



**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**



**January 2011**



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**Coordinator:**

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## ILLINOIS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

In an ever more competitive, information-based global economy, the knowledge and skills of our residents will drive our prosperity and the health of our communities. Quality jobs require more and more education. Yet, as noted in the 2010 report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm Revisited: Rapidly Approaching Category 5*,<sup>1</sup> among industrialized countries, the United States ranks 20th in high school completion rate and 16th in college completion rate.<sup>2</sup> According to the ACT College Readiness report, 78 percent of high school graduates did not meet the readiness benchmark levels for one or more entry-level college courses in mathematics, science, reading and English.<sup>3</sup> As a nation, we are falling behind in the education of our children.

As a state, Illinois lags behind many other states in providing a path for children to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, and productive citizens. By almost any measure, from 4th grade reading scores<sup>4</sup> to high school graduation rates<sup>5</sup> to the number of job applicants possessing necessary skills,<sup>6</sup> many other states are doing better than Illinois. For the over half a million children in Illinois living in poverty,<sup>7</sup> educational achievement is markedly worse than that for low income children in almost every other state.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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.

Research and the experience of other states and nations show us what we need to do. Every child from birth to adulthood needs:

- a safe and stimulating environment in which to learn,
- well-trained, highly qualified teachers,
- dynamic school administrators skilled in leading a learning community for staff as well as students,
- high expectations for achievement,
- rigorous and relevant academic standards,
- smooth transitions to post-secondary training and careers, and
- equal access to these resources.

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.

<sup>1</sup> National Academies Press <http://www.aps.org/policy/reports/upload/rags-revisited.PDF>

<sup>2</sup> 34 OECD, 2009. Rankings include OECD members and partners, and college graduation ranking is based on Tertiary-A institutions. See: Tables A2.1 and A3.1 in [http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_39263238\\_43586328\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_43586328_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.act.org/news/releases/2008/crr.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2009/state\\_g4.asp](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2009/state_g4.asp)

<sup>5</sup> <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section3/table-scr-1.asp>

<sup>6</sup> Including military enlistment tests: [http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/ASVAB\\_4.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/ASVAB_4.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.heartlandalliance.org/povertyreport/2009-acs-fact-sheets/illinois-09-acs-final.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, <http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/2009-national-assessment-of-educational-progress-national-and-state-level-science-res> and Table A-10 in: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2009/2011451.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Lumina Foundation [http://www.luminafoundation.org/state\\_data/](http://www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/)

## THE ROLE OF THE ILLINOIS P-20 COUNCIL

For success in the workforce today, high school diplomas are not enough. Students need degrees from college or technical programs. To make that possible, we must coordinate and leverage the policies and resources of all stakeholders—state agencies, institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families. 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, to align data and measurements, and to make timely recommendations for “developing a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support.”<sup>10</sup>

The Illinois public education system is responsible for preparing children for success in school and the workplace beginning as early as birth, continuing through graduate and professional school, and on through adult education. Across Illinois today, dedicated educators are working hard to help the over 2 million pupils in preschool through high school and the over 900,000 students enrolled in post-secondary colleges and universities learn the skills they need to succeed. School board members in Illinois’ 868 school districts, and the governing boards of our community colleges, levy property taxes and set local policies. The efforts of these many individuals are guided by the General Assembly, the Governor, and a state system that trains and certifies teachers and administrators, helps build and fund schools, sets standards, and provides oversight. The P-20 Council will develop a public policy framework for state leaders that increases collaboration across the systems and makes the pipeline more responsive to the diverse needs of students.

Public Act 95-626, establishing the P-20 Council, states:

*“This State needs a framework to guide education policy and integrate education at every level. A statewide coordinating council to study and make recommendations concerning education at all levels can avoid fragmentation of policies,*

*promote improved teaching and learning, and continue to cultivate and demonstrate strong accountability and efficiency. Establishing an Illinois P-20 Council will develop a statewide agenda that will move the State towards the common goals of improving academic success, improving use of existing data and measurements, developing improved accountability, promoting lifelong learning, easing the transition to college, and reducing remediation. A pre-kindergarten through grade 20 agenda will strengthen this State’s economic competitiveness by producing a highly skilled workforce.”<sup>11</sup>*

The P-20 Council is composed of members appointed by the Governor representing civic leaders, local government, trade unions, nonprofits, parents, business leaders, teachers, faculty, school boards, independent colleges, parents, civic groups, and university, community college, and school officials. There are four legislative members, appointed by the majority and minority leaders of the House and the Senate, and eight ex-officio members representing the heads of state agencies: Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Illinois Workforce Investment Board, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Early Learning Council, and the Illinois Math and Science Academy. The Illinois Education Research Council conducts research and coordinates research collection activities, and also joins the ex-officio members to form a Joint Education Leadership Committee which meets regularly to discuss the work of the P-20 Council.

