



Illinois State Board of Education


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Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President
The Honorable Dan McConchie, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Emanuel "Chris" Welch, Speaker of the House
The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor

FROM: Dr. Carmen I. Ayala 
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: July 7, 2021

SUBJECT: Illinois State Board of Education Strategic Plan

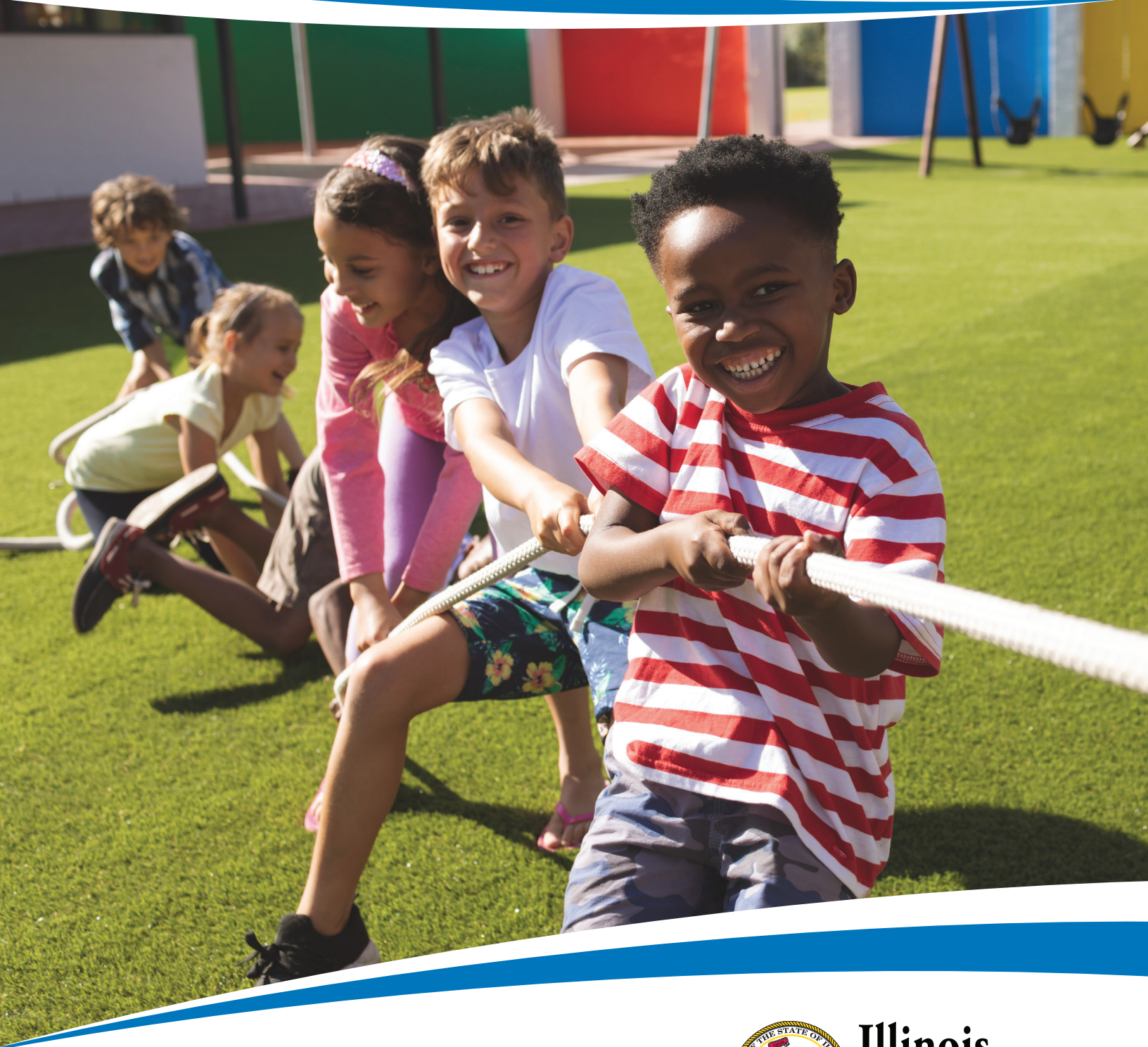
The ISBE Strategic Plan 2021 Annual Status Report pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/2-3.47a](#).

This report is transmitted on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education. For additional copies of this report or for more specific information, please contact Amanda Elliott, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs at (217) 782-6510 or aelliott@isbe.net.

cc: Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the House
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center

ISBE Strategic Plan

2020-2021 Annual Status Report



June 2021



Illinois
State Board of
Education

To All Residents of Illinois:

The Illinois State Board of Education crafted our Strategic Plan as a roadmap to equity, defining the steps our agency will take to improve and increase opportunities and supports for Illinois students, especially those in the greatest need. We adopted the plan in November 2020, nine months into a global pandemic that continues to shape the world today. Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, the agency, in partnership with educators, principals, administrators, parents, advocates, and students, accomplished a lot.

We developed an internal Equity Impact Analysis Tool to operationalize equity in our decision-making at every level of the agency. We took a giant leap toward closing the digital divide by expanding access to internet-connected devices.

We partnered with the world-renowned Center for Childhood Resilience at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago on a virtual training to equip educators and school mental health professionals to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and address students' social-emotional and mental health needs. Our students are seeing the results of this training in new practices and mindsets in the classroom.

We increased the number of Latinx and African American candidates enrolled in Illinois educator preparation programs, launched the Illinois Educator Preparation Profile, and adopted new Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards that will empower aspiring teachers with the skills they need to reach and engage students from all different backgrounds. We created model policies to protect the safety of LGBTQ students and prevent bullying.

