Advance ILLINOIS

THE STATE WE'RE IN 2025

A REPORT ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FELLOW ILLINOISANS,

As we present the 2025 edition of *The State We're In*, we do so at a pivotal moment for our state. Fifteen years ago, the Illinois P-20 Council set the bold goal that by 2025, 60% of adults would hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential. Today, we are heartened to report that nearly 60% of Illinois adults have reached that milestone, a testament to the collective efforts of educators, families, policymakers, and students themselves. That is worth celebrating and represents meaningful progress and new opportunities for residents and families across the state.

That said, and as the report makes plain, there is still much to do. While state investment in education across the continuum has increased significantly in recent years, and overall educational attainment has increased, there is room to improve. First, and importantly, it is clear that student wellness across a range of measures continues to erode, with ongoing and high levels of absenteeism and growing rates of mental health issues. These issues pre-date COVID, but were clearly exacerbated by the pandemic and have not rebounded. Second, while the state deserves credit for concerted funding effort and investment, affordability continues to be a challenge for families seeking early childhood care and education, and students looking to enroll in postsecondary — a factor that helps explain enrollment trends and gaps. Third, while overall educational attainment has increased and Illinois continues to outpace the nation in academic growth, proficiency continues to stagnate. It is encouraging that kindergarten readiness rates have been steadily increasing, and the state has narrowed some key learning gaps, but the ongoing need for academic rigor and support is clear. Finally, and sadly, gaps by race, income, language, and learning style continue to exist at every age level and across nearly every metric we measure. While some gaps have narrowed — in some cases significantly — there is work ahead to ensure all students reach their full potential.

Advance Illinois publishes this biennial report because we believe that good information helps drive good decision-making. Good information helps practitioners and policy makers identify key issues, understand the impact of various interventions, and craft thoughtful strategies. We offer this report in hopes that it will guide educators, families, and leaders as they work to improve opportunities and outcomes for the next generation — work that anchors Illinois' future.

Because we believe in the value of data to inform decision-making, it is worth noting that ongoing data collection and reporting at the federal level — the foundation of education information — is in jeopardy. With deep cuts to the agencies responsible for gathering, "cleaning," aggregating, and reporting data, we are seeing critical data sets delayed and/or compromised. Of the 76 metrics we use in this report, 36 of them — or nearly half — come directly from federal sources or rely on federal sources for analysis/calculation. At the same time, Illinois' own longitudinal data system continues to require more structure, stability, leadership, and funding.

Education is the surest path to a bright future. It is good news that Illinois has demonstrated that it can and will invest in and support strong early childhood, schools, and higher education. We hope the data in this report reminds us that when we make and sustain informed decisions, our children benefit, even as it underscores the need for ongoing effort.

On behalf of the Advance Illinois Board of Directors and staff, thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to the collaboration and work ahead.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. EDWARDSON
Co-Chair

MARIN GJAJA
Co-Chair

ROBIN M. STEANS
President

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The 2025 edition of *The State We're In* continues the tradition of taking a holistic approach to measuring Illinois' education performance across the full birth through postsecondary B-20 continuum. It tracks leading indicators such as staffing, funding, and attendance, as well as reporting on key outcome measures such as proficiency, growth, and overall educational attainment.

In addition, we pay close attention to how Illinois has recovered from the pandemic and how our recovery compares to other states.

We invite you to explore our complete data tables, as well as exclusive online-only content, including interactive data stories and explorers, and on-the-ground blogs: profiles that dive into the lived experiences that underlie the data in this report.

What Data is Provided?

As in previous reports, we examine roughly 80 metrics grouped by education sector: early childhood education and care, K-12, and higher education. The metrics evaluate the full scope of the educational continuum, including enrollment and access; learning conditions, which are often strong predictors of student growth; and traditional outcome metrics. All metrics are important, and taken together, the information in this report helps policy makers, practitioners, and families understand where Illinois is making progress and where more work is needed.

WHEN AVAILABLE, DATA FOR EACH METRIC INCLUDES:

- Current performance
- Historical performance
- Leading state performance and Illinois' comparative national rank
- Disaggregated data by key demographics including race/ethnicity, income status, English Learner status, and disability status

In some instances, we specifically denote where data is not available. We do this to highlight what education stakeholders need to know going forward to strengthen schools and improve student learning. In this report, we also acknowledge certain data sets that are at risk due to changes at the federal level.

State Rankings

It is helpful to gauge Illinois' progress on key metrics against the rest of the nation, when applicable and available. Although the robustness of the data varies, we provide rankings for each of the systems — enrollment and access, learning conditions, and outcomes — and highlight critical equity gaps.

We chose to summarize this data visually to provide an idea of how Illinois compares to the nation on many distinct metrics across the continuum. We've called out the number of metrics ranked in the top half to highlight where the state excels and where it lags. Please note that all rankings can be found in the Data Tables, and equity gaps are defined as any area where a student group falls below the statewide average, with a particular focus on race/ethnicity, household income, disability status, and English Learner status.

Rankings are included for metrics with data available from at least 40 states, and no statistical adjustments were made to the raw rankings.

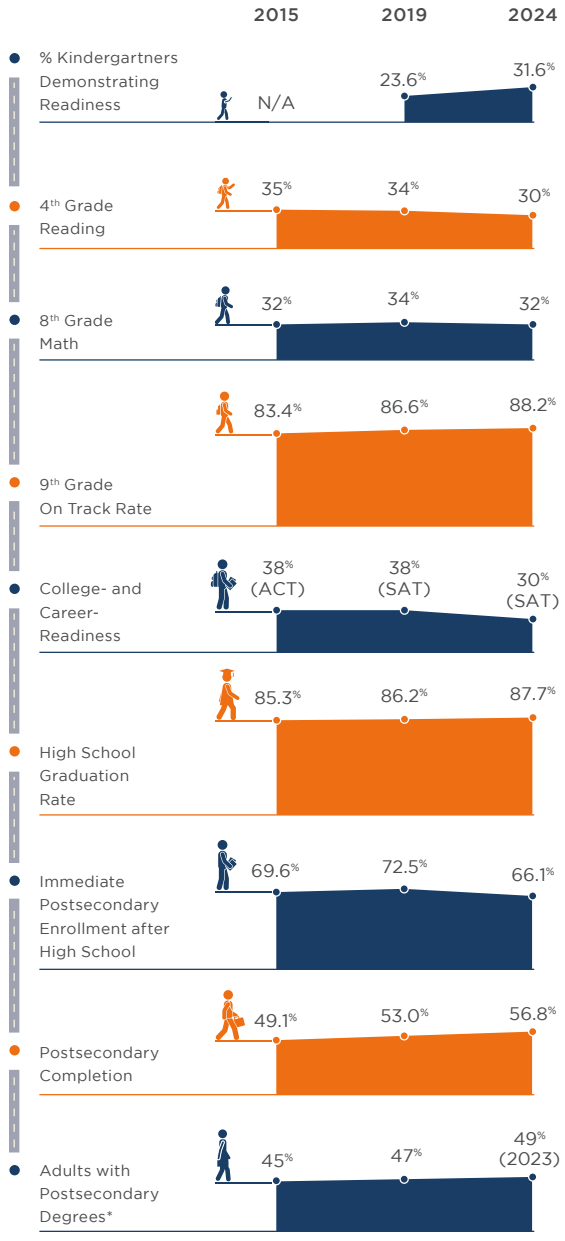
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illinois' Progress on Key Metrics

How is Illinois doing on educating *all* of its students. While there is real work to do, Illinois continues to be a national leader in education on several fronts. Over a decade ago, the Illinois P-20 Council set the ambitious goal of ensuring that at least 60% of adults attain a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2025. As we near the end of 2025, it is worth taking stock of what progress Illinois has made towards this goal and where there is more work to do across the full birth through career continuum.

- **While Illinois remains one of the nation's leaders in academic growth between 3rd to 8th grade, proficiency rates continue to stagnate**, with only a third of students meeting national benchmarks in reading and math in 4th, 8th, and 11th grades. Worse still, this number has been on the decline since 2015.[1] And while kindergarten readiness has improved, just a third of students exhibit readiness across developmental domains as they start their K-12 education. Progress in kindergarten readiness is a strong indicator for future success, so recent growth is good news, but the state can and should continue to strengthen underlying readiness.[2]
- **The COVID-19 pandemic had a real and lasting impact on students, but Illinois held steady through pandemic disruptions,** faring better than the majority of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and posting encouraging recovery on state assessments.
- **Illinois continues to excel at supporting students to complete high school, posting consistently high 9th grade on-track and graduation rates**. That said, in recent years, fewer students have been enrolling in postsecondary immediately after high school — a decline that started during the pandemic and has persisted.
- **Although the state did not achieve its initial goal of 60% of Illinoisans obtaining a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025, postsecondary outcomes continue to steadily improve, with completion rates on the rise and overall attainment increasing.** Better still, Illinois is beginning to close some important gaps. Indeed, Black and Latinx attainment rates have improved more rapidly than the state average, increasing by 9.5 percentage points since 2010. This is more critical than ever as, on average, individuals with a postsecondary degree continue to earn more throughout their career and experience less unemployment.[3]

ROADMAP TO A THRIVING ILLINOIS[4]



See Footnotes for a full list of metric sources

*The Illinois 60X25 goal includes both postsecondary degrees and credentials. The Lumina Foundation provides estimates of the percent of adults with a non-degree credential. In 2023, 57.4% of adults in Illinois had a post-high school degree or credential, with 8.0% of those individuals having a postsecondary credential (i.e., industry-recognized certificate, completion of an apprenticeship). https://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/attainment/illinois

There is no way to tell the story of our educational progress in the last 15 years without examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Despite immense challenges, it is clear that Illinois was able to hold ground in many areas better than most other states.**

Although progress on key metrics like proficiency and growth is insufficient, Illinois' resilience through the pandemic largely exceeded national norms.

INSIGHT

A NOTE ON PROJECTIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ILDS

In prior reports, we have used projections to estimate postsecondary enrollment and completion rates of Illinois 9th graders, as opposed to single-sector success metrics. Taking a cohort approach to viewing the data is critical because it allows us to better understand the overall progress students are making from high school all the way through postsecondary, rather than simply at points in time and/or within each sector. Both metrics — single-sector success metrics and a longitudinal projection approach — deepen our understanding of what is working in different ways and where more or different effort is required. Here is why:

> Looking at sector-specific and point-in-time data allows us to understand how that specific sector is doing on a key metric — for example, whether Illinois is improving its high school graduation rate or its postsecondary enrollment and completion rates.

That is important, but we should also want to know how these systems interact. For example, whether a growing number of students who begin high school in Illinois are enrolling in a postsecondary institution (calculated by multiplying the cohort high school graduation rate by the postsecondary enrollment rate of graduates), and/or whether a growing number of high school freshman are earning degrees years later (cohort high school graduation rates multiplied by postsecondary enrollment rates of graduates multiplied by postsecondary completion rates of those who enroll). To understand that, we need to follow students over time and connect the dots between those various snapshots. Historically, and with the use of some national data sets that allowed this type of analysis, we used these estimates to highlight the interactions between these systems.

While we continue to value that approach, we have reluctantly decided not to use projections this year for a sad but simple reason: we do not have enough confidence in the intersection of incomplete and complicated data sets. And while we should be able to rely on the state's longitudinal data system for exactly this type of information, it does not yet allow us to examine and share cohort data.

Put differently, while we can do some back-of-the-envelope projecting, we cannot be sure it paints an accurate picture. We could, for example, multiply our 2016 5-year high school graduation rate by the 2016 high school graduates' 16-month postsecondary enrollment rate (which has dropped from 73.5% to 66.8% in recent years), and understand that the likelihood of a high school freshman making it to any postsecondary institution across the nation — despite the increase in graduation rates — has dropped from 62.5% to 57.6%. We could further combine data to understand that, while completion rates for all students at postsecondary institutions in Illinois has grown from 63% to 65%, because our enrollment rate has dropped so sharply, overall expectations for how many high school freshmen will go on to earn a degree has dropped from 39% to 37% since 2019.

This is critical information and understanding to have, but our concern is that simple multiplication of these static data points may be inaccurate because we cannot account for Illinois students who leave the state, for out-of-state students who enroll in-state, or for adult returning students — all issues that impact the key progress metrics as outlined on pg 6. It is possible these factors may interact in a way that "cancel each other out," but we simply do not know.

The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) can and should provide us with the postsecondary graduation rate of Illinois 9th graders, allowing us to follow Illinois students over time and across state lines, a necessary analysis to allow the state to truly evaluate its progress to the 60x25 goal. The state must do more to invest in this tool and make it fully accessible to the public.

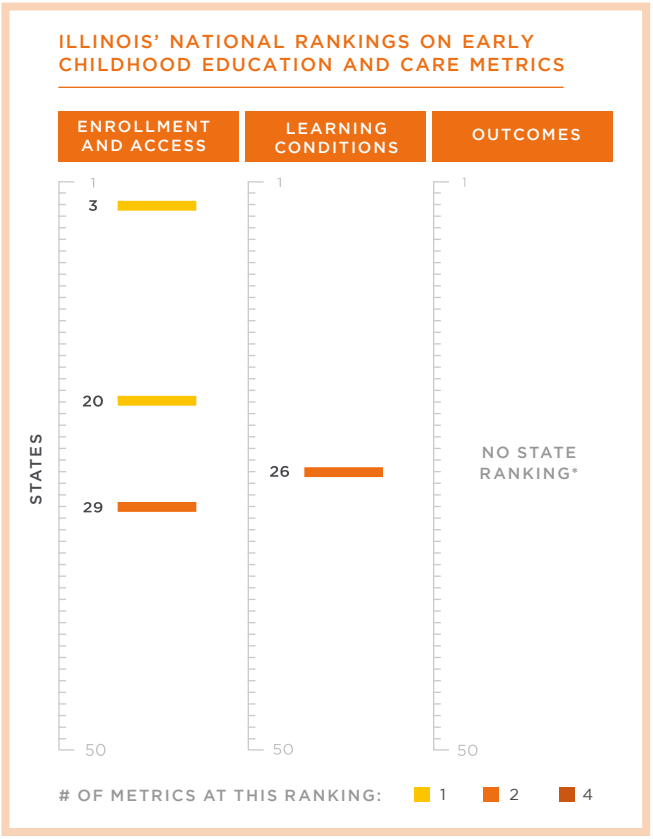
State Rankings

As we continue to gauge Illinois' progress on key metrics, it is critically important to measure ourselves against other states.[5] When evaluating Illinois' ranking, there are areas to celebrate and areas of concern.[6]

EQUITY

Across the education continuum, it is essential that we understand whether our systems and programs are working for all students. The strength of our economy and civil society depends on equipping the next generation with the skills they need to be contributing members of their communities. The good news is that Illinois has shown real progress in narrowing equity gaps in many places across that continuum. That said, the stubborn and troubling reality is that **among the metrics with an available state ranking, all but one reveal equity gaps** for students from low-income households, students of color, English Learners, or students with disabilities.

Reading through the full set of data tables, and examined throughout this report, you will get a sharper picture of the size of the gaps, and the degree to which some of these gaps are beginning to close. But it remains clear that the state has real work to do in ensuring our education systems are working for all students.



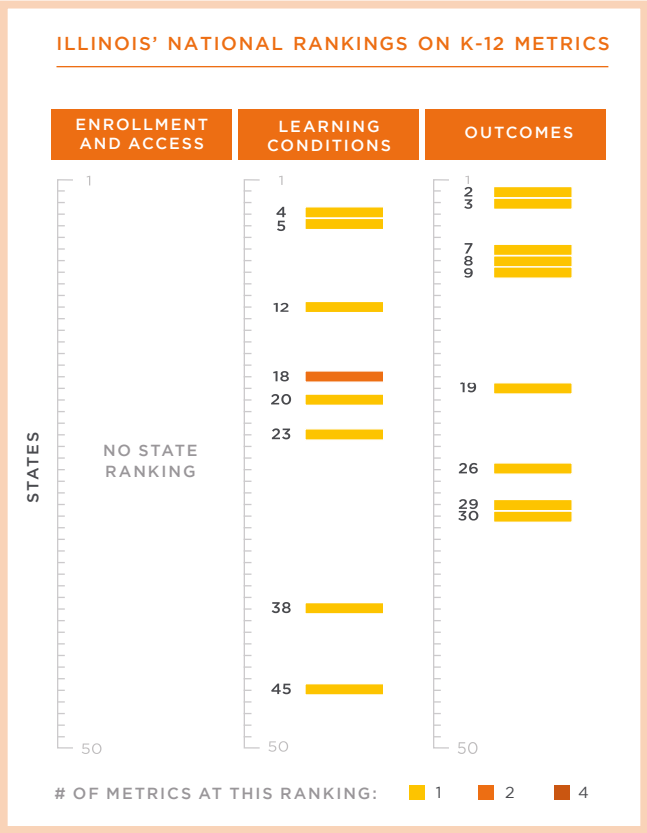
2 out of 5 Early Childhood Education Metrics were in the top half of states

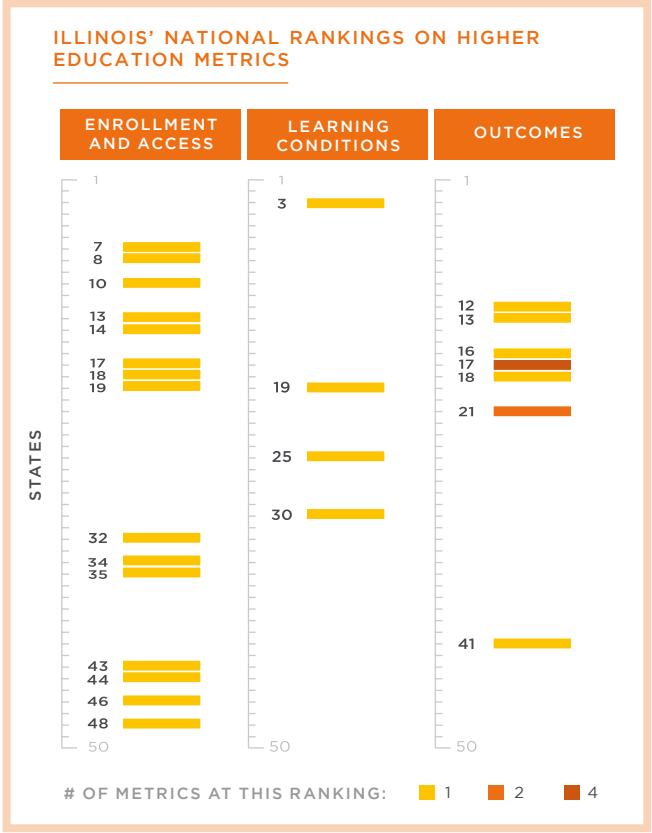
Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

There may be nothing more important to a child's long-term well-being than getting them off to a strong start. To that end, Illinois can and should celebrate that a record number of 3-year-olds are enrolled in state-funded preschool. Indeed, the state ranks in the top 5 nationally. At the same time, Illinois ranks much lower in enrollment for state-funded preschools for 4-year-olds and in access to Head Start.

Additionally, despite having the fifth highest GDP in the country, Illinois is middle of the pack (26th) when it comes to state-funded preschool funding. This may help explain why just a third of incoming kindergartners demonstrate readiness across developmental domains. And while the state has made early childhood a priority and overall kindergarten readiness is improving — which suggests we may see improvements over time across the continuum — it is clear we have work to do.

*Although Illinois can now report on "kindergarten readiness," the assessment we use is not comparable across states.





10 out of 16 K-12 Metrics were in the top half of states

K-12

When gauging how well Illinois is doing in creating conditions conducive for all students to learn and thrive, the data tells a diverging story.

It is good news that some important leading indicators are showing real progress. Per-student funding for K-12 schools is now in the top half (18th), a significant improvement since Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) was passed in 2017. In addition, Illinois ranked in the top 10 for student-to-teacher ratios in the elementary grades, though we fell short in other staffing areas (ratios for counselors, high school educators, social workers, etc.).

Although some metrics regarding student mental health and wellness — including chronic absenteeism and feelings of hopelessness — are concerningly high, national rankings suggest these worrisome trends mirror national averages.

Lastly, a continued bright spot for Illinois is its ability to support academic growth. Notably, Illinois ranks in the top 5 for student growth between 3rd and 8th grade for both reading and math, and makes the top 10 for NAEP proficiency in 8th grade reading and math. At the same time, Illinois remains in the bottom half of states for NAEP proficiency in both 4th grade reading and math, and high school proficiency has declined.

20 out of 28 Higher Education Metrics were in the top half of states

Higher Education

In a world where postsecondary credentials translate to higher employment, greater earnings, and healthier outcomes, it is important that we continue to make higher education more affordable and accessible for all who aspire to enroll. In Illinois, we've made some progress, but there are critical areas of ongoing need. In particular, state spending on public institutions of higher education continues to remain near the bottom of states (48th), a trend we have seen since 2008. Research makes clear that when state investment dwindles, tuition and fees increase. This is exactly the case in Illinois, and explains why Illinois boasts some of the highest tuition and fees in the country. Despite this unfortunate reality, Illinois ranks in the top 20 for net tuition (which is simply the amount students and families actually pay). This unusual juxtaposition suggests that financial aid, from public sources and from institutional scholarships and assistance, helps combat rising costs.

Meanwhile, there is much to celebrate in terms of overall outcomes and the learning conditions that support student success. While Illinois places in the middle of the pack for retention in 4-year institutions, it ranks in the top 5 for retention at community colleges. In addition, the state consistently places in the top half for measures of completion and attainment. As a result, and despite slowing enrollment trends, overall education attainment in Illinois continues to rise for every demographic.

ILLINOIS B-20 LANDSCAPE

With a decreasing and ever-changing state population, our education systems are growing more diverse — and enrollment patterns have changed, too.

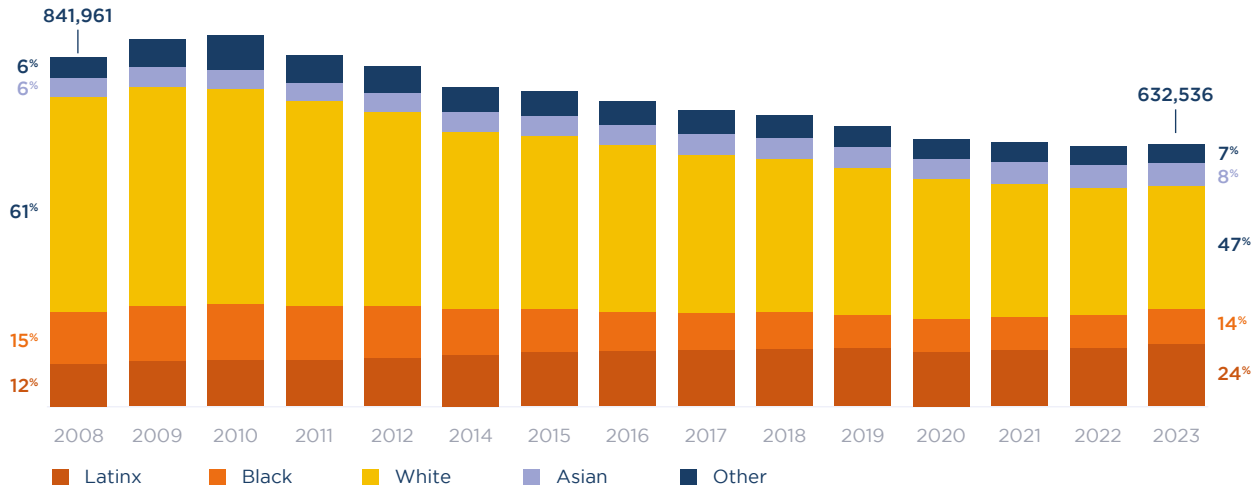
Decreases in state population have impacted the entire B-20 continuum.

