



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

December 31, 2021

Members of the General Assembly,

Since the beginning of my time in office, my administration has focused on three key education goals: closing equity and opportunity gaps across the P-20 spectrum, making college more affordable, and developing a highly skilled workforce prepared to succeed in the workforce of the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has made these goals even more critical.

I am grateful to the teachers, paraprofessionals, maintenance technicians, bus drivers, school support staff, principals, superintendents, and board members who have worked tirelessly and made tremendous sacrifices over the past two years to maintain safe and healthy learning environments for our students. In following masking, distancing, and vaccination requirements, you have set remarkable examples for our young people and helped reduced community spread and saved lives.

The road to learning recovery requires collective engagement in the critical task of keeping our schools open and sustaining in-person learning safely. Following the latest public health guidelines, maintaining high standards of cleanliness in school facilities, providing critical mental health resources, and communicating with our families every step of the way are all necessary ongoing efforts to ensure in-person learning can continue.

To that end, the State has been making key investments to provide programs and resources to support our students and educators. With the State's portion of the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant, ISBE, IBHE, and ICCB have collaborated to establish the Illinois Tutoring Initiative, which will connect public colleges of education to certain eligible school districts across the state to provide high-impact tutoring services to students in grades 3-5 and high school math. Federal dollars are also supporting the expansion of SEL and trauma response trainings for educators, and transition support services for students entering and exiting the P-12 system. Lurie's Children's Hospital and other community-based organizations are collaborating with ISBE and school districts statewide to improve the way services are provided to support students' mental health and trauma response needs.

Together we can continue striving to create a stronger education system for all students in Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker".

Governor JB Pritzker

P-20 Council Learning Recovery Report

December 31, 2021

We are still only seeing the very tip of the iceberg when it comes to fully understanding the impact of the COVID pandemic on Illinois' students, who saw nearly every aspect of their lives change over the past 21 months.

While the school experience in 2020 and 2021 was anything but traditional, students built resiliency and adaptiveness and learned to acclimate to new social environments. They encountered brand new academic and social-emotional obstacles and witnessed their schools enter the center of a nationally fraught conversation about public health and personal responsibility. But while students were given opportunities to grow in new directions, the impact of the COVID pandemic on academic outcomes is only starting to become apparent. Preliminary assessment results released by ISBE showed a 16.6% and 17.8% decline in the number of students meeting grade level standards in reading and math, respectively, between 2019 and 2021

Through this report, the P-20 Council intends to lay the groundwork for actions the State can take to

- Fully comprehend the impact of the pandemic on student learning and social-emotional development
- Alleviate some of the stressors school district leaders are currently facing in their road to recovery
- Consider how some of the innovations in the education space that developed from necessity may be key to building a stronger education system in Illinois

Process

Passed in early 2021, [PA 101-0654](#) charged the P-20 Council with drafting “long and short term recommendations for learning recovery actions for public school students in this State in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic” in a report due to the General Assembly, the Governor, the State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and the Community College Board by December 31, 2021.

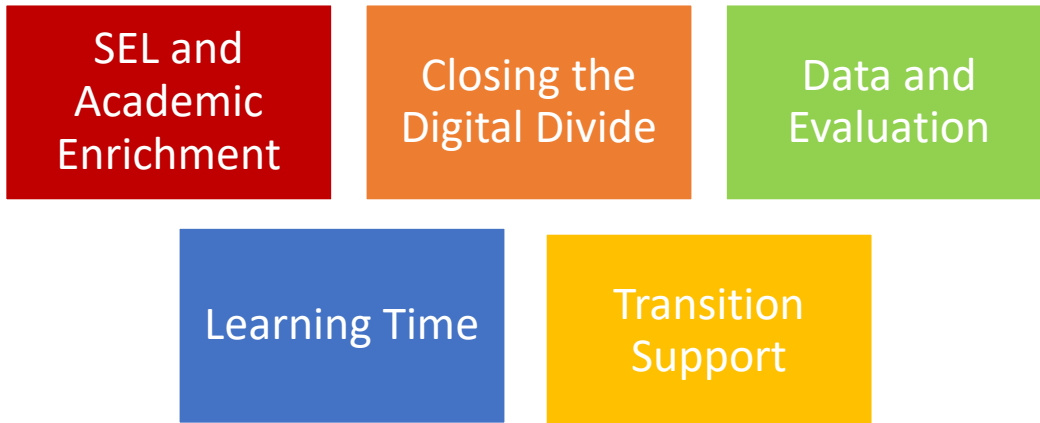
Beginning in August 2021 and continuing through mid-October, the P-20 Council invited stakeholders to participate in working group meetings. More than 50 individuals representing entities took part in these discussions, which aligned to the legislative charge of the report, which were as follows:

