

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

ILLINOIS

*This profile was verified by the staff of the Illinois Department of Education in July 2000.
All information was current as of that date.*

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

In response to Public Act 90-566 (HB 1005), the assessment system in Illinois is in a transition phase. The state has moved from the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) to the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), which is based on state standards adopted in July 1997. Moreover, the Prairie State Achievement Examination will be administered to all grade 11 students for the first time in April 2001.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* Illinois has changed from the IGAP (Illinois Goal Assessment Program) to the ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Tests), the latter based entirely on the Illinois Learning Standards. Illinois will also begin administering the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) to 11th grade students during the second semester of the 2000-2001 school year.
- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*
 - Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 – reading, writing, and mathematics (census tests)
 - Grades 4 and 7 – science and social science (census tests)

- Grades 4 and 7 – fine arts and physical development/health (special studies)
- Grade 11 – PSAE in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies
- *Norm or Criterion Referenced* Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced. The PSAE will include the ACT, Work Keys tests in reading and mathematics, as well as state developed components.
- *Matrix or Census Testing* Census: reading, mathematics, writing – grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. Science, social science – grades 4, 7, and 11. Special Studies (a sample of items for all students in these grades): Fine arts – grades 4, 7, and 11; Physical development and health – grades 4, 7, and 11. PSAE: Census
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*

READING

- 3 passages at grade 3, 4 passages for grades 5 and 8.
- Grade 3 – items: 53 multiple choice, 14 word analysis, 2 extended-response
- Grades 5 and 8 – 57 items: 55 multiple choice, 2 extended-response

MATHEMATICS

- Grade 3 – 72 items: 70 multiple choice, 2 extended-response
- Grades 5, 8 and 10 – 72 items: 80 multiple choice, 2 extended response

WRITING

- Persuasive, expository, and narrative prompts
- Grade 3 – 1 randomly assigned essay in one 40-minute session
- Grades 5, and 8 – 1 essay in each of two 40-minute sessions, 1 assigned essay and 1 essay chosen by the student

SCIENCE

- Grades 4 and 7 – 80 multiple-choice items: 70 science, 10 physical development and health

SOCIAL SCIENCE

- Grades 4 and 7 – 80 multiple-choice items: 70 social science, 10 fine arts

PSAE for Grade 11

- Reading: 73 multiple choice questions
- Mathematics: 93 multiple choice questions
- Science: 80 multiple choice questions
- Social Science: 60 multiple choice questions
- Writing: one essay

All multiple-choice items have a single correct answer.
Extended-response items take about 10 minutes per item.
Word analysis items involve, among other things, analyzing word sounds.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)* ISAT was administered annually during the first two weeks in February. However, Illinois intends to shift to an April testing date in the future for the ISAT assessments beginning in 2001. PSAE will be administered the last week of April. (April 25-26, 2001)
- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)* No exit examination, but students may receive a Prairie State Achievement Award in each subject tested by earning qualifying scores established by the State Board of Education. The highest scores and performance levels attained by a student shall be entered on the student's transcript. They will also receive ACT scores and Work Keys scores.
- *Other Assessments* NAEP, TIMMS
- *Transitional or Final Assessment System* ISAT was first administered in February 1999, in the subjects of reading, mathematics, and writing. Science and social science ISATs were administered during the 1999-2000 school year, with physical development/health and fine arts special studies IGAP items attached to the science and social science tests, respectively. PSAE is in the implementation phase as well, the pilot test was administered in the period of January 31 – February 11, 2000.

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

- *State Department of Education*
- *Commercial Testing Organization*
- *State teachers and administrators*
- *Assessment Committee*

The ISAT was developed by Illinois State Board of Education staff, Illinois teachers and district curriculum and assessment directors in cooperation with MetriTech, a Champaign-based testing company. ISAT is based solely on the Illinois Learning Standards adopted in July 1997. Those Standards were developed by Illinois parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, employers and other citizens to set uniform, high expectations for students learning.

The PSAE will use commercially developed tests, ACT and Work Keys tests for Reading for Information and Applied Mathematics as part of the test, as well as state-developed components.

Illinois has subject area advisory committees in all subjects as well as an overall Technical Advisory Committee, State Test Review Committee, and a PSAE Advisory Committee to review policies, development, and implementation of all of the tests.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

There is the requirement that all standards must be assessed, but there is no documentation process associated with this requirement except for the Quality Review materials.

5. Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:

- *Refining standards*
- *Revamping assessments*
- *Adding components to assessments*
What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?

Once the Illinois Learning Standards were completed, the ISAT was developed, based on these standards. The ISAT tests were in place during the 1999-2000 school year. The state has received an additional report from ACHIEVE on alignment and plans to continue to make adjustments to better match and measure the standards.

6. What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?

All items on the ISAT are written by Illinois educators, who used the Standards as a guide. In addition, various committees have reviewed the assessments to ensure items match the Standards. Illinois participated in the ACHIEVE match during the summer of 1999. Finally, Illinois has convened groups of high school teachers to look at the PSAE alignment as well as materials that ACT produced showing the match from the ACT to the Illinois Learning Standards.