The statewide population has decreased about 1% since 2010, with an 11% decrease in birthrates and pronounced decreases in children under 5 (13.7% decrease), school-age children (11.6% decrease), and young adults from 15 to 19 (10.4% decrease).[7] Only three other states experienced population declines from 2010–2020. Illinois' population decline coincided with a proportional 10.3% decrease in the state's public K-12 schools and an outsized 28% decrease in Illinois' postsecondary options since 2010.[8]

During this same period, our schools and postsecondary institutions have become more racially and socioeconomically diverse. From 2010 to 2023, the demographic makeup of postsecondary institutions has shifted — with Latinx students growing from 12% of the state's postsecondary enrollment in 2008 to 24% in 2023.[9]

Latinx students grew from 12% of the state's postsecondary enrollment in 2008 to 24% in 2023.

POSTSECONDARY STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT ILLINOIS INSTITUTIONS BY RACE

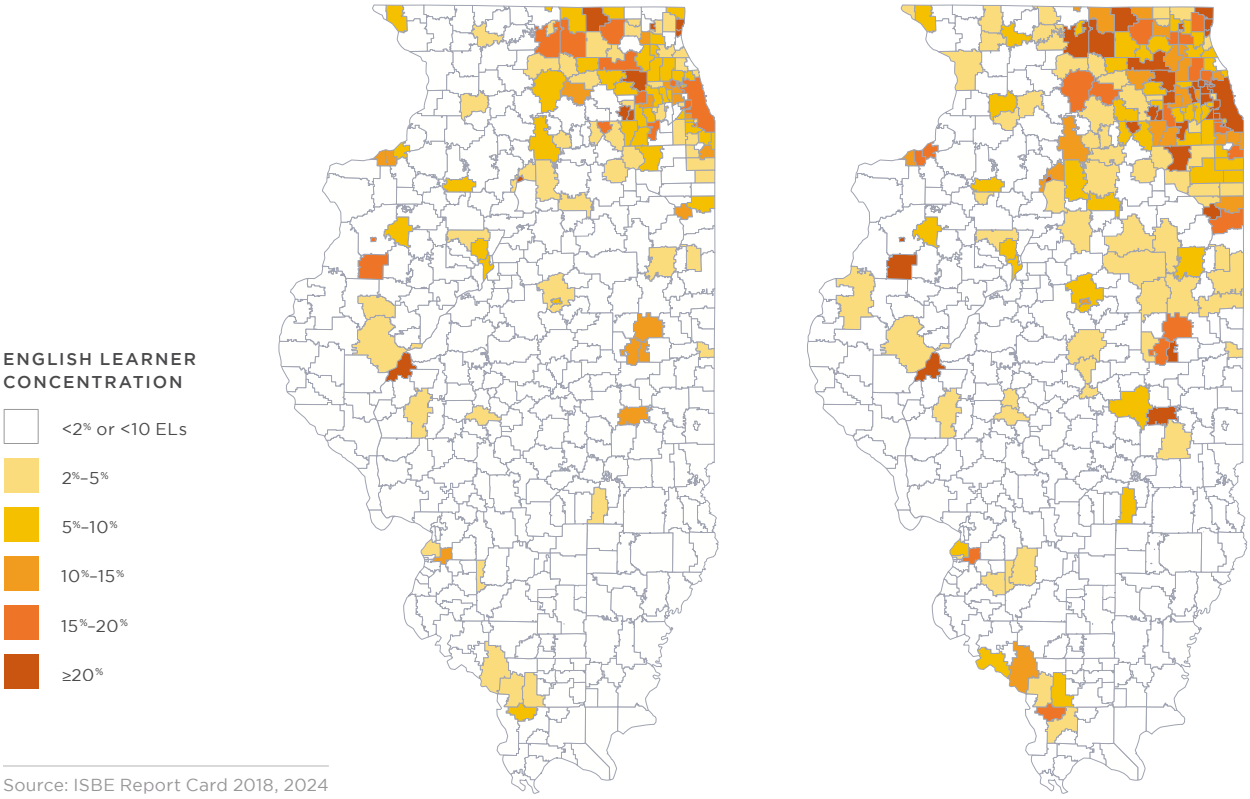


Source: IBHE Enrollment and Data Tool, 2008-2023
Note: IBHE does not provide data for 2013. International students are excluded from these counts.

Meanwhile, in grades preK-12 schools, Illinois schools are enrolling more students from low-income households, increased numbers of students of color, and most notably, the number of English Learners has increased from 234,000 to 304,000 since 2018, with more districts than ever serving these students. The state saw growth in English Learner enrollment across every locale: rural (69.18%), suburban (34.23%), urban (45.66%), and Chicago Public schools (16.42%) since 2018.

Districts across Illinois are experiencing growth in English Learner enrollment.

MAP OF THE PERCENTAGE OF PREK-12 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN 2018 AND 2024



Source: ISBE Report Card 2018, 2024

Illinois is seeing a change in the types of schools and programs children are attending.

Across the B-20 continuum, we are seeing changes in both the types of programs that students and families are enrolling in and whether they are enrolling at all. The types of early childhood education and care programs that families are choosing has varied in the last 15 years, with increases in state-funded preschool enrollment occurring alongside declining enrollment in Head Start and licensed child care in homes and centers. In 2023, 27% of eligible 3-to-5-year-olds were being served by the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and Head Start. Meanwhile, 32% of 3-to-5-year-olds were served by Preschool for All (PFA) or Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE). When looking at children ages 0–3, 21% of eligible children are served by CCAP or Early Head Start.[10]

Overall enrollment in K-12 is also down, with fewer students attending both public and private K-12 schools. Although difficult to pinpoint because of a lack of reporting requirements for homeschoolers, in 2024 alone an estimated 5% of school-age children were neither enrolled in K-12 public schools nor K-12 nonpublic schools. This percentage rose during the pandemic and has remained relatively stable (and high) since 2021.[11]

Lastly, with an overall decrease in postsecondary enrollment since 2010, the state saw the most significant decrease in community college enrollment, with a 35% decrease from a historical high point in 2008 to 2024.[12] Importantly, this trend has started to reverse in recent years, with a nearly 6% increase in student enrollment from 2023 to 2024.

After decades of disinvestment, state spending across the B-20 continuum has increased since 2019.

The state has made strong and concerted efforts to increase funding across the continuum, yet spending is still inadequate and oftentimes inequitable.

After unstable and inconsistent spending on educational institutions across the continuum, Illinois grew its spending by 75% in K-12 and by 21% for state-funded preschools from 2008 to 2024. Yet, from 2008 to 2023, appropriations for postsecondary education decreased by 33% in inflation-adjusted dollars.[13] The 33% decrease in postsecondary spending obscures the diverging fiscal decision-making that Illinois lawmakers have made in regards to Illinois' community colleges and public institutions of higher education. Although operational grant funding often increases and decreases at the same rate for colleges and universities in Illinois, the state's community colleges have seen their appropriations, including restricted grants, increase by 3% in inflation-adjusted dollars since 2008, while public universities have had their appropriations cut by 40% since 2008.[14]

In K-12 — as funding was increasing — state appropriations were distributed more equitably to districts after the passage of the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula in 2017. The state invested over $2 billion in new funding into public schools via the formula, decreasing the number of districts that are severely underfunded from 431 districts serving over 1.2 million students in 2018 to 49 districts serving 76,000 students in 2024.

Although per-student funding is a helpful measure to understand how the state is doing in terms of investing in education, it does not tell the full picture. Investing adequately means being able to identify what each institution, school, and center/home needs to support their students and children. The state has made progress in understanding what it means to adequately and equitably serve its students, but it still has more work to do articulating and achieving funding goals.[15]

While K-12 funding has seen progress in Illinois, early childhood education and care and higher education fall in the middle or bottom half of states for student spending.

ILLINOIS STATE FUNDING PER PUPIL (IN 2023 DOLLARS)

Source: (1) NIERR State of Preschool Yearbooks 2019, (2) U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of School System Finances Tables, (3) National Center on Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System

When looking at how close the state is to adequately and equitably funding our different education systems, it is also worth noting that funding gaps are not felt evenly throughout the state. It is clear that the state has a ways to go in ensuring adequate and equitable resources for all students.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Across all ECEC programs and services, the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding estimates an $8.9 billion shortfall. The difference between what our earliest learners need and what providers must spend ranges from $6,000 per pre-school aged child for state funded preschools, to $21,000 for center-based care for an infant. Lastly, the current funding approach is regressive in that, despite obvious efforts, it is not clearly targeted at or weighted for children from low-income households.

K-12

The EBF formula estimates that our K-12 districts face a $2.5 billion gap — in addition to an estimated $511 million gap for Mandated Categoricals (i.e., transportation, Illinois Free Breakfast and Lunch Programs) — resulting in increased proration (e.g., the state only reimbursing districts for a portion of these costs).

Despite the progress made through EBF to reduce the number of severely underfunded districts, significant gaps remain in access to adequate resources based on household income, English Learner status, race/ethnicity, and locale.

Higher Education

The Commission on Equitable Public University Funding is a statewide commission established to assess Illinois' public university funding system and recommend a "specific data-driven criteria... to adequately, equitably, and stably fund public universities." According to a recent report from the commission, Illinois' public universities face a $1.4 billion gap to adequately fund all 12 public universities. Importantly, universities that have larger concentrations of students from low-income households, students of color, and students from underfunded K-12 districts — demographics that are continuing to expand in our postsecondary institutions — are more likely to be underfunded. Similarly, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) estimates that the Illinois community college funding formula is underfunded by over $700 million.

Affordability remains a consistent barrier for students and families in the state.

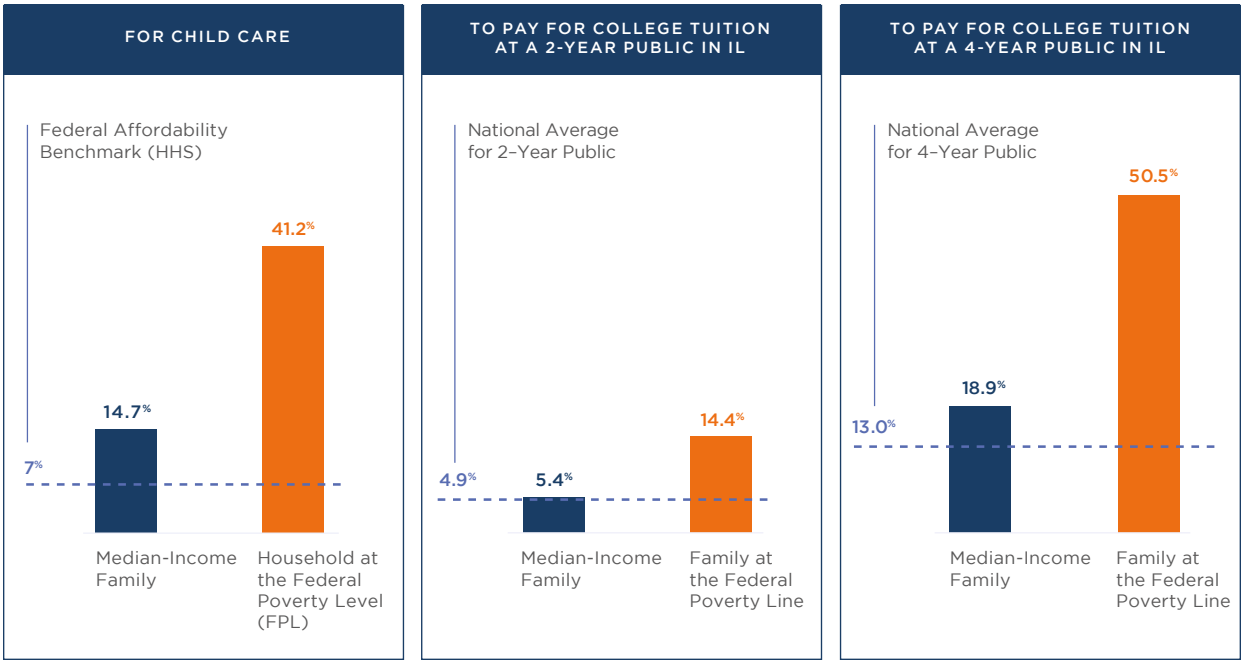
With increased investments in the last six years — as well as an influx of resources from the federal government during the pandemic — costs for students and families have started to stabilize, even though they remain high..

After years of increases, and likely due to greater state investments in the past five years, the cost for families and providers across ages of children and types of child care (i.e., home-based, center-based) has stabilized. However, this stabilization has settled at an unaffordable rate. For example, the cost of infant and toddler center-based care increased from $12,700 and $10,600 respectively in 2008 to $14,500 and $11,400 in 2022.[16] Moreover, these increases have been passed on to families, with families at the median household income level being asked to allocate 18.6% and 14.7% of their annual income for center-based infant and toddler care and 13.8% and 12.9% for home-based infant and toddler care. Alarmingly, for a family at the federal poverty line, it costs a whopping 52.2% for center-based infant care and 38.9% for home-based infant care.

There is a similar story for our public universities in the state. The average tuition and fees for public universities in the state has started to fall. That said, the weighted average tuition and fees at a public university in Illinois is nearly $4,000 more than the nationwide average, giving Illinois the distinction of being one of the most expensive states in the nation to earn a 4-year degree.[17] These tuition and fees continue to put a significant strain on families, and while they have decreased in recent years, the percentage of income required to pay for public university tuition and fees for a household at the median income level is 19% (down from 23% in 2016, but higher than the national average of 13%). It is worth noting and applauding that the state's growing investment in the Monetary Award Program (MAP), up by 77% since 2019, has helped ease — but not eliminate — the affordability barriers in the state.[18]

Early Childhood Education and Care and Higher Education in Illinois remain unaffordable for most Illinoisans.

PERCENT OF INCOME NEEDED:



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022; Census 2022; HHS 2022; Child Care Aware of America, Parents and the High Cost of Care, 2023; IPEDS 2023
Note: Toddler child care cost is used for calculation of child care bars. Tuition and fees are used for calculation of college bars.

Student mental health and wellness challenges remain unsustainably high.

Worrisome trends in student mental health and wellness were on the rise prior to the pandemic and only worsened during that period, with lingering effects putting a greater strain on student support personnel and impacting student academic progress.

Mental health challenges have become more common in the state, evidenced by the increase in K-12 students who feel sad or hopeless (from 29.6% of students in 2009 to 40.4% of students in 2023), and the percentage of postsecondary students who felt that their mental health impacted their academics in the last month (increasing from 24.6% in 2007 to 46.5% in 2024).[19] Though less acute, similar worrisome trends pre-date the pandemic and can also be seen in the percentage of high school students who report having seriously considered suicide. In 2023, just under 1 out of every 5 students (19.2%) reported having seriously considered suicide, a 32.4% (4.7 percentage point) increase since 2009.[20] Thankfully, the percent of students who report having attempted suicide has not increased to the same extent and has even decreased since its recent high of 12.4% in 2013, though current rates are still troubling (9.8%).[21]

Reporting of students experiencing potentially traumatic events, as defined by those in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) framework[22], shows that more than 3 out of every 4 Illinois youths have had an ACE (77%).[23] This rate is consistent with national averages, and has thankfully been declining in recent years. Additionally noteworthy is the concentration of these ACEs, which researchers identify as being an important consideration in determining the extent of harm ACEs have on an individual's life; high concentrations of ACEs are lower in Illinois than nationwide, as 6% of youth are identified as having 3+ ACEs experiences by parents or caregivers compared to 8% nationwide.[24]

Certain student groups are more impacted by these worrisome trends, with significant equity gaps persisting:

In high school, female students are more likely to feel sad or hopeless, with 51.6% of female students reporting feeling sad or hopeless versus 25% of male students in 2023. Similarly, female students consider suicide and attempt suicide at dramatically higher rates than their male counterparts (consider: 27% vs 11.4%, attempt: 12.6% vs 6.4%).[25]

Black students in Illinois are 2–3 times more likely to experience homelessness and are more than twice as likely to have reported 3+ ACEs compared to the statewide average (13% vs. 6%).[26]

LGBQ+ and transgender postsecondary students are more likely to feel like their academics have been impacted by their mental health (63.2% and 75.9%, respectively, compared to the overall average of 46.5%).[27]

Access to necessary supports is growing, but insufficient.

Despite increases in the number of school support personnel (or SSPs, which include counselors, nurses, school psychologists, social workers, and speech and language pathologists) in Illinois school districts, the state is still not meeting benchmarks of care. While the decreasing ratios of students to SSPs since 2019 are encouraging, in 2024, the state only met the recommended benchmarks for school psychologists, meaning the majority of Illinois students are in districts that do not have the adequate numbers of support staff.

INSIGHT

Children's Adversity Index

Earlier this year, Illinois released its first edition of the Children's Adversity Index, an interactive statewide map that sheds light on the relative level of community trauma and adversity that students in each district are experiencing. The Adversity Index is structured around the Pair of ACEs framework, which emphasizes the interconnectedness between Adverse Community Environments and Adverse Childhood Experiences. This means that the index does not measure the level of trauma in children that attend school in a district, but rather, it assesses the level of trauma exposure that a child growing up in a community would experience because of the level of the negative social, economic, and environmental conditions within a community.

To assess the level of community exposure, the index creates a composite score from three primary domains, each with their own set of variables that make up a subcategory score:

1. Community Risk Trajectories:
This domain captures indicators that reflect systemic risks and adverse trends, which may predispose communities to elevated levels of trauma. (i.e., mortality rate among individuals under 20, juvenile delinquency rates, rate of overdose deaths).

2. Community Unmet Needs:
This domain identifies areas where the lack of essential services and supports may exacerbate vulnerability and hinder resilience (i.e., food insecurity rate, prevalence of frequent mental distress among adults).

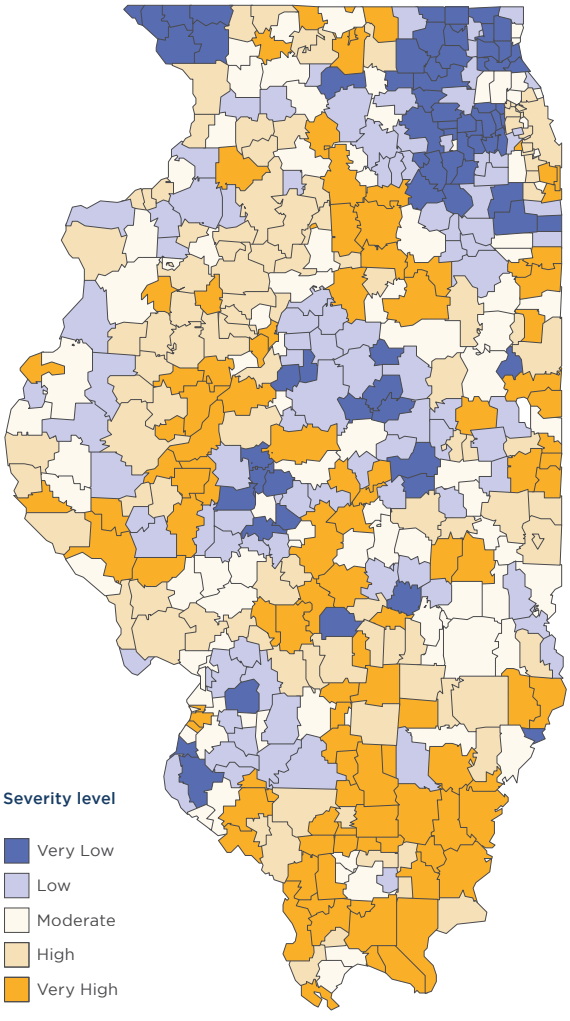
3. Barriers to Economic Progress:
This domain highlights economic conditions that limit opportunity and well-being, serving as structural barriers to long-term community health (i.e., housing cost burden, median household income).

These scores are not meant to be objective measures of trauma exposure, but rather, relative levels which, in concert, show where the greatest severity of trauma exposure exists in Illinois. Together, these domains provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the structural determinants of trauma exposure and for informing strategies to promote child and community well-being.

The results of the Children's Adversity Index show that the highest severity of community-level trauma exposure can be found in nearly every part of the state, regardless of rurality, racial demographics, or district EBF tier. Knowing this, state-level policymakers can take meaningful action to more accurately address these needs through trauma-informed care by driving services and resources to communities facing the highest levels of trauma exposure.

Adversity and community-level trauma exposure are experienced in nearly every part of the state.

ILLINOIS' CHILDREN'S ADVERSITY INDEX



Source: ISBE Children's Adversity Index, https://www.isbe.net/adversityindex

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Enrollment and Access

The Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) landscape is shifting and adapting to the needs of families, but cost and affordability continue to put an undue burden on families.

Where families are sending their children for education and care began shifting prior to the pandemic, and although there were dramatic impacts on enrollment in early childhood education and care programs, most have rebounded back to pre-pandemic levels.

Selecting a child care arrangement can be a balancing act for many parents, as they try to accommodate both work and family responsibilities. Accordingly, parents often make decisions based on the accessibility, affordability, and quality of child care — frequently utilizing multiple types of care.

Due to limitations of current data systems, we do not have a good way to estimate demand for child care in Illinois. The total number of children under the age of 6 decreased by about 200,000 (25%) from 2008 to 2023.

INSIGHT

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEM

Supply and demand in Early Childhood Education and Care is difficult to assess and understand. Having a better understanding of the child care and education needs for our youngest children in Illinois, including by region, is critical and should be a priority of the newly created Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC). As of 2025, IDEC has established the Early Childhood Integrated Data System, which will allow the state, for the first time, to gain unduplicated counts of children across ECEC programs. This, in turn, will make it possible to determine access and equity gaps.[28]

However, demand for child care is likely steadied by the fact that, though there are fewer of them, more young children have working parents. From 2008 to 2023, the number of birth to 5-year-old children with all available parents in the workforce increased from 61% to 71%; though these are not the only families seeking formal care arrangements, it provides a helpful estimate.[29]

There is still work to do in ensuring that all eligible children have an accessible and affordable placement; when only 27% or 32% of eligible 3-to-5-year-olds are being served (this varies by program), and only 21% of birth to 2-year-olds. Understanding supply and demand in early childhood is more important than ever.[30]

Enrollment changes from 2019 to 2024 were vastly different for different types of programs. State-funded preschool programs generally saw an increase. For instance, Preschool for All increased by 4%, Preschool for All Expansion increased by 68%, and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) reimbursements increased by 6.9% during that time. Meanwhile, the number of students enrolled in Head Start decreased 41% — likely due to a range of factors, including an increased number and focus on state-funded preschool opportunities within school districts; the ability for Head Start programs to continue reaching more families; or the conversion of slots into Early Head Start placements.[31] It is important to note that many programs saw significant and meaningful drops in enrollment during COVID, with some programs seeing 20% drops in that timeframe.[32]

INSIDE ILLINOIS' RISING COST OF CHILD CARE

Two early childhood education providers share their perspectives on rising child care costs.