- **Evaluating the academic growth and proficiency of students in order to understand the impact of school closures and remote and blended remote learning conditions on student academic outcomes**, including disaggregating data by race, income, diverse learners, and English learners, in ways that balance the need to understand that impact with the need to support student well-being and also take into consideration the logistical constraints facing schools and districts.
- **Establishing a system for the collection and review of student data at the State level**, including data about prekindergarten through higher education student attendance, engagement and participation, discipline, and social-emotional and mental health inputs and outcomes, in order to better understand the full impact of disrupted learning.
- Providing students **with resources and programs for academic support**, such as enrichment opportunities, tutoring corps, summer bridge programs, youth leadership and development programs, youth and community-led restorative and transformative justice programs, and youth internship and apprenticeship programs.
- Providing students with resources and support to ensure access to **social-emotional learning, mental health services, and trauma responsive, restorative justice and anti-racist practices** in order to support the growth of the whole child, such as investing in community schools and providing comprehensive year-round services and support for both students and their families
- **Strengthening the transition from secondary education to postsecondary education** in the wake of threats to alignment and affordability created by the pandemic and related conditions.
- **Closing the digital divide for all students**, including access to devices, Internet connectivity, and ensuring that educators have the necessary support and training to provide **high quality remote and blended learning** to students
- Ensuring more time for students' academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs by considering such strategies as: (i) **extending planning time for teachers**, (ii) **extending the school day and school year**, and (iii) **transitioning to year-round schooling**.

Stakeholders included representatives from the following groups:

- Illinois Education Association
- Illinois Federation of Teachers
- Illinois Principals Association
- Illinois Association of School Administrators
- Illinois Association of School Boards
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Community College Board
- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University
- Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University
- Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools
- Advance Illinois
- Afterschool Matters
- Start Early
- Learning Technology Center
- P-20 Councilmembers
- Additional community-based organizations

The full body of stakeholder participants met for 90-minute sessions on a biweekly basis. Participants spent about half of their time engaged in full group discussions, while the remainder of time was spent in working groups tackling different aspects of learning recovery:



Beyond the regularly scheduled meetings, stakeholders also had opportunities to provide additional feedback through one-on-one meetings with P-20 Council staff and by answering a survey asking for feedback on the final set of 13 recommendations, which was disseminated to all P-20 Councilmembers in late November. At the P-20 Council meeting on December 8, 2021, the P-20 Council voted to approve these recommendations.

Learning Recovery Recommendations

SEL & Academic Enrichment	Add resource coordinator positions at the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers to assist districts in identifying and applying for opportunities to bring wraparound services to schools and close equity gaps
SEL & Academic Enrichment	Make it easier for districts, early childhood facilities, and Institutions of Higher Education to access critical information
SEL & Academic Enrichment	Incentivize collaborations to increase district ability to meet student SEL, mental health, and trauma needs in the short term to create Sustainable Community Schools
SEL & Academic Enrichment	Build a common knowledge base and shared vocabulary around SEL, mental health, and trauma
SEL & Academic Enrichment	Incorporate SEL related questions into existing survey instruments or consider using a new tool to better gauge the state of SEL
SEL & Academic Enrichment	Implement a process for the periodic review and reduction of state professional development mandates
Learning Time	Facilitate peer learning communities and information sharing between schools/ districts interested in making innovative changes to their daily schedules and school calendars
Learning Time	Pending the results of ISBE's pilot program, consider wider adoption of competency-based education (CBE)
Transition Support	Study the impact of the pandemic on post-secondary transitions. Identify new and exacerbated inequities and barriers to transition

Transition Support	Create a landscape analysis of the different programs and services available across the State to support postsecondary transitions. Review programs for quality and student outcomes
Closing the Digital Divide	Add a new committee to the P-20 Council dedicated to tackling digital inequities across the P-20 spectrum
Data and Evaluation	Identify where federal COVID relief spending occurred and where services and support were deployed to students. Identify funding and service gaps for greater accountability and oversight of federal spending
Data and Evaluation	Capture successful innovations funded by COVID relief dollars and empower communities to sustain these programs after federal funds expire

Discussion themes

Several recurring challenges facing the P-20 field surfaced during working group and full group meetings, which helped focus the discussions and ground the ultimate recommendations in solutions to these systemic issues.

- **Educators are facing unprecedented challenges**
 - o Since March of 2020, school leaders have had to become “armchair epidemiologists, ventilation experts, logistics wizards, and connectivity gurus.” They’ve faced political and social pressures from all directions; fought to ensure their students continue to receive critical services during an emergency; and became responsible for stewarding unprecedented levels of federal relief dollars. This is all in addition to taking care of the social-emotional and academic needs of their students, which have been exacerbated in part due to disrupted learning. Educators are also people experiencing this

pandemic alongside their students and families, undergoing the same stresses and challenges. It is not an easy time to be an educator.