The P-20 Council was first convened in December 2009. In 2010, the Council met on January 27, March 23, May 26, July 28, and October 27. The six meetings of the Council to date have been both productive and promising, generating meaningful dialogue and thoughtful approaches to improving birth to adulthood education in Illinois.

<sup>10</sup> P-20 Council Mission Statement

<sup>11</sup> 105 ILCS 5/22-45, effective 6/1/2008 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=095-0626&GA=95>

## BUILDING UPON PROMISING ADVANCES

More than many Illinoisans may realize, changes at all levels of education are underway.<sup>12</sup> The agenda presented in this first annual report of the P-20 Council will build on these new initiatives. Spurred by federal laws, the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success,<sup>13</sup> and collaborations among educators, community leaders, and researchers, the General Assembly and state agencies have shifted the landscape of education. This report outlines some of these reforms, and then offers recommendations by the P-20 Council for a coordinated agenda to further improve education in Illinois.

The P-20 Council will work to sustain the gathering momentum created by these and other reforms:

### ➤ The Illinois P-20 Council

As many other states have done, Illinois has convened a council of state leaders to formalize collaboration and ensure alignment of education systems from birth through graduate education.<sup>14</sup> The Illinois P-20 Council brings together a broad coalition of stakeholders from education, government, business, and civic groups who can collectively identify needed change, and work to implement reforms.<sup>15</sup>

### ➤ Early childhood commitments

Twenty-five years ago, the state established the Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure. This nationally-recognized program has offered services to more than 800,000 3- and 4-year-olds across the state through the years. The Illinois Early Learning Council was established in 2003 to coordinate existing programs and services for children from birth to 5 years of age in order to better meet the early

learning needs of children and their families.<sup>16</sup> In 2006, with Preschool for All, Illinois became the first state in the country to offer high-quality voluntary preschool for all 3- and 4-year-old children, while also providing services for at-risk infants and toddlers.<sup>17</sup> The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development was established in early 2010 to strengthen Illinois' efforts to establish a comprehensive, statewide system of early care and education, by guiding and coordinating the work of the broad coalition of early education stakeholders that comprise the Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC) and collaborating with state and federal agencies to successfully implement ELC recommendations.

### ➤ Community Schools

In 2009, Illinois became the first state in the nation to codify community schools into their state school code.<sup>18</sup> Community schools, located in urban, suburban and rural areas all across Illinois, transform schools into hubs of their communities by providing expansive out of school time programming for parents, students and community residents. The ABCs of community schools are: aligning out of school time for students with in class learning goals to enhance and expand upon classroom teaching; bringing together the school, families and community so the groups are working in tandem; and coordinating academic and student resources so students' needs, whether academic, emotional, or physical, are addressed.

<sup>12</sup> Some innovations, like charter schools, are controversial, but there is urgency in the search for effective ways to reach underserved populations.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/masterPlanning/default.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Education Commission of the States, <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=910>

<sup>15</sup> The official Illinois P20 Council website is at [www.P20Council.Illinois.gov](http://www.P20Council.Illinois.gov).

<sup>16</sup> P.A. 93 380 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0380&GA=93>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www2.illinois.gov/earlychildhood/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> P.A. 96-746 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0746&GA=96>

## ➤ **Common Core Standards**

Illinois, along with most other states, has adopted National Common Core Standards in Math and English-Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.<sup>19</sup> These standards are clearer, fewer, and higher than the previous Illinois Learning Standards, and include application of knowledge through high-order skills. The Common Core Standards define the knowledge and skills necessary for students to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. Illinois educators are now participating in the development of Common Core Standards in additional subject areas, beginning with science.