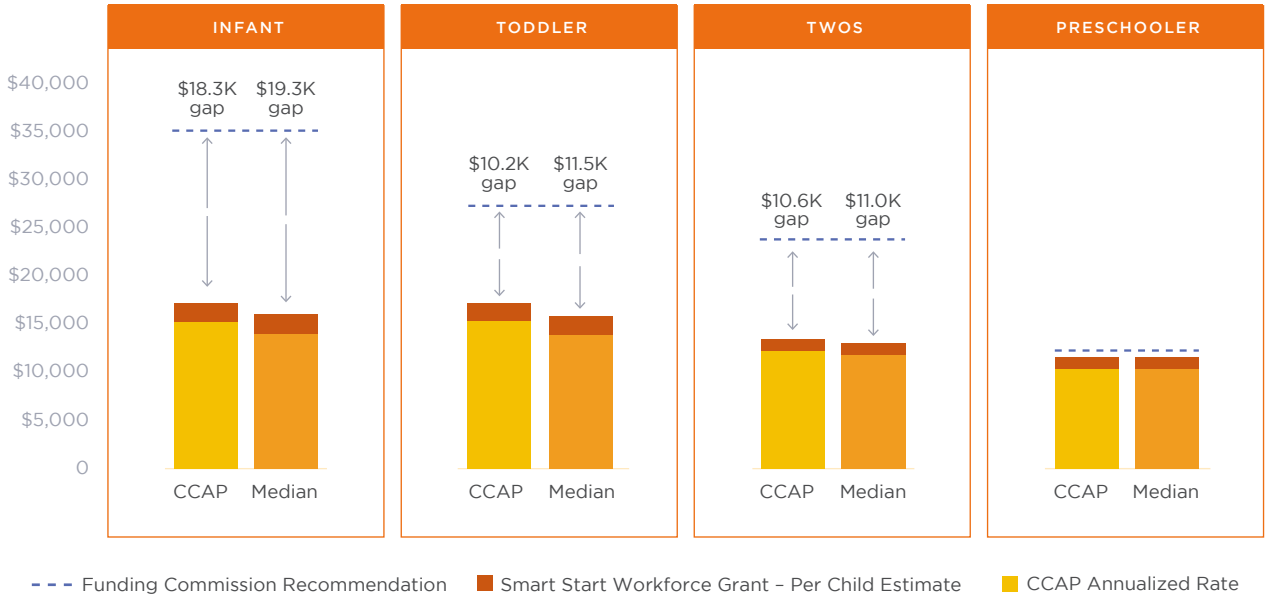
SCAN TO READ MORE

Meanwhile, the cost of care has increased across all programs, resulting in higher prices for families. Federal guidance indicates that child care should cost no more than 7% of a family's income. In Illinois in 2022, however, it accounted for 14.7% of a median family's income for center-based toddler care and 12.9% for home-based toddler care. Longitudinally, these rates have fallen and vary greatly by income and family type. For instance, center-based care for toddlers between 2016 and 2022 fell 19.8% to 14.7% for a median family, 45.4% to 31.4% for a single mother, and 50.1% to 41.2% for a family at the federal poverty line.[33]

Even with strong state investments, significant gaps remain between reimbursement rates recommended by the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding to assure high-quality care and current CCAP reimbursement rates. For example, for center-based care, the gap was as high as $21,866 per child in 2024[34].

Significant gaps in funding exist across center types, except for preschoolers.

COMPARING CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP), PRIVATE PAY, AND THE TRUE COST OF CARE (IN 2024 DOLLARS).



Source: Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding, IECAM

Learning Conditions

The state must work to ensure that our earliest learners have access to quality education and care. Stubbornly low compensation for educators and fewer homes and centers being certified through the Quality Rating and Improvement accreditation process threaten the quality of early learning experiences.

In Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), well-trained and well-compensated personnel are the key to quality care. That said, most early childhood providers and educators remain inadequately compensated — both by standards set within the field and in comparison to similarly educated workers in other fields.

Looking at average compensation in Illinois by educational attainment, ECEC professionals in licensed child care centers are compensated at a lower rate than other Illinoisans with similar education levels. Despite the fact that 76% of early childhood educators have *more* than a high school diploma, these workers earn less than the average Illinoisans with a high school diploma ($40,590 respectively versus $43,761). These gaps are even starker when compared to the earnings of a typical associate's degree holder ($54,677) or someone with a bachelor's degree or beyond, who earns $100,863.[35]

On a positive note, between 2015 and 2023, wages have steadily increased across all positions in licensed child care centers (i.e., Admin Directors saw a 57% increase, Early Childhood Educators saw a 41% increase) and outpaced inflation. However, *all* of those wage increases were outpaced by a 58% increase in the minimum wage, which highlights the continued need to focus on equitable pay for the early childhood workforce.[36]

Importantly, turnover rates for early childhood educators and administrators have been on the rise since 2021, with the top reason for an educator leaving their position being dissatisfaction with wages or benefits. Administrators cite that it can take, on average, four weeks to fill a vacant position.[37]

Increasingly more Child Care Centers are foregoing the quality accreditation process.

When examining one metric of quality, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) — or the rating and improvement system that seeks to improve the quality of early childhood programs beyond the minimum standards for state child care licensing — there is a meaningful decrease in the number of centers and homes who are moving through the accreditation process.[38] Nearly 82% of Child Care Centers have foregone the accreditation process in 2023, an increase from 70% in 2016.[39] These trends are similar for home-based care. This means the number of children being served in a child care setting with a Circle of Quality rating has decreased from nearly 80,000 in 2016 to 50,000 in 2023.

Outcomes

While kindergarten readiness is improving, just a third of students demonstrate readiness for kindergarten across all developmental domains, and equity gaps are widening.

Participation in the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) has increased since its launch, allowing the state to better understand the developmental readiness of students as they enter kindergarten.

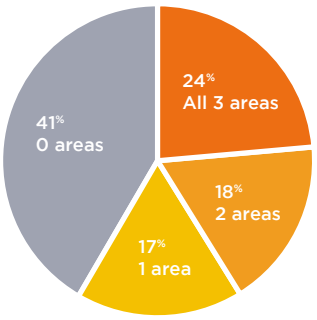
Since the state started administering the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey in 2018, participation has increased by 10.4 percentage points. During this same period, the percentage of kindergartners demonstrating readiness on all three developmental areas — social-emotional, language and literacy, and math — increased (from 23.6% to 31.6%) and the state also saw a decrease in the number of students who demonstrated readiness in zero areas (from 41.6% to 35.3%).

With the increased participation statewide on the KIDS assessment, the state is better able to understand where readiness gaps exist for our earliest learners. KIDS gaps widened from 2018 to 2023 for English Learners (from an 11.6% gap to 20.5% gap), by family income (from 14.8% gap to 18.2%), and by disability status (from a 13.8% gap to 17.2%).[40]

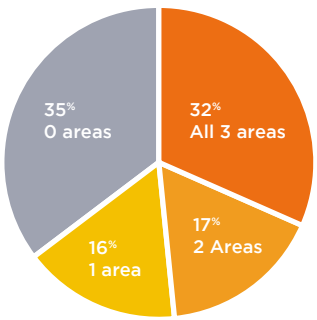
Gaps in early childhood education and care access and outcomes result in gaps in kindergarten readiness that exacerbate inequities in K-12. In good news, more recent KIDS data suggest smaller gaps across K-12 EBF Tiers than previously seen. The gap between Tier 4 districts (districts with adequate funding) and Tier 1 districts (our most under-resourced districts) decreased from a 17 percentage point gap to an 8 percentage point gap between 2018 and 2024.[41]

Kindergarten readiness increased from about a quarter of students to a third — but equity gaps are on the rise.

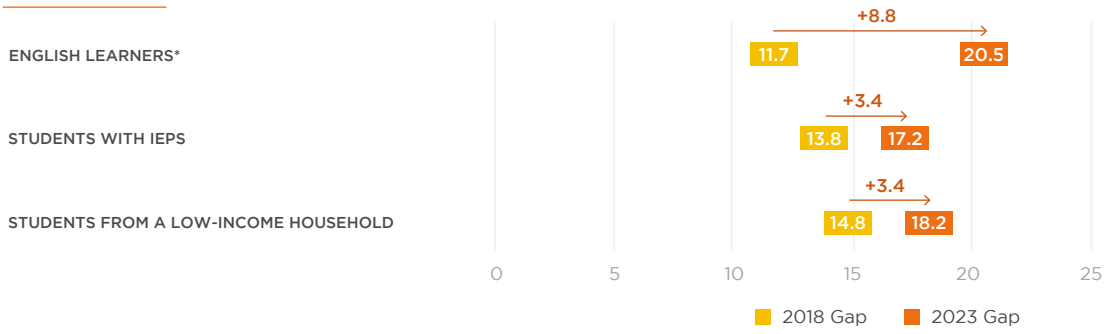
OVERALL PREPAREDNESS IN DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS FOR ALL STUDENTS, 2018



OVERALL PREPAREDNESS IN DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS FOR ALL STUDENTS, 2024



PERCENTAGE POINT GAPS TO KINDERGARTEN READINESS IN ALL 3 DOMAINS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS, STUDENTS WITH IEPS, AND STUDENTS FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS HAVE INCREASED BETWEEN 2018 AND 2023



Source: ISBE KIDS Report 2018 - 2023, ISBE Report Card 2024
Note: Most English Learners were not given alternative language assessment items specifically for English Learners, so it is likely that English Learner kindergarten readiness levels are not systematically measured across all districts. Source: IWERC, Trends and Disparities in Readiness Using KIDS, 2024

K-12 EDUCATION

Enrollment and Access

As the state population decreases and becomes more diverse, the K-12 system is mirroring those changes.

From 2010 to 2023, the number of school-aged children decreased by 11.6%, and enrollment in public K-12 schools decreased by 10.3%.[42]

During that same period, our K-12 public school enrollment has become more diverse, with increased numbers and percent of Latinx students (from 21.1% of the K-12 enrollment to 27.5%), English Learners (from 7.6% of the K-12 enrollment to 14.6%), and students from low-income households (from 45.4% of the K-12 enrollment to 49%).[43]

Additionally, we are seeing an increased number of students who are not enrolled in our public schools or in a registered non-public school.[44] We estimate this number is hovering between 3–6% of school-aged children, whereas historically the number was steady and closer to 1%.[45] The state saw an increase in the number of students not enrolled in either sector during the pandemic, and those rates have held steady.[46]

Learning Conditions

Through concentrated state investments and statewide initiatives to close opportunity gaps, the state has made strides in school funding, quality educators, and advanced coursework. However, the impact of the pandemic and historic inequities are still being felt today.

Research tells us that strong learning conditions lead to stronger and more equitable student growth and outcomes. Accordingly, it is important to understand whether students have access to adequate resources, high-quality educators, and school support personnel.

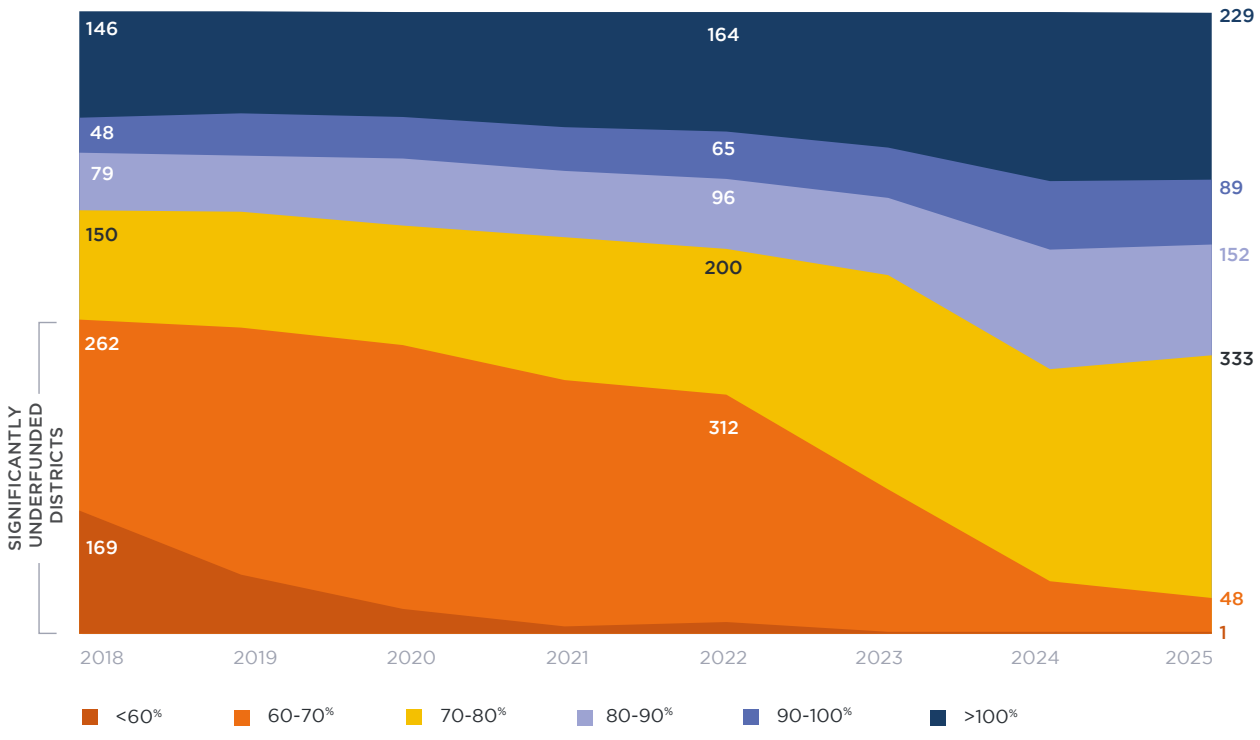
State Spending and the Path to Adequacy

EBF investments have increased funding across the state and targeted funding to the districts and students who need it most.

The state has invested over $2 billion in the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula, shrinking the number of districts with less than 70% of the resources they need from 431 districts serving over 1.2 million students to 49 districts serving 76,000 students.[47] This is powerful progress.

The number of districts that are significantly underfunded has decreased from 431 to 49.

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS BY ADEQUACY PERCENTAGE

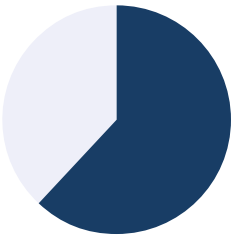


Source: ISBE, Evidence-Based Funding Distribution Calculation. Calculations do not include schools administered by Regional Offices of Education.
Note: Adequacy percentage is the percent of resources a resources has to support its "Adequacy Target" or the cost of providing all research-based components of a high-quality education based on each district's characteristics.

The average percent of adequacy for districts below 90% adequacy, or districts that are not fully funded, increased from 67.1% in 2018 to 77.1% in 2025.[48] When EBF was created, the goal was to close equity gaps and ensure all schools and students had the resources they needed to succeed.

Over the eight years that EBF has been in place, that is exactly what has happened. Indeed, the percent of students from low-income households, students of color, and/or English Learners attending deeply underfunded districts has decreased significantly, overall and across locales.

2018



62%

2025

4%

The percent of students in districts with <70% adequate funding dropped from 62% 2018 to 4% in 2025.

The implications of these investments are evident across the state. Empowered with consistent and stable funding, school districts have been able to hire more teachers, counselors, and support staff, and invest in updated programs, technology, and curricula.[49]

With such significant investments being made prior to the pandemic, Illinois was better suited to weather the inevitable disruptions in learning during the pandemic, putting the state in a stronger position for learning recovery. For example, Illinois was able to increase its ranking in math proficiency on the NAEP — not because proficiency rates grew, but because Illinois held steadier, while other states saw more significant academic losses.

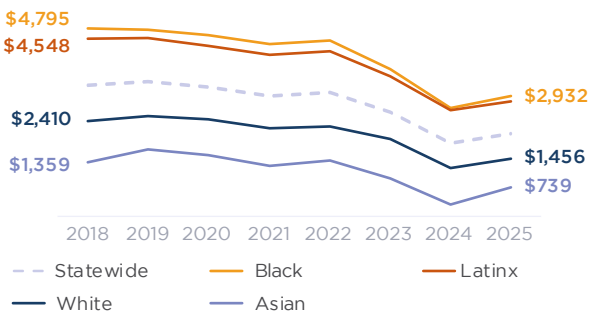
That said, Illinois has work to do. The state is still battling a $3 billion EBF gap and facing diminished support for Mandated Categoricals, which cover the costs for transportation and other required services. And even with significant improvements, the state still faces significant and inequitable gaps in per-student funding across student demographics.

At our current rate of investment, all districts will not be fully funded according to EBF until at least 2038[50], leaving an entire generation of students without access to an adequately funded education.

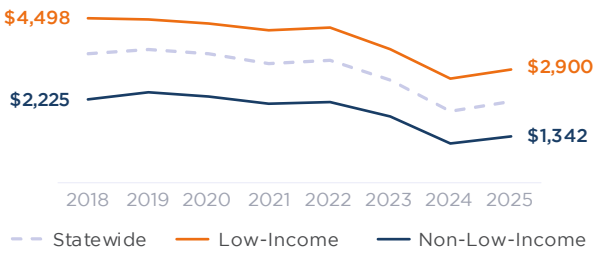
Despite progress on closing equity gaps to adequate funding, they still persist.

PER-PUPIL ADEQUACY GAP TO FULL FUNDING BY STUDENT GROUP AND LOCALE

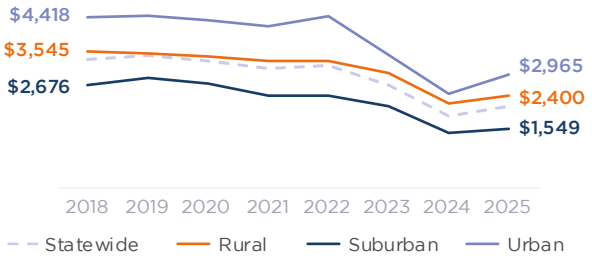
BY RACE/ETHNICITY



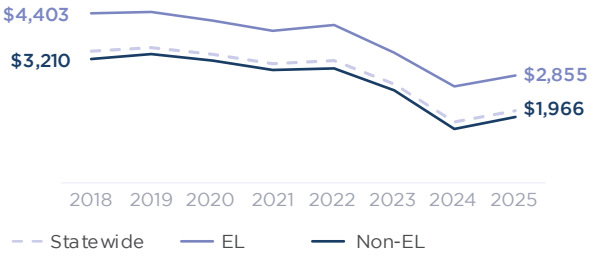
BY INCOME STATUS



BY LOCALE



BY ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS



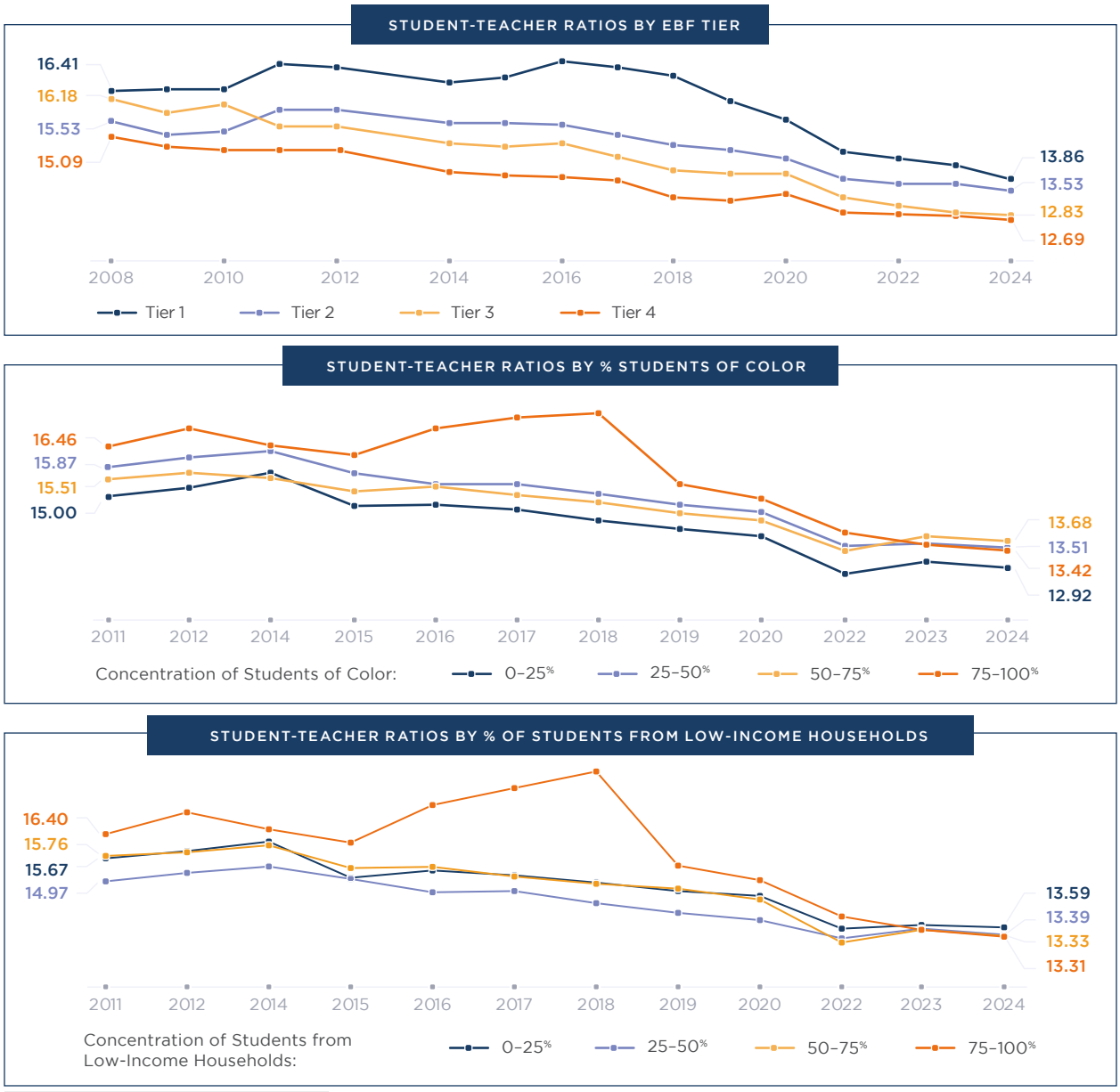
Source: ISBE, Evidence-Based Funding Distribution Calculation. Calculations do not include schools administered by Regional Offices of Education.
Note: Pandemic-related changes to the economy resulted in a large spike in the Corporate Personal Property Relief Tax (CPPRT), a funding source for school districts, over the last several years. This had the effect of accelerating the decline in funding gaps across the state. However, as CPPRT funding starts to return to normal levels, we're seeing a slight decrease in overall funding, and an increase in gaps to adequacy.

Access to Quality Educators

During this period of increased state investment through EBF and COVID-relief funding, districts across the state have invested in the educator pipeline. However, some of our most historically underserved students still do not have access to enough effective educators.

Ensuring every classroom has a well-trained, effective teacher may be the single most important thing a state can do to support student success. And while Illinois has made progress here, there is more to do. Illinois has seen an increase in the number of educators (FTE or full-time equivalence) from 130,101 in 2008 to 135,070 in 2024. With teacher FTE climbing and student enrollment dropping, student-to-teacher ratios have declined considerably over the last decade from a 15.2 : 1 ratio in 2009 to 13.2 : 1 in 2024.[51] Importantly, we saw significant gaps close regarding student-to-teacher ratios in both districts that serve large concentrations of students of color and students from low-income households. Lastly, those increases were especially prominent in historically underfunded districts that benefitted the most from new EBF funds.[52]

Student-teacher ratios have lowered for all students, with the gap between the groups also closing significantly.



Source: Common Core of Data, 2011-2024
Note: 2013 and 2021 are not included due to a lack of data.

Although Illinois has been hiring more teachers, teacher diversity does not yet match the diversity of the student population.

