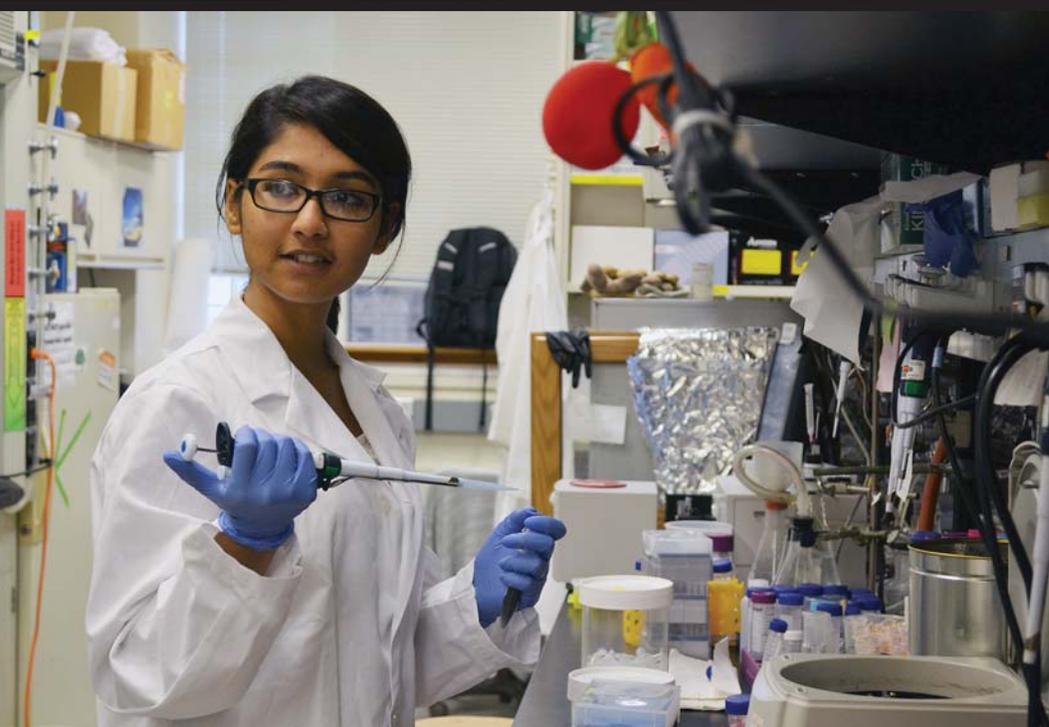




EDUCATION FOR OUR FUTURE: FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ILLINOIS P-20 COUNCIL TO THE GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE

SPRING 2014



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PURPOSE & HISTORY

To achieve fundamental and lasting improvement in this state’s education system so more students will complete college and technical programs and be well-prepared to succeed in the workforce and the community, it is necessary to coordinate and leverage the policies and resources of all stakeholders—state agencies, educational institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families.

State law (P.A. 95-626) established the Illinois P–20 Council in 2007 to guide education policy and integrate education at every level. The P–20 Council provides a framework for organizations and individuals representing pre-kindergarten through “grade 20” (graduate and professional school and continuing education) interests to identify common goals, address critical issues, align data and metrics for success, and make timely recommendations for “developing a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support from birth through adulthood that maximizes students’ educational attainment, opportunities for success in the workforce, and contributions to their local communities.”¹



According to 2008 census data, about 41% of Illinois’ nearly 7 million working-age adults hold at least a two-year degree.² In the five years since the Council was appointed in 2009, the proportion has increased to 43%. While this percentage exceeds the national average of 39%³ and has trended positive over time, it will take significant effort to expand the number of adults with higher education credentials.

Projections indicate that the state will require two thirds of the working population to have some level of postsecondary training by 2020 in order to meet its workforce needs.⁴ This requires an additional annual increase over current completion rate projections. Hitting this target will require unprecedented effort, commitment, and resource utilization by state government,

¹ P–20 Council Mission Statement, www.P20Council.Illinois.gov

² US Census Bureau, American Communities Survey, 2008

³ US Census Bureau, American Communities Survey, 2011

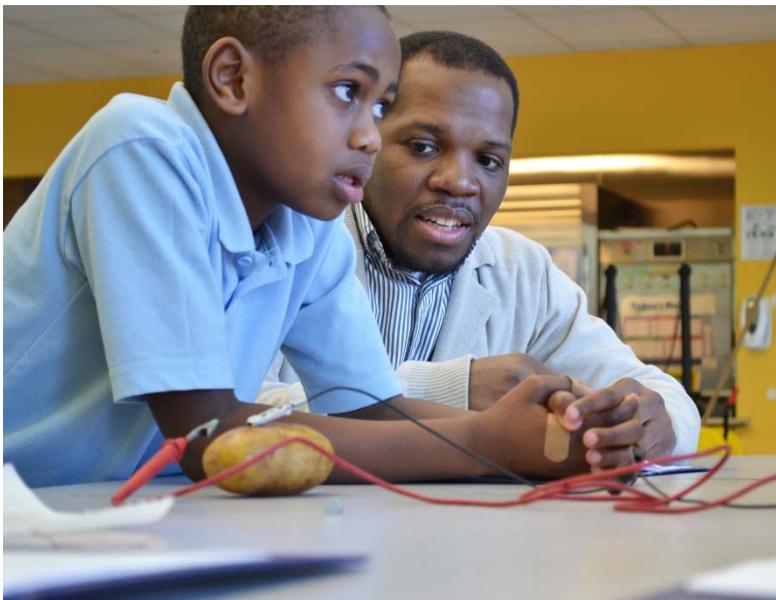
⁴ Complete College America, Illinois State Profile, 2011



educational institutions, and Illinois citizens. **In order to help ensure that Illinoisans are well-prepared for the 21st century economy, the P–20 Council has set as its primary goal: “to increase the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025.”** Reaching this goal will require strategic planning, cooperation, and coordination of efforts at all levels of the state education system.