7. How is the data included in the state assessment system used?

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification*
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

The main purposes of the ISAT tests are to:

- Help the state evaluate the extent to which public schools and students in Illinois are meeting the Illinois Learning Standards
- Describe how schools and districts perform in comparison to the state and nation;
- Chart progress of schools, districts and the state over time; and
- Generate information that can be used for school accountability and improvement, policy making, and remediation decisions about students.

Local educators and administrators may use state assessments in making decisions about student retention, but state officials firmly caution that this should only be one piece of information that is used in making such decisions.

In addition, the school district must provide a remediation program developed in consultation with parent(s) or guardian(s) for students, particularly in grades 3 and 5, whose performance on ISAT or local assessments or by teacher judgement is determined to be two or more grade levels below current placement.

The state test results may be used by local districts for performance-based contracts for superintendents, principals, and other administrators.

Finally, the PSAE is not to be used as a graduation test. The scores and performance levels are to be placed on the student transcript. Students have the option of having “official” ACT scores sent to colleges or Work Keys scores available to employers.

8. Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

The most imminent changes to assessment in Illinois are those outlined above, regarding the full implementation of the ISAT program, and the implementation of the PSAE. The ISAT was developed following the development of the Illinois Learning Standards in order to have an assessment that better matched curriculum. The PSAE was piloted in February 2000 and will be fully implemented in 2001. Illinois is also piloting open-ended reading and open-ended math assessments that will be incorporated into the state assessment system.

In addition, Illinois anticipates selected improvements to the assessments over time: the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has a process to annually improve test quality, including assessing more of the Standards, and to review contract specification and evaluate contractor capacity.

Finally, Illinois has been seeking input from educators and other stakeholders regarding academic standards and the assessments system. Feedback includes support for adding a greater variety of question types to the tests, and testing each year to provide better progress data to students, parents, and schools. However, such modifications to the testing program would require statutory changes. The ISBE intends to include a provisions for this as part of a larger package of accountability improvements that will be proposed during the next legislative session.

Most of the changes have come about in response to changes in state law. In particular, debate focused on the timing of the PSAE (originally administered in 12th grade, then proposed for 10th grade, compromised on 11th grade) and the development of the honors designations. Some changes, particularly in relation to the item types on assessments, were in response to federal guidelines. Illinois has formed a unique partnership with ACT to produce standards based assessments that have additional uses for those attending college or going immediately to the workplace.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

Illinois officials highlighted several challenges in the area of state assessment. First, the Illinois Learning Standards were not written as test specifications, which has occasionally posed problems in translating the standards into assessments.

Moreover, a great deal of the accountability system is based on the ISAT, whereas no single assessment is sufficient to bear all the weight. Schools and administrators feel they are under much pressure with regard to state achievement results. Illinois officials believe that school improvement and educational change take place at the classroom level and local assessments are often the best tools to effect change. However there is much emphasis in the press on statewide assessment.

Finally, Illinois is a strong local control state with over 900 school districts. The administration of assessment activities, the communication of policy information, and policy implementation is somewhat complicated in this environment. Officials note that their website has been an excellent means of communication, but it is still not adequate. Moreover, some districts are not as nearly as electronically sophisticated as others; there is significant variation between the urban and rural areas of Illinois.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies with regard to students with disabilities: Illinois acknowledges the intent of IDEA is that all students participate in school accountability measures, including assessment. However, not all students with an IEP must take all state tests. It is still the prerogative of the student's IEP team to decide whether it is appropriate for the student to take any of the state tests. Indeed, it is expected that a small portion of Illinois public school students with an IEP will never sit for a state test, while others may only take one or two tests appropriate for their grade, either with or without accommodations. However, the 504 Plan does not allow the student to be excluded from taking the state tests; it only allows for accommodations to take the state tests.

Policies with regard to LEP students: Per legislation passed in 1993, students who are in a state-approved TBE or TPI program for three or more academic years are required to take ISAT tests appropriate for their grade. Students who are in TBE or TPI programs for less than three years are not required to take ISAT tests; however school personnel may judge whether a student's proficiency in English would allow him/her to understand and take the tests. Students who do not take the state assessment must take the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). Students take this each year until they meet the qualification (3 years) to take the state assessment. This is considered a "bridge" to the ISAT, and scores are reported based on the Illinois Learning Standards.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Appropriate accommodations vary according to the disability addressed by the IEP or Section 504 Plan. In general, accommodations listed as appropriate within the IEP or Section 504 Plan for classroom assessment or local assessment are probably appropriate accommodations for the ISAT tests. There are no accommodations for LEP students other than the alternate assessment (IMAGE).

Three criteria are essential when considering any test accommodation:

1. The accommodation should allow the test score to reflect the student's proficiency in the area tested, not the disability addressed in the IEP or Section 504 Plan. The intent of the accommodation is to provide each student with the same opportunities in the testing situation as those provided to the student who receives no accommodations.