- **Capacity challenges are persistent and pervasive**

- Even when student needs are clearly identifiable and the pathway to addressing them is clear, capacity challenges persist.
 - Not every school has access to same resources
 - While the federal dollars the State has received are significant, the time constraints accompanying them limits our ability to address and eradicate systemic challenges and funding inequities

- **More information is needed to better address the needs of each student but there are barriers to collecting these data**

- Districts vary in their financial, technological, and staffing capacities, which poses significant challenges to uniform statewide data collection.

Social Emotional Learning and Academic Enrichment

Add resource coordinator positions at the ROEs and ISCs to assist districts in identifying and applying for opportunities to bring wraparound services to schools and close equity gaps

What does this proposal do?

To address capacity issues, additional staff at the Regional Offices of Education would help member districts identify appropriate funding opportunities and resources. Capacity could be lent to any constituent district in the region and the ROE would approach grant opportunities with a regional lens, which would help facilitate relationships within a region and provide additional opportunities for collaboration.

This proposal would bring additional resources to local communities while alleviating some of the administrative burden on school and district leaders.

How might this work?

Staff hired at the ROEs and ISCs would work with district leaders to understand current district needs and resource gaps within a region. The ROE/ISC staff would lend grant-writing and other forms of technical assistance to the districts in their region, extending those districts' capacity to secure funding and resources. ROE/ISC staff could also facilitate partnerships between districts to encourage resource sharing.

Make it easier for districts, early childhood facilities, and institutions of higher education to access critical information

What does this proposal do?

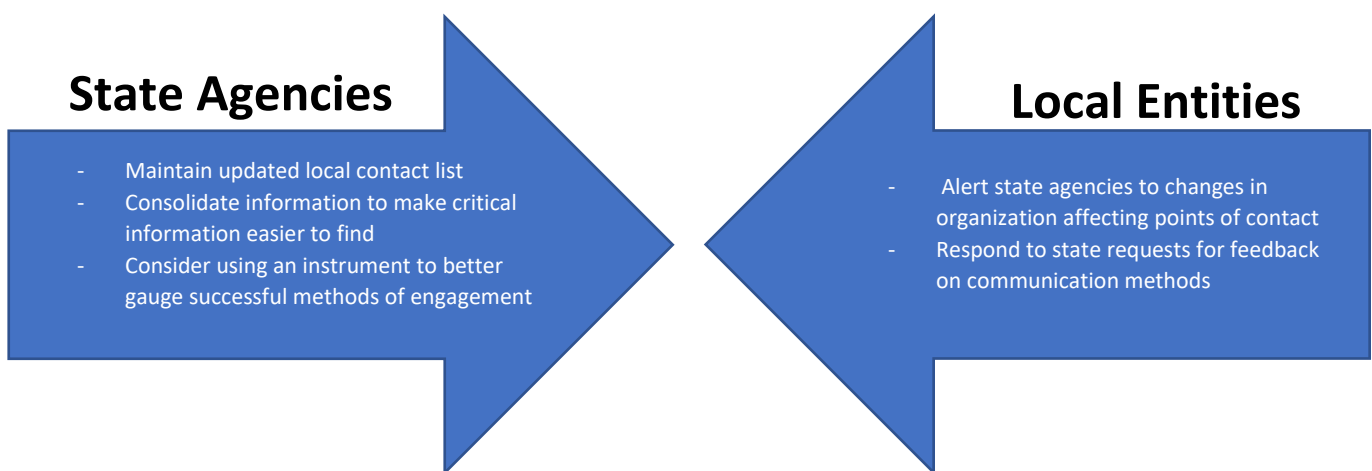
Working group members, particularly those based in a school setting, expressed a frustration in not always knowing where to look for critical information including funding opportunities and other key resources. Information does not always reach the appropriate staff member within a school, district, or IHE, which may result in said institution missing out on critical programming. This is especially a

challenge at smaller, rural school districts and IHEs where a single staff member may wear several hats that fall outside of their written job description.

This proposal is intended to reduce communication gaps and ensure all education entities are made aware of the resources, trainings, funding opportunities, and programming currently available to them. State agencies should work to centralize and streamline communication to ensure information is reaching its intended recipients. Many districts, schools, and IHEs may not be aware of programming the State is currently offering which may result in duplicative local spending and lower participation rates in State programs.

How might this work?

State education agencies should work with their local counterparts to ensure that the proper points of contact are identified for different funding opportunities. The education agencies should ensure that contact lists are maintained. In cases where program opportunities are offered outside of a traditional education entity (i.e. broadband funding for school districts is offered through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity), the education agencies should work with the appropriate State agencies to ensure the proper points of contact are reached.



