is used in those situations where a school district is seeking to terminate the employment of a tenured teacher, either for poor performance or misconduct (or a combination of the two). The law allows that, in such an instance, a tenured teacher has the right to timely request a due process hearing before a hearing officer. Because of frequent concerns about the time and cost of the tenured teacher dismissal hearing process, the process was streamlined and, in some respects, restructured. See Section 24-12(d), Section 24-16.5, and Section 34-85c (Chicago) of the School Code.

Most of Senate Bill 007’s reforms tie the heightened stakes to a school district’s implementation of a PERA-compliant performance evaluation system, thereby placing significantly greater importance on the validity and reliability of these systems.

### **Evaluation Training and Technical Support System**

ISBE has moved aggressively to establish training programs and a broad technical assistance system to support the adoption, piloting, and implementation of redesigned teacher and principal evaluation systems during the 2012–13 school year and beyond. PERA requires that each

individual assigned to serve as an evaluator of teachers or principals complete a rigorous prequalification process that includes an independent observer's determination that the evaluator's ratings properly align to the requirements of the state's performance evaluation system. Once prequalified, evaluators will be required to complete an evaluator retraining process at least once during their five-year certificate renewal cycle. School districts may use the state's prequalification and/or retraining programs or opt to independently develop and offer a prequalification and/or training program, provided such programs are approved by the state as compliant with the requirements of PERA, Article 24A of the Illinois School Code, and any other requirements established by ISBE by administrative rule. In every scenario, however, each evaluator would need to pass the assessment that is part of the state's prequalification program to be prequalified to evaluate certificated staff after September 1, 2012. In addition to the prequalification program, PERA requires that ISBE will establish several technical supports for local implementation.

In 2012, The Performance Evaluation Growth through Learning Partnership Group developed a pre-qualification training program and accompanying assessments for both professional practice and student growth. The training is an on-line self-paced set of training modules and assessments. Every evaluator in Illinois (more than 15,000 educators) completed this approximate 32 hour training since the summer of 2012. Training for the purposes of providing teacher evaluations and separate trainings for the purposes of providing principal or assistant principal evaluations continues. New hires who have administrative responsibilities are required to successfully complete evaluator training. An intensive support/remediation program utilizes an escalating intervention model and provides additional tiers of support and coaching when needed. All teacher evaluators have access to the Teachscape System for observation practice and an on-line library of resources and course materials that can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Teacher evaluation systems in Illinois are new and improved with a renewed emphasis on teacher practice and student growth.

ISBE has already significantly advanced the path to develop the prequalification program and supports required under PERA. On January 26, 2012, using a portion of the state's Race to the Top Phase 3 award, ISBE awarded a contract following a competitive procurement to the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) to undertake all the following activities:

1. Establish a prequalification program aligned to the state's performance evaluation system that individuals conducting evaluations after September 1, 2012, must successfully complete. The prequalification program must include a process to ensure that evaluators' ratings align to the requirements of the system.
2. Develop an evaluator retraining program for prequalified evaluators to take at least once during their five-year certificate renewal cycle for the purpose of maintaining credentials to evaluate certified instructional staff. The evaluator retraining program must be continuously updated, offer modules that build on each other over time, and address the various skill and knowledge levels among evaluators.
3. Build out a comprehensive technical assistance system that supports school districts with the development and implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems.
4. Provide Web-based systems and tools that support the implementation of the state's performance evaluation models for teacher and principal evaluations and evaluator prequalification and training programs.

5. Develop a train-the-trainer program that includes the development and the delivery of content specific to the evaluator prequalification program, the evaluator retraining program, the technical assistance system, and the Web-based systems and tools.

CEC is working closely with ISBE and PEAC and has established its training programs and technical support system. Please see Growth Through Learning Illinois which can be found at [www.growththroughlearningillinois.org](http://www.growththroughlearningillinois.org) for more information. ISBE is also using a portion of Race to the Top Phase 3 funding to support local costs associated with the prequalification program.