This is the fourth annual report of the Illinois P–20 Council to the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly. This report summarizes progress made on the recommendations of the P–20 Council between May 2013 and May 2014, as well as ongoing recommendations for advancing work in support of the 60 x 2025 goal. Recommendations are organized based upon the five critical education priorities which serve as a framework for the Council’s activities since inception:

- Transform the state education accountability system;
- Provide a clear path to careers;
- Develop and support effective teachers and leaders at all levels of the P–20 system;
- Engage families, youth, and communities throughout the state in increasing educational opportunities and maximizing educational attainment;
- Provide adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding and sound governance to promote high-quality, accessible educational opportunities throughout Illinois.



The Council’s six standing committees 1) Data, Assessment, and Accountability; 2) Family, Youth, and Community Engagement; 3) Finance and Governance; 4) Implementation Review Committee; 5) School, College, and Career Readiness; and 6) Teacher and Leader Effectiveness are aligned with the critical priorities and charged with working with broad stakeholder groups to collect input for developing recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on how to meet our primary goal.

Two additional committees, which were added in 2011, enhance the Council’s effectiveness. The Coordinating Committee, consisting of all the committee co-chairs, promotes communication and collaboration across all P–20 committees. The Joint Education Leadership Committee (JELC), chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and comprised of the leadership of state education and workforce agencies as well as the heads of the Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA), the Illinois Education Research Council (IERC), and the Early Learning Council (ELC), meets monthly to promote the implementation of the Council’s recommendations.



Since 2012, two additional subcommittees were created to facilitate the work of the P–20 Council. The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Joint Work Group was formed from a sub-set of two committees, Data, Assessment, and Accountability (DAA) and School, College, and Career Readiness (SCCR), in order to develop a framework to support post-secondary and workforce readiness and define what it means to be “college and career ready.”

In addition, the Diverse Educator Pipeline Working Group, a subgroup of the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) Committee, has worked closely with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and higher education to develop a comprehensive plan for recruiting, retaining, and developing the supply of diverse, highly qualified educators.

Additionally, the Implementation Review Committee (IRC) was formed in 2013 to collect stakeholder feedback on the implementation of key statewide education initiatives. This input on the successes and challenges associated with the implementation of priority initiatives as identified by the Committee will be submitted to the Council and state agencies to inform policy decisions and enhance implementation moving forward.

The critical priorities and associated recommendations contained in this report are largely consistent with those endorsed by the P–20 Council in its first annual report. While annual progress has been made in each area, the Council recognizes that lasting systemic change of the magnitude required to achieve our goal requires sustained attention and commitment over many years, and it welcomes the opportunity to work with policymakers, practitioners, and communities to better support Illinois’ students.



RECOMMENDATIONS & PROGRESS

Consistent with its charge “to develop a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support, from birth through adulthood, to maximize student attainment, opportunities for success, and contributions to their local communities,” the Illinois P–20 Council reports to the Governor and General Assembly on progress of the following recommendations:

▶▶ TRANSFORM THE STATE EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

- ▶ **Recommendation #1: Align Illinois’ student learning standards and assessments to reflect the knowledge and skills students will need for the 21st Century.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Gather feedback from educators, administrators, parents, and community members to better understand what supports and resources are needed by the field and families to support implementation of more rigorous learning standards.
- B. Continue to coordinate state efforts to improve student outcomes with the on-going work by PARCC, Complete College America, and other national initiatives to take full advantage of available resources, including specialized expertise and funding opportunities.
- C. Continue to align the Illinois Learning Standards in subjects not addressed by the Common Core standards with skills students will need for the 21st Century, including the Next Generation Science Standards, in consultation with the early childhood community, educators, higher education, and the business community.
- D. Ensure that Illinois students are prepared for success in higher education and the workforce through clearly defined policies and practices that assure college and career readiness as well as through grade-level benchmarks to help determine whether students are on track.
- E. Align Illinois graduation requirements with a state definition of college and career readiness and related Illinois Learning Standards.
- F. Develop and implement a comprehensive professional development framework for educators to provide the necessary supports and training to continue the timely implementation of standards and assessments including: Social Emotional Learning Standards, Illinois Early Learning Guidelines and Standards, the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), Illinois Learning Standards and PARCC, and Next Generation Science Standards.

- G. Work with school districts, community colleges, local workforce investment boards, and other community partners to help students engage in personalized learning plans based on their educational and career goals.
- H. Increase parent awareness of resources and opportunities available to support career pathways for students from at least middle school through postsecondary into the workforce.
- I. Incentivize the development of P–20 programs of study that provide for collaboration with the business community and take into account growing industries related to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Learning Exchanges that are a part of the Pathways Initiative.
- J. Continue integration of college-and-career-readiness-aligned student learning standards and develop measures for tracking and reporting progress on implementation.
- K. Identify and recognize schools and districts with innovative and particularly effective approaches to integration of curriculum, use of measures, reporting of data, and family and community engagement.

STATUS UPDATE

Aligning Assessments with College and Career Readiness Standards

To better prepare students for success in college and careers, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has made significant progress towards statewide implementation of the **Illinois Learning Standards** which were first adopted in 2010. The Illinois Learning Standards are aligned to Common Core Student Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and math but also include rigorous standards in social science and science to promote a comprehensive approach to student success. The CCSS are internationally benchmarked and based on the skills and knowledge students will need to be competitive in an increasingly global economy.

Additionally, in 2013, a portion of the **Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT)** questions were aligned to the new student learning standards which are being implemented in schools across the nation. While higher expectations of the new standards initially resulted in a downward shift of where students rank in meeting or exceeding standards, raising the bar is an important step in ensuring that students are prepared to meet the college and career readiness benchmarks. During this transition, clearer expectations will help to ensure that students graduate high school well-prepared for success in college and careers. The revised tests and clearer expectations helped to lay the groundwork for the transition from the ISAT to the **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments** to take place during school year (SY) 2014–15.

Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)

ISBE launched a statewide pilot of the **Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)** in SY2012–13. KIDS is an observation-based, developmentally appropriate assessment aimed at providing useful information to teachers and administrators in order to better address children’s learning and developmental needs. KIDS is an important piece of ISBE’s broader strategy to close the readiness gap and ensure that all children thrive in their earliest years and throughout their academic careers. Additionally, the data provided through the assessment will help to identify any gaps in school readiness and to support data-driven decision making on professional development and resource allocation at both the state and local level.