2. The accommodations should not compromise the purpose of the test. For example, the reading test cannot be read to a student because that destroys the purpose of the test. However, part or all of a science test can be read to a student whose IEP specifies disability-related reading problems, because the primary purpose of the test is to measure knowledge and skills in science, not reading.

3. The accommodations should not compromise test security. All conditions that pertain to test security and return of test materials after test administration still apply.

A variety of accommodations have been used to provide fair testing conditions for students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans. For example, changes in the presentation format (large print, Braille, audiotape) or the method of response (transcribed oral responses) may appropriately accommodate a wide range of disabilities. Accommodations may include:

Setting:

- Administer the test to a small group in a separate location
- Administer the test individually in a separate location
- Provide special lighting
- Provide adaptive or special furniture
- Provide special acoustics
- Administer the test in a location with minimal distractions
- Administer the test in a small group, study carrel, or individually

Presentation

- Provide an audio tape
- Increase spacing between items or reduce items per page or line
- Increase size of answer bubbles
- Provide reading passages with one complete sentence per line
- Highlight key words or phrases in directions
- Provide cues (e.g. arrows and stop signs) on answer forms

- Secure papers to work area with tape/magnets

Timing

- Allow flexible schedule
- Extend the time allotted to complete the test
- Allow frequent breaks during testing
- Provide frequent breaks on one sub-test but not another

Response

- Allow marking of answers in booklet
- Tape record responses for later verbatim translation
- Allow use of scribe
- Provide copying assistance between drafts

Scheduling

- Administer the test in several sessions, specifying the duration of each session
- Administer the test over several days, specifying the duration for each day's session
- Allow subtests to be taken in different order
- Administer the test in the afternoon rather than in the morning, or vice versa

Other

- Special test preparations
- On-task/focusing prompts
- Any accommodation that a student needs that does not fit under the existing categories.

3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?

Illinois officials have determined that it is inappropriate to translate any part of the ISAT tests or instructions into another language.

Students who have been in a state-approved bilingual program less than three years will take the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). IMAGE tests measure reading and writing proficiency in English, and are given to bilingual students in grades 3 – 11 who do not meet the criteria for ISAT/IGAP.

4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?

The legislation requires that students with IEPs who do not participate in standardized state tests participate in locally developed alternate tests. Results from these alternate tests are to be used for school accountability purposes. Alternate tests for students with IEPs are required beginning no later than July 2000. The State Board is currently piloting such instruments.

5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?

Yes, Illinois has the goal of inclusion of students with disabilities and LEP students on statewide tests. To assist in this process, the state published a document entitled, "Guidelines for the Alternate Assessment of Children with Disabilities" which were mailed to district superintendents and directors of special education in November 1999.

6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

The most imminent change will be the implementation of the alternate assessment. In addition, Illinois officials hope to work on writing better IEPs.

Performance Standards

1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?

Four performance designations have been established for the ISAT: exceeds standards, meets standards, below standards, academic warning. The basic definitions are as follows:

Level 1 – Academic Warning: Students' work shows an inconsistent command of the basic knowledge and skills. Students have major gaps in their knowledge and skills and little ability to apply them. They may have serious error or misunderstandings.

Level 2 – Below Standards: Students' work shows basic knowledge and skills in the learning area. However, students have some gaps in their learning and can apply it only in limited ways.

Level 3 – Meets Standards: Students' work show that they have knowledge and skills in the learning area. Students consistently use and apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Level 4 – Exceeds Standards: Students' work is outstanding and shows comprehensive knowledge and skills in the learning area. Students consistently use their knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.

Descriptions have been established for each subject, the following examples are portions of the standards for reading:

Exceeds Standards: The readers who exceed state standards comprehend a variety of types of literary and informational grade-appropriate texts. They can consistently understand and identify the important ideas in the text and can support their ideas with relevant information from the text and from their own knowledge and experience.

Meets Standards: The readers who meet state standards comprehend a variety of types of literary and informational grade-appropriate texts. They can understand and identify a majority of the important ideas in the text and can frequently support their ideas with relevant information from the text and from their own knowledge and experience.

Below Standards: The readers who do not meet state standards have difficulty comprehending a variety of types of literary and informational grade-appropriate texts. They can understand and identify some of the important ideas in the text and will inconsistently support their ideas with relevant information from the text and from their own knowledge and experience. They frequently rely more on their own knowledge and ideas than on the text. Errors in comprehension and overgeneralizations are often the result of this overreliance on their own knowledge.

Academic Warning: The readers at the “academic warning” level have significant difficulty comprehending a variety of types of literary and informational grade-appropriate texts. They understand and identify few of the important ideas in the text and are rarely able to support their ideas with relevant information from the text and from their own knowledge and experience. They frequently rely more on their own knowledge and ideas than on the text.