In addition to the supports and programs delivered through the CEC contract, ISBE is leveraging its Race to the Top Phase 3 funds in other ways to broaden its technical supports for local evaluation systems that incorporate student growth. A major focus of the state's Race to the Top Phase 3 plan is a comprehensive strategy to support the development of assessment frameworks and items that can be used to measure student growth across the curriculum. Using Race to the Top Phase 3 funds, ISBE is incorporating PEAC's Type I, II, and III assessment classification (see Principle 3.A, Table 15) into a two-pronged assessments for learning strategy to support standards implementation and the measurement of student growth for performance evaluations. These strategies will be implemented over the course of the 2012–13 and 2013–14 school years, as follows:

- ISBE will procure a statewide contract for Type I assessments to ensure the best available pricing and a simplified procurement and contracting process for school districts. All procured assessments must be able to measure student growth in a manner aligned to the college- and career-ready state standards, be coupled with appropriate training and professional development linked to using the assessment, and be integrated with the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (see Principle 1) to the maximum extent possible.
- ISBE has developed a network among school districts participating in the Race to the Top Phase 3 plan to develop both the frameworks and, if needed, specific Type II and Type III assessments, including the facilitation of workgroups across school districts with similar assessment needs. An entity procured by ISBE will manage this network activity and ensure the work is informed by and integrated with appropriate subject area content expertise within the state and nationally. In particular, Race to the Top Phase 3–funded support will focus on the development of Type II and Type III assessments items and frameworks in grade levels and subjects not assessed by the state and assessments that can support a STEM program of study model (including employability and pathway/technical assessments. (See Principle 1 for a further discussion of STEM programs of study.)

To further support the Race to the Top Phase 3 assessments for learning strategies, ISBE is convening a panel of technical experts and practitioners to provide guidance and expertise on, at minimum, the following areas:

- Alignment to the college- and career-ready state standards, as integrated within the Illinois Learning Standards
- Alignment to PERA and PEAC recommendations

- The appropriate use of the assessments, including for instructional, evaluative, predictive, or multiple purposes
- The demonstrated technical quality of assessments, including item quality
- The design of reporting systems ensuring accessibility to actionable data relating to appropriate uses
- Recommendations for professional development necessary to effectively use the assessments and results for instructional change
- Appropriate methods for assessing ELLs and SWDs

Finally, as required by both PERA and Senate Bill 007, ISBE has used Race to the Top Phase 3 funds to develop a survey of learning conditions to provide feedback from, at a minimum, students in Grades 6–12 and teachers on the instructional environment within a school. School districts could use this survey as one measure within a local principal evaluation system. (see 5 essential survey described in Principal 2.A.i)

### **Review and Approval of Implementation of LEA Teacher and Principal Evaluation**

Each year, LEAs and schools are given one of the following statuses by the Illinois State Board of Education: Full Recognition; Recognized Pending Further Review, Probation; and Non-Recognized. Violations of any provisions found in law or rules, including teacher and principal evaluation system requirements, may subject an LEA or its schools to recognition sanctions by reducing recognition status. Determinations as to what level of recognition is appropriate would depend upon many factors, including efforts to ensure future compliance and whether or not other material deficiencies exist alongside evaluation violations. It should be noted that non-recognized schools or districts do not qualify to receive general state aid payments. With respect to evaluation systems, Illinois will monitor compliance through inclusion in a two-part process: (a) Application for Recognition of Schools; and (b) Compliance Reviews.

**Application for Recognition of Schools.** Per the Illinois Administrative Code, “[n]o later than September 30 of each year, each school district shall apply for recognition of each school operated by the district” [23 Ill Adm. Code 1.20 (a) (1)]. The Application for Recognition of Schools requires each LEA to respond to a series of questions with respect to its compliance with relevant requirements. Each LEA will answer “yes” or “no” as to whether or not it is in compliance with the stated requirement. Beginning during the 2012-2013 school year, the Illinois State Board of Education will include a specific query on the Application for Recognition of Schools that asks the LEA to state whether it is in compliance with aspects of teacher and principal evaluations systems. LEAs that answer “no” must include an explanation detailing why and/or how they are out of compliance.