These are just a few of our collective achievements that have brought us closer than ever to reaching our goals in the areas of student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators.

The Strategic Plan also helped the agency maintain a laser-like focus on our goals as we addressed the impact of the pandemic. We have a tremendous opportunity over the next three years in expending \$7.8 billion in federal pandemic relief funds to advance equity in meaningful and lasting ways.

We could not have accomplished so much without the invaluable contributions and collaboration of every member of the education community in Illinois. You truly deserve a round of applause. We look forward to working hand in hand with you as we continue on our journey to build the education system that will equip each and every child for a successful future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
Illinois State Superintendent of Education



Darren Reisberg
Illinois State Board of Education Chair

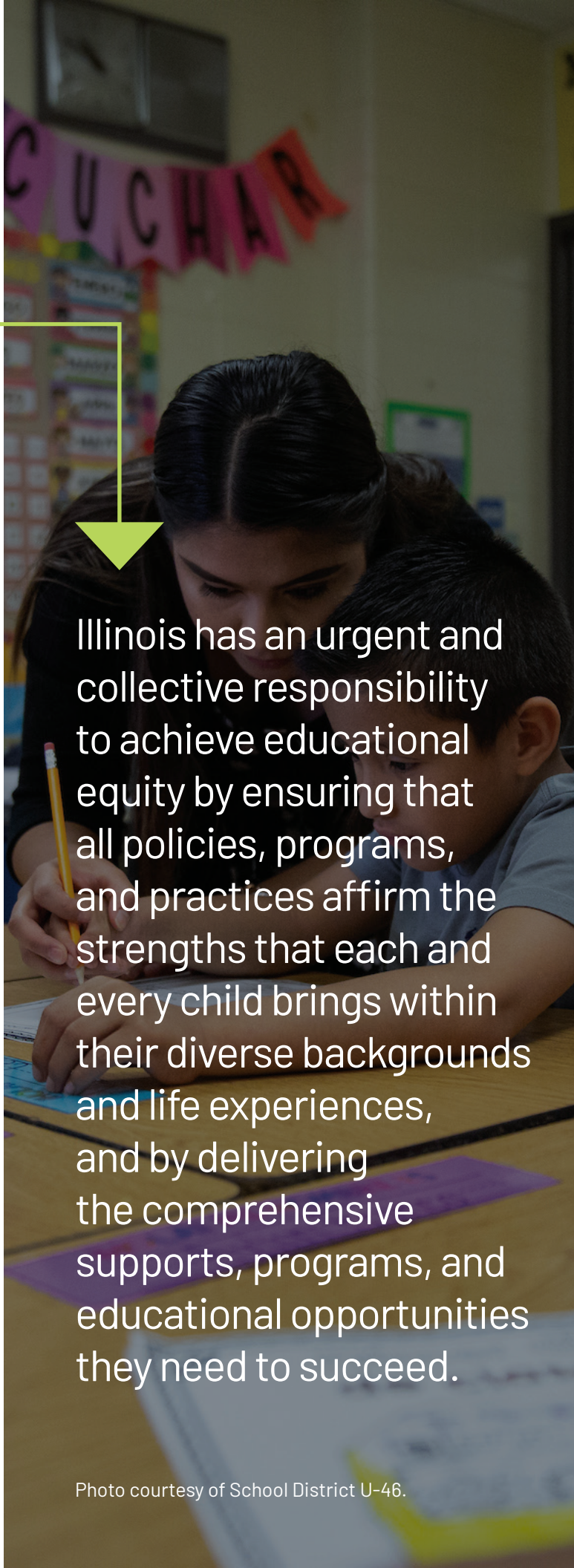
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Equity Statement

"I am excited to witness the work that ISBE is doing and will continue to do to increase supports and opportunities for students from historically marginalized communities. By utilizing the new equity impact tool, it is my hope that data gained with this tool will help move Illinois schools through an equity journey and into equitable practices and actions."

— Justin Johnson,
2021 Illinois Teacher of the Year



Illinois has an urgent and collective responsibility to achieve educational equity by ensuring that all policies, programs, and practices affirm the strengths that each and every child brings within their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and by delivering the comprehensive supports, programs, and educational opportunities they need to succeed.

Photo courtesy of School District U-46.

STRATEGY **EG.I**

An internal equity impact analysis tool will be developed, implemented, and used by all agency staff.

By end of the 2020-21 school year an equity impact analysis tool will be developed. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE had formed an internal Equity Advisory Work Group and charged the group with researching and creating the Equity Impact Analysis Tool to operationalize equity in the agency.</p>	<p>The work group developed the Equity Impact Analysis Tool with an equity glossary and research.</p> <p>The work group developed training videos of the tool rooted in agency work for a series of all-agency trainings. The work group conducted 12 trainings for agency staff in June 2021.</p>	<p>ISBE will conduct an evaluation of the training through an agency-wide survey and will include the recorded training on the agency's intranet ISBE Connects and in the human resources on-boarding packet for new employees.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY **EG.E**

An Equity Journey Continuum tool will be researched, developed, and incorporated into each district's public Report Card by the 2022 reporting year.