The tool is aligned to the state learning standards as well as the **Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards** (previously endorsed by the Council). This assessment tool was developed in partnership with the KIDS Advisory Committee, a stakeholder advisory group with representation from a diverse cross section of early learning experts from across the state. Over two dozen districts from across the state have participated in the pilot, and SY2014–15 will be the third year of the pilot. All kindergarten students in Illinois are to be assessed using the KIDS instrument beginning SY2015–16.

- ▶ **Recommendation #2: Develop a system of assessment of student learning that provides reliable measures for accountability and guides to improve instruction and student learning.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Provide necessary technological infrastructure to enable each school across the state to fully implement the state learning standards, including accompanying assessments (PARCC). Provide the technical infrastructure to allow full classroom use of electronic resources and tools for teaching and learning. Continue work to expand access to the resources that are available to teachers and students through the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE).
- B. Explore implications of the transition to the PARCC assessment for access to and use of ACT and WorkKeys.
- C. Ensure that state assessments promote a balance between growth measures and proficiency measures tied to the Illinois Learning Standards and other state college and career readiness benchmarks and outcomes.
- D. Develop and disseminate formative assessment items, samples of student work, and other exemplars that reflect mastery of 21st Century skills, Common Core State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards as a means of acquainting teachers, families, and students with new expectations for learning at all levels.

STATUS UPDATE

PARCC

In addition to working to implement updated learning standards, Illinois is also in the process of adopting a new assessment, the web-based **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment**, which is better aligned to the expectations of the postsecondary system and employers. During SY2013–14, Illinois, along with 13 other states and the District of Columbia, participated in field testing of the PARCC test. Field testing is intended to help identify and address potential operational glitches and to inform the development of accommodations for English Learners and students with special needs. Information regarding this “test of the test” will be released by PARCC upon completion of analysis. As a member of the **PARCC Governing Board**, Illinois will administer the new assessment statewide during the SY2014–15.

In preparation for the transition to computer-based assessments, Illinois has participated in PARCC speed tests to better understand the capacity of schools to administer the assessment. As of February 2014, ISBE estimated that more than half of Illinois school districts have the capacity to administer PARCC online.⁵ Schools without the necessary technology infrastructure will use paper-and-pencil testing during the initial transition to PARCC. ISBE anticipates that administering pencil-and-paper tests as opposed to electronic testing will be cost prohibitive over time. The aim is to have all students taking the assessment online. The State Board’s FY15 budget recommendation includes a \$450 million capital request to assist districts in improving their broadband internet service and network capabilities.

Bringing Classrooms into the Digital Age

In addition to web-based testing, enhanced digital connectedness enables schools to access a growing number of **electronic resources available to support teaching, learning, and professional development**. In recognition of the need for these critical investments, the P–20 Council passed a resolution at its October 2013 meeting in support of the development of the technological infrastructure needed for 21st century classrooms. This resolution expanded on a previous resolution on the issue of technology in the classrooms in 2012.

Assessing College and Career Readiness

Discussions around state plans for the future of ACT as PARCC comes online are ongoing. Illinois has been one of 13 states in the nation to offer the ACT college admissions exam to all public high school juniors statewide. In 2014, ISBE proposed making ACT testing optional due to limited funding in its budget for student assessment. The Board has prioritized the investment in the successful implementation of PARCC assessments. In the absence of a crosswalk for PARCC and ACT, the move away from Illinois being a universal ACT state has raised concerns about compatibility with college entrance requirements.

The **Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE)** includes the ACT Plus Writing, an ISBE-developed science assessment, and two of the **WorkKeys assessments**. In spring 2014, in

⁵ ISBE, PARCC FAQ’s, February 2014, www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/pdfs/parcc/parcc-faq-0214.doc

addition to the ACT and other components of the PSAE, Illinois districts are able to offer the third component of ACT WorkKeys. The ACT WorkKeys do not currently align to Illinois' new learning standards; however, the assessment does enable high school students the opportunity to earn a **National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)**, a portable industry-recognized credential, by the time they graduate high school. Transitioning towards a prioritization of PARCC will have important implications for the employer community who have come to value the NCRC as certification of workforce readiness skills. ISBE, along with the P–20 Data, Assessment, and Accountability Committee, is currently working to determine whether or not components of PARCC can be used to indicate academic workplace skills.

▶▶ PROVIDE A CLEAR PATH TO CAREERS

- ▶ **Recommendation #3: Develop, coordinate, and disseminate education and workforce systems to improve career counseling and career preparation.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Make workforce data accessible to students, families, and counselors to support a full range of career advising and planning for all students from at least middle school through postsecondary education.
- B. Develop system-wide links between industry and local classrooms through internships, mentorship opportunities, and other career exposure programs.
- C. Develop and link data systems across agencies to monitor career training and placement and to identify skill gaps in the workforce and growing industries, for example STEM fields.
- D. Use Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) data to align the P–20 College and Career Framework and Illinois' definition of college and career readiness with curriculum and accountability systems to establish empirical grade-level benchmarks to assess whether students are on track for transitions into college and careers.
- E. Utilize ILDS data as the basis for Illinois' plan for career and technical education to help meet local workforce needs throughout the state and to ensure that students obtain gainful employment, including helping to facilitate the transition of adult education students into certificate-awarding programs.
- F. Develop a sustainability plan to allow for the continued operation and expansion of the STEM Learning Exchanges.

STATUS UPDATE

Student Data Privacy and Security

In spring 2014, ISBE and P–20 Council jointly convened a working group to analyze issues related to student data privacy and security, including an overview of current policies and practices at the local, state, and federal level. The working group continues to meet and to develop use cases and a framework for guiding decisions around the collection and use of individual and aggregated student data.

Defining College and Career Readiness

Strengthening the education-to-employment pipeline continues to be a priority for the P–20 Council. In 2013, the Council endorsed the **College and Career Readiness Framework** outlining recommendations developed by the **Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Joint Working Group**, a joint sub-committee of the Data, Assessment, and Accountability Committee and School, College, and Career Readiness Committee. The Working Group brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders to identify a set of policies, practices, and supports necessary for preparing students for success in college and careers. The final report is available on the Committee’s webpage (<http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/COMM8.aspx>) on the P–20 Council website. The Working Group intends to codify key components of the framework in the coming year.