**Compliance Reviews.** Per the Illinois Administrative Code, “[a]s part of this [compliance]process, the regional superintendent of schools shall periodically visit the region’s school districts as he or she may deem necessary to ascertain the degree to which the districts’ schools comply with operational requirements” [23 Ill Adm. Code 1.210 (a) (3)]. Each regional superintendent of schools ensures LEA compliance with relevant laws, rules and policies by conducting such on-site reviews. As part of this review, the Illinois State Board of Education

annually develops a School District Evaluation Probe (“probe”) document for use by regional superintendents of schools. In essence, the probe is a listing of rules and statutes that each regional superintendent will use when gauging LEA compliance. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, the Illinois State Board of Education will include specific items for teacher and principal evaluations on the probe. Specifically, the following items were added to the FY 2013 (School Year 2012-2013) Public School Compliance Probe:

49N. As part of its teacher, principal and assistant principal evaluation plans, the district has implemented a four category rating system using “excellent”, “proficient”, “needs improvement”, and “unsatisfactory”.

49O. Each evaluator that has undertaken an evaluation on or after September 1, 2012 has completed the pre-qualification training program required by law.

49P. As applicable, the district and its teachers (or their collective bargaining unit) have convened a joint committee on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> in the year prior to its PERA implementation date for teacher evaluations.

49Q. The district groups all teachers into one of four appropriate reduction in force (RIF) categories each year.

49R. Evaluations of principals and assistant principals conducted on or after September 1, 2012 use student growth as a significant factor in evaluation ratings. “Significant factor” is defined as at least 25% during 2012-2013, 25% during 2013-2014, and 30% for 2014-2015 and thereafter.

49S. No later than its PERA implementation date, the district has incorporated student growth as a significant factor in teacher evaluation ratings. “Significant factor” is defined as at least 25% during the first two years of implementation and 30% thereafter.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) reviewed one-hundred and twenty six (126) compliance probes and compliance-related notifications from ROEs and ISCs for individual districts for FY 2013. Of those submissions, the following deficiencies were noted:

| Item No. | No. of Noncompliant Districts |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 49N      | 2                             |
| 49O      | 0                             |
| 49P      | 2                             |
| 49Q      | 2                             |
| 49R      | 2                             |
| 49S      | 0                             |



ISBE will reach out to the ROEs of the noncompliant districts to determine whether or not those issues have been corrected. The recognition statuses for public schools and districts for FY 2014 are currently under review and will be released no later than the spring of 2014.

### **Accountability Through Public Reporting**

The state will employ a robust system for publicly reporting on performance evaluation outcomes to hold school districts and schools accountable for the distribution of performance evaluation ratings and their correlation to student outcomes. Section 24A-20(c) of the Illinois School Code requires that “districts...submit data and information to the State Board on teacher and principal performance evaluations and evaluation plans in accordance with procedures and requirements for submissions established by the State Board.” Such data will include, at minimum, teacher and principal performance ratings and data on district recommendations to renew or not renew teachers not in contractual continued service [105 ILCS 5/24A-20(c)]. Pursuant to the state’s plan for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, ISBE has commenced the public reporting of teacher and principal evaluation results (see <http://www.isbe.net/PEAC/html/surveyresults.htm>). As more school districts incorporate student growth into their local performance evaluation systems, these reports will become more meaningful and robust.

In addition, on January 2012, the governor signed into law Public Act 97-0671, which will require that ISBE modify the school district and school report card. New metrics and re-designed reporting to parents and communities will increase accountability through public information. The new report card includes 27 Indicators of school effectiveness that support our college and career ready agenda. One data point that will be required on that report card is the percentage of teachers in a school having received, cumulatively, one of the top two performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a school will be shown to have 60 percent of its teachers having received an excellent or a proficient rating if 20 percent of the teachers’ most recent evaluation rating was excellent and 40 percent was proficient).