By end of the 2020-21 school year an Equity Journey Continuum will be developed for the field and the agency to pilot. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>The ISBE superintendent and the Equity Statement adopted by the Board provided direction that led to the development of an Equity Journey Continuum for school districts.</p>	<p>ISBE's internal Equity Advisory Work Group conducted research regarding equity measures and documents utilized in Illinois and other state education systems.</p> <p>The work group developed a crosswalk alignment based on the ISBE Strategic Plan's goals, priorities and strategies; the Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan Equity Report Card; and the Building Equity Indicator Systems: Guidebook for States and School Districts.</p> <p>The work group developed the Equity Journey Continuum rubric utilizing research, alignment, and foundational documents, along with relevant data elements collected from districts. The rubric provides a lens through which to see a district's individual equity journey.</p> <p>The work group conducted a small pilot with a group of diverse school districts in June 2021. During this pilot, districts reviewed their data along with the Equity Journey Continuum Rubric. The work group used the information, data, feedback, and response received to further develop the Rubric and additional information for districts.</p>	<p>The work group will conduct a statewide pilot during the 2021-22 school year to provide all Illinois districts with information, data, and support regarding the Equity Journey Continuum Rubric. The pilot will include opportunities for district response, information, and feedback.</p> <p>Districts will have the opportunity to prereview the Equity Journey Continuum on the Illinois Report Card during the pilot, prior to its public release.</p> <p>ISBE will incorporate the Equity Journey Continuum into district Report Cards each year for both district and public viewing beginning with the 2022 Illinois Report Card.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

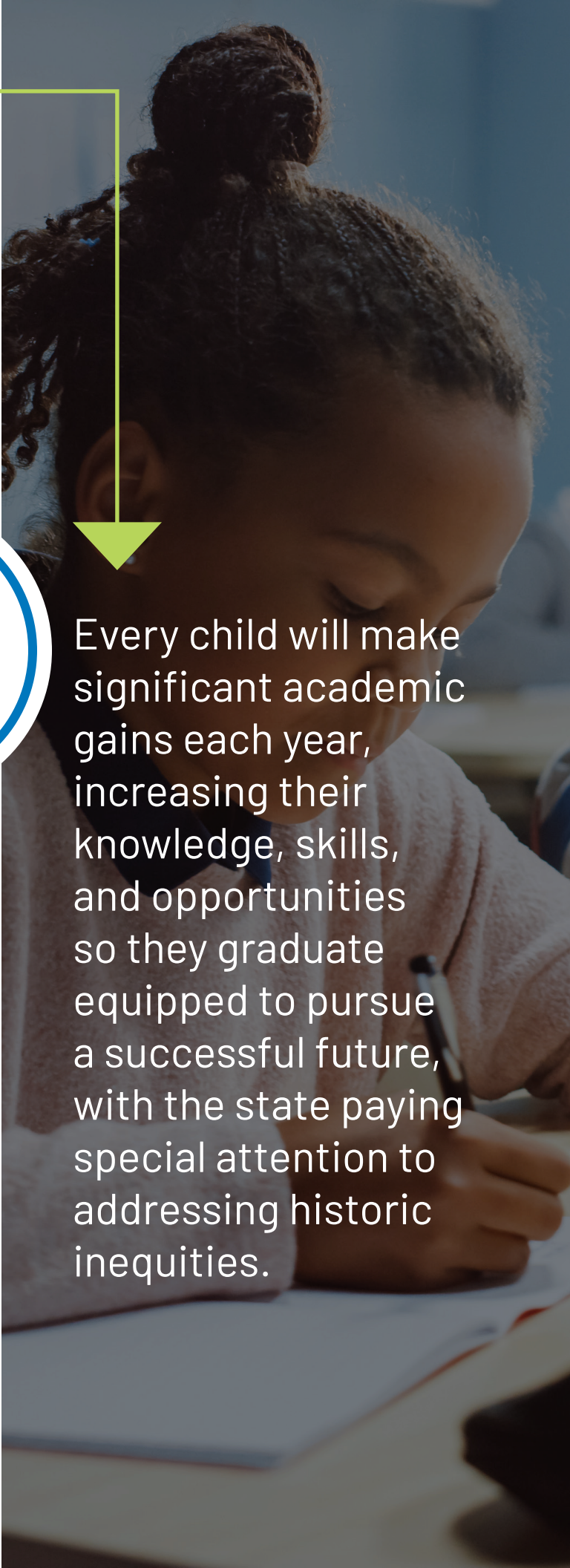
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Student Learning



“Federal funds empowered Illinois to take giant steps forward on the path toward closing our digital divide. Thanks to ISBE’s focus on digital equity, students across the state now have a vastly expanded menu of educational options and the 21st century tools to succeed in their learning both at school and at home.”

— Dr. Brent Clark,
Executive Director of the
Illinois Association of School
Administrators



Every child will make significant academic gains each year, increasing their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future, with the state paying special attention to addressing historic inequities.

STRATEGY 1.1

Support best practices and continuous quality improvement, including an emphasis on equity and diversity in order to support student learning while also addressing remote and blended learning.

By the end of the 2020-21 school year:

- The Curriculum Evaluation Tool (CET) will be developed, refined based on stakeholder feedback, and made available to all schools/districts. A pilot of 5% of districts will use the ISBE CET. **COMPLETE**
- In August 2019, 62% of districts provided one device per student. By the end of the 2020-21 school year, 75% of districts will provide one device per student. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
ISBE did not have guidance or resources available to districts to evaluate curriculum.	ISBE developed the Curriculum Evaluation Tool and refined the tool based on stakeholder feedback. Approximately 50 districts completed a pilot of the tool in June 2021.	ISBE will revise the tool based on an analysis of pilot data and feedback and release it all districts.
In August 2019, approximately 62% of districts provided one device per student.	In January 2021, approximately 87% of districts provided one device per student.	By January 2022, ISBE will collaborate with the Learning Technology Center to collect more detailed data related to school technology usage, needs, and capacity.