Illinois Pathways and the STEM Learning Exchanges

Preparing students for the opportunities of tomorrow is a key piece of Illinois’ plan to continue to strengthen its economy, and STEM careers are among the fastest growing sectors in the state. By 2018, it is estimated that Illinois employers will offer over 319,000 jobs requiring education and training in STEM, an increase of nearly 20% from 2008.⁶ According to Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, over 90% of those STEM occupations will require postsecondary education or training.

With funding from Illinois’ Race-to-the-Top award, as well as support from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and private donors, state education and economic development agencies have worked together to develop the **Illinois Pathways Initiative**. The initiative promotes public-private partnerships that enable students to explore their academic and career interests in growing sectors. Illinois Pathways has attracted \$8,500,000 worth of private investment in support of eight **STEM Learning Exchanges** since 2012. The Exchanges have expanded opportunities for 17,500 students in nearly 200 schools across the state. Through the STEM Learning Exchanges, Illinois students benefit from rigorous and relevant coursework, hands-on experience, and mentorship in the areas of:

⁶ Georgetown University, Center for Education and the Workforce, Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018, June 2010, <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/p48jo2m25y8svlo8r5h0>

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Energy
- Finance (Planning Phase)
- Health Science
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Research & Development
- Transportation, Logistics, & Distribution

WorkKeys and the National Career Readiness Certificate

During SY2013–14, all Illinois juniors took the ACT and the **WorkKeys**, a job skills assessment used by employers to select, hire, train, and develop a highly qualified workforce. Students are now eligible to earn a portable, industry-recognized credential, the **National Career Readiness Certificate**, before they graduate high school. Illinois is one of only five states leading the way in preparing students for college and careers by administering WorkKeys in high schools statewide.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE P–20 SYSTEM

- ▶ **Recommendation #4: Enlarge the pipeline of diverse, high-quality candidates into teacher and leadership positions throughout the entire educational system.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Develop and implement a state-level plan for enhancing the educator pipeline by recruiting well qualified candidates, providing rigorous preparation and strong supports, retaining effective educators, and continuing professional opportunities to grow their skills and knowledge throughout the course of their careers.
- B. Establish and implement a strategic plan for improving the quality and diversity of the pool of candidates for teacher and leadership positions in collaboration with school districts, universities, regional offices of education, and other partners.
- C. Promote partnerships among P–12 districts, community colleges and 4-year colleges/universities, and among college divisions (e.g., College of Education and College of Arts and Sciences) to support recruitment and retention of a diverse educator workforce that reflects the diverse needs and abilities of Illinois’ students.
- D. Commission a longitudinal study of factors that lead to teacher retention and effectiveness after student achievement data are connected to information on schools and teachers in the ILDS.

STATUS UPDATE

Diverse Educator Pipeline

The Council has continued to work closely with the Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) to better understand the educator pipeline and to identify the role the Council can play to help support and sustain the supply of highly qualified teachers and leaders. During the October 2013 Council meeting, the IERC presented findings from its study, *The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline*.⁷ Prior research demonstrated that academically skilled teachers from underrepresented populations tend to have a positive impact on academic achievement of students of color⁸; yet the demographics of Illinois educators do not reflect the students.

Moreover, at the beginning of SY2013–14, ISBE reported that Illinois' student population is a majority minority population for the first time. Efforts to improve the recruitment, retention, and completion of academically talented candidates from underrepresented backgrounds are needed in order to enhance the diversity of Illinois' teaching force. Additionally, initiatives aimed at supporting the development of a diverse workforce will help to retain high-quality, diverse educators in the profession.

In line with the findings of the IERC report, the **Diverse Educator Pipeline Working Group**, a sub-group of the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Committee, has developed a Request for Information (RFI) for the development of a **Diverse Educator Learning Exchange**. The RFI sought proposals for an education pathway that would leverage community partnerships to strengthen the pool of diverse candidates and would increase completion rates for diverse students in education programs. The proposal also sought ways to improve retention in local schools and provide continued professional development. ISBE's proposed FY15 budget included \$700,000 to allow for the development of a statewide partnership charged with coordinating resources, planning, and investments to support diverse students who pursue education as a profession. This funding was not included in the budget passed by the General Assembly, but work is proceeding, and at the time of this report, an Exchange was expected to launch in August 2015 pending funding.

Preschool Bilingual Rule

Today, Latino children make up 1 in 4 children between the ages of birth and 5 years old in Illinois.⁹ Many of these children and their peers begin school speaking a language other than English. In an effort to ensure that all children are being served in both a developmentally as well as a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner, ISBE instituted the preschool bilingual rule, making Illinois the first in the nation to require bilingual staff in early childhood. When a school district's preschool program has an enrollment of 20 or more

⁷ Illinois Education Research Council, *The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline*, March 2013

⁸ A. M. Villegas & J. J. Irvine, *Urban Review*, *Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments*, 2010; T. Dee, *Education Next*, *The Race Connection: Are Teachers More Effective with Students Who Share Their Ethnicity?*, 2004

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

students of limited-English proficiency who speak any single language other than English at a site, the district shall provide dually certified bilingual, early childhood staff to teach those children. This rule was to go into effect in July 2014. However, due to a lack of capacity in the early childhood workforce, a phase-in plan with an extended deadline has been established. Programs will now have until 2016 to come into compliance with the statute.