Indeed, over the last decade we have seen virtually no change in the percentage point gap between students and teachers of color, which has been hovering around 36% since 2016. Educators of color make up only 18% of the workforce, meanwhile students of color make up 54.7% of the K-12 population.[53] Early in the pipeline, the diversity in educator preparation programs has nearly doubled — specifically for Latinx educators. Yet diversity in the workforce remains stubbornly low, highlighting the need to ensure these early educators are able to move through the pipeline to the classroom.[54]

As importantly, access to high-quality educators is not equitable across the state in two critical ways. First, we see higher vacancy rates (the percentage of positions that are unfilled in the fall of a given school year) for Special Education, Bilingual instruction, and paraprofessionals, a circumstance that often results in larger classes and increased reliance on substitutes, educators with temporary or no licensure, and novice teachers.[55]

ONE TEACHER'S 'WHY'

A Bloomington special education teacher says the joys of teaching are not discussed enough.

SCAN TO READ MORE

Second, and crucially, high-poverty districts and districts that serve more students of color face outsized challenges recruiting and retaining the fully-certified and experienced staff that students need to succeed. These districts are more likely to have higher percentages of novice teachers, higher percentages of educators on short-term provision licenses, higher vacancy rates, and lower teacher attendance rates.[56]

	High-poverty districts	Districts that serve more students of color	Statewide average
Novice Teacher Rate	8.4%	7.9%	6.6%
Educators on Short-Term Approvals Rate	4.3%	4.5%	3.1%
Higher Vacancy Rate	5.1%	4.7%	2.8%
Lower Teacher Attendance Rate	60%	61%	66%

Additionally, rural and urban districts share many workforce challenges, like slightly higher rates of educators with provisional licenses, more novice teachers, and higher teacher vacancy rates. Some challenges differ by locale, with rural districts having more educators teaching out of field, while urban districts see higher rates of teachers with many absences.

	Rural	Urban	Suburban
Novice Teacher Rate	7.1%	7.7%	5.7%
Educators on Short-Term Approvals Rate	3.2%	3.9%	2.7%
Vacancy Rate	4.1%	3.2%	2.0%
Teachers with High Attendance Rate	69%	63%	66%
Out-of-Field Teachers	7.5%	3.6%	2.6%

RURAL DISTRICTS INNOVATE AMID TEACHER SHORTAGES

Small schools adapt with creative solutions, partnerships, and homegrown talent pipelines.

SCAN TO READ MORE

Illinois is making strides in ensuring that students have access to advanced coursework and career endorsements during high school.

Increasingly, more students have access to advanced coursework, including Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit courses, International Baccalaureate (IB), and enriched and honors coursework. Importantly, more students with disabilities, English Learners, students of color, and students from low-income households are participating in advanced coursework.[57]

Lastly, the state has seen significant increases in the number of students who are earning a College and Career Pathway Endorsement (from 596 in 2022 to 2,422 in 2024) or a Seal of Biliteracy (from 2638 in 2016 to 9,369 in 2024).[58] Both are examples of credentials students can earn during their K-12 tenure to propel their postsecondary pathways.

Student wellness trends, including chronic absenteeism, are at historic and worrisome levels.

Illinois high school students are facing high rates of mental health issues — a trend that started prior to the pandemic but has only worsened since then — with more significant and worrisome rates for female students, who feel hopeless at a rate 28.1 percentage points higher than male students (51.6% of female students and 25% of male students) and seriously consider suicide at a rate 26.6 percentage points higher than male students (27% of female students and 11.4% of male students).[59]

Exposure to traumatic events, captured through Adverse Childhood Experiences (or ACEs) are another useful metric to understand student wellness. Although exposure to ACEs has actually gone down in recent years, they are inequitably experienced: of the racial/ethnic groups examined, Black students had the highest rate of 0 ACEs reported. However, they also had the highest rate of 2+ ACEs reported, which is linked with greater impacts on later outcomes.[60]

Importantly, although mental health challenges are rising, rates of emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues among children in Illinois have remained stable. Illinois ranks high (8th) on rates of counseling and treatment of youth when compared to other states.[61]

Students are still considerably more likely to miss school than they were pre-pandemic.

One of the most alarming and persistent issues stemming from the pandemic has been the increase in chronic absenteeism and truancy. Although statewide attendance rates have hovered between 90% and 95% for the past 16 years, rates of chronic truancy (missing 5% or more school days without an excuse) rose from 11.2% in 2018 to 20.0% in 2024 and chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of school days regardless of excuse) rose from 16.8% in 2018 to 26.3% in 2024.[62] Additionally, for all measures of attendance, urban districts, as well as districts that serve a greater percentage of students of color and greater percentages of students from low-income households, are seeing alarming rates of truancy and absenteeism.[63]

INSIGHT

FEDERAL DATASET AT RISK

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System every two years. Due to the current administration's opposition to research disaggregated by important student groups such as gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity, it is not clear whether this data will be available in the future — greatly limiting how Illinois can track important mental health trends for youth.

The percentage of Illinois high school students who have felt sad or hopeless increased from 27% in 2007 to 38% in 2023.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO FELT SAD OR HOPELESS

Source: CDC Youth Behavioral Risk Survey, 2007-2023

Critical support staff are being added, but not fast enough.

In addition to adding teachers, thanks to reliable and growing EBF funds, Illinois districts are hiring an increasing number of student support personnel (SSP), including nurses, school psychologists, school counselors, social workers, and speech-language pathologists. Accordingly, the ratio of students to SSPs has declined since 2018. Despite these efforts, in 2024 — out of all the SSP positions — only school psychologists met the student-professional ratios recommended by relevant associations and by the evidence-based benchmarks included in the state's EBF.[64]

This means that most students are in districts without sufficient support staff. Indeed, only 13% of students throughout the state attend a school district in which there are enough school counselors to meet the identified target ratios. And while the number of support personnel has improved, racial gaps in access to social workers and counselors have grown since 2019.[65]

Illinois continues to face racial inequities in student discipline.

There is little doubt that student attendance and mental health suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, as schedules and norms were disrupted and student well-being eroded. At the same time, suspensions and expulsions disrupt learning. Indeed, suspensions and expulsions often cause students to fall further behind and can lead to an increased likelihood of dropping out.[66] Overall, suspension and expulsion rates have decreased significantly since 2014 with some stagnation starting in 2016, we also see continued equity gaps.[67] The gap between suspension rates of urban students and students of other locales has grown. Similarly, gaps have widened when looking at schools with higher percentages of students from low-income households compared to other schools.

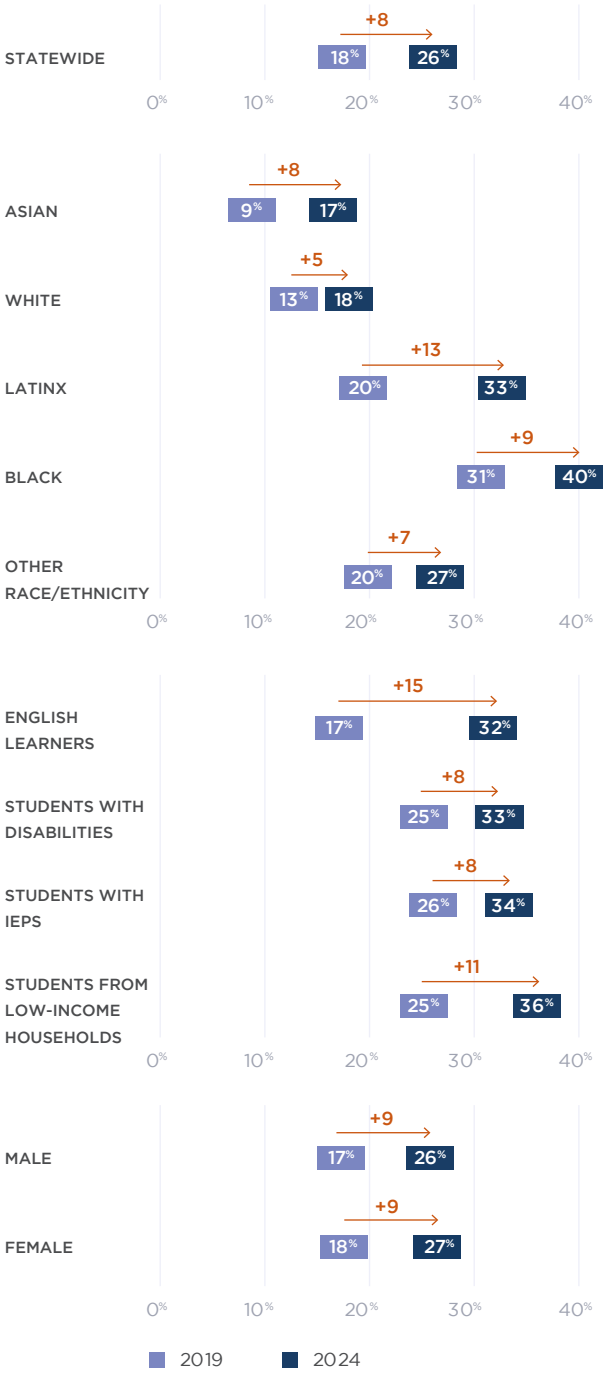
In 2024, Illinois schools issued 13.2 suspensions of Black students for every 100 Black students enrolled, which is significantly higher than the rates for White (3.2) and Latinx (4.0) students.[68]

School culture and climate have not yet rebounded from the impacts of the pandemic.

Research makes clear that attending a school with a strong learning environment can improve a student's trajectory and set them up for success in school and beyond. This is why Illinois continues to survey students and educators on the essential elements of school success — the 5Essentials — to understand whether schools are creating and nurturing ambitious instruction, collaborative teachers, effective leaders, supportive environments, and involved families.[69] Studies from the Consortium on School Research

The pandemic has had lasting impacts on student attendance with chronic absenteeism rates on the rise for all student groups.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATES BY STUDENT GROUP



Source: ISBE Report Card 2019, 2024
Note: In 2018 and 2019, chronic absenteeism held at 15% nationally. By 2022 chronic absenteeism exceeded 28%, 89% higher than the average rate three years earlier. https://www.returntolearntracker.net

at the University of Chicago repeatedly demonstrate that schools strong in at least three of the five essentials are significantly more likely to show strong student growth.[70] Unfortunately, the percent of schools that are strong in at least three of the five essentials has decreased from 29.4% in 2018 to 20.2% in 2024, and the state saw a significant dip in the percent of students attending a school that scored at a high level across each of the 5 essentials — a worrying trend.[71]

Importantly, the percent of schools with strong or strongest implementation decreased from 2018 to 2024 across each of the essentials:

- **26.7% → 22.8% in Effective Leaders**
- **33.7% → 19.2% in Collaborative Teachers**
- **38.4% → 30.9% in Involved Families**
- **35.4% → 30.8% in Supportive Environment**
- **63.5% → 35.8% in Ambitious Instruction**

This may well reflect the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, but it is worth discussion and attention.

Middle schools seem to be struggling in two key areas: supportive environments and involved families. The percent of students in schools scoring at or above 50 on those two essentials was nearly 10% percentage points less than the statewide average. [72]

Additionally, Quality Discussion, an element of Ambitious Instruction, has decreased significantly since the onset of the pandemic, from a high point of 73% of schools scoring at or above 50 on measures of Quality Discussion and dropping to 21% in 2024 — highlighting the profound impact of the pandemic disruptions in classrooms across the state.[73]

Outcomes

Overall, academic proficiency in Illinois remains largely flat. While the state weathered the pandemic better than many, gaps persist, growth has slowed, and high school performance has dipped.

In Illinois, roughly a third of students are demonstrating proficiency in reading and math at the 4th and 8th grade level. That is roughly the same as it was 20 years ago, and that overall stagnation mirrors national trends.[74]

Reading proficiency in the early grades is a strong predictor of future success.[75] Like the rest of the country, Illinois is struggling to improve student proficiency in early reading as well as in math. Results from the NAEP, or the Nation's Report Card, show that average scores and proficiency across the country reached a high point around 2013 and have either stabilized or modestly declined since then.[76] In Illinois, the percentage of 4th graders proficient in reading was 32% in 2009, reached a high of 35% in 2015, and dropped to 30% in 2024, placing Illinois 28th in the nation. In math, 4th grade proficiency in Illinois was 38% in 2009, remained flat at 39% in 2017, and has rested stubbornly at 38% through 2024, also placing Illinois 28th in the nation — although it is important to note that the changes in proficiency are not statistically significantly different from each other, so changes should be analyzed with caution.

There is (relatively) better news when we look at 8th grade proficiency: 33% and 32% of Illinois 8th graders demonstrated proficiency in reading and math on the 2024 NAEP — closely resembling the level of student proficiency in 2009.[77] While that is clearly not good news, it is notable that Illinois students held steady through pandemic disruptions, faring better than the majority of states. Indeed, in 2024, Illinois 8th graders ranked 6th in reading proficiency and 9th in math proficiency relative to other states, up from 15th and 22nd heading into the pandemic.[78]

Importantly, Illinois continues to outperform other states when looking at growth.[79] On average, Illinois achieved close to five grade levels of academic growth between 3rd and 8th grade for cohorts finishing in 2023 and 2024, ranking Illinois 2nd and 3rd in reading and math growth nationally.[80] That said, Illinois' students have historically posted more than the five grade levels of growth — the expected average growth between 3rd to 8th grades.[81] Although student growth has slowed nationwide — likely due to COVID-19-related disruptions — growth in Illinois has dropped to less than five grade levels, raising significant concerns. Although Illinois is outperforming the nation as a whole, in 2024, only half of Illinois districts were growing students at a rate higher than the national median district in both reading and math. This is a number that was at a high point of 61% for math in 2016 and 68% for reading in 2019.[82]

Although Illinois ranks middle of the pack for 4th grade proficiency, 8th grade proficiency outperforms most other states.

ILLINOIS' NAEP PROFICIENCY RANKINGS OVER TIME

Source: NAEP 2009-2024

Inequitable learning outcomes persist in Illinois.

To fully understand learning outcomes for children in Illinois, we must look beyond averages to understand what gaps might exist across lines of race, region, income, language, or learning style.[83] When it comes to equity gaps, there is good news and bad news. Looking more closely at NAEP, on the positive front, some longstanding equity gaps in both proficiency and measures of growth have begun to close for students of color, students from low-income households, students with disabilities, and English Learners.

For example, the gap in proficiency on 8th grade reading between individuals with disabilities and their non-disabled peers was 33

INSIGHT

HOW ARE THE IAR / SAT AND NAEP DIFFERENT?

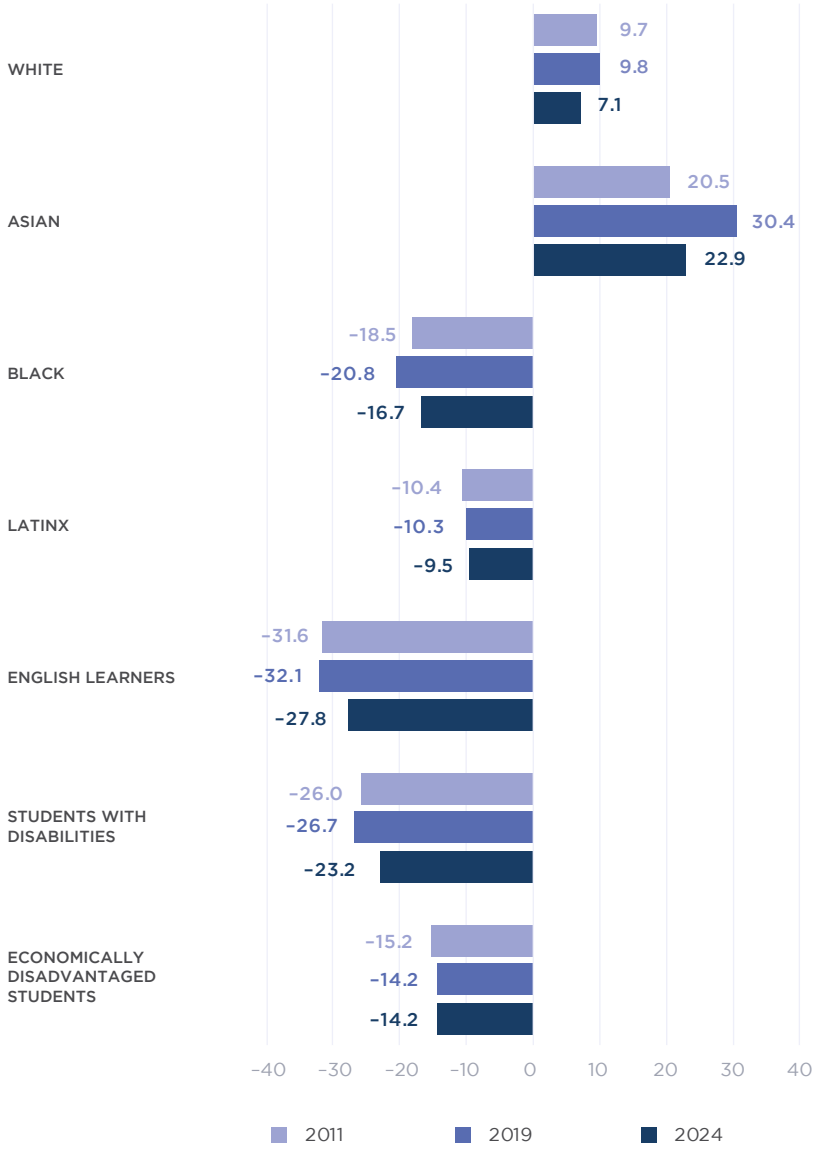
The IAR (Illinois Assessment of Readiness) and SAT are state-mandated assessments that nearly every student takes, while the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) is a national exam that tests a sample of students from every state. Each exam contains different content, proficiency standards, and can be used for different kinds of analyses. The IAR and SAT only provide a few years of data, while the NAEP allows us to assess student outcomes over a longer timeframe.

WHAT DO STATE ASSESSMENTS TELL US ABOUT STUDENT PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS?

According to the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), overall student proficiency now exceeds pre-pandemic levels in English Language Arts (from 37.8% in 2019 to 41.2% in 2024), while proficiency rates in math have not fully recovered (from 31.8% in 2019 to 28.4% in 2024).[89] Meanwhile, statewide SAT proficiency rates were declining prior to the pandemic and have continued to fall — by 8.7% in reading (39.8% to 31.1%) and 10.3% in math since 2017 (36.4% to 26.1%).[90]

Gaps to proficiency have improved among all student groups below the statewide average.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUBGROUP AND STATEWIDE PROFICIENCY RATES BY PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 8TH GRADE READING.



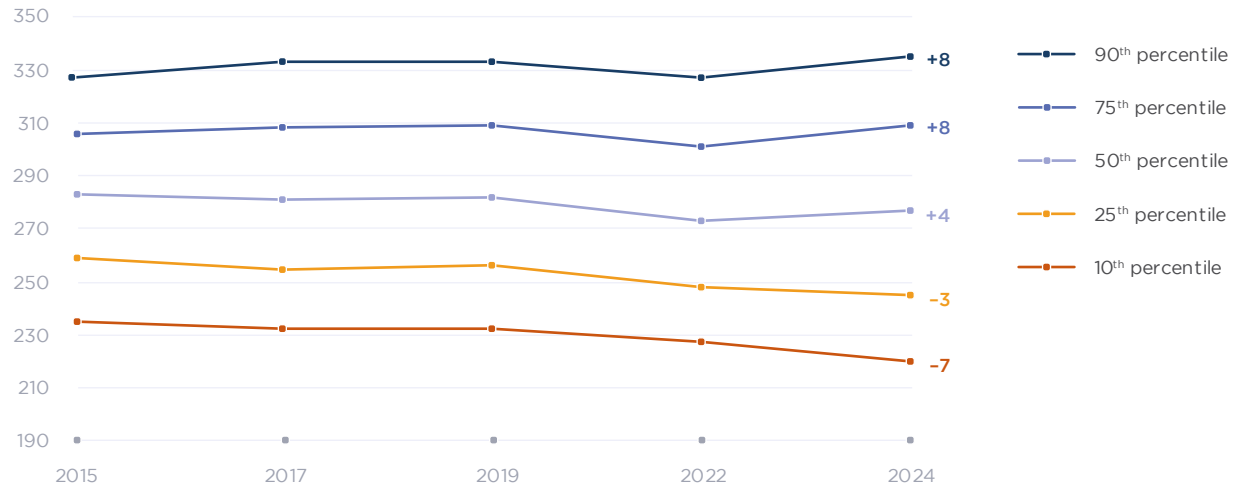
Source: NAEP 2011-2024

percentage points in 2003 and has dropped to 30 percentage points in 2024.[84] Similarly, the gap in proficiency on 4th grade reading between students from low-income households and their peers was 30 percentage points in 2003 and dropped to 24 percentage points in 2024.[85] These trends point to strong improvement in reading, with more work to be done in closing gaps in math proficiency.

Despite some progress, other gaps have widened. From 2022 to 2024, as the highest performers returned to pre-pandemic levels on NAEP, students who score in the lowest percentile have not rebounded. Indeed, their scores have continued to drop — a concerning new trend that did not exist prior to 2015.[86]

Like their national peers, the lowest-scoring students in Illinois have not rebounded from the pandemic.

AVERAGE 8TH GRADE MATH NAEP SCORES BY PERCENTILES OVER TIME



Source: NAEP 2015-2024

Other key indicators of success have shown positive progress in recent years: High schools continue to show steady progress in closing equity gaps in 9th grade on track and graduation rates.

Key indicators of success — including 9th grade on track and graduation rates — have remained at a high level, driven by strong improvements in outcomes by students of color, students from low-income households, and English Learners.

The percentage of 9th graders on track, an indicator that strongly predicts future high school graduation, has remained at a stable and high rate since 2014 (87.4% to 88.2%), though outcomes continue to vary by race. That said, while Black students, students from low-income

INSIGHT

CHANGES IN FEDERAL DATA AVAILABILITY

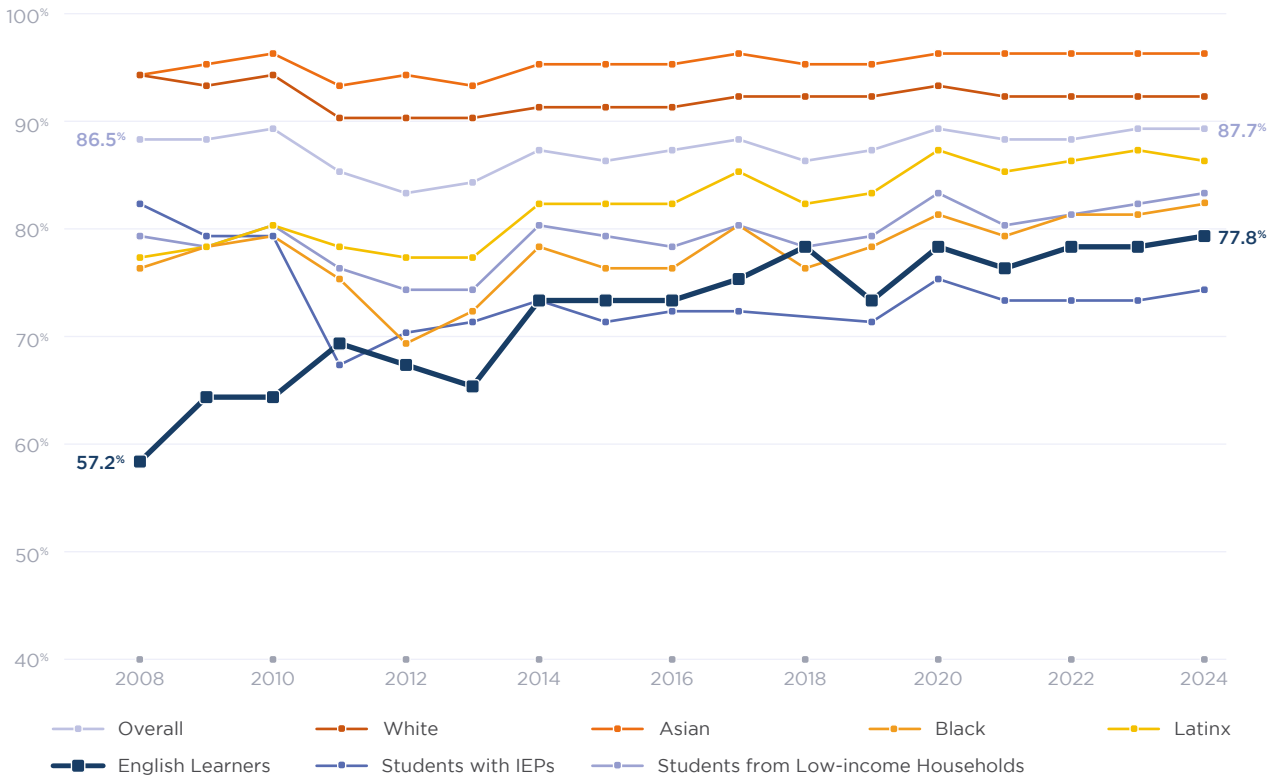
The National Center for Education Statistics releases an annual, congressionally-mandated report called the "Condition of Education," which typically includes over 270 data tables and allows states to see how they are progressing on key indicators, like high school graduation. Staffing cuts due to federal administration changes meant that the full scope of analysis was not released by the deadline this year, limiting access to the most recent graduation rates.

households, and English Learners all trail the statewide average by over 6 percentage points, these gaps have been steadily closing.