Incentivize collaborations to increase district ability to meet student SEL, mental health, and trauma needs in the short term to create Sustainable Community Schools

What does this proposal do?

Currently many under-resourced districts do not have the capacity to bring on additional staff with the appropriate training to address acute SEL, mental health, and trauma needs. ESSER funding, while substantial, must be expended by 2024. This makes long-term hires with these resources nearly impossible, meaning districts are unable to use these federal funds to bring on staff members like social workers, school counselors, and psychologists with the specialized training to address said issues.

ISBE is investing \$100M in ESSER funding in a Community Partnership Grant. School districts and community partners are eligible to apply for \$500K grants to support partnerships to bring wraparound services to schools.

The evidence-based funding formula is putting districts on a pathway to sustainable funding equity. Fully funding the formula would eventually enable all districts to fund the programs, services, and staff needed address all student needs in the long term. But in the immediate wake of the pandemic, as student and staff mental health, SEL and trauma needs are apparent, districts must be able to provide relief. Many community-based organizations, including community health providers, IHEs, afterschool programs and others are equipped to deploy these services immediately. Rural schools and districts in particular need facilitated connections between community-based and other external organizations, as they may need to look outside of their immediate community to secure all of the resources they need.

	Illinois Average	National Average	Target ¹
Student to Counselor Ratio ²	592:1	424:1	250:1
Student to School Psychologist Ratio ³	1290:1	1211:1	500:1
Student to School Social Worker Ratio ⁴	741:1	2106:1	250:1

How might this work?

ISBE, ICCB, IBHE and DHS should consider hosting regional “community provider resource fairs” to highlight district needs and community opportunities.

Resources should be made available in multiple languages and opportunities for families should be held at convenient times.

As part of Learning Renewal, \$100M is being made available to support partnerships between community-based organizations and school districts. Each partnership will receive \$500,000 over two years and will be responsible for completing a needs assessment and implementation plan. Pending the results of this program, ISBE should share lessons learned and consider extending support for similar collaborative models

¹ As recommended by the American School Counselor Association

² Ratios apply to Academic Year 2019-2020 <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/cd689f6a-252a-4e0a-ac8b-39b9b66d700d/ratios-19-20.pdf>

³ National School Psychologist Association <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/critical-policy-issues/shortage-of-school-psychologists>

⁴Academic Year 2015-2016 courtesy of ACLU https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf

Build a common knowledge base and shared vocabulary around SEL, mental health, and trauma

What does this proposal do?

While many educators have an understanding of how their students are developing social-emotional skills, not everyone has the adequate resources to understand or share best practices, and one way of developing these skills across districts is to form an agreed knowledge base. Sharing a common language helps educators and students alike understand how to think and talk about experiences inside and outside the classroom. Using accurate terminology avoids confusion and misinterpretation that can come from euphemisms or colloquial language. Adopting a common knowledge base and accepted terminology will allow substantive conversations about SEL, mental health, and trauma to progress and will create a more inclusive culture around SEL, mental health, and trauma.

How might this work?

There is precedent for aligning on interdisciplinary terms. In 2018, the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways committee of the Children's Cabinet adopted a Career Pathways Dictionary to align on definitions of key terms. The Whole Child Task Force is currently drafting working definitions for key terms in this space. The P-20 Council recommends adopting these definitions and working to socialize them throughout the P-20 community.

Reconsider utility of current data sources to provide insight into SEL, mental health, and trauma needs. Incorporate SEL related questions into existing survey instruments or consider using a new tool to better gauge the state of SEL

What does this proposal do?

ISBE currently collects SEL data from two main sources:

- The 5essentials survey is administered to P-12 teachers, students in grades 4-12, and parents annually. The survey collects data related to five indicators of school success:
 - Effective Leaders
 - Collaborative Teachers

- Involved Families
 - Supportive Environments
 - Ambitious Instruction
- The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is a federal instrument administered by the CDC to a random selection of states biannually. Provides information on substance use, sexual activity, bullying, and other health-related behaviors.⁵

There are limits to what these two sources of information can provide. For instance, neither survey asks specific questions about student and behavioral mental health, nor does either survey provide enough context to make assessments about the state of SEL-related programming within a school district.

In P-20 Council working group discussions, stakeholders, particularly those based in a school setting, were especially wary of asking LEAs for any new data to be collected or introduce any new data collection methods at this time because of the fear of overburdening educators. The P-20 Council recommends reviewing the data the State currently collects through an SEL-informed lens before adding any new data reporting requirements.

How might this work?