► **Recommendation #5: Improve training and licensure for teachers and educational leaders in accordance with findings from research and pilot programs.**

- A. Improve state mechanisms for collecting and reporting educator supply and demand data to provide more relevant information to teacher candidates, current teachers, districts, programs, and others.
- B. Provide information on trends in job placement and changing student demographics to assist teacher candidates in the decision-making process around which areas to develop specialties for endorsement.
- C. Encourage the establishment of local partnerships among P-12 districts and schools, community colleges, teacher preparation programs, labor organizations, and other stakeholders to better prepare future educators through high-quality clinical experiences.
- D. Collect information on best practices for local partnerships designing and delivering clinical experiences to pre-service teachers in order to provide the field with proven examples of successful collaborations.
- E. Create a rubric to guide development and evaluation of partnership agreements in order to establish clear communication around the roles and expectations of participating stakeholders, including local districts and schools, community colleges, teacher preparation programs, and labor organizations.
- F. Ensure that teacher preparation programs and licensure requirements align to evidence-based instructional practices that enhance the effectiveness of educators entering classrooms.
- G. Design an Education Learning Exchange to facilitate the development of robust partnerships that support a highly qualified, diverse pool of future educators.
- H. Ensure that the ILDS has the capacity to incorporate assessment data on teacher and leader preparation that can be used to inform education program design and professional development content.
- I. Continue to monitor program, teacher, and student outcomes to ensure that the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and teacher preparation programs are effectively preparing teacher candidates to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

- J. Incorporate research and feedback from the field into the Illinois Educator Licensure Board’s annual teacher and principal program review process. Examine the content and structure of superintendent preparation programs and identify any areas for recommended improvements.

STATUS UPDATE

Professional Educator License

In 2012, ISBE Superintendent Chris Koch requested that the **Educator Licensure Working Group** help to engage the field and gather input on ISBE’s restructuring of the teacher certification system. Subsequently, the group convened a stakeholder meeting to discuss proposed changes to the system, and the conversation helped to inform ISBE’s **grade span configuration** determination which went into effect July 1, 2013. The new system, the Educator Licensure Information System, makes the transition to an electronic database, streamlines endorsements, and includes updated grade-span configurations which better align to key milestones of child development.

Early Childhood Workforce

At the July 2013 quarterly meeting, the Council heard from a panel regarding the landscape of Illinois’ early childhood workforce, including representatives from University of Illinois at Chicago’s Early Childhood Education Program, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, the Gateways professional development system, and the Illinois State Board of Education. Panelists described the wide **variation in the preparation, credentialing, and compensation of Illinois’ early learning professional workforce.**

Beginning June 2013, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) requires all employees in licensed child care programs to enroll in the **Gateways Registry**, which houses information on the early learning workforce, including demographics, qualifications, compensation, and professional development. With this change, the Registry saw an increase in participation from 32,402 to 56,503 members in 2013. The increased participation in the Registry enables state agencies, educator preparation programs, and other stakeholders to better understand the characteristics and composition of the early childhood workforce, information which is valuable for informing policy and program development. Increased registry enrollment also allows practitioners to more easily connect with training and professional learning opportunities, strengthening the quality of early learning services.

▶ **Recommendation #6: Improve teacher evaluation and professional development for the entire education spectrum in accordance with findings from research and pilot programs.**

- A. Promote work environments that strive for excellence and foster professional communities within each school that provide an opportunity to learn and grow at work.
- B. Build capacity to provide targeted and accessible professional development to accompany teacher evaluation.

- C. Provide resources necessary for sustained induction, professional development, and mentoring programs to create educational work environments that foster excellence and support professional growth for teachers and administrators.

STATUS UPDATE

Educator Performance Evaluation

According to the **Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA)**, all P–12 teachers are to be evaluated using a model which includes measures to assess both their professional skills and student growth as a significant factor by SY2016–17. ISBE has continued to work with the **Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC)** to develop resources, supports, and guidance to teachers and administrators about how to design and deploy a new evaluation system, including training evaluators to conduct observations, collect evidence, and provide helpful, timely feedback.

The McCormick Foundation is supporting work being conducted by the Center for Educational Policy Studies at Illinois State University to validate the **Danielson Framework for Teaching** in early childhood classrooms in Illinois, as well as developing resources for supporting the use of the **Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument** to evaluate the performance of early childhood teachers. The framework has previously been validated for use in grades 4 and above. The study will take place in approximately seven districts and early childhood centers across Illinois during fall 2014.

▶▶ ENGAGE FAMILIES, YOUTH, AND COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE IN INCREASING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- ▶ **Recommendation #7: Improve educational attainment through attention to prevention, intervention, and reengagement.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Support efforts to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and care to all children.
- B. Ensure that critical wrap-around services are in place for students and families, including medical, dental, and mental health care; housing; social services; and after-school programs through school partnerships with community-based programs, community schools, or other models.
- C. Utilize data from the ILDS and other sources to monitor and evaluate intervention programs and continuously improve intervention efforts to keep students on track for academic success.

- D. Reengage students who have dropped out to enable them to complete a high school diploma or GED, or a degree or certificate.
- E. Reduce the need for remediation and encourage the adoption of models proven to enhance opportunities to attain credit, including dual credit and dual enrollment programs, embedding developmental coursework in credit-bearing classes, and other credit recovery strategies.
- F. Ensure that the ILDS has the capacity to track trends that might indicate the need for prevention, intervention, or reengagement so appropriate actions can be taken to support the student in getting back on track.

STATUS UPDATE

Guided Pathways to Success

As part of the P–20 Council’s ongoing effort to spotlight and amplify best practices, Illinois has partnered with Complete College America and Burning Glass to participate in the Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) initiative. GPS is a comprehensive set of high-impact strategies focused on improving postsecondary completion. Key strategies include: 1) developing “meta majors” or broad sets of academic areas that lead to programs of study; 2) providing intrusive, timely advising; 3) establishing default pathways; 4) guaranteeing milestone courses; 5) aligning math to fit the major; and 6) enrolling in whole programs of study as opposed to taking individual, unrelated courses.

STEM GPS centers around the need to develop and retain students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math. According to a report released by ACT and the National Center for Education,¹⁰ at least 40% of new college students express an interest in STEM, and many go on to initially pursue a STEM field of study. However, a majority of STEM students switch majors or drop out before completing. STEM GPS calls for a comprehensive set of strategies for plugging the leaky STEM talent pipeline. In spring 2014, Illinois, along with three other states and the District of Columbia, was selected to receive funds through the Helmsley Charitable Trust to build GPS systems for high-demand STEM fields.

