



The Illinois State Board of Education is focusing on four key priority areas in support of the State's education reform agenda. Education offers many opportunities during times of change and limited resources. Illinois is rich with examples of collaborative efforts among stakeholders working diligently to provide each student with a world class education. State and local leaders representing key education partners are coordinating efforts to progress in each area. These four areas directly align to the mission of the Illinois State Board and reflect shared values among stakeholders. Collectively we will address the need to enhance and transform the system to prepare and engage 21st century students with the high quality expertise of teachers and administrators in our state. The four focus areas include:

Increasing **student achievement** in low performing schools

- ESEA Reauthorization
- School Improvement Grants
- System of Support

Increasing the use of **data**

- Longitudinal Data System
- Illinois Growth Model

Increasing the **effectiveness of teachers & administrators**

- Performance Evaluation Advisory Council
- Collaboration with higher education and teacher preparation programs

Improving the use of **standards & assessment**

- New Illinois Learning Standards for English and Math
- Assessment – Illinois is a governing state in the PARCC Consortium

Regional and local leaders are needed to communicate the importance of the initiatives and explain the implications at the district, school and classroom level. It is our goal to create a mechanism for informing partners of current activities and progress in the four areas. Regional and local leaders are encouraged to share updates and explain connections to local initiatives to help address the following questions.

- How do these areas impact state activities?
- How do the four areas impact education funding?
- How does the focus on four impact regional support and assistance for schools?
- What does this agenda mean to the district level?
- What are the implications for the classroom teacher?

The following page provides a brief overview of each area and where to find additional information on the ISBE website. The next update will be available in February.



Support for the Lowest Performing Schools

Illinois has too many students attending schools that are not performing in ways that meet their needs. For too long the approach has been broad support for many schools and allowing districts to continue to fail without repercussions. School Improvement grant dollars have been invested in 12 districts in the state. Focusing on the lowest performing schools with intense support and resources will help address the challenges that have been in place for far too long. ISBE believes successful districts have as their foundation the following eight essential elements: comprehensive planning, professional development, leadership, conditions for learning, community and family, curriculum, instruction and assessment. Working closely with districts will provide an opportunity to learn and share strategies that are effective methods for continuous improvement. The statewide system of support will refine and enhance the services to reinforce continuous improvement. Additional information regarding the School Improvement Grants and the Statewide System of Support is available at www.isbe.net/grants.

Illinois Longitudinal Data System

The activities undertaken within the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) are set forth in Public Act 96-0107 to enable "students [to] achieve improved learning outcomes as a result of the longitudinal data system...through instructional and educational programs informed by valid and reliable data."

Initial steps that have been accomplished to implement ILDS include: a state-wide student identifier system used to link student records; a standardized cataloguing courses, the Illinois State Course System (ISCS); ILDS Data Advisory Committee formed; and, data stewards have been appointed. The work is continuing on the development of ILDS Data Warehouse, the development of a linkage system for teachers and administrator data, and the linkages for higher education and early childhood with the K-12 system. ILDS will continue to build additional data collection capabilities while seeking opportunities to reduce data collection burden for districts.

The ISBE has provided information for Regional Offices of Education and districts on the efforts of the ILDS implementation. These resources can be accessed at: <http://www.isbe.net/ILDS/>.

Performance Evaluation

As a result of Public Act 096-0861, the Illinois State Board of Education appointed a committee, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), to review and collaborate with the ISBE in the development of a teacher and administrator evaluation system. The PEAC has been meeting on a regular basis and it continues to meet on a monthly basis.

The new evaluation process must include a ratings system with four categories and based on student achievement growth. Multiple models from other cities and states are being reviewed by this committee. New requirements for the process of teacher evaluations must be in place September 1, 2012. For details and updates regarding progress and information, visit www.isbe.net/peac/.

Standards & Assessment

Illinois State Board of Education adopted the New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating Common Core for Math and English Language Arts in June 2010. These new standards will provide students with rigorous academics needed for college and career readiness. The common core standards will be aligned to the new generation of assessment currently being developed by the Partnership for the Assessment and Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC). Local level leadership is key to ensure teachers are transitioning to the new common core standards. Grade level discussions and analysis of current lessons compared to common core will be time intensive, yet essential to full implementation. For updates on assessment and resources on common core, visit www.isbe.net/common_core.