First, all current data collection instruments should be analyzed for utility of SEL response. The P-20 Council should study the relationship between different academic and environmental indicators and their bearing on SEL. Once current data has been analyzed, knowledge gaps can be better identified, and new collection can be pinpointed to ensure respondents are aware of the use value of any new questions.

Some stakeholders expressed concern about the idea that the State may ask new questions to pinpoint student mental health needs without the requisite resources in place to immediately respond to those needs once identified. Others opined that it will be difficult for the State to respond to those needs without first asking the questions to understand the full scope of need. It is important to keep

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

this in mind when assessing knowledge gaps and determining appropriate ways to collect data and respond through policy and programming.

Implement a process for the periodic review and reduction of state training mandates for educators

What does this proposal do?

Each year, educators are required to complete a series of training mandates in addition to the 120 professional development hours required for licensure renewal every five years. New educator training mandates are proposed annually by the General Assembly but there is currently no process in place to review and remove outdated or duplicative trainings.

There are currently 47 required or recommended trainings for educators and school personnel.⁶ The frequency and staff required to undertake these modules varies from training to training; it is estimated that the annual required trainings take between 13-21 hours to complete⁷. Relevant stakeholders expressed that not all required trainings impact educators' abilities to complete their jobs effectively, and that the opportunity cost of completing redundant or irrelevant trainings is that teachers have less time to undertake new relevant trainings in SEL or to plan their lessons.

The P-20 Council is proposing that ISBE, along with stakeholders representing educators, school administrators, and others, establish a system for the periodic review and reduction of training mandates.

How might this work?

Several other states have implemented related task forces and councils in recent years that can be used as models:

⁶ ISBE Mandated School Trainings <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/II-Mandated-Trainings.pdf#search=mandated%20training>

⁷ Make S.A.F.E. Task Force, April 2020 https://www.isbe.net/Documents_MSAFE/Mandated-Trainings-Illinois-School-Personnel-Presentation.pdf

Nevada	<p>Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force formed in 2019. It is responsible for making recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education every odd year. In February 2021, they recommended that Nevada’s legislature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explore and fund a variety of evidence-based options and best practices, including mentoring programs to support new and experienced teachers - fund the implementation of an online platform for teacher support
Massachusetts	<p>Hanover Public Schools Professional Development Task Force is a localized effort. The task force is comprised of teachers and district leaders working collaboratively to design Hanover’s state-aligned Professional Development modules.</p>
Connecticut	<p>2016 Task Force provided recommendations regarding professional development and in-service training requirements. Scope of work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing duplicative training - Exploring implementation differences between districts - Time required to complete trainings and time of year when trainings take place - Impact of professional development on instruction and student outcomes

Learning Time

Facilitate peer learning communities and information sharing between schools/districts interested in making innovative changes to their daily schedules and school calendars.

What does this proposal do?

The pandemic provided the catalyst for several school districts to implement innovative changes to their daily schedules and school calendars. Many communities introduced hybrid or block scheduling for the first time, asynchronous learning days, varied school start times, and other new methods of

engagement. Preliminary conversations with local leaders indicate that some of these changes may stay in place well beyond the pandemic period.

The P-20 Council believes that LEAs are best suited to make decisions about calendars and schedules that fit their local context. Rather than having the state prescribe or incentivize any particular type of scheduling change, district leaders should be given the opportunity to learn directly from their peers about the impact of these changes on their schools to determine what will work in their own communities.

Research on the impact of school calendars on student outcomes is still emerging, though current studies have not yet found a strong correlation between year-round schooling and increased test scores.⁸ The overall impact of changes to school schedules and calendars is highly dependent on the school community context and local decision-making.^{9, 10}

How might this work?

ISBE, in partnership with LEAs, can create space to facilitate the sharing of information between LEA leaders regarding the impact of different school schedules on student outcomes and school conditions. Practitioners should direct these conversations to provide insight into lessons learned.

Pending the results of ISBE's pilot program, consider wider adoption of competency-based education (CBE)

What does this proposal do?

Competency-based education focuses on individual students' mastery of skills and concepts. Students are able to move at their own pace, spending more time on concepts that challenge them while demonstrating proficiencies via assessments. Concept mastery is measurable and educators are able to pinpoint student needs.