## ➤ **Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**

Illinois is one of 11 governing states in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a collaboration of 25 states developing a K-12 assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards.<sup>20</sup> Higher education leaders and faculty will help design the high school assessments, and they have agreed to use the PARCC tests as one indicator of students' readiness for entry level postsecondary courses. The majority of the new assessments will be designed to be administered by computer. The Partnership's assessments will include challenging performance tasks and innovative, computer enhanced items that elicit complex demonstrations of learning and measure the full range of knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and 21st century careers. The inclusion of performance tasks will also help model effective classroom instruction. The Partnership will develop training tools for educators to use the results from the assessments to inform instructional decisions throughout the school year. The new assessments will be ready for states to administer by the 2014-15 school year.

## ➤ **New teacher and principal evaluations**

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010<sup>21</sup> requires new teacher and principal evaluations statewide that must incorporate measures of student growth and professional practice, in a phased approach through 2017. The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council is now working to advance these changes, develop a state template, and develop an evaluator training program.<sup>22</sup> The State must establish a number of data collection and support systems to effectively implement evaluations.

## ➤ **Independent alternative teacher preparation programs**

Alternative certification programs may now be offered by either institutions of higher education, not for profit entities, or a combination of higher education and not for profits. All entities, both higher education and not for profits, must meet the same standards and be approved by the State Board of Education.<sup>23</sup>

## ➤ **Overhaul of the state's principal preparation and certification requirements**

P.A. 96-903<sup>24</sup> calls for providers of principal preparation programs to replace the old model of high-enrollment, clinically non-intensive programs with redesigned programs that are committed to careful selection of candidates, deep partnerships with school districts and regional offices of education, and intensive clinical experiences. These new programs will provide extended opportunities for leadership practice as well as rigorous assessment of on-the-job leadership performance, focusing on the ability to support and manage instruction by creating a professional learning environment. The law obligates the state to reaccredit all principal preparation programs and allows for not-for-profit organizations to certify principals

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.corestandards.org/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.achieve.org/PARCC>

<sup>21</sup> P.A. 96-861 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0861&GA=96>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.isbe.net/PEAC/default.htm>

<sup>23</sup> P.A. 96-862 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=096-0862&GA=96&SessionId=76&DocTypeId=SB&DocNum=0616&GAID=10&Session=>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0903&GA=96>

if they meet the same state standards. Candidates must demonstrate success in the classroom and leadership capability, and will complete intensive internships supported by mentors who are proven successful administrators. Beginning on July 1, 2014, the general administrative endorsement shall no longer be issued.

### ➤ **Longitudinal Data System to support all levels of education**

The Illinois Longitudinal Data System initiative, supported by over \$18 million in federal dollars and additional state support, will provide data to help to track the progress and outcomes of Illinois students as they progress from pre-K through postsecondary education and enter the workforce.<sup>25</sup> By 2013, Illinois will establish a searchable longitudinal data system, with appropriate data access rights for each stakeholder group, while preserving the privacy of individuals as required by law.<sup>26</sup>

### ➤ **National Board Certification for Teachers**

In Illinois, 4,692 teachers have achieved National Board Certification, a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize, retain, and develop great teachers.<sup>27</sup> Certification is gained through a rigorous, performance-based assessment.<sup>28</sup>

### ➤ **National Board Certification for Principals**

With funding from the Chicago Public Education Fund, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is designing a National Board Certification for Education Leaders.<sup>29</sup> Modeled after master principal programs such as the Illinois Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute (resulting from P.A. 94-1039), it will provide rigorous professional growth opportunities for

principals. This year, Illinois was one of 17 states included in a national field test of the program, with 35 Illinois principals participating.

### ➤ **School for Advanced Leadership**

This year, the Illinois Association of School Administrators launched a professional growth program with a cohort of 24 practicing superintendents.<sup>30</sup> Participants receive individualized support through a certified coach during two years of professional development.

### ➤ **Illinois Professional Teacher Standards**

To become certified, teachers must pass tests assessing their knowledge of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the core Technology Standards, and Content-Area Standards for Educators.<sup>31</sup> The State Board of Education took action in late 2010 to raise the cut score on the basic skills test required for entrance into teacher preparation programs, and adopted rules to strengthen content knowledge for secondary teachers seeking certification endorsements. The State intends to address content knowledge at the elementary and middle school level, revising the Illinois Professional Teacher Standards to place greater emphasis on differentiating instruction and meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.

