



Education for Our Future:

First Report and Recommendations of the Illinois P-20 Council to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the People of Illinois

Executive Summary



January 2011

THE ILLINOIS P-20 COUNCIL

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

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

Today, about 41 percent of the state’s nearly 7 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree.² The P-20 Council has set a goal by which to chart our progress: “to increase the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025.” Reaching this goal will require coordination of efforts at all levels of the state education system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The P-20 Council met on January 26, 2011 and approved these ten recommendations, which stem from the work of the Council’s committees. The full report and the reports of the committees are available at: www.P20Council.illinois.gov.

Transform the State Education Accountability System

1. Align student learning standards and assessments to reflect the knowledge and skills students will need for the 21st Century:

- **The ability to ask relevant questions in order to solve problems**
- **The ability to work in collaborative teams to solve problems**
- **The ability to access/analyze/synthesize information**
- **The ability to effectively communicate in oral and written forms**

➤ **The ability to use and adapt new technologies.**

- Review and revise the Illinois Learning Standards to align with skills students will need for the 21st Century, as well as the Common Core Standards adopted by the state.
- Review and revise the Illinois Learning Standards, and also the assessment items and existing grading and reporting systems for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) and any other state developed assessments, to ensure that they align closely with the knowledge and skills students will need for the 21st Century.
- Coordinate these efforts with the work of the Partnership for the Assessment

¹ P-20 Council Mission Statement www.P20Council.Illinois.gov

² Lumina Foundation http://www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/

of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a collaboration of 25 states developing K-12 formative tools and a grade 3-12 assessment system that includes online administration and is aligned to the Common Core Standards.

- To ensure Illinois students are ready for success in college and career, develop a definition of college and career readiness and use the revised Illinois Learning Standards to back-map a ladder of benchmarks that are critical for each grade level. Prepare to use the PARCC tests as one indicator of students' readiness for entry level postsecondary courses.

2. Develop a system of assessment of student learning that fulfills two purposes:

- **To provide valid and reliable measures for accountability for the education system, enabling comparison of student achievement across grade levels, schools, districts, and postsecondary schools**
- **To inform and guide teachers and students to improve instruction and student learning.**
- For school and district accountability, statewide norms, as well as criterion referenced data should continue to be collected annually using scaled annual and interim items that are aligned with the revised Illinois Learning Standards. The assessment system must reflect a balance of growth measures and proficiency measures tied to state standards and must provide timely information by reporting results promptly.
- To assess student learning for the purpose of improving instruction, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in consultation with teachers should develop performance based assessments

that are aligned with the revised Illinois Learning Standards.

- Develop performance based assessment items that include exemplars of student work samples, rubrics, and resource materials that educators can use to model and assess the revised standards. These assessments should incorporate modern technology and allow students to create and produce products and make presentations that demonstrate their ability to integrate their new knowledge with existing knowledge to solve problems.

3. Develop an accountability system which will enable state and local education agencies, educators, parents, students, employers, researchers, and taxpayers to easily access and evaluate data about student learning, school climate, and financial expenditures in schools, districts, community colleges, and universities.

- Continue to support the development of a Longitudinal Data System that will simplify collection and analysis of individual student enrollment, achievement, and graduation records across school, districts, institutions, and agencies, from preschool years through post-secondary education. Link this data system to a workforce longitudinal data system and use it to support workforce needs analysis across the National Career Cluster Framework. In addition, make this data available to a broad base of users to support student portfolios and college and career planning.
- Continue to support the development of technology initiatives such as IlliniCloud, the Learning and Performance Management System, and the Illinois Interactive Report Card, to simplify collection and analysis of data, avoid duplication of effort, and reduce costs and administrative burdens. State and

local education agencies should develop or amend their technology and research strategies to assure all stakeholders can readily access and use these data sources.

- Develop a system to capture financial data that provides a clear picture of per-pupil expenditures at all levels of the educational system.
- Develop a survey to collect input from parents, students, and teachers for use in improving school and district climate and conditions for teaching and learning, as well as increasing ease of access to other levels of the education system.
- Make changes to the Illinois State Report Card to include school-level information about student achievement and student growth, finances, demographics, teacher characteristics, and climate survey results which can be compared to other schools and districts with comparable demographic sub-groups. The Report Card should also provide better guidance on how to interpret the data it presents, to avoid misinterpretation and counterproductive use of the data.

Provide a Clear Path to Careers

4. Coordinate education data systems and workforce data systems to improve career counseling and career preparation.

- Make workforce data and the full range of career choices accessible to students and counselors for career advising and planning for all students from middle school through post-secondary education.
- Develop system-wide links between industry and local classrooms through learning exchanges and other career exposure programs.

- Develop and link data systems across institutions and agencies to monitor career training and placement

Develop and Support Effective Teachers and Leaders at All Levels of the P-20 System

5. Enlarge the pipeline of high quality candidates into teacher and leadership positions throughout the entire educational system.