Challenges

None

Recommended Modifications

Consider an upward adjustment to the success measure regarding devices for the 2021-22 school year since Illinois schools surpassed the metric in the 2020-21 school year.

STRATEGY 1.2

Assist districts in addressing COVID-19's impact on learning resulting from the suspension of in-person instruction by providing supports around Priority Learning Standards.

By the end of 2020-21 school year 75% of districts participating in professional learning will report increased alignment of curriculum to Priority Learning Standards. **IN PROGRESS**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE released the Illinois Priority Learning Standards in August 2020.</p>	<p>A collaborative effort between regional offices of education (ROE) and ISBE staff developed an implementation plan for delivery of professional learning related to the standards.</p> <p>In January 2021, monthly Capacity Builder sessions kicked off with ROE and ISBE staff offering 90-minute interactive virtual sessions for ROE staff and district curriculum leaders on implementation of the standards. Following the March session, 92.8% of the participants, representing all six of the ROE/ISC Service Areas, indicated they Agreed or Strongly Agreed to understanding what the Priority Learning Standards are, which establishes a strong foundation for increasing curricular alignment.</p> <p>ISBE built a resource library, including recordings of the Capacity Builder virtual sessions, on ISBE's Learning Standards webpage.</p>	<p>Participating districts will complete professional learning sessions.</p> <p>ISBE will collect, analyze, and report data regarding districts' curricular alignment to the Priority Learning Standards.</p> <p>ISBE will implement the 2021-22 Capacity Builder series on the standards in summer/fall 2021.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 1.3

Increase supports for schools identified with the greatest need through ISBE's partnerships with the Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs), and primary support entities.

By the end of the 2020-21 school year at least 60% of Comprehensive Support schools will work with a primary support partner. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE did not have a systemic way of partnering highest-need schools with support providers. IL-EMPOWER Primary Partners did not exist prior to the 2020-21 school year.</p>	<p>Primary Partner services launched in December 2020 with two virtual open houses showcasing available services and supports.</p> <p>ISBE sent communications to districts, schools, and Primary Partners to coordinate events, explain program requirements, showcase the menu of services, and cultivate interest.</p> <p>ISBE established contracts, grants, intergovernmental agreements, and amendments to offer services at no-cost to districts/schools. ISBE also developed invoicing forms and procedures to reimburse Primary Partner expenses.</p> <p>ISBE created a draft tiered dashboard for key IL-EMPOWER stakeholders to inform program decision-making and policy development at local and statewide levels in June 2021.</p>	<p>ISBE will evaluate the long-term value and sustainability of providing Primary Partner services to districts.</p> <p>ISBE will develop a new procurement for support services for the 2022-23 school year.</p>

Challenges

Districts and schools reported during the 2020-21 school year that they were focused primarily on managing the day-to-day operations of remote and hybrid learning. They reported that school improvement planning, including professional development, was a secondary consideration during the pandemic. Only 54% of Comprehensive Support schools had partnered with Primary Partners as of June 1, 2021.

Recommended Modifications

None

STRATEGY 1.4

Provide tiered state-level support for schools that remain in the Comprehensive Support designation for more than four years.

By the end of the 2020-21 school year 10% of schools will no longer be identified as Comprehensive Support based on 2018 Report Card data. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>Forty-two percent of the 202 schools identified for Comprehensive Supports in 2018 exited Comprehensive status one year later, while 58% remained. ISBE met its initial success measure in the 2018-19 school year.</p> <p>Of the 42% of schools that exited Comprehensive status, 15.84% changed to Targeted; 19.80% changed to Commendable; .50% changed to Exemplary; and 5.94% discontinued as schools.</p>	<p>ISBE created a draft dashboard to track the progress of school performance.</p> <p>ISBE established quarterly meetings with providers and schools to review data.</p>	<p>ISBE will utilize external and internal evaluations and data to analyze FY 2021 programs and procure the next generation of Statewide System of Support approved partners based on school and district needs.</p> <p>ISBE will establish an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee of key stakeholders to study and recommend effective tiered state-level support for schools that remain in the Comprehensive Support designation for more than four years.</p> <p>ISBE will complete its five-year strategic plan for IL-EMPOWER, including statewide exit criteria and state-determined action for schools that remain in the Comprehensive Support designation for more than four years.</p>

Challenges

Schools did/will not receive new designations for the 2020 or 2021 Report Cards, due to Illinois' federal waiver for accountability during the pandemic. The absence of assessment data and designations for two years creates significant gaps in data for tracking progress toward this goal and reliably evaluating and reporting the performance of schools and their learning partners.

Recommended Modifications

None

STRATEGY 1.5

Expand literacy on the utilization of assessment and on assessment data to accurately identify learning gains, achievement gaps, and COVID-19's impact on learning.

By the end of 2020-21 school year ISBE will have a plan to enhance reports, create professional development resources, and release communications to expand assessment literacy. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE did not have an assessment literacy plan.</p>	<p>ISBE developed an assessment literacy plan to provide professional development opportunities to assist parents, teachers, and administrators in building their understanding of how individual student reports depict student achievement scores.</p> <p>ISBE developed the plan which contains a calendar of upcoming webinars to support spring 2022 test administration. The webinar topics include enhanced student reporting, understanding student score data, and making connections to the Illinois Learning Standards.</p> <p>ISBE created an explainer video for parents/guardians for their student's Illinois Assessment of Readiness Individual Student Report. Parents/Guardians can scan a QR code on the report and view a video that explains the testing results for their specific student.</p>	<p>ISBE will continue to add professional development opportunities to the plan.</p> <p>ISBE will publish and communicate to stakeholders the catalog of events and registration links.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 1.6

Develop a native language assessment.