### ➤ **Perkins Programs of Study**

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006<sup>32</sup> has strengthened career and technical education in Illinois, enhancing the academic achievement of students by strengthening the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and restructuring the way stakeholders—employers, high schools,

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0107&GA=96>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ILDS/htmls/project.htm>, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=6092&GAID=10&GA=96&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=52071&SessionID=76>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.nbpts.org/>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.nbpts.org/products\\_and\\_services/nbcel](http://www.nbpts.org/products_and_services/nbcel)

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.iasaedu.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1320:iasa-school-for-advanced-leadership-isal&catid=104:non-menu-article](http://www.iasaedu.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1320:iasa-school-for-advanced-leadership-isal&catid=104:non-menu-article)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/pstandardrules.htm> ; [http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL15\\_overview.asp](http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL15_overview.asp)

<sup>32</sup> (Public Law 109-270) [http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/documents/files/FundingCareerPathways\\_Perkins.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/documents/files/FundingCareerPathways_Perkins.pdf)

community colleges, universities, business and industry, community based organizations, adult education providers, and parents - work together. In Illinois, federal Perkins Title I funds are divided between the secondary and postsecondary systems and administration is shared between the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Community College Board.<sup>33</sup>

### ➤ **Drop-Out Prevention**

In 2009, ISBE, Advance Illinois, and State Farm Insurance Companies convened a state-wide Drop-Out Prevention Summit involving hundreds of stakeholders in discussions of strategies to increase educational attainment.<sup>34</sup>

### ➤ **IHOPE Program to re-enroll high school dropouts**

The Illinois Hope and Opportunity Pathways through Education (IHOPE) Program<sup>35</sup> develops a system to re-enroll significant numbers of high school dropouts using a regional service delivery model, where Chicago Public Schools and Regional Offices of Education establish comprehensive plans in coordination with school districts, community colleges, and community groups.

### ➤ **Remediation in post-secondary education**

In 2007, the state of Illinois passed the College and Career Readiness Act<sup>36</sup> to fund pilot projects for community colleges and partner high schools to align K-12 curriculum with college level coursework and reduce the need for remedial classes for community college students.

### ➤ **College Illinois Corps**

In 2009, ISAC launched the College Illinois Corps program to provide near-peer mentors for low income and first generation high school students to

help them navigate the college and career planning process.<sup>37</sup> Seventy-eight recent college graduates have been deployed throughout the state to advise students and families on college opportunities, selecting the right college, and completing financial aid forms and to provide other support to help them make a smooth transition between high school and college.

### ➤ **Student Financial Aid Support**

In 2007, ISAC began a partnership with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to increase the rate at which students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).<sup>38</sup> Research has shown that students are more likely to go to college if they have completed a FAFSA. For low income students, completing the FAFSA unlocks up to \$10,000 in state and federal grant aid for college. Prior to the ISAC/ CPS pilot, approximately 57% of CPS students completed the FAFSA. Three years later, 75% of the students completed the form and the number of students receiving state financial support has increased 30%. Under the pilot, ISAC and CPS each week match data on students who have and who have not completed the FAFSA, allowing CPS counselors to reach directly those students who have not yet completed it. ISAC staff is available to help students and families complete the FAFSA. Because of the success of the program, in the next year, ISAC hopes to expand the program statewide.

### ➤ **Complete College America**

Illinois is a founding state member of Complete College America, a national nonprofit working to significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of value and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> <http://64.107.108.147/programsofstudy/grantresource.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention/Summits/Archive/Illinois.aspx>

<sup>35</sup> P.A. 96-106 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0106&GA=96>

<sup>36</sup> P.A. 95-694 <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=095-0694&GA=95>

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.collegezone.org/elibrary/2290\\_14482.htm](http://www.collegezone.org/elibrary/2290_14482.htm)

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.collegezone.com/elibrary/2290\\_12654.htm](http://www.collegezone.com/elibrary/2290_12654.htm)

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.completecollege.org/path\\_forward/essential\\_steps\\_for\\_states/](http://www.completecollege.org/path_forward/essential_steps_for_states/)