- In collaboration with school districts, universities, regional offices of education, and other stakeholders, Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), ISBE, and the Teacher Certification Board should develop a plan for increasing the numbers of diverse candidates for teacher and leadership positions while maintaining high standards. This plan should be based not only on ethnicity and gender but also on diversity of experience and skill sets.

6. Improve training and certification for teachers and educational leaders in accordance with findings from research and pilot programs.

- Provide additional high quality clinical practice experience for teachers and educational leaders from pre-K through 12th grade.
- Build a teacher selection model based on competencies that are most related to effective teaching and enhanced student learning, so that state certification indicates a high likelihood of success in the classroom, modeled for different subjects and environments, pre-K through high school.

- Change the existing teacher leadership endorsement into a tiered structure that provides a career ladder for teachers and/or fills the need for certification of general administrative positions (e.g., curriculum dean, special education director, athletic director).
- Convene a state task force to examine the content and structure of superintendent preparation programs and suggest changes needed.

7. Improve teacher evaluation and professional development for the entire education spectrum in accordance with findings from research and pilot programs.³

- Promote work environments that that strive for excellence and foster professional communities within each school that provide an opportunity to learn and grow at work.
- Add professional capacity for teacher evaluation.
- Integrate teacher evaluation with sustained, targeted, and effective professional development.
- Support induction and mentoring programs.
- Consider the feasibility of an accelerated implementation timeline for the new evaluation system outlined in the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (P.A. 96-861), and monitor how districts' plans for evaluating teachers are impacting teaching and learning.
- Support mentoring of new principals for their first two years and mentoring of new superintendents for their first two years, and assess the impact of that mentoring on teaching and learning.

Engage Families, Youth, and Communities Throughout the State in Increasing Educational Opportunities and Maximizing Educational Attainment

8. Improve educational attainment through attention to prevention, intervention, and reengagement.

- Ensure all children have access to high quality early childhood education and care.
- Ensure that critical wrap-around services are in place for students and families, including medical, dental, and mental health care, housing, social services, and after school programs, through community-based programs, community schools, or other models.
- Utilize data from the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and other sources to monitor and evaluate intervention programs and continuously improve intervention efforts to keep struggling students in school.
- Reengage students who have dropped out before attaining a diploma or college degree, through the Illinois Hope and Opportunity Pathways through Education (IHOPE) Program (P.A. 96-0106), the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program, and other means.

³ For recommendations for specific metrics relating to teacher preparation and effectiveness, see pages 10 and 11 of the December 2010 "P-20 Report on Teacher Effectiveness: Policy Priorities to Increase Teacher Effectiveness," at the P-20 Council website: www.P20Council.illinois.gov

9. Increase public engagement across the entire spectrum of education.

- Provide opportunities for youth, families, and communities to exchange information and ideas about P-20 issue areas, and to make recommendations to the P-20 Council about the integration of youth and family and community involvement in education at all levels, including out of school time, bringing an understanding of diverse community needs and cultural barriers to the work of the P-20 Council.
- Community- based coalitions and P-20 Council partners should help to raise public awareness about issues and recommendations of the P-20 Council.

10. Track and report progress toward the goal: to increase the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025.

- The P-20 Council in consultation with the state agencies serving education, colleges and universities, research organizations, and others with access to essential data should identify key indicators throughout the P-20 system and establish benchmarks and a timeline for progress toward the benchmarks necessary to meet the goal.
- The P-20 Council should report to the public on progress toward the benchmarks on an annual basis, with quarterly updates.

We must identify and learn from the best innovative practices, preschool through college, and plug the leaks in our education pipeline. Some needed reforms will require reallocation of resources, and some will require additional resources to improve the opportunities and supports for our students to gain the skills they need for the 21st century. The health of our economy and the strength of our communities hang in the balance.

Committee	Responsibility and Co-chairs
Teacher and Leadership Quality	Monitoring, reporting upon, and advising policymakers on teacher and leader quality. <i>Co-chairs:</i> Erika Hunt and Josh Anderson
Data, Assessment, and Accountability	Promoting the creation and use of data systems, assessments, and accountability systems to promote access, improve equity, and enhance learning. <i>Co-chairs:</i> Glenn “Max” McGee and Robin Steans
Family, Youth, and Community Engagement	Creating timely dialogue and information exchange on critical educational issues among students, families, educators, legislators, and community members. <i>Co-chairs:</i> Kathy Ryg and Debra Strauss
College and Career Readiness	Making actionable recommendations on what skills, systems, resources, and alignment efforts are required for all Illinois residents to be college and career ready in an innovative and globally competitive society. <i>Co-chairs:</i> John Rico and Sharon Thomas Parrott
Finance and Governance	Studying the State education system and recommending a governance and finance structure that will provide adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding to sustain high quality educational opportunities throughout the state. <i>Co-chairs:</i> Ray Hancock and Laurel Prussing

For questions regarding this report or the work of the P-20 Council, please contact Dr. Lizanne DeStefano, University of Illinois, P-20 Coordinator, at 217-333-9625, or at destefan@illinois.edu. Agendas and minutes for the public meetings of the Council and its committees are available at www.P20Council.illinois.gov.

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