By the end of 2020-21 school year Spanish Language Arts Standards will be developed and adopted by the Board. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>The initial work to develop a native language arts assessment began in July 2020 with the establishment of a diverse group of educational leaders across Illinois who had extensive experience and knowledge with Spanish language arts standards.</p> <p>The work group collaborated with ISBE to develop Spanish language arts standards specifically designed for Illinois to serve as the foundation for the development of the native language arts assessment.</p>	<p>Over the course of four months, the Spanish language arts work group explored the work of other states that had already designed and implemented Spanish language arts standards into their assessment programs. The work group also examined the current Illinois Learning Standards for English language arts to ensure proper alignment across all grade levels.</p> <p>The work group completed its initial draft of the Spanish language arts standards in November 2020. The ISBE Board approved the publication of the standards for public comment in April 2021.</p>	<p>Once the public comment period concludes, ISBE will submit the Spanish language arts standards to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). Illinois could adopt the standards in rule as early as September 2021.</p> <p>ISBE will issue a Request for Sealed Proposals for the development of the native language arts assessment.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None


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Learning Conditions



“The ISBE Student Advisory Council is excited to see the strong focus the agency has placed on mental health and wellbeing, especially by making it a priority to include student voice in this topic. We are hopeful that this hard work will create beneficial changes in the everyday lives of students across Illinois.”

— Serena Thakkar,
ISBE Student Advisory
Council member

A photograph of a young student with dark hair, wearing a grey and green striped shirt, sitting at a desk in a classroom. The student's right hand is raised high, and they are looking towards the right side of the frame with a slight smile. A green arrow points from the top of the page down to the student's hand.

All districts and schools will receive the resources necessary to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments, and will be equipped to meet the unique academic and social and emotional needs of each and every student.

Priority 1: Student Well-Being – All schools and their respective programs will be equipped with the tools and resources needed to create safe and healthy learning environments for every student.

Priority 2: Resource Allocation – Strategic resource allocation decision-making will be used across and within Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

STRATEGY 2.1.1

Support schools to address the social and emotional needs of students, educators, and staff impacted by COVID-19 by providing them with high-quality professional development.

By the end of 2020-21 school year each of the six Regional Office of Education regions will have established a Social Emotional Learning (SEL)/Trauma training hub. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE created the Wellness Department in 2018 with the goal of equipping schools to support the holistic needs of students and educators.</p> <p>The pandemic highlighted the need for an expanded focus on adult and student SEL and mental health. ISBE began identifying resources, aligning programming, and disseminating information. ISBE created a webpage dedicated to mental health, initiated a SEL rural Communities of Practice program, and secured funding to launch a trauma-focused virtual learning community and a statewide resilience pilot.</p>	<p>ISBE developed seven Culturally Responsive SEL Wellness Hubs strategically located with one in each of the six Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools areas and one in Chicago Public Schools.</p> <p>In partnership with the Center for Childhood Resilience at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Peoria ROE, ISBE provided all educators in Illinois universal access to a virtual learning community providing online trainings on the impact of trauma on children and adolescents, the intersection between race and trauma, crisis response strategies, and schoolwide trauma-responsive policies and classroom practices to build resilience among students. More than 5,300 individuals have accessed the virtual training community to date.</p>	<p>The hubs will help districts complete an SEL/mental health needs assessment, develop an action plan, and provide the resources necessary to support identified needs.</p> <p>Hub specialists will receive training on needs assessment and action planning.</p> <p>ISBE staff will work with hub specialists to identify the training and resources necessary to meet identified needs.</p>

	<p>As a second part of the partnership with Lurie Children’s, ISBE launched the Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) pilot with 44 schools that receive federal Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grants. These schools created REACH teams composed of teachers, administrators, social workers, and 21st CCLC project personnel and parent mentors to develop and implement data-driven strategic plans to support students’ social-emotional learning and mental health.</p>	<p>Additionally, through the development of a statewide coalition, ISBE will further develop a multi-tiered system of support around student and educator wellness to positively impact the culture and climate of Illinois schools. Initiatives will include an expansion of the REACH pilot, a trauma-sensitive schools designation pilot, a community schools partnership grant, and continued participation in task forces and committees, such as the Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership and the Whole Child Task Force.</p>
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Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 2.1.2

Support district implementation of policy and guidance to promote students’ safety and well-being, including non-discrimination and inclusion.

By the end of 2020-21 school year ISBE will provide model policies and revise guidance on safety and well-being to include non-discrimination and inclusive practices. **IN PROGRESS**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE did not have model policies available for districts to use as a guide.</p> <p>ISBE reviewed current legislation pertaining to student safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p>ISBE staff met with members of Prevent School Violence Illinois, the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes, Safe School Alliance, and the ISBE Student Advisory Council to create a checklist to ensure districts are utilizing model policies and best practices to address their needs.</p> <p>ISBE completed an analysis on model policies pertaining to school discipline, safety and inclusion of LGBTQ students, bullying prevention, harassment of students, nondiscrimination statements, and uniform grievance procedures.</p> <p>ISBE compiled and analyzed baseline data was from the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years regarding districts’ suspension and expulsion of students of color.</p> <p>ISBE developed a toolkit including model policies for school discipline, protecting the safety of LGBTQ students, bullying prevention, preventing harassment of students, nondiscrimination statements, and uniform grievance procedures.</p>	<p>ISBE will establish training and resources for the model policy toolkit.</p> <p>During the 2021-22 school year, ISBE will collaborate with the University of Illinois-Springfield and Loyola University to collect more detailed data from targeted schools, including conducting a root cause analysis of suspensions and expulsions with a primary focus on discipline affecting students of color and analyzing data such as teacher and student demographics and mobility rates.</p> <p>ISBE will develop online professional development materials on restorative discipline practices.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 2.1.3

Adopt culturally responsive teaching and leading standards for educator preparation programs.