Using this information, members of the public can, for the first time, analyze the distribution of performance evaluations within a school district. This information can be correlated with publicly reported district and school performance data, including student growth information at the school district level and the school level, to determine whether proficient and excellent performance evaluation ratings within a school district correspond to high levels of student performance. As the availability of this information becomes more widely known and used, the state anticipates that it will be an important mechanism for holding school districts publicly accountable for the validity of their performance evaluation ratings.

### **PERA Research-Based Study**

In addition to its training and technical support system and public reporting mechanisms, the state has also established a plan to review, revise, and improve high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the state’s adopted guidelines. PERA specifically requires that the state contract for a research-based study of performance evaluation reform implementation by no later than September 1, 2012 (the PERA Research-Based Study). Under Section 24A-20 of the Illinois School Code, the findings from this study must be issued by no

later than September 1, 2014, and it must assess local teacher and principal evaluation systems for “validity and reliability, contribution to the development of staff, and improvement of student performance.” The PERA Research-Based Study must also make recommendations for changes, if any, that need to be incorporated into teacher and principal evaluation systems as the state and local districts continue to move forward with implementation and revisions to existing systems.

The PERA Research-Based Study will use data collected by the state, including but not limited to performance ratings for teachers and principals, district recommendations to renew or not renew nontenured teachers, and student achievement data. In addition, the district data made available through the Illinois Shared Learning Environment will allow the PERA Research-based Study to incorporate information from local assessment and human resources systems for evaluation in a statewide manner that has never before been possible. A leading model for the PERA Research-Based Study is the Excellence in Teaching pilot in CPS, where the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research has partnered with CPS on every element of the design, implementation, and reporting associated with the pilot, while still delivering an independent assessment of successes and challenges. Findings from the consortium’s work include the need for school districts to build in accountability to ensure that schools implement evaluations with fidelity, multiple measures of teaching practice will lead to more accurate evaluations, and principals need to focus on developing instructional leadership skills. Extensive access to individual student and teacher data was a critical element of the success of the consortium’s work, as will be true for the PERA Research-Based Study.

In addition, a deliverable of the PERA Research-Based Study will include recommendations for how the state’s system for oversight of local performance evaluation system implementation should flag indicators of improper or ineffective implementation for further analysis and review as part of the state’s general compliance monitoring system. For example, one flag could be a lack of correlation between school and district student growth measures based on the state growth model and performance evaluation outcomes. Found below is the exact excerpt from the Request for Sealed Proposals which ISBE issued, which names the specific requirements of the successful bidder to this request:

**Overview:** The successful bidder will be responsible for conducting an evaluation of the state’s teacher and principal evaluation system under PERA. The contractor will work collaboratively with ISBE, PEAC, education stakeholders, and outside experts to carry out the evaluation and develop findings and recommendations.

**Contract Deliverables:** Pursuant to this RFSP, the contractor will design, conduct, and report on a rigorous evaluation by completing, at a minimum, the following activities:

1. Develop a Framework, Design, and Methodology for the PERA Research-Based Study. The successful bidder will be responsible for designing the PERA Research-Based Study and developing a framework and methodology for analyzing available data, subject to review and approval by ISBE and PEAC. The study design must be appropriate for analyzing a variety of types of data collected statewide to determine the effectiveness of the state’s teacher and principal evaluation system and the ability of that system to incorporate student growth measures and improve student performance. The study must specifically assess local *teacher and principal evaluation systems for “validity and*



reliability, contribution to the development of staff, and improvement of student performance.” In addition, the study must analyze how student growth, as measured by the assessments selected by school districts, is correlated to student growth as measured by State assessments. Information on Illinois' state growth model approach is available here: <http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/2012/jan/eppc.pdf>.

The contractor will have access to data collected by the state, including but not limited to performance ratings for teachers and principals, district recommendations to renew or not renew non-tenured teachers, and student achievement data. In addition, the contractor will have access to district data, as districts participating in the State's Race to the Top 3 application committed to cooperate with and provide data for the PERA Research-Based Study. The contractor will be expected to use this data to incorporate information from local assessment and human resources systems for evaluation in a statewide manner.