The above performance standards for the ISAT are replacing the performance levels for the IGAP. The IGAP was considered a transitional assessment system and is being phased out; after 2000 it will be fully replaced. The IGAP performance levels are as follows:

- Level 1 includes students who do not meet the state goals
- Level 2 includes students who meet the state goals
- Level 3 includes students who exceed the state goals

State goals were set by subject, with cut scores established for each level.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

As with the Illinois assessments and accountability systems, goals for the acceptable level of performance for schools are in transition. The goals listed below have not yet been modified, but they can no longer be used as the IGAP test on which they are based is being phased out. These goals have not yet been rewritten, however: the State Board has convened a Task Force that is working on the new school designation decisions and are currently seeking input from various groups around the state.

ISBE formerly evaluated each school by the total percentages of its IGAP scores that fall into the three performance levels – does not meet, meets or exceeds the state goals. Following are the definitions of the levels of schools as determined by the IGAP scores distribution:

- Level 1 – Schools That Do Not Meet State Goals: More than 50% of all IGAP test scores do not meet state goals.
- Level 2 – Schools That Meet State Goals: At least 50% of all IGAP test scores meet or exceed goals.
- Level 3 – Schools that Exceed State Goals: At least 50% of all IGAP test scores exceed the state goals and at least 90% of all test scores meet or exceed the state goals.

These same numbers have been used in a transition plan for Title I purposes. New definitions of schools are being considered (see above task force) and will be implemented in the next school year.

3. How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?

The performance standards outlined above are based on state assessments and do not incorporate elements such as dropout and attendance rates. The final unit of analysis was a category of schools that exceed, meet, or do not meet state goals. However, this system is under modification. The new unit of analysis will be a school designation, or category, but the details of this system, including the manner in which the designation will be calculated, is a part of the work of the above mentioned Task Force.

4. Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?

Before 1999, schools could “bubble out” scores of students with IEPs, meaning the scores would not count, except for individual purposes. However, at present, all students, schools, and districts are included in performance calculations. The proposed plan will also include all students.

5. Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

With the implementation of the ISAT, Illinois moved from a system of three performance levels to four. This change had a significant impact on the state and Title I accountability system, because the definition of adequate yearly progress and the identification of schools on Academic Watch and Warning were based on the three-level system. Indeed, that definition has not yet been revised, although the three-level ratings system has been replaced. So although there are no further changes anticipated for the state performance standards, the repercussions of the most recent change are still being felt throughout the educational system. Please refer to the above mentioned Task Force which will be recommending a plan to the State Board following public input beginning in the fall of 2000.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

In 1999, about 700 schools out of 3500 would be considered in this category for Title 1 purposes. But, since the new designation rules have not been established, this number represents schools in which greater than 50% of scores not meeting standards.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports*

Individual student reports, with data on performance on state assessments, are sent both to the school and to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

- *School reports*

School reports available on the ISBE website including the following information (most data is reported by state, district, and school):

- ✓ Racial/Ethnic Background of Students and Total Enrollment
- ✓ Low-Income, Limited-English-Proficient Students and Dropouts
- ✓ Attendance, Mobility, and Chronic Truancy
- ✓ Average Class Size
- ✓ Contact with Parents
- ✓ Teachers by Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender
- ✓ District by Type and Enrollment
- ✓ Teacher/Administrator Characteristics
- ✓ Teacher/Administrator Salaries
- ✓ Average Financial Indicators
- ✓ Expenditure by Function
- ✓ Expenditure by Fund
- ✓ High School Graduation Rate
- ✓ ACT results by subject and composite score
- ✓ IGAP results by grade, IEP and non-IEP
- ✓ ISAT results by performance level, subject, grade, and percent tested.

- *District reports*

Little district level data is accessible; most district reports simply include information on each school, as listed above. The school is the level of accountability, but the new system will include a district designation.

- *State reports*

A wide range of state-level reports are available for viewing or download from the ISBE website. Among these are:

Illinois State Board of Education Elementary and Secondary School Educational Statistics:

- ✓ Number of Public School Districts
- ✓ Number of Public and Nonpublic Attendance Centers
- ✓ Number of Charter Schools
- ✓ Pupil Enrollment
- ✓ Public School Enrollment by Ethnicity
- ✓ Number of Selected Full-Time Personnel by Gender
- ✓ Public School Four-Year Secondary Enrollment Attrition
- ✓ 12th Grade Graduates
- ✓ Public Secondary School Dropouts by Gender and Ethnicity
- ✓ Operating Expenditure per Pupil by District Type
- ✓ Public and Nonpublic School Personnel (FTE)
- ✓ Selected Full-Time Personnel by Gender
- ✓ Median/Mean Salaries for Selected Full-time Personnel
- ✓ ACT Composite Scores
- ✓ Illinois Standards Achievement Test Scores

A Profile of Illinois Public Schools: Selections from the School Report Card Files: This report contains trend information since the inception of reports cards in 1986. The following trends are described and displayed graphically:

- ✓ Number of School Districts Declines
- ✓ Number of Public Schools Increases
- ✓ Increase in Average School Size
- ✓ Student Enrollment Continues to Increase
- ✓ Increase in Low-Income Students
- ✓ Mobility Rate Declines
- ✓ Percent Minority Increases
- ✓ LEP Students Increase
- ✓ Slight Decline in Dropout Rate Since 1994
- ✓ Chronic Truancy Rate Generally Unchanged
- ✓ More than 60% of Grade 3 and Grade 5 Students, and at least 70% of Grade 8 and Grade 10 Students Meet or Exceed State Standards in Reading
- ✓ While 68% of Grade 3 Students Meet or Exceed State Standards in Mathematics, only 43% of Grade 8 Students Meet or Exceed State Standards
- ✓ Among the Four Grades Assessed, at Least 56% of the Students Meet State Standards in Writing
- ✓ IGAP Science Performance Generally Unchanged at Grades 4 and 11, and Up Slightly at Grade 7
- ✓ IGAP Social Sciences Performance Generally Unchanged at Grades 4 and 11, and Decline Slightly at Grade 7

- ✓ ACT Scores Increase
- ✓ Illinois ACT Average Consistently Higher than National Average
- ✓ Percent Minority Teachers Less than Half That of Minority Students
- ✓ Declining Trend in Percent of Male Teachers
- ✓ Percent of Teachers with Graduate Degrees Generally Unchanged
- ✓ Pupil-Teacher Ratios Decline Slightly Since 1998
- ✓ Teaching Experience Continues to Increase
- ✓ Many Educators Needed to Replace Retiring Baby Boomers
- ✓ Average Teacher Salary Increased by 68% since 1986
- ✓ Average Administrator Salary Stays Ahead of Inflation
- ✓ Statewide Operating Expenditure Per Pupil (OEPP) Increase
- ✓ High School OEPP Substantially Higher than Elementary and Unit OEPP.

- *Title I reports*

The Title I system in Illinois is undergoing much modification. However, they do report on demographics, participation rates, and disaggregated assessment data.

2. How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?

Data is distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education to schools and districts, with a memo that individual reports are to be sent to parents. In addition, there is a requirement that school level data must be publicly reported by October. At the same time, the State Board gives a data tape to the press, generally to the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Other press organizations request the data or go to the Chicago Tribune website for information on academic performance.

3. At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)? Check on the following categories required by federal regulation:

- *Gender*
- *Race*
- *LEP status*
- *Migrant Status*
- *SWD*
- *SES*

Illinois disaggregates by gender, race, LEP status, students with disabilities, and lunch status (SES). The disaggregated data is public information, but the assessment data is not routinely released in report cards. However, this data can be computed from the data tape that is released to the press.

4. Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?

Illinois is phasing in the ISAT system, so there is little trend data available on this assessment. However, much trend data is available for the IGAP and the ACT. An example of this would be **A Profile of Illinois Public Schools: Selections from the School Report Card Files**. This report contains trend information since the inception of reports cards in 1986.

5. How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?

Illinois produces District Summary Reports, School Summary Reports, and Individual Student reports. In response to the 1997 IDEA, two scores are reported on a state's primary accountability report, which for Illinois is the School Report Card. One score includes scores from all students (IEP and non-IEP) who took the state test. A second score includes results for only students with IEPs. A third score (that includes results for non-IEP students only) will also be included on the School Report Card.

If a student (IEP or non-IEP) takes any of the ISAT tests, that student's score is included in the school, subdistrict (for Chicago District 299), district and state percentages and data computations. The option of "bubbling out" a student's score is not available for any of the state tests.

Beginning with the 2001 assessment, there will be individual student information for the following: IEP, LEP, Migrant, Free and Reduced Lunch.

6. What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?

Schools are required to use assessment data through the Quality Assurance and Improvement Planning process, on which details are provided in the following section. Moreover, schools and districts that are receiving assistance through the school improvement system are required to conduct an data analysis and planning process, with assistance from the state. Details on this system are also provided in a later section of this profile.

7. Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?

The most imminent change to the reporting system is further development of the state education website and the types of information that are accessible. Illinois officials are working with NCREL to develop a website (based on the Maryland education website model) on which data is more easily accessible for all education stakeholders.

8. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.

When reporting assessment data, Illinois reports only percentages of students in each performance level, rather than scale scores. The State Superintendent and State Board are

committed to not reporting scale scores, as this could result in school comparisons and “wall charts.” They believe that the percentage of students in each performance category is most informative. For example, a school could have a relatively high mean score, but have few students in the meeting and exceeds state standards categories, depending on the distribution of scores. Nonetheless, the Chicago Tribune does compute scale scores and publish these.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.

The main component of the Illinois accountability system is a school improvement program known as **Quality Assurance and Improvement Planning**. Another system, the **Academic Early Warning** and **Academic Watch Lists** is being phased out, and was only partially in effect in 1999-2000. This previous model will be replaced with a new system of school designations, which is currently under development. Information is provided in this document on Academic Early Warning and Academic Watch system, as details of the replacement system are not yet available.