By the end of 2020-21 school year the culturally responsive teaching and leading standards will be fully adopted and a training for higher education will be developed. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>The Diverse and Learner Ready Teacher Network, a group of stakeholders convened by the agency, drafted Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.</p>	<p>ISBE adopted the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards in December 2020 and they became finalized in Illinois Administrative Code, Part 24 in February 2021.</p> <p>In June 2021, a stakeholder group assisted ISBE in developing an implementation plan for the new standards in educator preparation programs, including training for representatives of higher education institutions.</p>	<p>Training plans will be implemented so approved educator preparation programs can complete training and re-align their program in accordance with standards</p>

Challenges

ISBE will partner with higher education institutions to implement the training plan and equip educator preparation programs to align their programs to the standards.

Recommended Modifications

None

STRATEGY 2.1.4

Support implicit bias training through professional development in schools and classrooms.

By the end of 2020-21 school year districts will report how they have met Public Act 100-0014. A revision to the compliance monitoring tool will be completed. **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>At the start of the 2020-21 school year, ISBE did not have information from districts about how they met the requirements of Public Act 100-0014. It was unclear if the ROE compliance monitoring tool included the implicit bias training mandate.</p>	<p>ISBE staff collaborated with the ROEs to confirm that the compliance monitoring tool included Public Act 100-0014.</p> <p>ISBE staff gathered and reviewed information about how districts met Public Act 100-0014. Of the 353 districts that underwent a compliance review during this timeframe, 85.8% were meeting the requirements of the act.</p> <p>ISBE staff utilized data from districts and collaborated with stakeholders to develop a draft evaluation tool to assist districts in selecting implicit bias professional development.</p>	<p>ISBE staff will review compliance information related to Public Act 100-0014 on an annual basis.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 2.1.5

Embed the history and accomplishments of historically underrepresented groups (e.g., Latino/a, African American, LGBTQ) in the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards.

By the end of 2020-21 school year the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science will be revised.

SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>Illinois adopted the Illinois Learning Standards for social science in 2016. ISBE had not reviewed the standards since their implementation in 2017.</p> <p>ISBE’s initial review of the standards in 2020 indicated there were gaps in terms of equity and inclusivity.</p>	<p>In summer 2020, ISBE convened a diverse group of stakeholders – primarily educators – to conduct a thorough review of the existing Illinois Learning Standards for social science through the lenses of equity and inclusivity. ISBE staff presented the report from the review to the ISBE Board in November 2020.</p> <p>The group that reviewed the standards continued work through the spring and presented revised standards to the ISBE Board in March 2021. The Board approved the standards for publication for public comment. The public comment period concluded in May 2021.</p> <p>ISBE revised the standards in response to public comment and presented the public comment analysis at the June 2021 ISBE Board meeting.</p>	<p>Following second notice to JCAR, Illinois may adopted the standards in rule as early as August 2021.</p> <p>Districts will have the 2021-22 school year to plan for implementation of the standards at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 2.2.1

Provide clear and user-friendly data and tools to promote collaboration within LEAs among their finance and programmatic teams to support strategic resource allocation.

By the end of 2020-21 school year ISBE will provide professional development on the use of the financial projection tool. **IN PROGRESS**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>The Financial Projection Tool began as a district-facing tool only that ISBE employees could not utilize. ISBE identified a need for both districts and ISBE staff to access the tool simultaneously in order for ISBE staff to provide real time financial and budgetary support to districts.</p>	<p>ISBE staff worked with contractors to revise the Financial Projection Tool. Staff engaged in trial testing of the revised tool to ensure financial data and edits to the entered data were accessible by ISBE staff immediately after being entered by districts.</p>	<p>ISBE will offer professional development on the use of the tool externally by July 2021.</p> <p>ISBE will revise the Ed360 data dashboard to allow districts to upload their most current financial data – not just their Annual Financial Reports and district budgets, which often lag in displaying present financial realities – to provide greater accuracy in projecting the impact of budgetary decisions on programmatic decisions.</p>

Challenges

ISBE contractors needed to learn the Ed360 system before devising a plan to revise the system to meet the needs ISBE identified, causing challenges meeting the timeline for the competition of this strategy.

Recommended Modifications

None

STRATEGY 2.2.2

Educate advocates, stakeholders, and LEAs regarding equitably designating funds to focus on specific student populations, including birth-to-5, English Learners, special education, and low-income, resulting in diminishing achievement gaps.