Remediation

Ensuring that Illinois students graduate from high school equipped with the skills and knowledge to be competitive in an increasingly global economy is critical to the well-being of our state. A 2011 Pew Research Center Report found that 94% of parents surveyed expect their child to go to college.¹¹ Too many students, however, lack the tools necessary to succeed once they arrive. Recent ACT results showed that only 25% of students in the graduating Class of 2012 met all four College Readiness Benchmarks.¹²

¹⁰ ACT, The Condition of STEM 2013, 2013, www.act.org/stemcondition/13/

¹¹ Pew Research Center, Is College Worth It?, May 2011, www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/15/is-college-worth-it/

¹² ACT, Illinois ACT Profile – Graduating Class of 2012, 2012, www.act.org/newsroom/data/2012/pdf/profile/Illinois.pdf

Maintaining a highly qualified workforce is critical to preserving our nation’s global competitiveness in the 21st Century economy. According to Complete College America, by 2020, 67% of all jobs in Illinois will require some level of postsecondary training.¹³ As the job market has continued to evolve, student skills and knowledge have not kept pace with changing demands in the workplace. There is persistent need for remediation and catch-up coursework at institutions of higher education.

According to Lieutenant Governor Simon’s 2012 *Focus on the Finish* report,¹⁴ almost half of recent high school graduates test into remedial courses, and most of those incoming freshmen struggle with math in particular. Too often, students placed into remedial coursework do not make the transition to credit-bearing coursework, stifling their ability to obtain a degree or credential. This is especially problematic because 56% of students attending 2-year institutions begin in remediation.¹⁵

We have learned that traditional remediation courses often do not serve students well in advancing their academic progress. Colleges and high schools continue to devise programs and courses that help students catch up in their senior year or register in co-requisite courses at the college level to make up for deficiencies while still getting college credit.

High School Graduation, Achievement, and Success Task Force

The High School Graduation, Achievement, and Success Task Force was formed at the request of the Illinois General Assembly to advise on the challenges facing our state in ensuring that students graduate high school and are well-prepared for success in college and careers. The Task Force was jointly chaired by P–20 Council Chairman Miguel del Valle and education researcher Elaine Allensworth. The Task Force issued its final report in April 2013. A key component of the recommendations focused on the need for the development and use of a “freshmen-on-track indicator.”

The Task Force heard from several experts on effective practices to improve high school success to measure progress in a student’s first year of high school and to identify those at risk of not graduating. The report outlines several recommendations on how schools can keep students engaged in learning and on track to graduate. There was also a focus on the need for timely intervention and the type of support needed to help at-risk students who are chronically absent or truant. The full report is available through the P–20 Council website at www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/HSGAS.aspx.

College Changes Everything

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), in partnership with the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, IBHE, ICCB, ISBE, Illinois Federation of Independent Colleges and Universities, Illinois College Access Network, and Women Employed convened hundreds of

¹³ Complete College America, Illinois State Profile, 2011, www.completecollege.org/wp-content/themes/cca/pdfs/Illinois.pdf

¹⁴ Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Focus on the Finish, January 2012, <https://www2.illinois.gov/ltgov/Documents/CC%20Report%20for%20web.pdf>

¹⁵ Complete College America, The Game Changers, October 2013, <http://completecollege.org/pdfs/CCA%20Nat%20Report%20Oct18-FINAL-singles.pdf>

educators, administrators, advisors, advocates, and other partners for its annual College Changes Everything Conference in July 2013. The conference serves as a best practices symposium for disseminating effective approaches, showcasing innovative programs, and sharing resources focused on increasing college access and completion in support of the 60 x 2025 goal.

Truancy and Barriers to Student Success

The P–20 Council regularly coordinates with other state advisory bodies, inviting them to present to the Council to share their findings and major policy implications and to help advance recommendations aligned with the work of the Council. Over the past year, the Council has hosted presentations from both the Student Success Task Force and CPS Truancy Task Force.

The **Student Success Task Force** was charged with analyzing issues related to suspension, expulsion, and truancy and making recommendations to the General Assembly on best practices for developing and implementing community-based, restorative disciplinary approaches and alleviating the disproportionate impact that current policies and practices have on students of color. The Task Force submitted its report to the legislature in February 2014; the report is available through the ISBE website at www.isbe.net/SSTF/default.htm.

The Council also connected with the **CPS Truancy Task Force**, which has been tasked with identifying causes of truancy and barriers to attendance as well as developing recommendations for addressing root causes and promoting attendance. The Task Force has planned a series of public hearings to take place during summer 2014 and will submit its recommendations in July 2014.

► **Recommendation #8: Increase public engagement across the entire spectrum of education.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Identify and support opportunities for youth, families, and local partners to provide input on the diverse needs of students and their communities.
- B. Employ P–20 Council networks and community-based coalitions to raise public awareness about recommendations of the P–20 Council and high-level issues impacting the state’s education system and engage community and private foundations to help support these efforts at the local and regional level.
- C. Secure funding for outreach activities conducted by the P–20 Council to support state education initiatives, for example, the state School Report Card, educational opportunities and resources for military children, and the early childhood Quality Ratings and Improvement System (QRIS), a web-based tool providing parents with information on the quality of early learning programs.

STATUS UPDATE

ExceleRate Illinois

Illinois received \$53,000,000 in 2013 as a **Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge award winner** to strengthen the quality of our early learning and development programs. A key piece of Illinois' proposal is the new **ExceleRate** program, a quality rating and improvement system which **helps families better understand what quality early learning programs look like** and enables them to make more informed decisions when choosing the program that best meets the needs of their young learner. ExceleRate also guides early childhood programs as they work to move from providing good services to great services for our youngest children. A public website which allows parents to search for early childhood providers in their area is expected to go live in fall 2014.

Collective Impact

The P-20 Council has signed on as a sponsor organization to the **60 x 2025 Network**, a coalition of communities committed to bringing together local stakeholders to improve educational outcomes and to strengthen their communities. The Network launched this work in January 2014 with a community networking meeting in East Peoria. Communities from across the state brought together teams of public and private stakeholders to participate and learn more about ways that they can begin to work in partnership to leverage their resources and expertise to enhance student outcomes.

Illinois' Military Children's Compact

HB3939, sponsored by Representative Eddie Jackson, passed both houses in May 2014, strengthening **Illinois' Military Children's Compact** in three important ways. First, the legislation, as passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor, includes updated provisions which will enhance the transition of children from military families into Illinois' schools. The changes help to assure the continuity of services and supports to students during what can be a difficult transition for dedicated service members and their families. Additionally, the bill removes the sunset on the state's participation in the national Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission which had been set to expire in June 2015. Lastly, the bill ensures that districts serving the largest proportion of students from local military bases have a voice on the Council in making decisions regarding the best way to provide a seamless, high-quality education to students from military families.