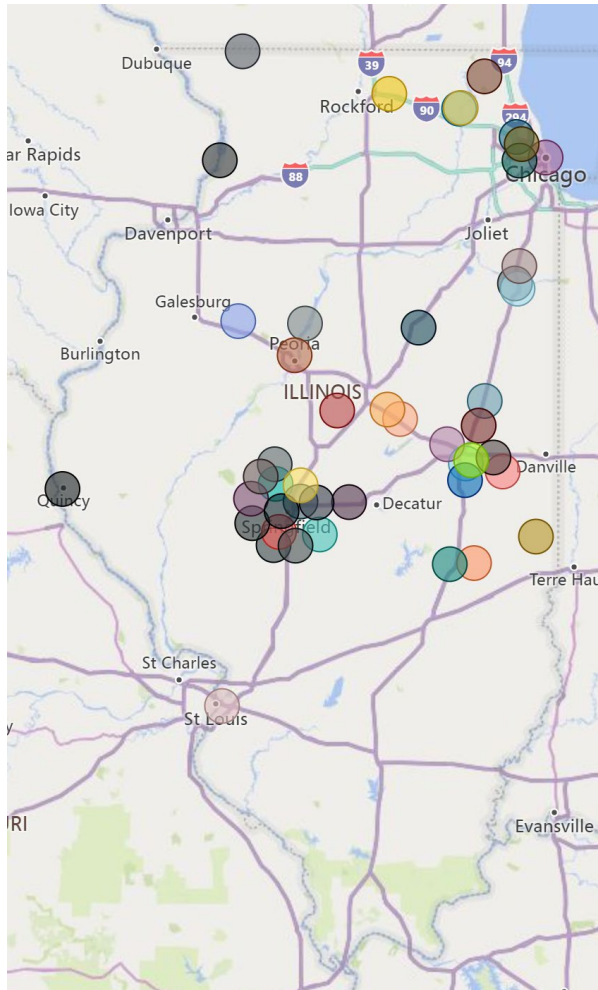
⁸ Annenberg Institute at Brown University <https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai20-209.pdf>

⁹

https://journals.lww.com/jphmp/Abstract/2019/11000/Examining_the_Effectiveness_of_Year_Round_School.12.aspx

¹⁰ https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/more-time-at-school_1f50c70d-en

In 2016, ISBE launched the Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirement Pilot Program and in 2018 enabled districts to operate CBE sites jointly. Currently there are 25 CBE sites engaging students from 47 different school districts.¹¹ Many of these programs are focused on Career and Technical Education and STEM skills at the high school level.



Map of participating school districts in ISBE's CBE pilot program (2021)

How might this work?

Upon completion, ISBE should share the results of the pilot widely. Any data collected as part of the pilot should be analyzed and disaggregated. Districts participating in the pilot should participate in peer learning opportunities to share

¹¹ <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CompetencyPilot.aspx#>

lessons learned and best practices for other districts considering implementing CBE programs.

Closing the Digital Divide

Add a new committee to the P-20 Council dedicated to tackling digital inequities across the P-20 spectrum

What does this proposal do?

The past two years have proven that appropriate internet enabled devices and a strong broadband connection are just as essential to a student’s educational career as notebooks and pens. Internet enabled devices were instrumental to students’ ability to remain engaged with their teachers and classmates. This exposed large inequities in broadband connectivity and access to appropriate devices across the state, with rural school districts particularly impacted.

Since March of 2020, the State has distributed over \$80M in federal funding to help reduce learning disruptions, improve distance education, and close the digital divide	
Digital Equity Formula Grants	\$40,050,298
Virtual Coaching for Educators	\$6,500,000
Digital Equity Grants	\$32,500,000
DoIT IGA	\$5,000,000

The P-20 Council is one of the only bodies that creates a space for ongoing interagency collaboration on the issues affecting the education sector. Therefore,

the P-20 Council is a logical home for a committee dedicated to tackling the digital inequities affecting the entire P-20 spectrum.

How might this work?

The P-20 Council should establish a new committee to consider topics including but not limited to:

- Closing the digital divide
- Maintaining viable technology
- Digital literacy
- Cost-saving measures in broadband
- Tech-oriented solutions to support learning recovery

This committee should bring together education stakeholders as well as groups like the Learning Technology Center, the Illinois Office of Broadband, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Innovation and Technology. The committee would be responsible for setting its own research agenda.