By the end of 2020-21 school year all LEAs will have the redesigned Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) Spending Plan information available to them to equitably allocate designated funds to specific student populations. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>The FY 2020 EBF Spending Plan focused on districts’ use of Tier Funding rather than emphasizing the funds designated for three student groups: students from low-income backgrounds, English Learners, and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).</p>	<p>The FY 2021 EBF Spending Plan featured redesigned questions that emphasized the funds designated for three student groups: students from low-income backgrounds, English Learners, and students with IEPs.</p> <p>ISBE aggregated the results of the FY 2021 EBF Spending Plan and reviewed them cross-departmentally to inform future redesigns and supports.</p> <p>The FY 2022 EBF Spending Plan retains the same emphasis so that districts remain focused on the students identified in EBF statute.</p>	<p>ISBE will provide supports for districts to complete the FY 2022 EBF Spending Plan, including a full review by the district’s Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee as required by 105 ILCS 5/14C-10 and Ill Admin Code Part 228 228.30 (c)(4).</p> <p>ISBE will convene an advisory group to establish a value proposition and guide integration of the EBF Spending Plan into other required plan(s) for maximum resource allocation alignment and benefit for identified student groups.</p>

Challenges

None

Recommended Modifications

As a result of the pandemic, consider making the current goal for the end of the 2021-22 school year the goal for the end of the 2022-23 school year: “A revised supplement not supplant policy will be implemented. This will be validated by Title I monitoring, Resource Allocation Reviews, and site-based expenditure reporting data.”

Consider the following for a success measure for the 2021-22 school year: “By the end of the 2021-22 school year, ISBE will have convened an advisory group to establish a value proposition and guide integration of the EBF Spending Plan into other required plan(s) for maximum resource allocation alignment and benefit for identified student groups.”

STRATEGY 2.2.3

Create an efficient and effective reporting system in collaboration with the field that encourages and fosters braiding and blending (i.e., integrated resource allocation system) and is supported by aligned agency mindsets and practices.

By the end of 2020-21 school year agency staff will be trained to understand and work with districts on blending and braiding. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE staff had discussed braiding and blending internally as a tool for districts to use to strategically engage funding streams, however, agency staff had not undergone a formal training to ensure aligned understanding of the concepts.</p>	<p>The Finance Center and the Education Center developed a braiding and blending webinar for districts. The process of developing the webinar required both centers to develop a deeper understanding of braiding and blending that they then shared with managing staff in the Title, special education, multilingual, and finance departments.</p> <p>ISBE staff identified and trained a core team in the concept of braiding and blending.</p>	<p>ISBE staff will provide additional cross-departmental training opportunities to further share this understanding internally.</p> <p>ISBE staff will produce an FAQ document to accompany the district-facing webinar.</p> <p>Additionally, pilot districts will have an opportunity to request individual assistance with developing a braiding and blending plan for their funding streams.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

3

Elevating Educators



“We support ISBE’s strategic plan and especially appreciate the state board’s focus on “Elevating Educators”. The commitment the state has made to our newest educators is an encouraging investment in the future of public education in Illinois and we think it will help not only alleviate the teacher shortage, but lead to career satisfaction and student success. We are incredibly happy to partner with ISBE to provide great experienced mentors and coaches for novice teachers.”

— Kathi Griffin,
President of the Illinois
Education Association

A photograph of a female teacher with long dark hair, wearing a black top with a floral pattern, smiling and looking down at a book she is holding. She is in a classroom with colorful posters on the wall, including one that says 'Buenos Días' and another that says 'NO IV UN'. A yellow arrow points from the top of the page down to the text.

Illinois’ diverse student population will have educators who are prepared through multiple pathways and are supported in and celebrated for their effectiveness in providing each and every child a high-quality education that meets their needs.

Photo courtesy of School District U-46.

STRATEGY 3.1

Leverage and align partnerships that lead to the recruitment of a diverse teaching corps.

By the end of 2020-21 school year the percentage of students of color enrolled in Illinois educator preparation programs will increase by at least 5% (from 30% to 35%). **SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>Illinois did not have a standardized definition of program enrollment.</p> <p>ISBE's annual educator preparation program data – collected each May for the preceding year – showed the racial/ethnic demographics of enrollees as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% Caucasian • 12% Latinx • 7% African American • 4% Unknown • 3% Asian • 3% Two or more races • <1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander • <1% American Indian/Alaskan Native 	<p>Latinx and African American candidates each increased by 2% for a cumulative increase of 4% of candidates of color between 2019 and 2020.</p> <p>ISBE staff worked with a group of educator preparation program deans to determine a standardized definition of program enrollment to allow the agency to collect and analyze consistent data between educator preparation programs.</p> <p>ISBE staff worked with the Diverse and Learner Ready Teacher Network and The New Teacher Project to develop expectations and support for educator preparation programs in setting data-informed recruitment and retention plans.</p> <p>ISBE launched the Illinois Educator Preparation Profile (IEPP): a new interactive report that provides a holistic view of all approved educator preparation programs within colleges and universities in Illinois. The IEPP serves as a valuable tool for prospective educators to learn more about preparation program, school district administrators involved in teacher hiring, and preparation programs' continuous improvement efforts.</p>	<p>ISBE will finalize a statewide definition for program enrollment in collaboration with educator preparation programs.</p> <p>ISBE staff will host a required webinar to communicate recruitment and retention plan expectations with educator preparation programs.</p> <p>Educator preparation programs will have the opportunity to participate in a pilot to have their recruitment and retention plans reviewed by a peer.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 3.2

Establish a school/district leadership department that will support the recruitment of a diverse leadership pipeline with a focus on race and culturally responsive leadership.