2. What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

Organize the response into the following subsections:

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Illinois law states that a student in grades 3 or 5 whose performance on the state tests or local assessments or by teacher judgment is determined to be two or more grades below current grade placement, will be provided a remediation program developed by the district in consultation with their parent(s) or guardian(s). Remediation programs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Increased or concentrated instructional time
2. A remedial summer program of not less than 90 hours
3. Improved instructional approaches
4. Tutorial sessions
5. Retention in grade, or
6. Modification to instructional materials

Moreover, by September 1, 1998, school boards were to adopt and enforce a policy on promotion that ensures that students can perform at the expected grade level prior to promotion. Decision to promote or retain may be based on the following:

1. Successful completion of the curriculum

2. Attendance
3. Performance on state tests
4. Performance on local assessments
5. Other criteria established by the school board

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Quality Assurance and Improvement Planning is a partnership between the Illinois State Board of Education and the schools across the state. It provides an opportunity to improve student learning, to increase the involvement of stakeholders in education, and to institute an accurate account of student progress and achievement throughout Illinois. The process contributes to the development of a learning-focused accountability and quality assurance system.

Three tools that are central to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Planning process are school improvement planning, organizing and implementing an internal review, and the function and relationship of the external review to the participating school.

School Improvement Planning: This process encourages schools to decide what type of school improvement is needed at the local school level. This approach to school improvement planning removes any restrictive focus from schools and allows schools to access more information about planning and planning strategies, to develop the support of the faculty and local community, and to analyze data on current performance in relationship to the school's past performance.

Internal Review: The internal review is a rigorous self-analysis that encourages educators, parents and the school community to reflect on existing school policies and practices. It examines the school's improvement plan and provides the school sufficient flexibility to demonstrate its work and an opportunity to answer basic questions:

- Are all our students learning?
- How do we know they are learning?
- What changes need to be made in our program so that all students will be successful?

External Review: To develop a culture of review, schools need to engage in an annual review program. The majority of these reviews will be conducted internally, by the school itself. On a regular cycle, however, the State Board of Education will convene a group of individuals who are not from the immediate school community to visit the school as part of an external review.

The external review will be the culmination of many activities that have been developed and implemented by the school's internal review team. This external visit will involve a group of educators, parents, and community members from outside the district who work to develop a collective perspective of the work of the school.

In 1991, the State Legislature approved legislation that created the **Illinois Academic Watch List** as one of a number of efforts to improve the state's school recognition process and increase accountability of public schools. This section of law was amended in 1996 to include an

Academic Early Warning List. This amendment allows for schools that are not meeting state goals for learning as specified by ISBE to be placed on an Academic Early Warning List first and then on an Academic Watch List if they do not demonstrate significant academic improvement. Schools that have been identified as level 1 schools for two consecutive years or have demonstrated a significant downward trend in academic achievement for three consecutive years will be placed on the Academic Early Warning List. Placement on the Academic Early Warning List results in access to quality assurance visits, resources and technical assistance through the Illinois statewide system of support based on the specific needs of the individual school. Schools that remain on the Academic Early Warning List for two consecutive years and do not demonstrate significant improvement will be placed on the Academic Watch List. Placement on the Academic Watch List results in continued access to the assistance for improvement as identified above, and also carries with it strong state intervention over time if the school does not make significant academic progress. All Illinois schools are expected to become at least level 2 schools (meet state goals) within five years of the 1997-98 school year. (This goal applies to both Title I and non-Title I schools.)

At present, the entire accountability system is in transition. Schools are held accountable, although there were no school designations in 1999-2000. A moratorium on school designations will enable ISBE to determine a fair and meaningful formula for school designations. Only schools on the Academic Early Warning list were identified. State test results may be used by local districts for promotion/retention and remediation decisions for individual students, and as part of performance-based contracts for superintendents, principals, and other administrators.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Although districts may be targeted for assistance through the school improvement process, most accountability in Illinois is based on the school level.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

In the past, Illinois had absolute targets for the percentages of students within a school that should be meeting state goals. As noted earlier, this system is being phased out and details on the replacement system are not yet available.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

Before 1999, schools could “bubble out” scores of students with IEPs, meaning the scores would not count, except for individual purposes. However, at present, all students, schools, and districts are included in measures of progress.

5. How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?

For the moment the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I are aligned – that is to say, they are both in transition. In the past, both accountability systems were based on the Academic Watch and Early Warning Lists. However, this system is being phased out and has not yet been replaced. Hence, both systems are in the same state of transition. Illinois officials intend to finalize modifications to both systems during the summer of 2000.

6. Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?

Subgroup performance measures are not currently used as an indicator in state accountability measures.

7. Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?

Charter and non-public schools are not included in the accountability system.

8. Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

The system of accountability in Illinois is going through a great deal of transition. First, there will be modifications to the Quality Assurance Program; the Quality Assurance program is becoming more focused. School reviews for the next academic year will concentrate on schools in which students are performing mostly at “Meets Standards” levels, but which are prepared to undergo meaningful school improvement with feedback from the external review team. Schools in which students are consistently under-performing will be served by a more intensive “system of support” which includes case managers, school audits and intensive technical assistance. QAIP visits have been diverted from low-performing schools for the 2000-2001 school year.

In addition, Illinois is in the process of developing a system of School Designations. The Superintendent has appointed a School Designation Task Force to design and communicate new school and district accountability designations that incorporate student performance data and other school quality indicators. Recommendations will be ready by August, after public input is gathered during the summer. The State Board will seek legislative support in the next session to make necessary adjustments in statutes and rules.

