



# LEVERAGING ESSA: POLICY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS IN ILLINOIS

The passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) includes important accountability provisions regarding English learners (ELs) that further emphasize that the educational experience of and goals for EL students are not an isolated set of challenges. Rather, the ways in which states, districts and schools are prepared and supported to educate ELs reflect a broader and more integrated approach to equitable outcomes so that all students are able to thrive in school.

One major explicit change is that accountability for EL performance and progress is now shifted to Title I, which increases funding opportunities and visibility for ELs. Beyond this specific shift, however, there are several additional areas within ESSA that will also have deep significance for ELs as part of a broader equity approach to accountability.

The success and sustainability of efforts to ensure educational excellence and equity, particularly with regard to our EL students requires robust and thoughtful partnership between and among educators, decision makers, families, and communities. Prepared by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Latino Policy Forum, and Partners *for* Each and Every Child (Partners *for*), this document serves as a resource to EL advocates and families so they can better understand the opportunities within ESSA that can support a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning for ELs. This analysis can also be used as a companion to the Illinois ESSA State Plan Draft #1 [Reader's Guide](#)<sup>1</sup>, expanding on the section focusing on ELs (*This resource and others can be found at [partnersforeachandeverychild.org](http://partnersforeachandeverychild.org)*).

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## I. SNAPSHOT OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH IN ILLINOIS<sup>1</sup>

### English Learner Policy Context

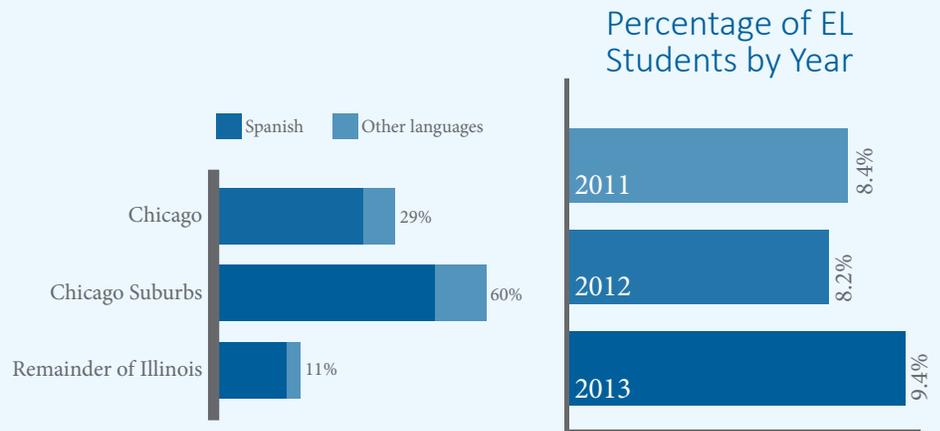
Illinois requires districts to offer Transitional Bilingual Education, in which students are taught academic content in their native languages while learning English. In 2010, the state extended the category of limited-English-speaking public school students, to include 3- and 4-year olds, and requires Districts to provide transitional bilingual education in preschools and K-12 schools where 20 or more pupils with limited English proficiency speak the same native language. Preschools without a critical mass speaking the same home language would have to provide English-as-a-second-language instruction. Schools must teach English (ESL) and various content areas in students' native language.

In an effort to promote college and career-level mastery in 2 or more languages, IL awards a State Seal of Biliteracy for students who demonstrate a high level of proficiency in one or more languages, in addition to English.

ISBE also supported legislation that requires charter schools to comply with federal and state laws and regulations for the provision of services to English learners. The agency has also begun working with charter school networks to develop the supports and infrastructure needed to serve ELs in charter schools. Illinois is also a member of WIDA, which provides English Learner assessment and proficiency screeners and progress tools.

### Demographic Information — Distribution Across the State

From 1990-2009 there was a significant increase in the population of foreign-born people in the United States and in the state of Illinois.



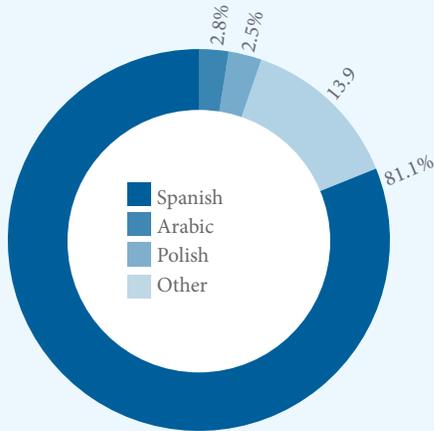
In 2013-2015, Illinois had more than the national average of ELs in K-12 (not including those enrolled in Pre-K).