Four-year graduation rates have remained at a stable, but high, rate in the last 15 years. At the same time, gaps across race and ethnicity have been closing since 2012, spurred by increases in Black (74.9% in 2008 to 80.7%) and Latinx graduates (75.7% to 85.1%). Similarly, graduation rates have increased for students from low-income households (78.2% to 81.8%), with dramatic increases for English Learners, whose completion rates have seen a 20.6 percentage point increase. Indeed, in 2008, just over half of English Learners graduated (57.2%), whereas roughly three-quarters graduated in 2024 (77.8%).[87]

4-year high school graduation rates among English Learners have grown dramatically since 2008.

STATEWIDE ILLINOIS 4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE BY STUDENT GROUP



Source: ISBE Report Card, 2008-2024

More students are moving straight into college-level coursework once they get to a postsecondary institution.

As the state continues to grow access to the number of students taking college-level coursework in high school. We are, encouragingly, also seeing community college rates decreasing steadily since 2013, with overall remediation rates dropping from 48.7% in 2013 to 27.7% in 2022.[88] This is important; students who take remedial coursework — which costs tuition, but does not result in any credits — are disproportionately likely to stop-out of college. This phenomenon is exactly what the Developmental Education Reform Act (DERA) is attempting to address.

INSIGHT

THE DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION REFORM ACT (DERA) IS WORKING

Research tells us that students enrolled in developmental education classes in postsecondary - that is, classes for which they earn no course credit - are dramatically more likely to stop out. Accordingly, in 2021, Illinois passed the Developmental Education Reform Act (DERA), which (1) ensured that institutions placed students in college-level courses if they met standards on any one of the multiple measures (i.e, placement exam, GPA) and (2) provided plans to scale evidence-based models to maximize students' likelihood of completing gateway courses in their first two semesters. As a result, the number of students enrolled in developmental education is dropping. This is good news and the state can and should track the use of evidence-based co-requisite models to ensure ongoing progress.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Enrollment and Access

Illinois colleges and universities have seen steady decreases in enrollment since 2010, along with significant changes in student demographics. At the same time, students and families continue to battle high costs of attendance.

Both enrollment in postsecondary institutions in Illinois and rates of college-going high school graduates have decreased. Meanwhile, the student body has become more diverse.

In the last 15 years, Illinois has seen its postsecondary enrollment decrease by 28%. At its high point in 2010, 1,068,125 students enrolled in a postsecondary institution in Illinois. In 2023, enrollment stood at 774,056.[91] Importantly, population changes do not account for the entirety of this drop. Illinois' 15-to-19-year-olds dropped 10.4% from 2010 to 2023.[92] At the same time, the percent of students enrolling in college within 16 months of high school graduation decreased from 71.0% in 2018 to 66.8% in 2024.[93] Although too early to tell, changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in 2024 and changes to accessibility of federal financial aid broadly may have worrisome impacts on postsecondary enrollment — especially for first-generation students and students from low-income households.

With shifts in state population, it is more important than ever to take a holistic approach to postsecondary enrollment. The state can do that by focusing not just on increasing the number of students who enroll immediately following high school, but also on reenrolling adults, increasing access for first-generation students, and expanding college opportunities for individuals throughout the state.

Meanwhile, as Illinois K-12 graduates' overall enrollment from 2008–2023 decreased, the demographics of postsecondary enrollment has shifted. Black and White student enrollment as a percent of overall student population decreased (2 percentage points and 17 percentage points, respectively).[94] Meanwhile, Latinx representation in postsecondary enrollment increased from 12% of the overall enrollment to 24% in 2023, reflecting both the increase in the Latinx population in Illinois as well as an increased rate of postsecondary enrollment within the population.[95]

Community colleges saw the most significant decreases in student enrollment, with a 35% decrease from 2010 to 2023 compared to 11% decrease for public universities and 13% for not-for-profit private universities.[96] Importantly, community college enrollment in Illinois has rebounded faster than other sectors from the pandemic, with a nearly 6% increase from 2022 to 2023, compared to stable enrollment at public universities and private universities (less than 1% change).[97]

Encouragingly, Illinois has seen a drop in the percent of 18-to-24-year-olds not enrolled in college or employed decreasing from 14% in 2008 to 11% in 2023.[98]

Pandemic disruptions had real impacts on student enrollment, highlighting the importance of key access and outreach programs that can reengage students who might not have made the transition to postsecondary in a typical period and similarly those students who may have stopped out.[99] Reengaging these students is critical to the state achieving its goals in increasing the number of adults with a postsecondary degree and access to a degree or comparable industry-recognized credential, which we know matters now more than ever.

Affordability remains a significant barrier to earning a degree in Illinois.

Tuition and fees have stabilized since 2019, but are still pricing far too many students out of college. Indeed, average tuition and fees for public universities in Illinois are significantly higher than the national average (about $4,500 higher in 2023).[100]

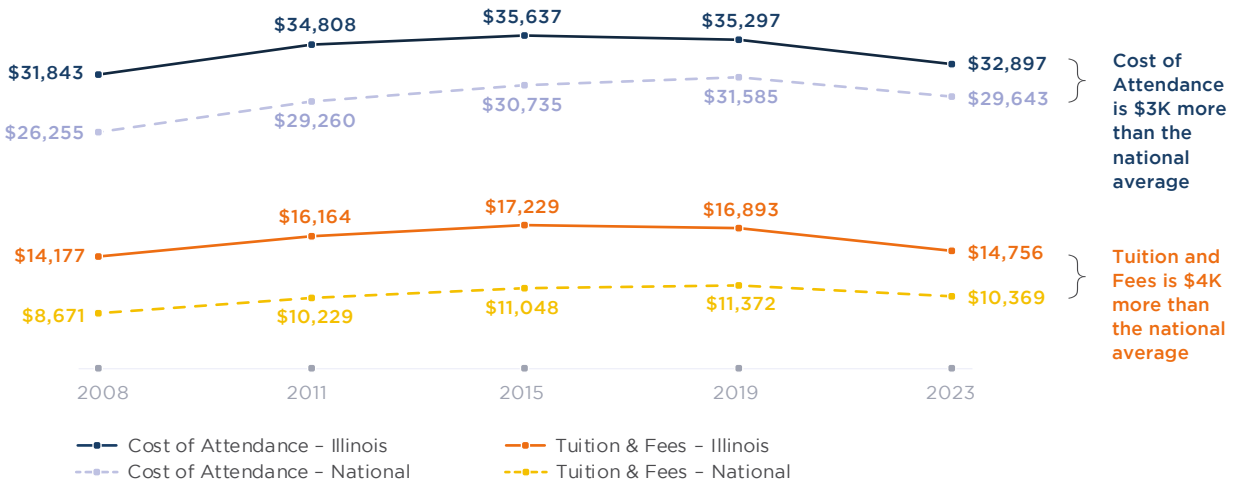
With tuition and fees stabilizing at high rates, it takes a greater percentage of household income to attend a public university in the state. In fact, Illinois ranks 46th for affordability when it comes to 4-year institutions, with tuition and fees costing a median income household 19% of their annual income (down from 23% in 2016). It is also worth noting that the current tuition and fee rates do not create equal burdens among students and families across the state. Black families are faced with paying 30% of their household income to afford tuition and fees at a public university, while Latinx families would need to spend 20% of their annual income, and a family at the federal poverty line would need to spend 51% of their annual income. This means that a four-person household at the federal poverty line in 2023, making $30,000, would be asked to pay $15,153 in tuition and fees at a public university — before financial aid.[101] Importantly, although financial aid — specifically state financial aid directed at students from low-income households — assists in reducing this burden, students with families at the federal poverty line were still asked to contribute 31% of their income when factoring in these grants and scholarships.[102]

Not surprisingly then, the average amount of postsecondary debt has risen for Illinois residents across all institution types. Indeed, median debt rose from $4,865 in 2010 to $7,628 for students who graduated from a public institution in 2021.[103]

Additionally, affordability issues cannot solely focus on tuition and fees as the full cost of attendance. Factors such as housing and transportation puts a major strain on students as well. Illinois has made a concerted effort to increase state financial aid for residents, with a 77% increase in investments in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) from 2019 to 2025, and the average MAP award increasing from $3,636 in 2010 for public university students to $5,764 in 2023.[104] This is important and meaningful progress. When examining the cost to students and families, which factors in institution support and state financial aid (or net price), the percent of income a median income household would need to pay at a public university decreased from 21% in

Cost of attendance reached record highs in 2015 with recent declines.

AVERAGE COST OF ATTENDANCE AND TUITION & FEES AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ILLINOIS AND NATIONWIDE (IN 2023 DOLLARS)



Source: IPEDS, 2008-2023
Note: Cost of Attendance includes tuition and fees, food and housing, books, course materials, supplies, and equipment, and other expenses that a full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking student can expect to pay to go to college for an academic year.

Learning Conditions

On average, Illinois institutions are spending more on academic and student supports — which is critical, given the worrisome trends in student mental health and the need to close equity gaps in retention.

INSIGHT

DEEPER POSTSECONDARY DATA COLLECTION NEEDED

As Illinois battles enrollment decreases, it becomes even more important for institutions to support the students they do enroll. Currently, there is no publicly available data on retention rates disaggregated by race and ethnicity, income status, or other key identifiers at the institutional level. The state should continue to expand its data transparency in this area to help illuminate areas of progress and challenge. Such information could be enriched by including a common or comparable culture and climate survey.

2016 to 12% in 2023. This highlights the meaningful progress that MAP has made on affordability.

Illinois institutions are spending more on critical supports.

On average, institutions in Illinois, both public and private, are spending more per-student on academic and student support services.[105] This includes critical supports like academic tutoring, student wellness supports, and other wraparound services that assist students to and through their education. This is true despite the fact that per-pupil appropriations for community colleges and public universities have leveled off since 2011, and underscores efforts at the institution level.

Retention rates are on the rise.

From 2010 to 2023, retention rates for full-time students have increased from 71% to 76% at all postsecondary institutions in Illinois.[106] Retention rates vary by institution type, and Illinois ranks in the top 10 in the country for retention rates at our 2-year institutions. Meanwhile, Illinois ranks 30th for public universities and 19th for private not-for-profit universities.[107]

At the same time, retention rates have improved but remain stubbornly low for part-time students. Specifically, retention of part-time students grew from 42% in 2010 to 48% in 2023, but is far below full-time students. Additionally, at Illinois' public universities, Black and Latinx full-time students are less likely to be retained than the statewide average — with Black student retention at 59.2% and Latinx at 75.3% — while the statewide average is 80.3%.[108] Understanding how institutions in Illinois can better support students through their postsecondary journey will help achieve the state's overarching goal of increasing attainment across Illinois while ensuring students do not take on undue burdens of student loan debt with no degree.

Student mental health is a significant barrier to postsecondary success.

As in the K-12 sector, worrisome trends in student mental health for postsecondary students were on the rise prior to the pandemic and worsened during that period. The percentage of students feeling that their emotional and mental difficulties have impacted their academics has increased from 24.6% to 46.5% since 2007.[109] Latinx students, students with disabilities, students who report higher rates of financial stress, trans students, and students who identify as LGBQ+ are more likely than other students to report emotional or mental difficulties that interfere with their academics.

TWO POWERFUL TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT WELL-BEING

K-12 and postseconday advocates highlight the significance of data and programs for student mental health.

SCAN TO READ MORE

Outcomes

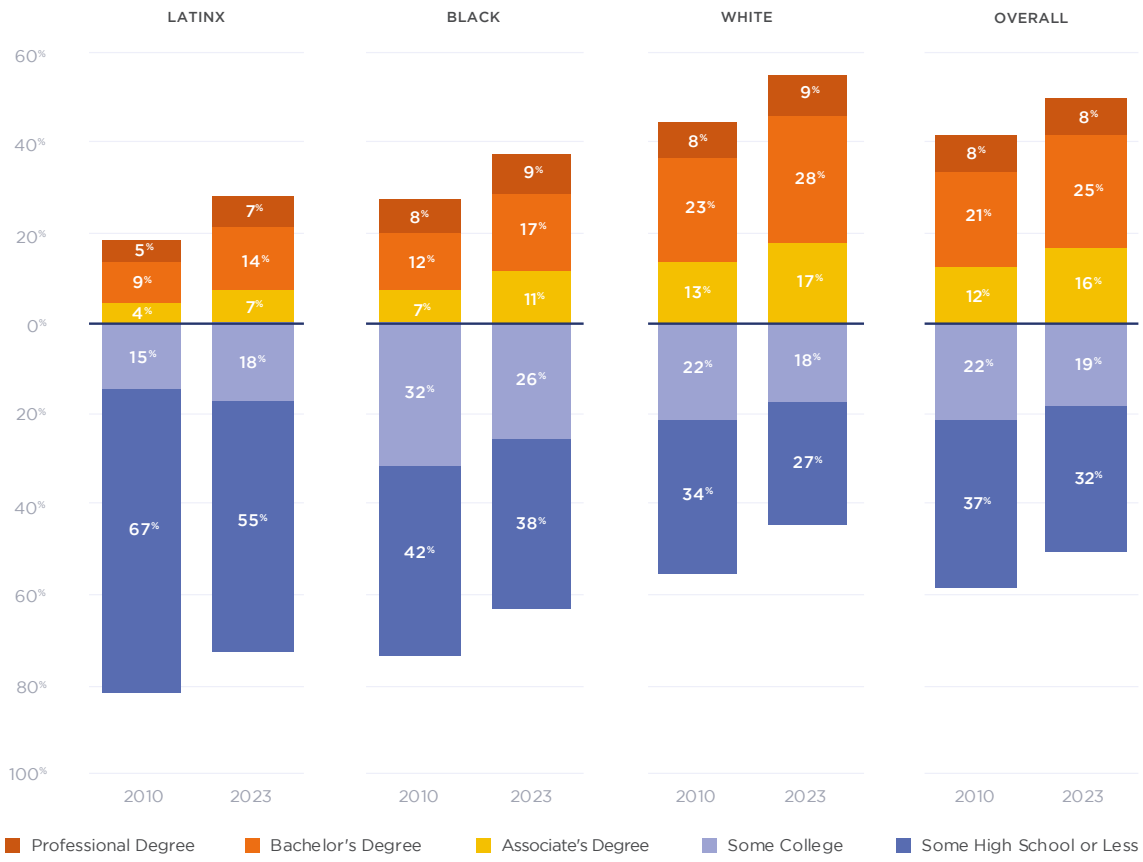
The state has made meaningful and consistent progress in overall attainment, and done so while closing equity gaps. That said, far too many students do not make it to college graduation.

The state has made progress in reaching its goal of having 60% of Illinois residents earning a high-quality postsecondary degree by 2025. The percentage of adults in Illinois with an associate's degree or higher grew from 41% in 2010 to 49% in 2023. Importantly, Black and Latinx attainment during this period grew by an encouraging 9 percentage points each. But significant attainment gaps persist, with 36.3% of Black and 27.5% Latinx individuals having a postsecondary degree, compared to 56% of White individuals in 2023. Illinois ranks 17th in the nation for post-secondary attainment and that ranking has remained relatively stable since 2009.[110]

When examining the number of Illinoisans with a post-high school credential (including short-term credentials), that number has increased by 16% since 2009 (from 41.4% to 57.4%).[111] Illinois is in the middle of the pack for that metric, mirroring similar states like Florida (55.2%), California (56.1%), and New York (56.8%).[112] Illinoisans who have a postsecondary degree are less likely to be unemployed and have higher annual wages than those without a degree, highlighting the continued importance of higher education.[113]

Degree attainment is on the rise in Illinois with meaningful progress for Black and Latinx individuals across the state.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: Census

Strong success rates for transfer students and progress in graduation rates have helped spur increases in overall attainment

These attainment rates are bolstered by both strong community college transfer rates and increasingly strong graduation rates. Illinois students that transfer from community colleges complete their bachelor's degrees at the highest rates across the country — 8% higher than the national average![114] Overall, however, the number of students transferring to public universities has decreased in the last ten years (32% decrease).[115] Transfer rates are declining at a higher rate than the overall enrollment declines (11% decrease), highlighting a need to better understand transfer patterns in the state. Specifically, Black and White transfer counts to public universities have dropped by 46% from 2010 to 2023, while Latinx transfer counts are up 58%.[116] Importantly, a recent report showed that 79% of Illinois community college students intend to transfer but ultimately do not.[117]

Illinois graduation rates have been slowly inching up since 2008 for both bachelor's and associate's degrees. Rates of graduation in 150% of normal time increased from 63% for the 2003 cohort to 68% for the 2017 cohort for a bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, associate's degree graduation rates increased from 17% to 31% during that same period. Illinois ranks 12th in the nation and 13th in the nation, respectively, for completion rates.[118] Lastly in 2024, the total completions at Illinois community colleges was at its third-highest level ever reported (70,091), an increase of 6.7% from 2020.[119]

12X12X12: A PATH TO GRADUATION

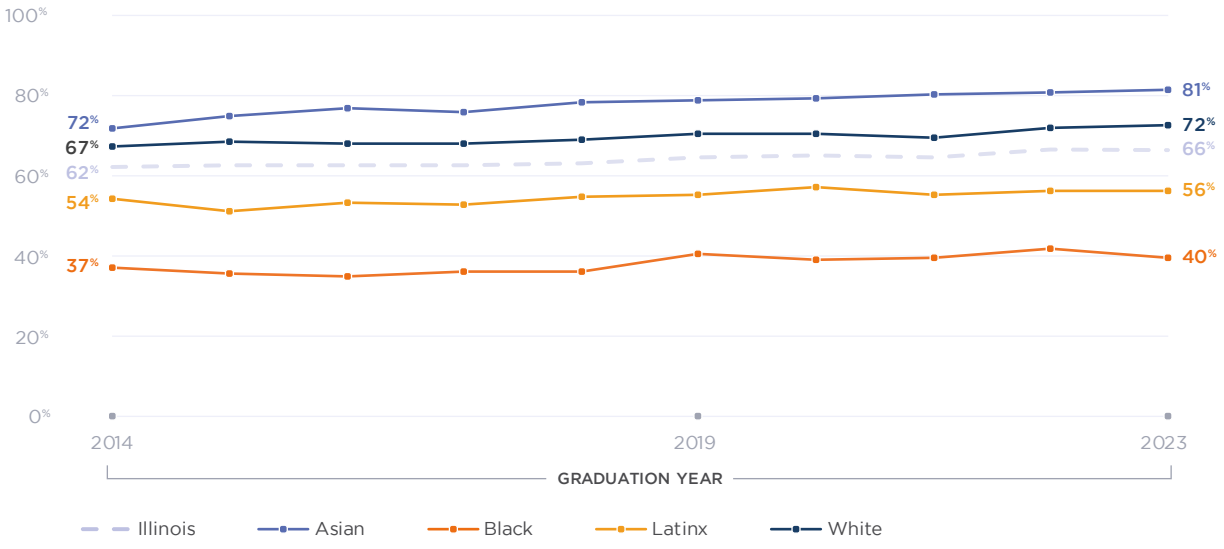
At Joliet Junior College, the president bets big on dual credit.

SCAN TO READ MORE

Although all student groups saw increases in their overall graduation rates for both bachelor's and associate's degrees, worrisome completion rate gaps exist for Black and Latinx college students. For instance, among the 2017 cohort, 40% of Black students and 56% of Latinx students graduated, compared to the average graduation rate of 66%. Similarly, Pell Grant recipients are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree, with 50% of students graduating in 150% of the time 2017.[120]

Postsecondary graduation rates are inching upwards, but gaps persist.

BACHELOR'S GRADUATION RATE AT 150% OF NORMAL TIME BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Graduation Rates component final data (2002 - 2022) and provisional data (2023).

CONCLUSION

With unprecedented change happening at the federal level, it is more important than ever that Illinois continues to prioritize adequate and equitable investments, and that we continue to keep student needs at the center of policy and practice. Our strength and our future depend on all students — no matter their background — having access to high-quality education and care from birth to adulthood.

Illinois continues to make progress — and to be a leader — in driving equitable opportunities and outcomes for students. We've made immense headway in investing adequate and equitable resources into our K-12 schools, and progress in a number of key areas suggests this work is making a difference. That said, the state has more work to do in both early childhood and higher education funding — work complicated by looming budget deficits and deep federal cuts, but nonetheless essential to the state's long-term health.

It is also worth celebrating that the state continues to make meaningful progress in closing equity gaps — from the number of students that are showing up to kindergarten developmentally ready to learn, to ensuring that a record number of high school students have access to advanced coursework, to ongoing growth in overall educational attainment. It is clear that over the last 15 years, Illinois has committed to investing in the full B-20 continuum — and that work is paying off, with nearly half of the adult population having a postsecondary degree and nearly 60% of the population having either a postsecondary degree or credential. This is tremendous progress.

That said, equity gaps persist throughout the continuum — from access to preschool, to academic proficiency and wellbeing in K-12, to retention rates in our postsecondary institutions. The state can and must do better to meet the needs of all students.

Similarly, we are seeing a concerning trend in stagnant proficiency and growth rates for elementary and secondary students in both English and math — a trend that started prior to the pandemic, but was clearly exacerbated by COVID-19 disruptions. Similarly, and just as importantly, data suggests that our children need more social and emotional resources and support. Increasing chronic absenteeism rates and concerning trends in student mental health and wellness raise important questions about what we can and should be doing as a state to systemically support students so that they are ready and able to learn.

Illinois has proven time and time again that we are capable of making and sustaining transformational progress for students and families, and the data in this report reminds us progress is both possible and essential.