Stakeholder Engagement

The P-20 Council serves as a thought leader for a broad range of education issues and places a high value on its role in helping to bridge the gap between work taking place at the state level and in local communities. In addition to open Council meetings, the committees of the Council are open to members of the public to join. This allows the Council to engage an even broader cross-section of stakeholders than those already represented through the Council membership. Additionally, updates on Council activities, education-related events and

reports, and other relevant information are made available through the Council's website at www.p20council.illinois.gov.

The Council has co-sponsored a number of events with partners throughout the state to raise awareness about the many pressing issues that have the greatest impact on educators, students, and families. The Council participated in the Greater Leadership Chicago education breakfast series, the 60 x 2025 Community Networking Symposium, the IERC annual research symposium, and Advance Illinois' Legislative Forum. Additionally, the Council featured a Family Engagement Panel at its quarterly meeting in Elgin in July 2013 to spotlight innovative efforts and best practices for engaging families and communities in supporting student learning.

Data, Assessment, and Accountability Committee

In spring 2014, the P–20 **Data, Assessment, and Accountability (DAA) Committee** conducted focus groups to gather input from stakeholders on the purpose and use of large-scale student assessments. Respondents included teachers, administrators, and community members from across the state. In a report prepared by the Consortium for Educational Change and the Center for the Study of Educational Policy at Illinois State University on behalf of the Committee, key findings included that a majority of the participants expressed understanding of and value for the Common Core State Standards. Moreover, many participants spoke of the benefits of the new standards' focus on critical thinking skills and the fact that standards will now be largely consistent across most states in the nation. However, concerns persist about having sufficient resources for full implementation and, for educators in particular, having the time necessary to plan collaboratively to implement Common-Core-aligned curriculum.

Respondents indicated that they placed greater value on new large-scale assessments (PARCC) as compared to current large-scale assessments (ISAT, PSAE, ACT, and WorkKeys). Additionally, many expressed a hope that the new assessments will be better aligned to learning in the classroom and will provide for timely feedback that can be used to support instruction. Concerns regarding PARCC resulted primarily from uncertainty about technological capacity, scheduling logistics, and time allocated for testing. There were also concerns about accommodations for diverse populations (i.e., special education and English-language learners), and how and when data will be used to evaluate educators and schools. The full report can be found on the Committee's webpage via the P–20 Council site (<http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/COMM2.aspx>).

Review of Implementation of Key Education Initiatives

The **Implementation Review Committee** of the Council began the process of developing a survey in spring 2014 to **gather stakeholder feedback on the implementation of educator performance evaluations, student and educator data systems, and Common-Core-aligned learning standards**. Survey findings are intended to identify successful practices and areas for improvement related to the roll-out of key initiatives. The committee seeks to strengthen stakeholder communications, inform policy decisions, and provide recommendations that ensure effective resource allocation moving forward.

Family, Youth, and Community Engagement Committee

The **Family, Youth, and Community Engagement (FYCE) Committee** was formed as a standing committee of the Council to provide a way to communicate with families, students, and community members on the work of the Council. Over the course of the past year, the Committee held a number of forums on high profile issues to bring together stakeholders with state policy makers for dialogue on key initiatives that impact the state's educational system, including the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver** and state school report card roll-out.

▶▶ PROVIDE ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AND SOUND GOVERNANCE TO PROMOTE HIGH-QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT ILLINOIS

- ▶ **Recommendation #9: Develop a plan for Illinois education governance and finance that promotes high-quality, accessible educational opportunities.**

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Support the development of a comprehensive plan for effective and efficient governance and finance of public education, including a review of successful case studies and proven models from other states and countries.
- B. Integrate budget data with ILDS data to provide a clear picture of per-pupil expenditures at all levels of the educational system.
- C. Develop strategies that help make college more affordable and that minimize student debt.
- D. Increase MAP grant funding to enable a greater number of eligible students to access resources needed to pursue postsecondary education.

STATUS UPDATE

Education Funding Advisory Committee

Pursuant to SR 431, the **Senate Education Funding Advisory Committee (EFAC)** was formed to “propose a state education funding system that provides adequate, equitable, transparent, and accountable distribution of funds to school districts that will prepare students for success after high school.” Additionally, the authorizing legislation required the committee to consider 1) local student population; 2) student needs; 3) each district's ability to pay; 4) transparency and accountability; and 5) predictable results in the formation of their recommendations. The Committee held six public hearing throughout the state inviting community members, advocates, and education funding experts to provide input into the process. Several P-20 Council members testified to the committee during these hearings.

In January 2013, the Committee released its report available through the ISBE website at <http://www.isbe.net/EFAC/pdf/efac-final-report013114.pdf>. The report sets forth a framework for distributing funds to schools in a way that reflects the diverse educational needs in our state. Subsequently, EFAC Co-Chairman State Senator Andy Manar sponsored **SB16** to codify key pieces of the committee's recommendations. At the date of publication for this report, the bill had passed the Illinois Senate but had not come to a vote in the House.

MAP Grants

Founded over 50 years ago, each year the **Monetary Award Program (MAP)**, administered through the **Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)**, awards about \$373,000,000 (FY14) to roughly 140,000 Illinois undergraduates with financial need, enabling them to pursue higher education. The program is one of the largest and most successful state-funded college scholarship programs in the nation. In spring 2012, the General Assembly charged ISAC with bringing together stakeholders to develop recommendations for enhancing the MAP grant program to drive completion rates while continuing to prioritize access for students with financial need.

In January 2013, the MAP Task Force issued its final report outlining recommendations, including a call for institutions of higher education to establish programs to increase graduation rates and eliminate disparities in completion rates. Additional recommendations focused on the need to provide information on comprehensive advising and support services, establishing an early warning system to intervene for students at risk of falling off track, and enhanced freshmen and transfer orientation, including financial literacy training.