2. Conduct the Study in Accordance with the Approved Study Design. The contractor will carry out the PERA Research-Based Study in accordance with the approved study design and methodology. The contractor will work with ISBE and PEAC to analyze the data collected by the state and districts and develop findings in accordance with the study goals described in this RFSP. The study must be completed, and findings issued, no later than September 1, 2014. As discussed in the *Background* section above, PERA's teacher evaluation requirements will be implemented on a phased schedule, and only certain schools will have developed and implemented a PERA-compliant evaluation system as of September 1, 2014. Therefore, the contractor must also prepare a supplement to the PERA Research Based Study that analyzes PERA's implementation in school districts participating in the state's Race to the Top Phase 3 application that are also within the lowest performing 20 percent of school districts. The supplement must be completed by no later than December 1, 2015.
3. Prepare Recommendations for Compliance Monitoring and Improvement of the Evaluation System. The contractor will provide recommendations to ISBE for the purpose of improving the state's system for oversight of local performance evaluation system implementation based on analysis of statewide data and data from districts initially implementing PERA. The recommendations must specifically address findings from the contractor's analysis of how student growth, as measured by the assessments selected by school districts, is correlated to student growth as measured by State assessments. These recommendations must be included in the findings issued no later than September 1, 2014. The contractor will prepare a report outlining its recommendations and flagging indicators of improper or ineffective implementation for further analysis and review as part of the state's general compliance monitoring system. For example, if the PERA Research-Based Study revealed a lack of correlation between school and district student growth measures based on the state growth model and performance evaluation outcomes, then the contractor should flag this indicator for further analysis.

Overall compliance monitoring of Illinois school districts falls under the jurisdiction of the applicable regional superintendent of schools, who performs an annual review of school districts and schools to determine the extent to which the school district and its schools comply with statutes, rules, and regulations. Using the results of the PERA Research-Based Study, ISBE and PEAC intend to work with the contractor selected through this RFSP to determine how updated and appropriate requirements for principal and teacher evaluations can be incorporated into the existing statewide compliance monitoring system. In particular, focus will be placed on low-performing school districts within the state's accountability system to determine whether these school districts are employing valid and reliable performance evaluations for teachers and principals. Supports through the state's technical assistance system for performance evaluations will be targeted to these school districts to improve the function of their performance evaluation systems and their contribution to improved student outcomes. The deliverables of the PERA Research-Based Study must include monitoring tools and recommendations for ongoing data collection systems to support statewide compliance monitoring of performance evaluation implementation.

4. Assist ISBE and PEAC to Incorporate Recommendations for Improvement. The contractor will assist PEAC, ISBE, education stakeholders, and outside experts in analyzing the results of the PERA Research-Based Study to determine any necessary adjustments to the state's guidelines for performance evaluations, local implementation, oversight and management, and compliance monitoring. The contractor will also make recommendations for further analyses and activities to support continuous improvement of the performance evaluation systems.

Overall compliance monitoring of Illinois school districts falls under the jurisdiction of the applicable regional superintendent of schools, who performs an annual review of school districts and schools to determine the extent to which the school district and its schools comply with statutes, rules, and regulations. Using the results of the PERA Research-Based Study, ISBE and PEAC intend to work with CEC and the contractor for the PERA Research-Based Study to determine how updated and appropriate requirements for principal and teacher evaluations can be incorporated into the existing statewide compliance monitoring system. In particular, focus will be placed on high-priority districts, as described in Principle 2, to determine whether these school districts are employing valid and reliable performance evaluations for teachers and principals. Supports through the state's technical assistance system for performance evaluations will be targeted to these school districts to improve the function of their performance evaluation systems and their contribution to improved student outcomes.

The PERA Research-Based Study will be closely analyzed by PEAC, ISBE, education stakeholders, and outside experts to determine any necessary adjustments to the state's guidelines for performance evaluations and methods for improving local implementation of these systems. The state anticipates that the process used to undertake the PERA Research-Based Study will be repeated in future years so that the state's teacher and principal evaluation systems can be continuously improved.

With these resources and supports we believe Illinois educators in all districts will be well prepared to implement the required new evaluation systems no later than the 2015-16 school year.

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