DATA TABLES

Early Childhood

Enrollment and Access

Do Illinois children have access to Preschool?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
1a	3-Year-Olds Enrolled in State-Funded Preschool	20%	20%	22%	23%	24%	DC	82%	3 out of 45	2 (1 -> 3)	0 (3 -> 3)							
1b	4-Year-Olds Enrolled in State-Funded Preschool	31%	26%	31%	34%	35%	DC	95%	20 out of 45	–9 (11 -> 20)	0 (20 -> 20)							
1c	3-Year-Olds Enrolled in Head Start	8%	10%	8%	6%	6%	MS	19%	29 out of 51	–6 (23 -> 29)	–6 (23->29)							
1d	4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Head Start	11%	11%	9%	5%	5%	MS	23%	29 out of 51	–3 (26 -> 29)	–11 (18 -> 29)							
2a	% of 3- and 4-Year-Olds <400% FPL Served by PFA	36%	31%	38%	43%							37%	23%	31%	4%	20%	21%	22%
2b	% of 3- and 4-Year-Olds <130% FPL Served by Head Start	36%	36%	33%	25%							23%	42%	18%	3%	12%	25%	46%
3	% of 3- and 4-Year-Old English Learners Who Are Receiving Bilingual Services																	

How affordable is child care for an infant?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2019	2022	2024
CENTER						
4a	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	23.9%	23.5%	19.8%	18.6%	
4b	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		34.7%	30.6%	26.2%	
4c	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		54%	47.5%	39.8%	
4d	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	60.1%	59.5%	57.2%	52.2%	
HOME						
4e	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	13.2%	14.4%	12.9%	13.8%	
4f	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		18.7%	16.9%	16.6%	
4g	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		40.4%	34.6%	27%	
4h	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	33.1%	36.4%	37.2%	38.9%	

How affordable is child care for an toddler?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2019	2022	2024
CENTER						
5a	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	19.9%	19.8%	16.4%	14.7%	
5b	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		29.2%	25.4%	20.7%	
5c	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		45.4%	39.4%	31.4%	
5d	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	50%	50.1%	47.5%	41.2%	
HOME						
5e	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	12.5%	13.9%	12%	12.9%	
5f	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		20.5%	18.6%	18.2%	
5g	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		31.9%	28.8%	27.7%	
5h	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	31.3%	35.2%	34.7%	36.3%	

How affordable is child care for a preschooler?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2019	2022	2024
CENTER						
6a	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	18.1%	17.6%	14.4%	12.6%	
6b	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		26%	22.4%	17.8%	
6c	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		40.4%	34.6%	27%	
6d	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	45.4%	44.6%	41.7%	35.4%	
HOME						
7a	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Median Household Income	12.2%	12.7%	10.9%	11.7%	
7b	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Male-Parent Family		18.7%	16.9%	16.6%	
7c	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Single, Female-Parent Family		40.4%	34.6%	27%	
7d	% of Income Necessary to Pay for Median Cost of Child Care for a Household at the Federal Poverty Line	30.7%	32%	31.5%	33%	

Do Illinois children have access to affordable child care?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024
8a	# of 0-to-2-Year-Olds Enrolled in CCAP	42,081	29,077	36,674	32,932	36,945
8b	% of 0-to-2-Year-Olds Under 300% FPL Enrolled in CCAP	15%	11%	15%	16%	
8c	# of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Illinois CCAP	35,653	29,665	29,932	29,887	33,280
8d	% of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Under 300% FPL Enrolled in CCAP	18%	16%	18%	21%	

Do Illinois children have access to home visiting and Early Intervention services?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024
9	Children Under 3 At or Below 185% FPL With Access to State-Funded HV (IDHS + ISBE PI)	11%	9%	13%	13%	
10	Children Under 3 At or Below 185% FPL With Access to Federal-Funded HV (MIECHV + EHS)		6%	7%	8%	
11a	% Early Learners Receiving Early Intervention Services	4%	5%	5%	6%	
11b	% of Service Delays For Receiving Early Intervention Services		4%	5%	8%	

Early Childhood

Learning Conditions

Is Illinois adequately investing in state funded preschools?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)
12	State Spending Per Child on State Funded Preschools	$5,111	$4,363	$5,685	$5,378	$6,171	DC	$23,785	26 out of 45	-2 (24 -> 26)	-2 (24 -> 26)

Are young children being taught in quality environments?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)
13	National Quality Benchmarks Met for State-Funded Preschool	9 out of 10	8 out of 10	8 out of 10	8 out of 10	8 out of 10	AL, HI, MI, MS, RI	10 out of 10			
14a	% of Licensed Centers Ranking Silver or Above on ExceleRate	N/A	30%	30%	20%	18%					
14b	% of Licensed Homes Ranking Silver or Above on ExceleRate	N/A	4%	3%	2%	2%					
15a	% of Licensed Center-Based Programs That Are Nationally Accredited	N/A	17%	20%	22%	21%					
15b	% of Licensed Home-Based Programs That Are Nationally Accredited	N/A	3%	3%	4%	4%					
16a	% of State-Funded Preschool Teachers With a Bilingual or ESL Endorsement										
16b	% of Licensed Child Care Educators With a Gateways Bilingual or ESL Credential										

Early Childhood

Outcomes

Are Illinois children prepared for Kindergarten?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2018	2019	2023	2024	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
17a	Children Demonstrating Readiness for K in All 3 Areas		23.6%	26.3%	29.9%	31.6%	39%	26%	20%	37%	16%	15%	23%
17b	Children Demonstrating Readiness for K in SEL		49.3%	52.9%	57.5%	58.4%							
17c	Children Demonstrating Readiness for K in Language and Literacy		43.5%	45.6%	47.8%	49.2%							
17d	Children Demonstrating Readiness for K in Math		30.3%	32.7%	35.6%	37.1%							
17e	Children Not Ready in Any of the 3 Developmental Areas		41.6%	38.8%	36.0%	35.3%							

K-12 Education

Learning Conditions

Is Illinois adequately investing in our K-12 schools?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2023)	Rank Change (2019–2023)
18	State Spending Per-Student	$5,639	$7,478	$9,195	$9,857		VT	$25,395	18 out of 51	29 (47 -> 18)	5 (23 -> 18)

Are Illinois districts adequately and equitably funded?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2018	2019	2023	2025	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
19a	# of districts <60% adequacy		169	34	2	1							
19b	# of districts <70% adequacy		431	420	198	49	6%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	5%
19c	# of districts <90% adequacy		660	656	598	534	66%	88%	84%	58%	77%	82%	85%
20	Dollars per low-income students: Dollars per non-low-income student		0.90	0.92	0.96	0.98							

Do schools have sufficient teachers to meet student needs?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS						
		2009	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2009–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	High Poverty Districts	Low Poverty Districts	>75% Students of Color	≤ 25% Students of Color	Rural/Town	Suburban	Urban
21a	Student-Teacher Ratio	15.2:1	15.3:1	14.6:1	13.4:1	13.2:1	NY	11.3	12 out of 50	16 (28 -> 12)	10 (22 -> 12)	13.3:1	13.6:1	13.4:1	12.9:1	12.7:1	13.7:1	13.4:1
21b	K-8th grade students per teacher	15.3:1	15.1:1	14.3:1	12.9:1	12.8:1	ME	11.0	4 out of 50	7 (11 -> 4)	4 (8 -> 4)	12.8:1	13.1:1	12.8:1	13.0:1	12.9:1	13.0:1	12.8:1
21c	9th - 12th grade students per teacher	15.1:1	15.7:1	15.4:1	14.4:1	14.1:1	VA	7.8	38 out of 50	3 (41 -> 38)	3 (41 -> 38)	14.6:1	14.5:1	14.8:1	12.8:1	12.4:1	13.7:1	13.4:1

Do schools have sufficient staff to meet student needs?

		HISTORICAL DATA				NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS						
		2012	2016	2018	2022	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2012–2022)	Rank Change (2018–2022)	High Poverty Districts	Low Poverty Districts	>75% Students of Color	≤ 25% Students of Color	Rural/Town	Sub-urban	Urban
22a	Student to Counselor Ratio	814:1	507:1	481:1	459:1	VT	174:1	45 out of 50	–19 (26 -> 45)	–1 (44 -> 45)	375:1	535:1	417:1	446:1	398:1	547:1	406:1
22b	K-5th grade students per counselor	1450:1	665:1	598:1	568:1	VT	175:1	49 out of 50	–2 (47 -> 49)	–2 (47 -> 49)	393:1	824:1	460:1	502:1	425:1	820:1	426:1
22c	6th - 12th grade students per counselor	633:1	432:1	416:1	412:1	VT	172:1	41 out of 50	–24 (17 -> 41)	–8 (33 -> 41)	362:1	430:1	389:1	408:1	378:1	439:1	393:1
23	Student to Psychologist Ratio		1,190:1	1,107:1	921:1	NY	355:1	18 out of 50		–3 (15 -> 18)	2,593:1	666:1	1,753:1	927:1	1,107:1	734:1	1,790:1
24	Student to Social Worker Ratio		707:1	581:1	468:1	NY	304:1	5 out of 50		1 (6 -> 5)	934:1	424:1	661:1	527:1	560:1	391:1	821:1
25	Student to Nurse Ratio		762:1	771:1	611:1	VT	253:1	23 out of 50		1 (24 -> 23)	1,404:1	573:1	1,114:1	413:1	395:1	587:1	1,456:1
26	Student to Speech-Language Pathologist Ratio				610:1						1,325:1	460:1	1,325:1	588:1	654:1	475:1	1,166:1

Is Illinois' educator pipeline producing enough educators to meet need?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	High Poverty Districts	Low Poverty Districts	>75% Students of Color	≤ 25% Students of Color	Rural/ Town	Sub-urban	Urban
27	# of enrollers in teacher preparation programs		17,690	18,362	19,888								
28	# of completers of teacher preparation programs		4,927	4,331	5,780								
29	% novice teachers			5.7%	6.9%	6.6%	8.4%	4.4%	7.9%	6.3%	7.1%	5.7%	7.7%
30	Total # of teachers	130,101	127,037	131,164	132,894	135,070	32,740	28,231	44,399	31,603	27,552	69,628	37,832
31a	# of unfilled teacher positions		1,103	1,858	3,558	4,096	1,687	110	2,131	742	898	1,380	1,524
31b	# of districts with over 5% of unfilled teacher positions			58	139	185	39	4	48	119	136	51	9
31c	% of districts with over 5% of unfilled teacher positions			7%	16%	21%	49.40%	2.47%	45.70%	24.40%	28.20%	14.70%	25%
32a	Teacher Retention (District-Level)				90%	90%	87.17%	91.7%	87.7%	89.7%	89.1%	90.4%	88.3%
32b	Teacher Retention (School-Level)		86%	86%									
33	% teachers with provisional license or short-term approval	0.7%		0.9%	3.3%	3.1%	4.3%	1.3%	4.5%	2.6%	3.2%	2.7%	3.9%
34	% teachers out-of-field				3.9%	3.9%	3.8%	2.9%	3.4%	6.4%	7.5%	2.6%	3.6%
35	% teachers missing 10 or fewer days of school		76.5%	73.4%	64.3%	66.0%	60.2%	69.6%	60.9%	69.6%	68.9%	66.3%	63.2%
36	% districts with 3 or more principals per school within 6 years		6%	8%	11%	12%	24%	9%	26%	11%	12%	13%	18%

Is Illinois' teacher diversity reflective of our students' diversity?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAPS					
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	% Black Students	% Black Teachers	% Latinx Students	% Latinx Teachers	% Asian Students	% Asian Teachers
37a	Percentage Point Gap Between % Students of Color and % Teachers of Color	26%	37%	37%	36%	36%	17%	6%	28%	9%	6%	2%
37b	% Students in Districts where % Teachers of Color is ≥ half the % Students of Color	22%	21%	21%	21%	22%						

*For data quality reasons, we are using 2018 data for 37b, rather than 2016

Are students in an environment that supports learning?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2018	2019	2023	2024
38	% of schools with at least 3 strong or strongest areas of 5Essentials		29.4%	29.9%	18.7%	20.2%
39a	% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of Effective Leaders		26.7%	25.6%	19.4%	22.8%
39b	% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of Collaborative Teachers		33.7%	29.4%	17.0%	19.2%
39c	% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of Involved Families		38.4%	33.6%	28.4%	30.9%
39d	% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of Supportive Environment		35.4%	55.1%	33.8%	30.8%
39e	% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of Ambitious Instruction		63.5%	50.2%	35.9%	35.8%

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2014	2015	2019	2023	2024
40	% of students with 1 or more out-of-school suspensions	4.80%	4.10%	3.20%	3.60%	3.40%
41a	Statewide Number of Out-of-School Suspensions per 100 Students	8.84	7.25	5.17	5.73	5.41
41b	White	3.84	3.87	2.67	3.33	3.15
41c	Black	27.15	20.34	14.41	14.36	13.15
41d	Latinx	6.48	5.06	3.78	4.21	4.04
41e	Asian	0.96	0.71	0.53	0.65	0.72
41f	English Learners	4.03	3.29	2.76	4.01	3.91
41g	Students with disabilities					

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016	2022	2023	2024
42	# of schools participating in REACH			255	270	443
43a	# of schools participating in SEL Hubs				2051	2166
43b	# of districts participating in SEL Hubs				548	575

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2009	2017	2019	2021	2023	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank 2007	Rank 2019	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Female	Male	LGBTQ+
44	% of students who felt sad or hopeless	27.8%	32.3%	36.3%	42.1%	38.2%	NE	27.20%	18 out of 34	20 out of 38	25 out of 42	33.4%	42.6%	42.6%	33.7%	51.6%	25.0%	62.5%
45	% of students who reported that their mental health was most of the time or always not good					26.0%	MS	21.60%	5 out of 29			26.9%	23.8%	25.9%	20.8%	36.0%	16.2%	53.0%
46	% of students who seriously considered attempting suicide	14.5%	15.9%	19.0%	20.3%	19.2%	NJ, NE	14.00%	19 out of 33	9 out of 37	27 out of 40	17.7%	21.0%	17.7%	15.1%	27.0%	11.4%	38.2%

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON (SY 2023)					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State 2023	Leading State 2023 Performance	IL Rank 2023	Rank Change (2008–2023)	Rank Change (2019–2023)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
47	Chronic Truancy		9.8%	13.4%	19.9%	20.0%												
48	Chronic Absenteeism			17.5%	28.3%	26.3%	NJ	16.7%	20 out of 52			18.1%	40.4%	32.9%	16.6%	32.7%	32.1%	36.3%

K-12 Education

Outcomes

Are Illinois students meeting proficiency standards?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2009	2017	2019	2022	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2009–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income*
49a	NAEP 4th Grade Reading - % of students scoring proficient or higher	32%	35%	34%	33%	30%	MA	40%	29 out of 51	1 (30 -> 29)	–1 (28 -> 29)	37%	18%	21%	57%	10%	9%	18%
49b	NAEP 4th Grade Math - % of students scoring proficient or higher	38%	39%	38%	38%	38%	MA	51%	30 out of 51	2 (32 -> 30)	5 (35 -> 30)	53%	18%	20%	62%	14%	14%	21%
49c	NAEP 8th Grade Reading - % of students scoring proficient or higher	33%	36%	35%	32%	33%	MA	40%	8 out of 51	17 (25 -> 8)	7 (15 -> 8)	40%	16%	24%	56%	10%	5%	19%
49d	NAEP 8th Grade Math - % of students scoring proficient or higher	33%	32%	34%	27%	32%	MA	37%	9 out of 51	22 (31 -> 9)	13 (22 -> 9)	44%	9%	18%	61%	11%	4%	15%

*Note that NAEP uses the term "Economically Disadvantaged Status" instead of students from low-income backgrounds.

What level of academic growth do we see across the state?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
50a	Years of growth in Math between 3rd to 8th Grade		5.23	5.32	4.74	4.87	WI	5.03	3 out of 51		2 (5 -> 3)	5.33	4.1	4.33	6.4			
50b	Years of growth in Reading between 3rd to 8th Grade		5.32	5.02	4.85	4.91	LA	5.22	2 out of 51		7 (9 -> 2)	5.03	4.87	4.85	5.15			
51a	% of IL districts growing students at a rate higher than the national median district, in Math*		61.05%	53.63%	41.05%	49.42%	ND / MD	75%	20 out of 42		–16 (12 -> 28)*							
51b	% of IL districts growing students at a rate higher than the national median district, in Reading*		58.08%	67.76%	42.50%	49.57%	MD	84%	18 out of 42		–18 (6 -> 24)*							

*Note that many districts do not have defined growth rates (up to 16% in Illinois in 2016)

*Note: Only 43 states have district-level reporting for this metric in 2024, and 46 in 2019

How does student growth vary across the state?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
52a	Average statewide student growth percentile by subgroup, ELA			50%	50%	50%	51%	46.90%	48.80%	56.20%	44.70%	47.30%	47.90%
52b	Average statewide student growth percentile by subgroup, Math			50%	50%	50%	50.60%	47.20%	49.20%	57.00%	45.30%	47.90%	48.20%

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	High Poverty Schools	Low Poverty Schools	>75% Students of Color	≤ 25% Students of Color	Rural/ Town	Suburban	Urban
53a	% of schools with growth >45 SGP for each subgroup, ELA			71.63%	70.71%	71.21%	61.54%	86.84%	65.04%	70.42%	66.87%	75.18%	69.26%
53b	% of schools with growth >45 SGP for each subgroup, Math			73.14%	70.73%	72.20%	64.20%	88.32%	67.92%	67.66%	63.28%	78.46%	71.37%

Are Illinois freshmen on-track to graduate high school?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
54	9th Grade On-Track Rates		82.4%	86.6%	87.4%	88.2%	92.7%	79.7%	84.1%	96.7%	84.2%	79.7%	81.7%

Do students have access to rigorous coursework?

		HISTORICAL DATA					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2020	2023	2024	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	IEP	EL	Low-Income
55	% of HS students taking Early College Courses (AP, IB, Dual Credit)	31.58%**											
56a	% of HS students taking AP coursework				22.70%	24.20%	25%	14.10%	22.50%	54.90%	3.40%	9.70%	16.40%
56b	% of HS students taking Dual Credit Courses				14%	16.40%	20.50%	10.80%	13.10%	19.30%	8.10%	8.10%	11.90%
56c	% of HS students taking IB Coursework				1.10%	1.20%	0.60%	1.80%	2%	1.40%	0.40%	0.90%	1.70%
56d	% of HS students taking enriched or honors coursework				20.30%	52.30%	53.60%	41.20%	51.70%	78.80%	19.40%	34.80%	42.40%

*This helpful metric is no longer reported by ISBE.

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2014	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
57a	10th -12th Grade Students Taking an AP exam		17.37%	22.87%	23.64%	25.04%	DC, MD	29.25%, 28.27%	7 out of 51		3 (10 -> 7)	23.45%	13.28%	24.53%	58.56%			
57b	% of exams passed, taken by 10th-12th Grade Students		64.05%	63.55%	62.79%	67.59%	MT	74.27%	26 out of 51		-9 (17 -> 26)	76.99%	36.11%	50.17%	80.87%			

Are Illinois students college- and career-ready?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Non-EL	EL	Former EL
58	% students meeting college-ready benchmarks on SAT/ ACT exams		38%	38%	30%	30%	NH	37%	5 out of 11		0 (5 ->5)	50%	13%	21%	70%		31%	
59a	# of students awarded the Seal of Biliteracy		2,638	6,217	7,959	9,369										3,851	634	4,884
59b	# of students awarded Commendation towards Biliteracy		953	2,876	4,242	5,407										3,249	811	1,347
60a	# of students served by CTE programs		280,517	295,270	278,543	285,732						155,426	34,879	68,141	14,250		27,252	
60b	% of students served by CTE programs		45.30%	48.27%	46.79%	48.35%						54.40%	12.21%	23.85%	4.99%		9.54%	
61a	# of Districts Offering College and Career Pathway Endorsements			30 for SY2022	39	94												
61b	Students earning college and career pathway endorsement			596 for SY2022	1,072	2,422												

Are Illinois students graduating high school?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON (SY 2022)					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP						
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State 2022	Leading State 2022 Performance	IL Rank 2022	Rank Change (2008–2022)	Rank Change (2019–2022)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	SWD	EL	Low-Income
62a	4yr HS Graduation Rates, all students	86.5%	85.5%	86.2%	87.6%	87.7%	WV	91.2%	19 out of 49		8 (27 -> 19)	91.3%	80.7%	85.1%	94.6%	79.5%	77.8%	81.8%
62b	6yr HS Graduation Rates, all students		88.2%	88.1%	89.3%	89.6%						92.1%	83.0%	88.2%	95.7%	81.9%	82.0%	83.6%

Higher Education

Enrollment and Access

Is Illinois higher education affordable for all students?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP			
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
TUITION & FEES															
63a	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Public University for a household at the Median Income Level	17%	23%	21%	19%		DC	6%	46 out of 51	2 (48 -> 46)	0 (46 -> 46)	17%	30%	20%	14%
63b	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Private University for a household at the Median Income Level	44%	58%	56%	54%		UT	9%	34 out of 49	–6 (28 -> 34)	–2 (32 ->34)	50%	87%	58%	41%
63c	Percent of income necessary to pay for 2-year public college for a household at the Median Income Level	4%	6%	6%	5%		CA	1%	18 out of 47	–2 (17 -> 19)	–2 (17 ->19)	5%	9%	6%	4%
64a	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Public University for a household at the Federal Poverty Level	46%	57%	57%	51%		FL	16%	44 out of 51	4 (48 -> 44)	3 (47 -> 44)				
64b	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Private University for a household at the Federal Poverty Level	117%	145%	151%	146%		UT	27%	35 out of 49	–3 (32 ->35)	–1 (34 -> 35)				
64c	Percent of income necessary to pay for 2-year Public College for a household at the Federal Poverty Level	12%	15%	16%	14%		CA	4%	19 out of 47	0 (19 -> 19)	0 (19 -> 19)				

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP			
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2016–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
NET PRICE															
65a	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Public University for a household at the Median Income Level		21%	17%	12%		FL	8%	14 out of 51	21 (35 ->14)	9 (23 -> 14)	11%	19%	13%	9%
65b	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Private University for a household at the Median Income Level		30%	26%	21%		NJ	10%	10 out of 49	6 (16 ->10)	6 (16 -> 10)	19%	33%	22%	16%
65c	Percent of income necessary to pay for 2-year public college for a household at the Median Income Level		10%	8%	7%		CA	6%	7 out of 47	0 (7 ->7)	–2 (5 -> 7)	6%	10%	7%	5%
66a	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Public University for a household at the Federal Poverty Level		62%	46%	33%		FL	14%	17 out of 51	26 (43 ->17)	9 (26 -> 17)				
66b	Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year Private University for a household at the Federal Poverty Level		89%	70%	56%		NJ	40%	13 out of 49	17 (30 ->13)	8 (21 -> 13)				
66c	Percent of income necessary to pay for 2-year Public College for a household at the Federal Poverty Level		30%	22%	17%		WV	11%	8 out of 47	0 (8 ->8)	2 (10 -> 8)				

Are Illinois students enrolling in college?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2018	2019	2023	2024
67a	16-month college enrollment of high school graduates		71.0%	69.2%	65.6%	66.8%
67b	12-month college enrollment of high school graduates		70.3%	68.6%	64.8%	66.1%

Higher Education

Learning Conditions

Is Illinois adequately investing in our public universities and colleges?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2023)	Rank Change (2019–2023)
68a	State Spending Per-Student Total	$1,741	$779	$2,254	$2,446		DC	$20,329	48 out of 51	–1 (47 -> 48)	–1 (47 -> 48)
68b	State Spending Per-Student Public Universities	$8,028	$1,865	$5,899	$5,385		DC	$20,329	32 out of 51	–12 (20 -> 32)	–7 (25 -> 32)
68c	State Spending Per-Student Community Colleges	$567	$660	$1,356	$966		CT	$5,597	43 out of 48	3 (46 -> 43)	0 (43 -> 43)

How many Illinois students at community college are being enrolled in remedial courses?