Though MAP recipients graduate at approximately the same rate as non-MAP students, the Task Force included a focus on the topic of effective advising as a strategy to increase completion rates among MAP students. Since the group had not originally been brought together with an emphasis on this topic, ISAC agreed to bring together a separate group to specifically address the topic of best practices for advising. The **MAP Advising Task Force** report issued in February 2014 is available online through the ISAC website (<http://www.isac.org/e-library/research-policy-analysis/research-reports/>).

During spring 2014, ISAC was directed by the state legislature to determine the practical and fiscal impacts of **Pay It Forward** approaches to funding higher education. A number of states across the nation have expressed interest in this model of financing the costs of college. In these programs, a state or college initially covers all or a portion of the student's education costs, and the student pledges to pay a percentage of his or her income for a number of years after leaving school. Ideally, after many years, enough students are returning enough money that the system becomes self-sustaining and no longer requires additional support from the state or college to make payments. Some states, such as Pennsylvania, have launched exploratory efforts to analyze how such a program might be structured, but at the date of the release of this report, no such program was actively operating at a large scale. ISAC is investigating the topic and due to report back to the General Assembly on its findings in December 2014.

- ▶ **Recommendation #10: Track and report progress toward the goal of increasing the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year**

2025; and develop an accountability system which will enable stakeholders to easily access and evaluate data about student learning, school climate, and financial expenditures in schools, districts, community colleges, and universities.

2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Identify key indicators of student success throughout the P–20 education system that will lead to the attainment of this goal.
- B. Establish benchmarks and a timeline for meeting the targets in consultation with state agencies, advisory bodies, colleges and universities, researchers, advocacy groups, community organizations, and others.
- C. Develop a format for annual public reporting on the status of progress made toward this goal, which include key indicators of student success throughout the P–20 educational spectrum.
- D. Continue support for the development, use, and sustainability of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), a data system which collects student information over the course of a student’s educational career from early childhood through postsecondary and into the workforce, to inform instruction and target customized supports to the student based on his or her unique needs.
- E. Continue to promote efforts to incorporate workforce and social service data into ILDS to provide a more comprehensive student profile that allows for more tailored resources, including supplemental curricular materials, academic counseling, and career advising.
- F. Link ILDS data to the workforce data and labor market statistics to support workforce needs analysis across the National Career Cluster Framework, as well as to make data available to a broad base of users to support college and career planning.
- G. Continue to support the development of web-based resources to simplify collection and analysis of data, avoid duplication of effort, and reduce costs and administrative burdens.
- H. Support the roll-out of the new state School Report Card (SRC), including the continued development of “under construction” indicators, mechanisms for collecting statewide data on student and parent perception of school climate and effectiveness, and linkages to the ILDS.
- I. Employ the P–20 Council and other entities to assist families and other stakeholders in understanding and using the SRC by disseminating informational materials and promoting statewide training networks.
- J. Encourage the development of user friendly mechanisms for annual reporting on key indicators of success in early childhood and postsecondary education.

STATUS UPDATE

Illinois Longitudinal Data System

Development of the **Illinois Longitudinal Data System** has made important progress under the **ILDS Governance Board**, which is comprised of the state agencies which house P–20 education and workforce data. Agencies have signed an intergovernmental agreement signifying their commitment to moving forward establishing the system and outlining terms by which data will be linked. Next steps for the board include developing a sustainability plan to support the operation of the system, selection of the Centralized Demographic Database administrator, and identification of high priority research questions to be addressed by information made available through the system.

The ILDS Board issued the first annual report on the longitudinal data system and identified several priority areas for public reporting and analytics. The group has also established five working groups to address key questions on data security, data access, legal issues, and performance measures, among others. The Early Learning Challenge funds will support the development of a database that provides information on the number of young children (birth to 5) who are served in the many early learning and child care programs that are funded through federal, state, and local resources.

State School Report Card

The P–20 Council worked with ISBE and the Boston Consulting Group in 2011 to redesign the state school report card to provide a snapshot of key information about schools. Over 60 focus groups were held across the state to allow stakeholders to provide input on what types of information would be the most relevant and meaningful to them in helping to support students. The new **Illinois School Report Card** is available online via a public facing website (<http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>) that went live in October 2013. The FYCE Committee continues to work closely with ISBE on training and outreach to help families and community partners better understand how to use the information to support student learning by engaging teachers and leaders in dialogue around school climate, student learning, and education spending.

Illinois 5 Essentials Survey

ISBE launched administration of the **Illinois 5 Essentials (5E) Survey** in 2013. The survey provides a unique opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to provide feedback on five key areas for improving schools, including: 1) Effective Leaders, 2) Collaborative Teachers, 3) Involved Families, 4) School Environment, and 5) Ambitious Instruction. The survey is based on more than 20 years of research by the **University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research** on schools and critical factors for success. Research shows that schools strong on the five essentials are ten times more likely to improve student learning than schools weak on the five essentials.

Data from the 5E Survey will be included in the new State Report Card in order to provide a more robust depiction of school climate and learning conditions than can be gleaned from test scores alone. Legislation requires that all districts must participate at least every other

year. The survey was administered in spring 2014. The Illinois Education Research Center is expected to complete an evaluation of the 5E Survey in fall 2014. The purpose of the study is to analyze how Illinois school districts are using the Illinois 5 Essentials Survey results, particularly for school improvement, to identify challenges to successful implementation, and to make recommendations for improving the 5E Survey and implementation process for statewide use.

NEXT STEPS & ONGOING WORK

Illinois has made important progress towards strengthening the P–20 education system, supporting student success, and increasing educational attainment from early childhood through postsecondary. We have set a clear goal to achieve, and there is a strong commitment across the education sectors to align their efforts. Continued collaboration between educators, parents, advocates, policy makers, employers, and community partners is critical for leveraging education resources and amplifying the good work taking place across our state.

The challenge is great and requires that all **stakeholders work together to achieve the shared goal of increasing the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025**. Illinois must continue to identify and implement the best practices and innovative policies, preschool through college, to enhance educational opportunities and equity statewide and streamline our education pipeline to promote completion and gainful employment. Some changes will require reallocation of resources, and others will require additional resources to transform P–20 education and prepare Illinois residents for the 21st Century. The health of our economy, the strength of our communities, and the future of our state depend on our ability to prepare our residents for success in college and careers now and in the future.