➤ **Illinois workNet**

IllinoisworkNet, overseen by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and managed through Southern Illinois University, is the State's lead workforce development web-based portal featuring career planning tools, job search functions, employability assessments and a variety of collaborations tools designed for adults, dislocated workers, youth, businesses and workforce professionals. Since becoming operational Illinois workNet has over 163,000 individual user accounts, over 4,200 workforce professional accounts, and over 1,000 business accounts. Statewide there are currently over 1,100 partner Illinois workNet sites, including community colleges.<sup>40</sup>

➤ **Bridge Programs**

DCEO and the Illinois Community College Board have worked collaboratively to establish bridge programs that prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. The Joyce Foundation through its Shifting Gears initiative has funded the State to implement a series of policy and program changes in order to institutionalize the bridge program model throughout the state.<sup>41</sup>

As stakeholders propose additional reforms for discussion in Springfield and across the state, the P-20 Council will provide a forum for discussion of innovative approaches, and help to coordinate and align operations to create a seamless and effective system from preschool through postsecondary education.

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<sup>40</sup> [http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos\\_portal/?partner=](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/?partner=)

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.shifting-gears.org/illinois/61-state-progress-illinois-.html>

## THE FIRST YEAR OF THE P-20 COUNCIL

State law (P.A. 95-626) established the Illinois P-20 Council to guide education policy and integrate education at every level. By statute, the Illinois P-20 Council is to be funded through State appropriations to support staff activities, research, data-collection, and dissemination. Staff support for the Council is to be provided by the Office of the Governor, in coordination with relevant State agencies, boards, and commissions. This year, the initial strategic planning and organizing has been assisted by the University of Illinois through a grant from the Chicago Community Trust.

The Governor or his designee serves as the chairperson. Chairperson Miguel del Valle has served as the inaugural chair of the P-20 Council.

The Coordinator of the P-20 Council is Dr. Lizanne DeStefano. Ann Courter joined the staff in December 2010 as Policy Analyst. Amber Kirchoff, Dunn Fellow, provides support through the Governor’s Office. The Illinois Education Research Council provides research support, as needed.

To guide the work of the P-20 Council, a committee was formed, chaired by Ray Hancock, to develop statements of vision, mission, and goals. After reviewing examples from multiple states’ Councils and careful consideration, the Council adopted this mission statement at its May 26, 2010 meeting:

**“The mission of the Illinois P-20 Council is to deliberate and make recommendations to the Governor, Illinois General Assembly, and state agencies 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.”**

The Chairperson of the P-20 council is authorized by statute to “authorize the creation of working groups focusing on areas of interest to Illinois educational and workforce development.” Five committees have been established over the past year to inform the deliberations of the Council on each of its goals. Committees are co-chaired by P-20 Council members, and committee membership includes both Council members and interested parties who are not Council members. Several of these committees have been meeting regularly, while others are just getting underway. Reports by these committees can be viewed on the P-20 Council website: [P20Council.Illinois.gov](http://P20Council.Illinois.gov).

Committee	Responsibility and Co-chairs
<b>Teacher and Leadership Quality</b>	Monitoring, reporting upon, and advising policymakers on teacher and leader quality. <i>Co-chairs:</i> Erika Hunt and Josh Anderson
<b>Data, Assessment, and Accountability</b>	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
<b>Family, Youth, and Community Engagement</b>	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
<b>College and Career Readiness</b>	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
<b>Finance and Governance</b>	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

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This first annual report charts a developing agenda for improvement at all levels of Illinois education, from birth through adulthood, to create a seamless system of quality education and support. The P-20 Council respectfully recommends that state agencies, educational institutions, and community partners work together to:

### **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 ISAT and PSAT 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 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, 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, IBHE, ICCB, 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.**

- 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.

**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.<sup>42</sup>
- The P-20 Council should report to the public on progress toward the benchmarks on an annual basis, with quarterly updates.

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<sup>42</sup> 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.

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(\* indicates P20 Council Member)

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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](mailto:destefan@illinois.edu). Agendas and minutes for the public meetings of the Council and its committees are available at [www.P20Council.illinois.gov](http://www.P20Council.illinois.gov).