		HISTORICAL DATA				
		2008	2016 (Class of 2014)	2019 (Class of 2017)	2023 (Class of 2021)	2024 (Class of 2022)
69a	Freshmen enrolled in remedial courses at community colleges		49.40%	44.20%	28.80%	27.70%
69b	Freshmen enrolled in remedial courses at community colleges in reading		17.00%	12.60%	3.30%	3.00%
69c	Freshmen enrolled in remedial courses at community colleges in math		41.10%	34.70%	19.60%	19.00%
69d	Freshmen enrolled in remedial courses at community colleges in communication		21.80%	20.50%	14.80%	13.80%

Are Illinois higher education institutions retaining students past freshman year?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON				
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)
70a	Retention Rates for 2-year public institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	57.8%	65.6%	66.4%	68.4%		SD	78%	3 out of 48	18 (21 -> 3)	0 (3 -> 3)
70b	Retention Rates for 2-year Private NFP institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	83.7%	65.6%	74.8%	40.5%		ME	100%	26 out of 28	–11 (15 -> 26)	–21 (5 -> 26)
70c	Retention Rates for 2-year FP institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	66.9%	75.1%	75.6%	72.7%		WI	94%	25 out of 44	5 (30 ->25)	–14 (11 -> 25)
70d	Retention Rates for 4-year public institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	77.7%	79.4%	77.6%	80.0%		FL	91%	30 out of 51	–14 (16 -> 30)	–15 (15 -> 30)
70e	Retention Rates for 4-year Private NFP institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	81.0%	80.8%	81.8%	80.1%		DC	90%	19 out of 49	–3 (16 -> 19)	–2 (17 -> 19)
70f	Retention Rates for 4-year FP institutions for First-Time Full Time Undergraduates	67.6%	58.1%	54.4%	64.9%		LA & WI	100%	18 out of 37	3 (21 -> 18)	6 (16 -> 10)

Higher Education

Outcomes

Are Illinois college students completing college at any institution?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP			
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
71a	150% of time completion rates of college enrollees who start in Illinois community colleges	17.00%	21.8%	25.8%	31.1%		SD	46.3%	12 out of 47	6 (18->12)	4 (16->12)	36.5%	15.2%	25.2%	33.5%
71b	150% of time completion rates of college enrollees who start in Illinois public universities	59.10%	61.3%	62.8%	64.4%		IA	73.6%	13 out of 51	–4 (9->13)	2 (15->13)	72.4%	36.0%	53.2%	80.8%
71c	150% of time completion rates of college enrollees who start in Illinois 4-yr private not-for-profit universities	63.50%	65.6%	67.1%	68.0%		DC	79.4%	17 out of 49	2 (19->17)	1 (18->17)	72.8%	44.6%	58.6%	81.6%

Are Illinois higher education institutions graduating their students?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP (2023)			
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2024)	Rank Change (2019–2024)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
72a	4-year public institutions graduating 60% of students in 6 years	2 out of 12	2 out of 12	3 out of 12	3 out of 12							7 out of 12	1 out of 12	2 out of 12	7 out of 12
72b	4-year private NFP institutions graduating 60% of students in 6 years	22 out of 45	20 out of 45	23 out of 47	23 out of 49							31 out of 49	7 out of 49	13 out of 49	28 out of 49
73a	Completion rate at community colleges	20.61%	27.07%	31.18%	37.49%		FL	62.78%	16 out of 47	8 (24 -> 16)	4 (20 -> 16)	43.88%	19.71%	30.50%	38.16%
73b	Completion rate at 2-year private NFP institutions	45.61%	69.89%	62.30%	40.28%		ME, OR	100.00%	21 out of 28	–1 (20 -> 21)	–8 (13 -> 21)	60.98%	21.43%	7.69%	N/A
73c	Completion rate at 2-year private FP institutions	62.75%	57.16%	62.45%	61.42%		WY	84.94%	21 out of 43	6 (27 -> 21)	4 (25 -> 21)	63.73%	46.27%	69.26%	64.10%
74d	Completion rate at public universities	59.10%	61.27%	62.86%	64.39%		FL	74.89%	18 out of 50	–3 (15 -> 18)	3 (21 -> 18)	72.40%	35.82%	53.14%	80.82%
74e	Completion rate at 4-year private NFP institutions	65.08%	66.17%	67.21%	68.88%		MA	80.19%	17 out of 48	1 (18 -> 17)	2 (19 -> 17)	73.05%	46.52%	60.14%	82.05%
74f	Completion rate at 4-year private FP institutions	47.83%	23.14%	29.86%	31.93%		IN	100.00%	20 out of 31	–6 (14 -> 20)	–2 (18 -> 20)	35.53%	20.00%	28.57%	50.00%

How are we doing against the 60X25 goal?

		HISTORICAL DATA					NATIONAL COMPARISON					EQUITY GAP PERFORMANCE BY SUBGROUP			
		2008	2016	2019	2023	2024	Leading State	Leading State Performance	IL Rank	Rank Change (2008–2023)	Rank Change (2019–2023)	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
75a	% of adults 25–65 with an associate's degree or higher	41%	45%	47%	49%		DC	72%	17 out of 51	0 (17 -> 17)	–3 (14 ->17)	54.8%	36.3%	27.5%	73.6%
75b	% of adults 25–65 with an associate's degree	8%	9%	9%	8%		ND	15%	41 out of 51	–8 (33 -> 41)	–3 (38 -> 41)	9.2%	8.6%	6.5%	4.3%
75c	% of adults 25–65 with an undergraduate degree	21%	23%	24%	25%		CO	29%	17 out of 51	0 (17 -> 17)	–4 (13 -> 17)	28.1%	16.6%	13.9%	36.0%
76	20–24-year-olds not in school, not working, without a postsecondary degree	14%	13%	12%	11%		ND	5%	21 out of 51	2 (23 -> 21)	1 (22 -> 21)	8.6%	23.8%	12.5%	1.9%

METRIC DEFINITIONS

1

Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in state-funded preschool or Head Start

The % of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

National Institute for Early Education Research, NIEER Interactive Data Explorer, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

The percentage of children enrolled in state-funded pre-K is defined as the number of children served by PFA and PFAE.

2

Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds under 400% FPL served by PFA/PFAE and 3- and 4-year-olds under 130% FPL served by Head Start

Calculated by dividing the number of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in PFA/PFAE by the number of 3- and 4-year-olds from families at or below 400% of the Federal Poverty Line.

Calculated by dividing the number of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start by the number of 3- and 4-year-olds from families at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Line.

IECAM Database, Demographic Data, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023; National Institute for Early Education Research, NIEER Interactive Data Explorer, 2016, 2019, 2023.

Equity Gap Performance data is from 2023. The number of children served by PFA includes enrollment in PFAE.

3

% of 3- and 4-year-old English Learners who are receiving bilingual services

Data unavailable

4

Percentage of income necessary to pay for average cost of child care for an infant/toddler in a center

The percentage of income necessary to pay for the median price of child care for an infant or toddler enrolled full-time in a center-based setting. Calculated using the annualized inflation-adjusted median price charged for full-time center-based care for infants and toddlers. All numbers were adjusted for inflation in 2022 dollars.

Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) National Database of Childcare Prices, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2022.

5

Percentage of income necessary to pay for average cost of child care for an infant/toddler in a home

The percentage of income necessary to pay for the median price of child care for an infant or toddler enrolled full-time in a home-based setting. Calculated using the annualized inflation-adjusted median price charged for full-time home-based care for infants and toddlers. All numbers were adjusted for inflation in 2022 dollars.

Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) National Database of Childcare Prices, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2022.

6

Percentage of income necessary to pay for average cost of child care for a preschooler in a center

The percentage of income necessary to pay for the median price of child care for a preschooler enrolled full-time in a center-based setting. Calculated using the annualized inflation-adjusted median price charged for full-time center-based care for preschoolers. All numbers were adjusted for inflation in 2022 dollars.

Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) National Database of Childcare Prices, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2022.

7

Percentage of income necessary to pay for average cost of child care for a preschooler in a home

The percentage of income necessary to pay for the median price of child care for a preschooler enrolled full-time in a home-based setting. Calculated using the annualized inflation-adjusted median price charged for full-time home-based care for preschoolers. All numbers were adjusted for inflation in 2022 dollars.

Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) National Database of Childcare Prices, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2022.

8

Number and percentage of children enrolled in Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Eligibility for CCAP is 225% FPL and 275% FPL at redetermination, plus categorical eligibility. Therefore we used 300% FPL. Estimate calculated by dividing the number of 0-to-2-year-olds enrolled in CCAP by the number of 0-to-2-year-olds estimated to be under 300% of the FPL.

IECAM, Multi-Year Search, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2023.

9

Children under age 3 below 185% FPL with access to state-funding home visiting

The number of children served by state home visiting is estimated as the sum of children served by PI, HFI, and MCHV programs. Calculated by dividing the number of children under 3 enrolled in PI, HFI, and MCHV by the number of children under 3 from families at or below 185% FPL.

IECAM, Multi-Year Search, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

10

Children under age 3 below 185% FPL with access to federally funded home visiting

The number of children served by federal home visiting is estimated as the sum of the number of EHS seats and MIECHV seats. Calculated by dividing the number of children under 3 enrolled in EHS and MIECHV by the number of children under 3 from families at or below 185% FPL.

IECAM, Multi-Year Search, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

11

Percentage of early learners receiving Early Intervention Services and % of Service Delays for Early Intervention Services

The % of children under 3 receiving Early Intervention services. Estimate calculated by dividing the number of average monthly active Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) by the number of children under 3 years old.

IECAM, Multi-Year Search, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

12

State spending per child on state-funded preschools

Per-child state spending calculated using state expenditures per-child enrolled in state-funded pre-K programs. Adjusted for inflation in 2024 dollars.

National Institute for Early Education Research, NIEER Interactive Data Explorer, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

13

Number of early childhood quality benchmarks being met.

The number of NIEER quality standards met by the state of Illinois.

National Institute for Early Education Research, The State of Preschool Yearbooks, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

14

Percentage of licensed programs ranking Silver or Above on Excelerate

Quality Rating Information Systems (QRIS) are used across the country to measure the quality of care provided to young children. ExceleRate Illinois, Illinois' QRIS system, awards four "Circle of Quality" designations: licensed, bronze, silver, and gold. In these metrics, programs rated silver or above were deemed high-quality. Licensed programs include family home care, Head Start programs, and PFA programs.

IECAM, Multi-year Search, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

15

Percentage of early childhood centers that are nationally accredited

IECAM, Multi-Year Search, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

16

Percentage of state-funded preschool teachers with a bilingual or ESL credential

Data unavailable

17

Children demonstrating readiness for kindergarten

Percentage of children meeting readiness standards in all three or zero areas on the Kids Individual Development Survey and the percentage of children meeting readiness standards in Social-Emotional Learning, Literacy, and Math.

ISBE, 2018–2024 KIDS Data Sets.

18

State spending per student

Revenues per student for K-12 public education from state sources.

U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of School System Finances, 2008–2023.

19
Number of districts < % of Funding Adequacy
"The historical data is the number of districts below 60%, 70%, and 90% of Funding Adequacy. That is, based on total K-12 funding a district receives from state and local sources, what percentage of its unique Adequacy Target it has reached.
The equity metrics are the number of students for each demographic that attend school in a district below 60%, 70%, or 90% of adequacy"
ISBE EBF Full Calculations 2018–2025, ISBE Report Card 2018–2025.

20
Dollars per low-income student: Dollar per non-low-income student
EBF Per Pupil Resources per Student from a Low-income Household divided by the EBF Per Pupil Resources per Student from a non-Low-income Household.
ISBE EBF Full Calculations 2018–2025, ISBE Report Card 2018–2025.

21
Student-teacher ratio
The total students statewide divided by the total teachers statewide; the sum of kindergarten and grades 1–8 Students statewide divided by the sum of kindergarten and grades 1–8 teachers statewide; the total secondary school students statewide divided by the total secondary school teachers statewide
Common Core of Data, State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/ Secondary Education Survey, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024.

22
Student-counselor ratio
Student enrollment divided by count of counselors (full-time equivalent).
Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012–2022.

23
Student to Psychologist Ratio
Student enrollment divided by count of psychologists (full-time equivalent).
Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012–2022.

24
Student to Social Worker Ratio
Student enrollment divided by count of social workers (full-time equivalent).
Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012–2022.

25
Student to Nurse Ratio
Student enrollment divided by count of nurses (full-time equivalent).
Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012–2022.

26
Student to Speech-Language Pathologist Ratio
Student enrollment divided by count of speech-language pathologists (full-time equivalent).
Illinois State Board of Education FOIA, 2025.

27
Number of enrollers in Illinois teacher preparation programs
Total sum of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Enrollers include students who completed programs in that school year. Prior to SY18–19, enrollment data from Title II does not include completers. For consistency, we have added completers to the raw enrollment data for those years.
United State Department of Education Title II Data Tools 2016–2023.

28
Number of completers from Illinois teacher preparation programs
Total sum of students completing teacher preparation programs.
United State Department of Education Title II Data Tools 2016–2023.

29
Percentage of novice teachers
Percent of teachers who are in their first or second year of teaching.
Illinois State Report Card 2019–2024.

30
Total number of teachers
Full-time equivalent count of teachers.
Illinois State Report Card 2012–2024.

31
Number of unfilled teacher positions and districts with vacancies
Number of unfilled teacher positions and number of districts with a teacher vacancy rate above 5%. Vacancy rates are calculated by dividing the number of unfilled positions by the sum of filled and unfilled positions.
Illinois State Board of Education Unfilled Positions Report 2019–2024; ISBE Data Request.

32
Teacher Retention
Statewide average of the three-year average percentage of full-time teachers returning to the same entity (school or district) from year to year.
Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2018–2024

33
Percentage of teachers with provisional license or short-term approval
Percentage of teachers (full-time equivalent) who hold a provisional license or short-term approval. Teachers may or may not be using the credential.
Illinois State Report Card 2008–2024.

34
Percentage of teachers out-of-field
Percentage of teachers (full-time equivalent) who are teaching at least one course for which they do not have a state-approved license or credential.
Illinois State Report Card 2023–2024.

35
Percentage of teachers missing 10 or fewer days of school
Percentage of teachers with fewer than 10 absences in a school year.
Illinois State Report Card 2023–2024.

36
Percentage of districts with 3 or more principals per school within 6 years
Percentage of districts with an average of 3 or more principals in each school in a 6 year period.
Illinois State Report Card 2016–2024.

37
a) Percentage point gap between % students of color and % teachers of color
b) % Students in Districts where % Teachers of Color is ≥ half the % Students of Color
a) Percentage of teachers of color minus the percentage of students of color.
b)Percentage of students in districts where the percentage of teachers of color is at least half the percentage of students of color.
Illinois State Report Card 2008–2024.

38
Percentage of schools with at least 3 strong or strongest areas on the 5Essentials
Illinois State Report Card 2008–2024.

39
% of Schools with strong or strongest implementation on individual essentials
% of schools with strong or strongest implementation of each 5Essential: Sum of all schools that earned a score at or above 60 on the essential from the 5Essentials survey divided by the sum of all public PreK-12 schools. A score of 60 – 80 is considered strong and a score of 80 – 100 is considered very strong. Data is included only for schools with greater than 50% teacher participation rates who received scores in the given school year.
Illinois State Board of Education 5Essentials, CPS 5Essentials, Illinois State Report Card.

40
Percent of students statewide with 1 or more out-of-school suspensions
Percent of students statewide with 1 or more out-of-school suspensions.
ISBE End of Year Discipline Report 2014–2022, Illinois State Report Card 2023–2024.

41
Statewide number of out-of-school suspensions per 100 students
Calculated by dividing the number of out-of-school suspension incidents for each subgroup by the number of students enrolled for each subgroup and multiplying by 100.
ISBE End of Year Discipline Report 2014–2022, Illinois State Report Card 2014–2024.

42
Number of schools participating in REACH
Number of schools participating in the Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) Statewide initiative.
ISBE Data Request.

43
Number of schools and districts participating in SEL Hubs
Number of schools and their perspective district participating in the SEL Hubs.
ISBE Data Request.

44

Percentage of students who felt sad or hopeless

The percentage of high school students enrolled in grades 9 to 12 who reported being sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row, so that they stopped doing some usual activities, during the 12 months before the survey.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data, 2009–2023.

45

Percentage of students who reported that their mental health was most of the time or always not good

The percentage of high school students enrolled in grades 9 to 12 who reported that their mental health was not good most of the time or always, during the 12 months before the survey.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data, 2009–2023.

46

Percentage of students who seriously considered attempting suicide

The percentage of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data, 2009–2023.

47

Chronic Truancy Rate

Percentage of students identified as chronic truants. Students are considered chronic truants if they are subject to compulsory school attendance and are absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

Illinois State Report Card 2008–2024.

48

Chronic Absenteeism Rate

The percentage of students identified as chronically absent. Students are considered chronically absent if the number of absences total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic year, including absences with and without valid cause and out-of-school suspensions.

Illinois State Report Card 2019–2024.

49

Percentage of 4th and 8th graders scoring proficient or higher in NAEP

The percentage of 4th and 8th grade students who score proficient or higher on the NAEP assessment. Low-income or "Economically Disadvantaged Status" are students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or any state-defined economically disadvantaged status.

Nation's Report Card, NAEP Data Explorer, 2009-2024.

50

Years of growth between 3rd and 8th grade.

The Standford Education Data Archive (SEDA) uses a model that takes each state's reported proficiency-level counts for its state exam and returns a projected mean score for the exam. SEDA then uses the NAEP scores of the four national cohorts that were in 4th grade in 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015 to scale the projected means such that each scaled test score is comparable to other scaled test scores across the nation. This standardization process is called the Grade Cohort Standardized (GCS) scale. Source: (https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:pt329xg7054/seda2024_documentation_20250210.pdf)

The years of growth between 3rd and 8th grade metric is the difference in mean GCS-scaled State Subject-Grade-Year Averages for a state's 8th graders in a given year and the state's 3rd graders 5 years earlier.

Reardon, S. F., Fahle, E. M., Ho, A. D., Shear, B. R., Saliba, J., Min, J., Shim, J., & Kalogrides, D. (2025). Stanford Education Data Archive (Version SEDA 2024). Retrieved from: https://purl.stanford.edu/pt329xg7054.

51

Percentage of districts growing students at a rate higher than the national median

The growth rate metric is the average of the differences in mean GCS-scaled District Subject-Grade-Year Averages for each grade (from 4th to 8th) in a given year and the preceding grade in the previous year. The percentage of districts growing students at a rate higher than the national median is the number of districts in a state with a higher learning rate in a given year than that year's national median learning rate divided by the number of districts reporting growth data in that state that year. The "national median" here is the median of all reporting districts' standardized scores across the nation in a given year (from 2010 to 2024, the national median in reading language arts ranged from 0.86 to 1.08 and in math from 0.91 to 1.07). (See Metric 50 definition)

Reardon, et al., 2025, Stanford Education Data Archive (Version SEDA 2024).

52

Student growth percentile

Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is first calculated for each student. A student's SGP represents their growth relative to their academic peers. Academic peers are students in the same grade who received scores in the same category in previous years. Students are ordered among their academic peers on a scale from 1 to 99, and the student who made the least gains relative to their peers receives an SGP of 1. A score of 50 represents average or expected growth. ISBE then calculates averages of students' SGPs for the Report Card. This cohort SGP averages students' SGPs by demographic group, district, school, and state. Because it is an average of a population's percentiles, state-level average SGP will always be 50, but the average SGP of subsets of students (whether by race, ethnicity, district, or school) will vary according to the level of growth those subsets display relative to their academic peers.

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2018–2024; "Illinois State Board of Education," "Student Growth," 2018.

53

Percentage of schools with >45 student growth percentile

See explanation of Student Growth Percentile (SGP) above. The percentage of schools with a SGP greater than 45.

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2018–2024.

54

9th Grade On-Track Rates

The percentage of first-time ninth-grade students deemed on track to graduate. A student is considered "on-track" if they earn at least five course credits without failing more than 0.5 course credits in core subjects (reading, math, science, and social science).

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2018–2024.

55

Percentage of students taking Early College Coursework

The percent of students in grades 9–12 who participated in Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered by the College Board, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, or enriched/honors coursework.

56

Percentage of students taking AP coursework, Dual Credit Courses, IB Coursework, or enriched/honors coursework

The percent of students in grades 9–12 who participated in Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered by the College Board, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, or enriched/honors coursework. At this time, percentages have to be reported separately as to avoid duplication.

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2023, 2024.

57

Percentage of 10th-12th graders taking an AP exam and percentage of exams passed

The number of Illinois 10th-12th graders taking AP exams divided by the total number of Illinois 10th-12th graders. The total AP exams earning a 3,4, or 5, divided by the total AP exams earning a 1,2,3,4,5.

College Board, AP National and State Data Archive, "AP Participation," "AP Performance," 2014, 2019, 2023, 2024.

58

Percentage of students meeting college-ready benchmarks on SAT/ACT exams

Illinois switched from the ACT to the SAT in 2018. For 2008 and 2016, this metric refers to the percentage of students who met 3+ ACT benchmarks. In 2018 through 2024, this metric refers to the percentage of students who meet both of the 2 SAT benchmarks.

2018–2024 Illinois SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report; ACT Condition of College and Career Readiness State Profiles, 2016, 2012, 2008.

59

Number of students awarded the Seal of Biliteracy and Commendation towards Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by the state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. Number of students awarded the Seal of Biliteracy: The total sum of Seal of Biliteracy awarded by school year. The Seal of Biliteracy was established in Illinois to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The total sum of Commendation towards Biliteracy awarded by school year. The State Commendation toward Biliteracy is a recognition given by a district/school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated significant progress toward achieving a high level of proficiency in both English and in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in another world language.

Illinois State Board of Education, Division of English Language Learning, Seal of Biliteracy Data Report SY15–24.

60

Number and percentage of students served by CTE programs

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Illinois provide instruction for careers in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand occupations in Agricultural Education, Business, Marketing and Computer Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Science Technology, and Technology and Engineering Education (Industrial).

Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, 2018–2024, Career & Technical Education Report.

61

Number of districts offering College and Career Pathway Endorsements and the number of students awarded

Students Earning College and Career Pathway Endorsement: The total sum of students earning a College and Career Pathway endorsement by school year.

ISBE College and Career Endorsement Recipients File.

62

High school graduation rates

From 2011 onwards, high school graduation rates represent an Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR). Prior to 2011, high school graduation rates represent an Adjusted Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR).

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, Illinois Report Card Trend Data 2008–2024.

63

Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year public university, 4-year private, and 2-year public college for a household at the Median Income Level (Tuition and Fees)

Average tuition and fees for a college for family earning between $48–75K per year divided by the median income level.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, Table H-8: Median Household Income by State: 1984–2023.

64

Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year public university, 4-year private, and 2-year public college for a household at the Federal Poverty Level (Tuition and Fees)

Average tuition and fees of college for a family earning between $0–30K per year divided by the federal poverty line.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023. US Department of Health and Human Services, Prior HHS Poverty Guidelines and Federal Register References.

65

Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year public university, 4-year private, and 2-year public college for a household at the Median Income Level (Net Price)

Average net tuition for a college for family earning between $48–75K per year divided by the median income level.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, Table H-8: Median Household Income by State: 1984–2023.

66

Percent of income necessary to pay for 4-year public university, 4-year private, and 2-year public college for a household at the Federal Poverty Level (Net Price)

Average net tuition of college for a family earning between $0–30K per year divided by the federal poverty line.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023. US Department of Health and Human Services, Prior HHS Poverty Guidelines and Federal Register References.

67

16- and 12-month enrollment of high school graduates

Percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college within 12 and 16 months of graduation.

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, Illinois Report Card Trend Data 2018–2024.