The School Designations Task Force will also make recommendations to establish school and district incentives, rewards and sanctions within the new designation structure and to blend existing incentives with new ones (e.g. Blue Ribbon Schools, Those Who Excel, deregulation, funding preferences).

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Transition from the old accountability system to the new accountability system is the current, dominant issue in Illinois accountability. In addition, another interesting issue in the area of accountability is the case of Chicago Public Schools. The Chicago school system has established its own student accountability policy, most notably, an end to social promotion.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

The system of support in Illinois is designed to provide comprehensive intervention and support to districts/schools that meet one of the following criteria:

- Districts with one or more schools on the Academic Early Warning list
- Districts/schools that fed into the above districts/schools regardless of their academic performance
- Districts on the Financial Watch List with significant numbers of students who do not meet state standards, particularly in the areas of reading and math.

The system support focuses state resources in those districts/schools with the greatest need and the strongest will to improve. The system of support has been evolving and improving since 1997, and its continued aim is to provide districts/schools with the tools and services to make necessary improvements and increase the number of students meeting the Illinois Learning Standards.

The academic year 1999-2000 was the first time that Illinois utilized a whole-district approach to school improvement, rather than just working with individual schools. Illinois offered assistance to two districts in 1999-2000, with a positive response, and will be working with 15 districts in 2000-2001.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

It is the responsibility of the state to identify schools and districts that are low performing.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

A wide ranges of services are available to low performing schools and districts in Illinois. Through mutual agreement, the district and local board of education in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education may undertake the following steps towards school improvement:

- A. District/School Profile and Audit—The profile and audit is a comprehensive review of areas that comprise a comprehensive education system. The profile and audit will be conducted over a period of time that will allow sufficient data collection, analysis and recommendations

using the most up-to-date information, research and best practices. The district will prioritize the areas of study and receive periodic reports on the results. The District and School Board will have ample opportunity to contribute to and review the report while it is in progress. The profile and audit will include district, school and classroom analysis. The entire process will be collaborative and inclusive.

- B. District and School Improvement Planning—Each school targeted for services will receive human, financial and material resources to develop and implement an integrated school improvement plan. The district will receive support to develop a comprehensive and systematic district improvement plan. All plans will be based on the data and information included in the profile and audit described above.
- C. Professional Development—Each school targeted for services will participate in professional development that is based on the goals and activities of the School Improvement Plan. In addition, other learning opportunities will be made available through consortia (e.g., Summer Bridges), regional (e.g., Regional Offices of Education) or statewide efforts (e.g., Alignment Academy). And finally, leadership development and support will be a critical element of the professional development design. All professional development will follow national standards and to the greatest degree possible be job-embedded and have sufficient follow-through support that will result in classroom or school-wide improvement.
- D. Communication—A communication plan will be developed that allows for information about district/school improvement to be shared among schools, central office, parents, and community.
- F. Resources—District resources will be delegated/reallocated to support district and school improvement efforts (i.e., time, money, people, space, professional development). The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will assign a team of a state education agency liaison and education consultants to the district/eligible schools at no expense to the district. This team will be available to the district for a minimum of two years unless changes are determined necessary. In addition, the ISBE will provide start-up costs needed to implement the district and/or school improvement plans.
- G. Evaluation/Monitoring/Feedback—School improvement efforts will be monitored to ensure district and schools are making progress in achieving their goals; particularly as they relate to improved student achievement as measured by state and district assessments. The district and school improvement plans will be the primary tool to monitor improvement.

In addition, Illinois is in the process of piloting a new program of Educators-In-Residence (EIR). The Educator in Residence is a “school coach” who is placed full time in a school that is eligible for academic assistance from the ISBE. Responsibilities and activities of an EIR vary according to the needs of the school, the EIR’s area of expertise and experiences, and the relationship of the EIR with the district/school. The EIR is a currently employed educator who focuses on classroom improvement and experiences of teachers and students.

Note: Chicago Public Schools has a slightly different support system. While some of the types of assistance still apply to Chicago – the audits and school improvement criteria for example – others do not, such as the EIR program, because Chicago has their own system of external partners.

4. Who provides the state assistance?

Please see the response to question 3, above.

5. Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?

Support that is provided through the School Improvement office of ISBE is separate from that of Title I schools; however, many of the schools that School Improvement assists are Title I schools.

6. Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?

The process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status is in transition, as are the assessment and accountability systems in Illinois. At the moment, a school may be removed from the Academic Early Warning list if over 50% of students are meeting state standards on the ISAT assessments. During the academic year 1999-2000, two schools were removed from the list. In “downstate” Illinois (not including Chicago) approximately twelve schools are receiving intervention; including Chicago it is over sixty.

7. Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?

School improvement plans are required of all schools. However, schools on the Academic Early Warning List (or otherwise identified for school improvement) must revise their plans with assistance and advice from ISBE.

8. Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

Changes are anticipated to the system of identifying and assisting low performing schools. These will be linked to the changes in the accountability system and the development of the system of school designations. For more details, please refer to the section on accountability, above.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

As with the state accountability system, the Title I accountability system and corresponding measures of adequate yearly progress are in transition. Under the previous system — which has not yet been replaced — the measure of adequate yearly progress in Illinois was the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP). Subgroup performance and local assessments were not incorporated in the system. The IGAP has been almost entirely phased out. However, the Title I system based on the ISAT has not been fully developed. The previous Title I target – which has not been replaced, either – was for all Title I schools to have more than 50% of their students meeting state standards within five years.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

The current definition of adequate yearly progress under Title I is still in effect, but it is essentially of no use, as it was based on a (nearly) outdated assessment. Hence, no schools have been identified as making or not making adequate yearly progress for the past two years.

The target established for Title I schools – and indeed, for all schools in Illinois – is the following: All schools must have more than 50% of their students meeting state standards within five years. Beginning with the 1997-98 school year, they were also expected to make AYP annually. A Title I school was considered to have made AYP if it demonstrated an increase in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards from one school year to the next. In sum, schools were expected to make realistic and significant annual progress so that:

- 1) The percentage of level 1 students not meeting state standards decreases yearly; and
- 2) The percentage of level 1 students is no more than 50 percent after five years.

The LEA, in consultation with Title I schools, was required specify the yearly progress projection in the Title I plan for ISBE approval, beginning in the 1998-99 year. Title I schools that had already been identified through placement on the Academic Early Warning List as needing improvement were notified that they must specify and file the yearly progress projection for the following school year with the LEA and ISBE. If the school met or exceeded its yearly progress projection but had not yet met state goals, it would be retained on the Academic Early Warning List as a level I school. However, because the school had made AYP, it would not be placed on the Academic Watch List for further state intervention.

All schools, including Title I schools at level 2 (meet state goals) or level 3 (exceed state goals) are expected to demonstrate continued annual improvement. Any school, including Title I schools at level 2 or 3, that demonstrates a significant downward trend in achievement for three consecutive years will be placed on the Academic Early Warning List.

An LEA is considered to have made AYP if more than 50% percent of Title I, level 1 schools in the district have made AYP or if the percentage of students in level 1 (not meeting state standards) has decreased. The LEA, in consultation with Title I schools, shall specify in the Title I plan which of these two processes will be used to calculate AYP for the LEA. If the latter process is chosen — decreasing the percentage of students in level 1 — the LEA shall also specify the yearly projection in the plan for ISBE approval. ISBE will annually review the LEAs progress according to the process selected by the LEA and the yearly projection specified in the Title I plan to determine whether the LEA has made AYP.

3. What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?

The method of determining adequate yearly progress is selected by the district and the district makes this determination for schools; however, both procedures are reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

4. What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?

If a school has been identified as a level 1 school for two years, or has shown a significant downward trend in academic performance for three years, it will be placed on the Academic Early Warning List, which also places it in Title I school improvement. This identification is the shared responsibility of the state and the LEA.

To be removed from the Academic Early Warning List, a school must have at least 50 percent of its students meeting state standards. A Title I school that is in program improvement must revise its school improvement plan, as would any school on the Academic Early Warning List. For further details on the school improvement plan, please refer to the section on Identifying and Assisting Schools in Need of Improvement, above.

5. What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Illinois provides all of the above types of assistance, both through general state assistance, and Title I-specific assistance. For more details, please see below.

6. Who provides the assistance?

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*
- *Other – Explain*

Illinois does have a statewide system of support, even though they have not identified Title I schools needing improvement in the past two years. In fact, Illinois officials note that the system of support actually seems to work better without a formal list of “Title I schools needing improvement,” which was perceived as a limited program problem within the identified schools. The system of support consists of no fewer than five SEA divisions plus regional offices and LEAS working together, in order to assist all low achieving and high poverty schools with the schoolwide approach. Such schools have regular internal and external reviews, external partners, master teachers, and little extra funding for staff development, class size reduction, schoolwide planning, etc. Then the schools plan a five-day integrated review on site to ease off the intensive support. Another 400 ~ 500 schools with low achieving records will be scheduled in the system of support.

7. Have waivers played a role in this process?

Illinois schools have received several waivers related to the eligibility requirements for schoolwide projects. Illinois officials did encourage schools to apply for waivers and they believe the waivers are becoming a more valuable tool for Illinois.

8. Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

There are future plans for the Title I system in Illinois and the definitions of adequate yearly progress, but few details on this system are publicly available. The state is trying to align the Title I with Quality Assurance, as well as with the development of the designation system. Ideally, Illinois will have a seamless accountability system that encompasses Quality Assurance, School Improvement, and Title I.

9. Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?

At the moment, the Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress are aligned, and Illinois officials intend to maintain this alignment as the state transitions to a new accountability system.

10. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.

The major challenge facing Title I in Illinois should be clear: the transition to the new accountability system and the current state of flux for Title I. Title I officials activities have been ambiguous in wake of the implementation of the ISAT assessments and upcoming modifications to the state accountability system.

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