Transition Support

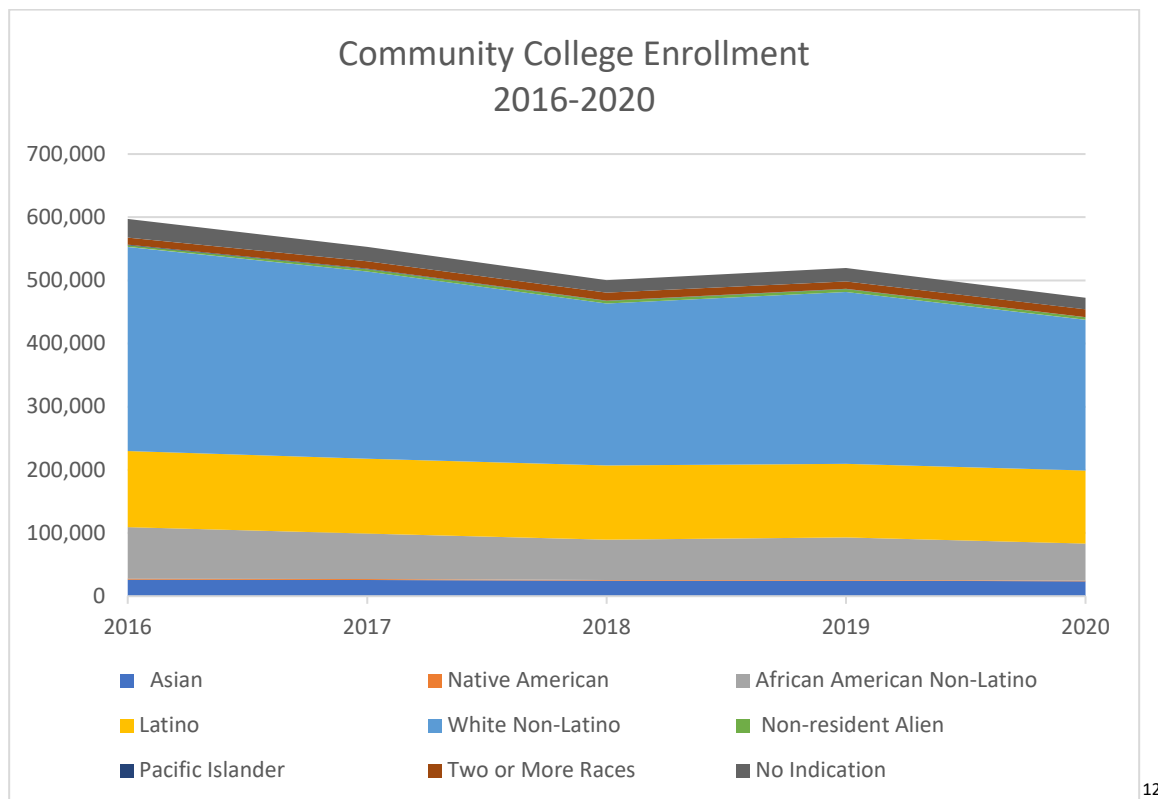
Study the impact of the pandemic on post-secondary transitions. Identify new and exacerbated inequities and barriers to transition

What does this proposal do?

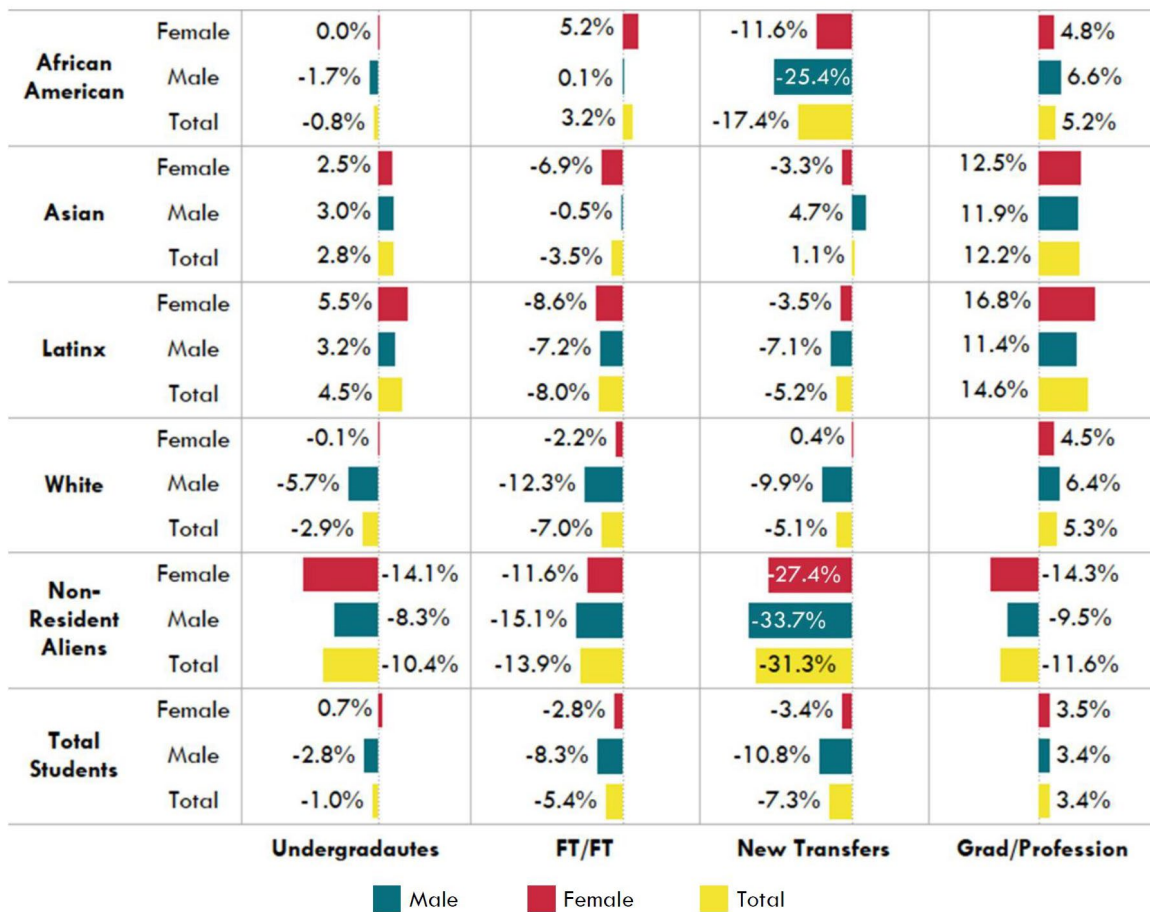
Postsecondary enrollment has declined nationally and in Illinois during the pandemic. Inequities that posed barriers to entry pre-pandemic have been exacerbated, and new stressors have been added, further complicating the pathway to postsecondary education for thousands of students. The full impact the pandemic on college enrollment has not yet been studied. Understanding the extent of the pandemic's effect on student transitions will enable the state to alleviate those issues and resume progress towards our State's 60 x 25 goal.