68

State spending per-student for public universities and community colleges

Per-student state spending calculated using state expenditures per student enrolled in a public university or community college in the state. Adjusted for inflation in 2024 dollars.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

69

Percentage of Illinois community college freshmen enrolled in remedial courses

The percentage of graduates who are taking remedial courses in any subject (Reading, Mathematics, Communications) at Illinois community colleges.

Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, Illinois Report Card Trend Data 2018.

70

Percentage of freshmen returning full-time 2nd year to Illinois higher education institutions

The percentage of full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

71

6-year completion rates of college enrollees who start in Illinois degree-granting institutions

The percentage of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies at colleges and universities in the fall of their cohort academic year and who graduated within six years. National Comparison: Each state's percentage of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies at colleges and universities in the fall of their 2016 cohort and who graduated within six years by institution type. All 50 states are compared by institution type to determine respective rank for the 2016 cohort.

National Student Clearinghouse, Completing College State Profile.

72

4-Year institutions graduating 60% or more of students in six years

The number of public universities and not-for-profit universities in Illinois, who reported data, that graduate 60% or more of first-time full-time students in 6 years.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

73

150% completion rate at 2-year institutions

Graduation rate within 150 percent of normal time (within three years for two-year institutions and within six years for four-year institutions). Graduation rates at two-year colleges include students who earned either an associate's degree or another degree or certificate that can be completed in two years or less. At four-year colleges, they include students who earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree. Does not include transfers who go on to graduate at other institutions.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

74

150% completion rate at 4-year institutions

Graduation rate within 150 percent of normal time (within three years for two-year institutions and within six years for four-year institutions). Graduation rates at two-year colleges include students who earned either an associate's degree or another degree or certificate that can be completed in two years or less. At four-year colleges, they include students who earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree. Does not include transfers who go on to graduate at other institutions.

National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2023.

75

Degree attainment of Illinois adults ages 25–65

The percentage of adults ages 25–64 that have an associate's degree or higher.

IPUMS USA, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2008, 2016, 2019, 2024.

76

20-to-24-year-olds neither in school nor working without a postsecondary degree

The percentage of young adults ages 20 to 24 that are not in the labor force or enrolled in a postsecondary program in the last 3 months.

IPUMS USA, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2017, 2015, 2011, 2007.

ENDNOTES

1. NAEP; 2018–2024 *Illinois SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report*; ACT Condition of College and Career Readiness.

2. *IWERC, Inequity in the early years: Student development trajectories from Kindergarten to Grade 3, 2024.* https://dpi.uillinois.edu/applied-research/iwerc/current-projects/kids-series/.

3. United States Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*, 2023.

4. Kindergartner Readiness: The percentage of entering kindergartners ready in all 3 developmental areas. Source: Illinois State Board of Education, *KIDS Full Report 2018-2023, ISBE Report Card 2024*.

4th Grade Reading: The percentage of 4th grade students scoring proficient or higher in NAEP reading. Source: Illinois State Board of Education, *KIDS Full Report 2018-2023,* Illinois Report Card 2024.

8th Grade Math: The percentage of 8th grade students scoring proficient or higher in NAEP math. Source: Nation's Report Card, NAEP Data Explorer.

9th Grade On Track: The percentage of students considered "on track." A student is considered "on-track" if they earn at least 10 semester credits and no more than one "F" in a core course. This measure is highly predictive of whether students go on to graduate high school. Source: Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library.

High School Graduation Rate: The 4-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate. Source: ISBE Report Card Data Library.

College and Career Readiness: The percentage of students identified as college- and career-ready on the ACT or SAT. Illinois switched from the ACT to the SAT in 2018 and will be switching back to the ACT in SY2025. For 2008 to 2017, this metric refers to the percentage of students who met 3+ ACT benchmarks. From 2018 – 2024, this metric refers to the percentage of students who meet both of the 2 SAT benchmarks. Sources: 2018 Illinois SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report; ACT Condition of College and Career Readiness State Profiles.

Postsecondary Enrollment: The percentage of students enrolled in a college within 12 months of graduation. Source: Illinois State Board of Education, Report Card Data Library, Illinois Report Card Trend Data 2024.

Postsecondary Completion: Postsecondary completion rates in 150% of time. Source: National Student Clearinghouse, Completing College State Profiles.

Adults with Postsecondary Degrees: Degree attainment of Illinois adults ages 25–65. Source: IPUMS USA, American Community Survey, one-year estimates.

5. Some rankings do not include all 50 states and do not have sufficient data to be reported. The following rankings were dropped from the figures: Retention and Completion Rates for not-for-profit institutions and for-profit institutions and the percentage of college-ready benchmarks on SAT/ACT exams.

6. See Data Tables for a full list of metrics and state rankings.

7. IPUMS USA, *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0.

8. ISBE Report Card 2008–2024; IBHE, *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool* Twelve Month Enrollment 2010–2023.

While shifting demographics has also coincided with declining postsecondary enrollment, especially in Illinois public institutions of higher education, it is important to note that although there may be a relationship between state populations and postsecondary enrollment, this connection is less direct than in K-12 enrollment. This is due to a number of factors, including: postsecondary enrollment is elective rather than compulsory; enrollment in postsecondary institutions is unimpeded by state or national borders; and enrollment is virtually unrestricted by age, meaning the postsecondary-eligible population is significantly larger than the K-12 population. As such, while it is true that Illinois postsecondary enrollment has declined since 2010, much like enrollment in K-12, this decline is probably a result of a confluence of factors, of which demographic changes is only one.

9. IBHE, *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool* Twelve Month Enrollment, 2010–2023.

10. Office of Head Start, Program Information Reports (PIR), 2023, https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pir/reports; Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, IECAM Database , University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2023, https://db.iecam.illinois.edu/.

11. IPUMS USA, Illinois Report Card; ISBE *Nonpublic School Recognition Data Tables*.

12. IBHE, *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool*, 2010–2023.

13. The state has made progress in postsecondary spending since 2019, but unfortunately these investments were made after nearly two decades of disinvestment and unstable funding for postsecondary institutions.

14. National Center for Education Statistics, *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDs), 2008 - 2023 State appropriations.* U.S. Department of Education.

IPEDS defines state appropriations as 'all amounts received by the institution through acts of a state legislative body, except grants and contracts and amounts reportable on line 20. Funds reported in this category are for meeting current operating expenses, not for specific projects or programs. Do not include any ARRA revenues.'

15. The Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding released its recommendations in March 2024 (https://www.ibhe.org/assets/files/Funding/Illinois_Commission_on_Equitable_Public_University_Funding_Report.pdf) and the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding released its recommendations in Spring 2021 (https://idec.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idec/events/documents/early-childhood-funding-commission/2022-and-prior/early-childhood-funding-commission-full-report.pdf) but neither set of recommendations have yet been fully implemented.

16. National Center for Education Statistics, *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDs), 2008 - 2023 State appropriations.* U.S. Department of Education.

17. National Center for Education Statistics, *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDs), 2023 Tuition & Fees*.

18. ISAC *Data Book*, 2019–2024.

19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)*.

Healthy Minds Network, Health Mind Study Among Colleges and Universities, 2023-2024 Data Set, University of Michigan, UCLA, Boston University, & Wayne State University.

This metric identifies the percentage of high school students who reported being sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities.

20. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)*.

21. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).*

22. "Adverse Childhood Experiences." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html.

Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (i.e., experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, having a family member die, substance abuse) and can have long-term impacts on health, opportunity, and well-being. About 64% of adults in the United states reported they had at least one type of ACE before age 18.

23. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. *2022 National Survey of Children's Health: SAS Indicator Data Set.* Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2024.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

24. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2022 *National Survey of Children's Health: SAS Indicator Data Set.* Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2024.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

25. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).*

26. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. *2022 National Survey of Children's Health: SAS Indicator Data Set.* Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2024.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

27. Healthy Minds Network, *Health Mind Study Among Colleges and Universities*, 2023-2024 Data Set, University of Michigan, UCLA, Boston University, & Wayne State University.

28. Illinois SB406. *Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDES)* requirements.

SB406 requires the Illinois Department of Early Childhood to establish an early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDES) to develop public analytic portals and query tools for parents and communities to access aggregated integrated data from the ECIDS system.

29. Steven Ruggles et al. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

30. Office of Head Start, *Program Information Reports (PIR)*, 2023, https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pir/reports; Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, *IECAM Database*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2023, https://db.iecam.illinois.edu/.

31. Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map, *IECAM Database*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, https://db/iecam.illinois.edu/

32. Advance Illinois, *The State We're In*, 2022.

33. For reference, in 2019 nationally, on average, the percentage of income needed for child care ranged from 8.9% to 16%.

34. Illinois Department of Early Childhood. Cost Model for Early Childhood Education and Care Services. https://idec.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idec/documents/unsorted-documents/cost-model-for-early-childhood-education-andcare-services.pdf.

The Commission describes high-quality as ensuring sufficient capacity at regional/local level, racially/ethnically inclusive opportunities for quality improvement and equitable resource distribution, supporting the whole child. This means also supporting families, providers, communities, and the early childhood workforce, with the two biggest factors in quality being compensation parity and ratio/group sizes.

35. Illinois Department of Human Services. *Illinois Salary & Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities, Fiscal Year 2019.* 2020. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS).* 2025. U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*, 2023.

Similar trends are seen for other positions in the sector, including teaching assistants and early childhood administrators.

36. Illinois Department of Human Services. *Illinois Salary & Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities, Fiscal Year 2019*.

In partnership with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Illinois ranks 17th highest pay in the country but is only $0.42 more than the national average due to the fact that nationwide early childhood compensation is low.

37. Illinois Department of Human Services. Illinois Salary & Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities, Fiscal Year 2023. https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/EC/SalaryStaffingSurvey/FY23SalaryStaffingSurvey_A11Y.pdf.

38. Importantly, this data does not include accreditation from other entities like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).

39. Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map. *IECAM Database.* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. https://db.iecam.illinois.edu/.

Accreditation can have challenges, including significant costs to programs and the time and effort required to go through the sometimes multi-year process. This means not every program has the resources to pursue national accreditation. Source: "Quality in Early Care and Education Programs." *Illinois Early Learning.* https://illinoisearlylearning.org/answers/quality-ece/.

40. ISBE *KIDS Full Report 2018–2023*, ISBE, *Illinois Report Card 2024*.

The KIDS Report was folded into the ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* in 2024, not allowing for some of the gap analysis that was completed from 2018 to 2023. The accuracy of KIDS results for English Language Learners may be impacted if the administrator of the assessment did not speak the home language of the child.

41. ISBE *KIDS Full Report 2018–2023*, ISBE, *Illinois Report Card 2024*.

42. US Census Bureau, *ISBE Report Card; (2010, 2023)*.

43. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* (2010, 2023).

44. Recent surveys show that nearly 6% of all school-aged children are homeschooled during the 2022–23 school year, but those rates vary greatly state-by-state. Data from NCES shows that number rose nationally from 2.8% of students in 2019 to nearly 6% in 2023.

45. This estimate is made using the percentage of school aged children, students enrolled in registered non-public schools, and students enrolled in public K-12 schools. Source: National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Census Bureau. ISBE *Report Card.* ISBE *Nonpublic School Recognition Data Tables*.

46. Homeschooling counts are unavailable at the state level, as Illinois is one of the few states that does not require families to register with the state or their local school district. HSLDA. "Homeschool Laws by State," 2020. https://hslda.org/legal/illinois.

47. ISBE, *Evidence-Based Funding Distribution Calculation*.

48. ISBE *EBF Quick Facts, 2024.* https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FY25-EBF-At-a-Glance.pdf.

49. Illinois State Board of Education. *Evidence-Based Funding Five-Year Evaluation*. https://www.isbe.net/Documents/PRP-5-Year-Eval-Study-Report-2022.pdf.

50. Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. *Fully Funding the Evidence-Based Formula.* https://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/fully-funding-evidence-based-formula-volume-x.

51. Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. Fully Funding the Evidence-Based Formula: Volume X. September 18, 2024. https://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/fully-funding-evidence-based-formula-volume-x.

52. This analysis focused on districts who were identified as Tier 1 in 2018.

53. ISBE *Report Card,* 2016–2024.

54. Advance Illinois. *The State of Our Educator Pipeline 2023: Strengths, Opportunities, and the Early Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2023. https://drive.google.com/file/d/18X5gGCRWG2EgI7C0OWjLxtBCReeuq7nc/view.

55. Illinois Association of Regional State Superintendents (IARSS), *Educator Shortage Survey Dashboard*, 2024, https://iarss.org/2024-2025-educator-shortage/.

56. ISBE Report Card 2024; ISBE *Unfilled Positions Report* 2024.

57. ISBE *Report Card*, 2008–2024.

58. ISBE. *SEAL and Commendation Data* 2015–2024. ISBE *College and Career Pathway Endorsement Recipients FY21-FY24*.

59. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data*, 2023.

60. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. *2022 National Survey of Children's Health: SAS Indicator Data Set.* Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2024.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

61. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. *2022 National Survey of Children's Health: SAS Indicator Data Set*. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2024.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

62. ISBE *Report Card* 2008–2024.

Illinois closely mirrored the national average trends for chronic absenteeism, with national rates doubling from 2018 to 2022 and slight decreases in the last two years.

63. ISBE *Report Card* 2008–2024.

64. Target ratios vary. Based on the Evidence-Based Funding formula, counselor benchmarks represent target ratios of 250:1 for K-5 and 450:1 for 6–12; social workers come from the National Association of Social Workers at 250:1; nurse ratios come from the American Academy of Pediatrics at 750:1. Speech Language Pathologists do not have a recommended ratio and prefer to consider workload per professional. Importantly, many school support personnel's primary role is to serve students with disabilities, meaning support services for the general education population is not always provided by SSPs.

65. ISBE *FOIA Request*.

66. Noltemeyer, Amity L., et al. "Relationship Between School Suspension and Student Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis." *School Psychology Review* (2015).

67. Illinois closely mirrors the national average when it comes to suspension and expulsion rates.

68. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card*, 2024.

69. Survey results are included on every school's report card at illinoisreportcard.com.

70. U.S Department of Education. "Illinois Surveys Teachers, Students and Parents on the Essentials of School Success," 2014.

71. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* 2014–2024; ISBE *5Essentials Data File* 2014–2024.

72. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* 2014–2024; ISBE *5Essentials Data File* 2014–2024.

At or above 50 means for that essential, schools in that category have scores that signify they are above the benchmark.

73. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* 2014–2024. ISBE *5Essentials Data File* 2014–2024.

74. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer*.

75. Hernandez, Donald H. "How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*, 2012.

76. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer.*

77. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer.*

Importantly, these changes were not statistically significant, meaning the state's proficiency levels have remained stable since 2009.

78. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer.*

79. The Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) uses the Learning Trend to describe yearly growth in state testing. The Learning Trend represents the average cohort growth from the previous year to the current year.

80. See Metric 50 definition for how academic growth is defined.

81. Reardon, et al. *Stanford Education Data Archive*, 2018.

Grade level of growth is the average cohort increase on state exams nationally for a set of pre-pandemic years .

82. Reardon, et al., 2018, *Stanford Education Data Archive*.

83. Importantly, when understanding student outcomes based on group, it is important to look at multiple outcome factors. For example, the University of Chicago Consortium

on School Research found that former English Learners often outperformed their peers in postsecondary enrollment. Source: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. "English Learners in Chicago Public Schools: A Spotlight on High School Students." https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/english-learners-in-chicago-public-schools-a-spotlight-on-high-school-students.

84. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer.*

85. Nation's Report Card, *NAEP Data Explorer.*

86. NAEP Reports can be found at https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/.

87. ISBE, *Illinois Report Card* (2008, 2024).

88. Illinois Report Card. *Postsecondary Remediation – Community College, Class of 2013 and Class of 2022.*

89. Illinois State Report Card (2019, 2024).

90. Illinois State Report Card (2019, 2024).

The statewide assessment for high school changed to the SAT in SY2016 and switched back to the ACT in SY2025.

91. IBHE *Enrollment and Data Tool Month Enrollment* 2010–2023.

92. Steven Ruggles et al. *IPUMS USA: Version 16.0* [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

93. Illinois Report Card. *Postsecondary Enrollment* (2018–2022).

94. IBHE *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool Month Fall Enrollment* 2010–2023.

95. IBHE *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool Month Fall Enrollment* 2010–2023.

96. IBHE *Enrollment and Degree Data Tool Month Fall Enrollment* 2010–2023.

97. Illinois mirrors national trends for community college enrollment changes.

98. Steven Ruggles et al. *IPUMS USA: Version 16.0* [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

99. IWERC, *Post-Secondary Student Choice during the Pandemic in Illinois*. https://dpi.uillinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Outmigration_Report-4_final.pdf.

100. National Center for Education Statistics. *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*, 2023 Tuition & Fees. U.S. Department of Education, 2025.

101. National Center for Education Statistics. *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*, 2023 Tuition & Fees. U.S. Department of Education, 2025.

102. National Center for Education Statistics. I*ntegrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2023 Tuition & Fees.* U.S. Department of Education, 2025. U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates,* 2023.

103. College Scorecard 2010–2021.

104. ISAC *Data Book, Part Two: Monetary Award Program*, https://www.isac.org/e-library/research-policy-analysis/data-book/.

105. National Center for Education Statistics. *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS),* 2023 Tuition & Fees, 2025.

106. IPEDS *Trends Generator*, 2010–2023.

107. IPEDS *Trends Generator,* 2010–2023.

108. IBHE, *First Look Fall Enrollment*, https://www.ibhe.org/DataPoints/IBHE_FIRST_LOOK_FALL_ENROLLMENT_2023-24.html.

109. Healthy Minds Network. *Healthy Minds Study Among Colleges and Universities, 2023–2024 Data Set*. University of Michigan, UCLA, Boston University & Wayne State University, 2024.

110. Steven Ruggles et al. *IPUMS USA: Version 16.0* [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

111. Lumina Foundation, https://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/attainment/illinois.

The Illinois 60x25 goal includes both postsecondary degrees and credentials. Lumina Foundation provides estimates of the percent of adults with a non-degree credential. In 2023, 57.4% of adults in Illinois had a post-high school degree or credential, with 8.0% having a short-term credential.

112. Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation Report: Educational Attainment*, https://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/attainment/.

113. American Community Survey, 2010–2023.

114. Community College Reserach Center, T*racking Tranfer: State-by-State Outcomes*. https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/dashboard/tracking-transfer-state-outcomes.html.

115. IBHE *Interactive Transfer Data Platforms*, 2010–2023.

116. IBHE *Interactive Transfer Data Platforms*, 2010–2023.

117. Partnership for College Completion, *Seamless Success: Transforming College Transfer in Illinois*. https://partnershipfcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/UPDATED-PCC_TransferReport_6-18-2025.pdf.

118. IPEDS *Trend Generator* 2010–2023.

119. Illinois Community College Board, *Annual Enrollment and Completions in the Illinois Community College System*. https://www.iccb.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Annual_Enroll_Comp_2024_Executive_Summary.pdf.

120. IPEDS 150% BA Grad Rates by Race IL (2005–2017) and IPEDS Pell Grant Data.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John A. Edwardson*
Co-Chair
Former Chairman and CEO, CDW

Marin Gjaja
Co-Chair
Chief Customer Officer, Ford Model e

HON. William M. Daley*
Founding Co-Chair
Retired Vice Chairman of Public Affairs, Wells Fargo; Former White House Chief of Staff

HON. Jim Edgar†
Founding Co-Chair
Former Governor of Illinois

Ellen Alberding*
Retired President and CEO, The Joyce Foundation

Jason Barickman
Partner, Fairlawn Capital and Meyer Capel, PC

Harry Berman
Former Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Becky Betts
Former Chief Marketing & External Affairs Officer, A Better Chicago

Lew Collens*
President Emeritus, Illinois Institute of Technology

REV. K. Edward Copeland
Pastor, New Zion Baptist Church & Chair, Alignment Rockford

HON. John Cullerton
Former Illinois Senate President

Judy Erwin
Managing Director, Kivvit

Shayne Evans
Founder and Managing Partner, The Academy Group

Gary Fencik
Senior Partner, Adams Street Partners

James C. Franczek JR.*
Founding Partner and President, Franczek P.C.

Janice K. Jackson, EdD
Executive Director, The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program

Clare Muñana
President of Ancora Associates, Inc.

Lynda Parker
Assistant Principal for Student Services, Oak Park River Forest High School District 200

Sylvia Puente*
Senior Advisor, Latino Policy Forum, Retired President and CEO, Latino Policy Forum

Bill Polasky
10th-12th Grade Teacher, Meridian Community Unit School District 223, Educator Advisory Council Member

Juan Salgado
Chancellor, City Colleges of Chicago

Sonia W. Soltero, PhD
Professor and Department Chair, College of Education, DePaul University

Sara R. Stoelinga
President & CEO, Easterseals Chicago

Jason J. Tyler
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Northern Trust

Kristy N. Waterman
Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary, TreeHouse Foods

** Founding Members*
† The Honorable Jim Edgar passed away in September 2025.

ADVISORY GROUP

Bethany Patten
Chief Interagency Program Officer, Illinois Department of Human Services

Alicia Lynch-Deatherage
Interim Director of Early Childhood Development, Illinois State Board of Education

Bryan Stokes
Director, McCormick Foundation

Dr. Kimako Patterson
Chief of Staff, Illinois State Board of Education

Hal Woods
Chief of Policy, Kids First Chicago

Jenny Nagaoka
Deputy Director, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

Dr. Meg Bates
Director, Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative

Dr. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro
Vice President of Education Policy & Research, Latino Policy Forum

Sarah Hartwick
Senior Vice President and Corporate Board Secretary, Illinois Manufacturers' Association

Dr. Kyle Westbrook
Executive Director, EdSystems

Kris Monn
Executive Director/CEO, Illinois Association of School Business Officials

Diana Zaleski
Education Policy/Agency Relations Director, Illinois Education Association

Dr. Elizabeth Alvarez
Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent Proviso Township Schools

Dave Ardrey
Executive Director, The Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools

Mike Abrahamson
Director of Policy and Research, The Partnership for College Completion

Dr. Nidea Ruedas-Gracia
Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Illinois, College of Education

Emily Klonicki
Executive Director, Alignment Rockford

Dr. Dana Weiner
Chief Officer for the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation, State of Illinois

Dr. Kiljoong Kim
Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall

Dr. Mashana Smith
Associate Director, School Mental Health, Center for Childhood Resilience

Breana Calloway
Assistant Principal, EAC Member, North Chicago District 187

Michelle Zurita-Sharpe
Teacher, EAC Member, Chicago Public Schools

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Advisory Group for their guidance and input on the analysis and report findings. We are also grateful to the Illinois State Board of Education for providing data and guidance for this report.

Special thanks to Afton Partners for their consultant work, as well as to Jason Theisen for his thorough data work and analysis. We also extend our appreciation to Duo Studio for its design and data visualization support, and Alexis Dent for copy editing support.

A final note of appreciation goes to the Advance Illinois team for their collective work on the report over the past year.

In Memoriam: Governor Jim Edgar
We honor the memory of the Honorable Jim Edgar, founding co-chair for Advance Illinois whose vision and dedication helped shape our organization. His legacy continues to inspire our work.

ADVANCE ILLINOIS
303 EAST WACKER DRIVE, SUITE 1925
CHICAGO, IL 60601
312.235.4531
ADVANCEILLINOIS.ORG

ABOUT ADVANCE ILLINOIS

Advance Illinois is an independent bipartisan policy and advocacy nonprofit organization working toward a healthy public education system that enables all students to achieve success in college, career, and civic life.

Scan to Access Digital Report, Data Tables & More Report Features

BIT.LY/SWI2025