



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2026

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ISAC Introduces *Education Matters* to Expand Its Vision for Student Success

Building on the legacy of the College Changes Everything® movement, this reimagining will create a broader platform for future initiatives that strengthen education across Illinois

CHICAGO – During its 16th annual [College Changes Everything® \(CCE\) Conference](#) today at the Tinley Park Convention Center, the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) announced that the renowned [College Changes Everything \(CCE\) movement](#) launched by ISAC and partners more than 16 years ago will transition to a new movement and community of practice: [Education Matters Illinois](#).

"A rapidly changing educational landscape requires us to think about an ecosystem that looks well beyond an end goal of a two- or four-year degree program," **said Jacqueline Moreno, Chief Service Officer at ISAC** and one of the initial architects of the College Changes Everything movement. "Technology, geography, politics, economics, and resource deficits are among the many factors driving shifts in how we value education and use it to shape our future. *Education Matters* is a movement that reflects our commitment to supporting a thoughtful evolution through collaboration, innovation, and intentional investment."

The multifaceted *Education Matters* movement and awareness campaign will focus on education as both a core societal value and a set of critical issues that require thoughtful engagement. First, education is the foundation for opportunity for *individuals and society*: It offers each student an opportunity to grow, imagine, and shape a future aligned with their potential. It also strengthens families, supports local economies, and helps to create thriving, resilient communities.

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Education is also at the intersection of nearly every *public policy* issue in today's world. It is a critical component of conversations and policy around access, equity, funding, job creation, urban, suburban, and rural challenges, student well-being, and postsecondary pathways. And it is at the core of every innovation and workforce alignment initiative, of policy considerations on public investment, economic development, accountability, modernization, and the future of public service.

As with CCE, and consistent with ISAC's mission, supporting students and families is central to *Education Matters*. As part of the *Education Matters* movement, from Labor Day through Thanksgiving, ISAC will continue to offer more intensive supports to partner high schools and community organizations statewide, assisting them in helping students and families navigating college/career school and financial aid applications. Recognizing that meaningful support also requires personal connection and a focus on soft skills, the [ISACorps](#), ISAC's statewide, community-based near peer mentors, bring their lived experience and training to help students develop a sense of identity, belonging, and agency as active participants in shaping their own futures.

A related new and ongoing art and awareness campaign also launched at this year's CCE conference. *Land of Learning: Freedom to Learn, Opportunity to Grow*, uses images to reflect the work of education in continually creating connection. The campaign highlights landmarks, icons, and sources of community pride from across the state. Students, parents, and practitioners tell us about local images that represent their hometown; we select entries from across the state and create striking art posters that match the local landmarks and icons with the education and careers behind each one. Check out the first [Land of Learning Posters](#).

Education Matters will also build on a community of practice developed over 16 years through CCE to collaborate with parents, educators, policymakers, and communities who understand the connection between healthy schools and resilient communities. *Education Matters* convenings and a reinvigorated annual conference in the tradition of the preeminent CCE Conferences will bring partners together to explore, innovate, and most important, collectively *act* on initiatives that support students and families in a new and changing world.

"Education matters because every learner matters. Every decision, every innovation, every act of support matters," **said Moreno**. "We invite all who are interested to join us on a journey to shape a brighter future for our students and communities."

About *Education Matters*

Education Matters is a new multi-dimensional movement, awareness campaign, and community of practice initiated by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. Education matters to students and families because it is the foundation on which opportunity is built—not just for individual students, but also for families and for thriving and resilient communities. Education *matters* are also at the intersection of nearly every public policy

issue in today's world—from public health to workforce alignment. Join us to engage, innovate, and act. Find out more at isac.org/Education-Matters

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at isac.org, on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ILStudentAssistance) (@ILStudentAssistance), [X](https://twitter.com/ILStudentAssistance), and on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ISACfinancialaid) @ISACfinancialaid, and watch our videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/ISACfinancialaid).

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