By the end of 2020-21 school year the school/district leadership department will be established. **COMPLETE**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE's Department of District and School Leadership (DDSL) did not exist.</p> <p>The agency's efforts to foster a diverse and robust leadership pipeline that reflects the diversity of Illinois' students were piecemeal and distributed among multiple departments at the agency.</p> <p>Stakeholders did not have a single point of contact at ISBE to collaborate with on leadership pipeline initiatives.</p>	<p>ISBE hired a director to lead DDSL in November 2020.</p> <p>In partnership with Education First, DDSL has engaged in research-based inquiry over the last seven months to better understand the current needs of district and school leaders, the Illinois leadership pipeline, and how the department might best position itself to meet the needs of stakeholders. This process culminated with the presentation of a three-year Strategic Plan in June 2021. The process involved the following activities:</p>	<p>DDSL will begin its implementation of its strategic plan.</p> <p>DDSL will implement a principal mentoring and principal recruitment grant.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None

STRATEGY 3.3

Improve incentives, training, and partnerships for districts to attract and support teachers in early childhood, special education, and bilingual programs.

By the end of 2020-21 school year there will be an 8% reduction in unfilled early childhood, special education, and bilingual positions. **IN PROGRESS**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>Early Childhood: In 2018, ISBE established an alternative pathway to licensure so that teachers can obtain their Professional Educator License (PEL) with an Early Childhood endorsement. As a result, teachers with a Level 5 Illinois Gateways Early Childhood Education Credential can serve as the lead teacher in Preschool for All (PFA)/Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE) classrooms until 2023 while they complete the requirements for the PEL.</p>	<p>Early Childhood: ISBE began creating a plan to collect comprehensive data on unfilled positions in early childhood programs.</p> <p>ISBE developed language to extend the alternative pathways to licensure for early childhood educators.</p>	<p>Early Childhood: ISBE will distribute the Unfilled Positions Survey to Early Childhood Block Grant programs administered by community-based organizations. The survey will help ISBE ascertain the number of teachers who have a PEL with an Early Childhood endorsement and are working in PFA and PFAE programs in both district- and community-based settings. It will also gather information on their salaries and the number of unfilled positions in such programs.</p> <p>ISBE will work to extend the deadline for the alternative pathway to licensure for early childhood educators beyond FY 2023.</p>

<p>Special Education: According to ISBE’s annual Unfilled Positions Survey, in the 2019-20 school year, Illinois school districts had a total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 740.3 unfilled positions in special education out of 23,287.3 total special education positions (3.18% of total special education positions). 	<p>Special Education: The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs awarded a five-year State Personnel Development Grant to ISBE in September 2020 for the Integrated Elementary Special Education (IESE) project to support teacher retention.</p> <p>ISBE budgeted more funds to address special education teacher shortages in its fiscal year 2022 IDEA grant application.</p>	<p>Special Education: The IESE project will offer two sessions in summer 2021 to provide coaching and mentoring training to those who will supply professional development throughout the state.</p> <p>ISBE will collect data from districts and ROEs that participate in IESE activities to determine whether participants demonstrate an increase in educator retention.</p>
<p>Bilingual: According to ISBE’s annual Unfilled Positions Survey, in the 2019-20 school year, Illinois school districts had a total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 154.8 unfilled positions in English as a second language, special education bilingual, and bilingual out of 4,120.7 total positions (3% of total bilingual positions). 	<p>Bilingual: ISBE made changes to Part 25 to allow individuals who received the Seal of Biliteracy to use it as evidence of target language proficiency in place of taking a language test so that they can receive a Bilingual endorsement. ISBE hired an international teacher recruiter to recruit bilingual teachers for English Learners. The recruiter expanded the Exchange Visitor Program for Teachers to add a partnership with Mexico, in addition to one the agency has with Spain.</p>	<p>Bilingual: ISBE will change Part 25 rules to allow teachers born and educated outside the United States to earn a World Language endorsement without taking basic courses in their native language (e.g., Spanish 101, 102).</p> <p>ISBE will review data on how many individuals used the Seal of Biliteracy to prove target language proficiency for a Bilingual endorsement to evaluate the impact of the policy.</p>

Challenges

The pandemic impacted ISBE’s ability to recruit international bilingual teachers to support the state’s English Learners.

Recommended Modifications

None

STRATEGY 3.4

Support educator retention by leveraging partnerships that will provide access to coaching, mentoring, and teacher leadership opportunities, which include remote and blended pedagogy, as well as culturally responsive teaching practices.

By the end of 2020-21 school year there will be at least three partnerships focused on retention of educators of color resulting in an 8% reduction in the retention gap between white teachers and teachers of color. **IN PROGRESS**

Where We Started	Activities and Accomplishments	What is Next
<p>ISBE determined that it would define retention as continuing to teach in an Illinois public school setting, rather than define retention as continuing to teach at the same school or district.</p> <p>The retention rate is greater for White educators than for educators of Color.</p> <p>After one year of teaching, there is a 3% retention gap between White educators and educators of Color. After two years, the retention gap increases to 6%.</p>	<p>ISBE leveraged a partnership with the Region 9 Comprehensive Center to study root causes of educator retention challenges in Illinois schools.</p> <p>ISBE partnered with the Illinois Education Association and Illinois Federation of Teachers to develop and implement a new teacher virtual coaching and mentoring program.</p> <p>ISBE provided funding to three local education agencies/higher education partners to create and implement teacher residency preparation programs. Residency programs are associated with significantly better retention outcomes than other forms of preparation.</p> <p>ISBE developed a proposal to pilot affinity groups which aim to improve retention outcomes for Illinois teachers of Color.</p>	<p>ISBE staff will identify a partner to implement the affinity groups pilot program throughout the state.</p> <p>ISBE staff will determine which content areas have the largest retention gaps between white teachers and teachers of Color to inform the design of future partnerships.</p>

Challenges
None

Recommended Modifications
None



Illinois State Board of Education

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