How might this work?

The P-20 Council should study recent enrollment trends and, using qualitative and quantitative data, identify the impact of the pandemic on students' transitions. The study should look into underlying reasons behind trend data, including how attitudes towards postsecondary education may be shifting.



Headcount Enrollments at Illinois Public Universities: Change from 2019-20 to 2020-21¹³



Create a landscape analysis of the different programs and services available across the state to support postsecondary transitions. Review programs for quality and student outcomes

What does this proposal do?

A full accounting of the different resources currently being used by school districts to support postsecondary transitions is necessary if the state is to understand where to strategically target deploy additional resources. Past attempts to create landscape analyses within this sector have focused on program availability across the State but have not compared these programs for quality and student outcomes. This past work can be used as a starting point for evaluating the quality and rigor of programs across the State using an equity lens.

¹³ <https://www.ibhe.org/First-Look-Fall-Enrollment-2020.html>

How might this work?

Building off existing landscape analyses, available services and resources dedicated to postsecondary transitions should be mapped. Demographic and postsecondary persistence information about student served by these programs should be disaggregated. Stakeholders from the secondary and postsecondary sectors should collaborate on a rubric to assess program quality. The group should identify where outcomes are inequitable and where program improvements are necessary.

ISBE is investing \$7.5M in ESSER funds to support up to 50 high schools' participation in a post-secondary transition support program in collaboration with One Goal. Participating schools will work with One Goal to improve postsecondary enrollments, especially for traditionally underrepresented students.

Data and Evaluation

Identify where federal COVID relief spending occurred and where services and support were deployed to students. Identify funding and service gaps for greater accountability and oversight of federal spending

What does this proposal do?

Since March of 2020, the State of Illinois has received over \$8B in federal relief across the education sector. The public P-12 system alone received roughly \$6B in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, about 90% of which flowed directly to LEAs. Local leaders have significant autonomy to direct these dollars, which must be allocated by late 2024. To fully comprehend the trajectory of our learning recovery we must understand how leaders used their local contexts to drive their spending decisions, and how these resources contributed to student successes. Programs invested in at the state level, including Learning Renewal efforts, will also be closely monitored.

How might this work?

To understand the complete impact of the pandemic on the education sector and the effectiveness of our collective response, data analysis will take place over the

next several years as we monitor the spend down of relief dollars and its direct impact on student outcomes. Results gleaned from this process can be used to support state and local decision in the period beyond the pandemic.

Capture successful innovations funded by COVID relief dollars and empower communities to sustain these programs after federal funds expire

What does this proposal do?

Stakeholders expressed a strong desire not to simply return to the status quo once the pandemic period is finished and relief funds have been expended. The federal pandemic relief dollars have offered unprecedented opportunities for the state to invest in our communities and for school districts, early childhood providers, and IHEs to invest in their own needs. The State needs to study how districts and IHEs decided to spend federal COVID relief dollars to understand the relationship between spending and recovery.

How might this work?

State agencies are working on analyzing large data sets containing information about local and state education spending in response to the pandemic. Agencies should consider establishing deadlines for reporting some of this information for the sake of accountability and transparency. The Learning Renewal team is working to establish metrics to monitor the programs being invested in from the state level.