1. Data compiled from the Migration Policy Institute, the Latino Policy Forum, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), US ED Office of Civil Rights, and the National Center for Education Statistics



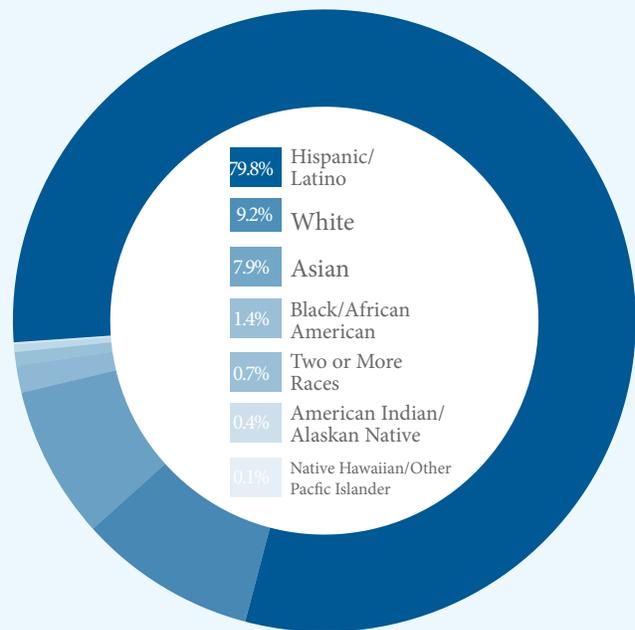
**OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT  
SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**

## Languages Spoken



There are 144 languages spoken in Illinois amongst ELL students but the three most common are Spanish, Polish and Arabic.

ELs by Race/Ethnicity in 2012



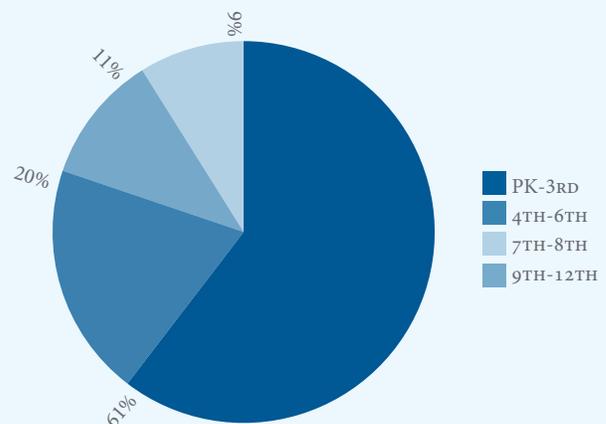
## Eligibility for EL Services

Students are eligible for EL programs and services if:

1. The student has a home language other than English and
2. Based on test scores, the student shows a need for EL instruction to gain skills in listening, speaking, reading, or writing academic English.

All parents in Illinois fill out a Home Language Survey at time of registration. The survey determines whether a language other than English is spoken in the student's home and what language the student usually speaks. If the student is identified as having a language background other than English, the student takes an English Proficiency assessment within 30 days. Other appropriate measures for identifying ELs are results of locally developed tests, teacher evaluations of performance, samples of the student's work, or information received from family members and/or school personnel. The English Proficiency assessment varies by grade level of the student. Students in grade levels 1-12 take either WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) or WIDA Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL).

Percentage of Enrolled ELs by Grade Level in 2011





## I. SNAPSHOT OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH IN ILLINOIS

### Assessment Information; Entrance/Exit Criteria

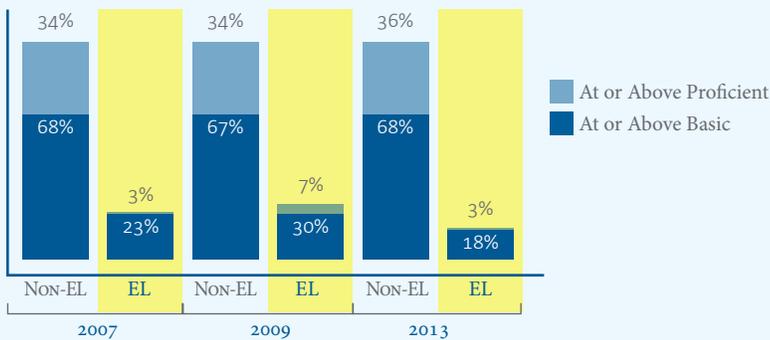
The WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) is an English language proficiency "screener" test given to incoming students who may be designated as English language learners. It assists educators with programmatic placement decisions such as identification and placement of ELLs. The W-APT test five English Language Proficiency Standards including:

- Social and Instructional Language • Language arts • Mathematics • Science • Social studies

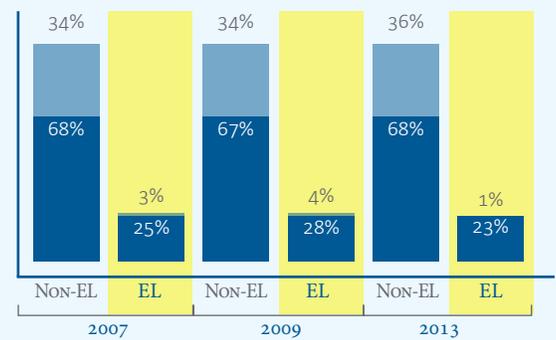
EL Services Entrance Criteria	
Composite Proficiency Level	5.0 on ACCESS/W-APT
Reading Proficiency Level	4.2 on ACCESS/W-APT
Writing Proficiency Level	4.2 on ACCESS/W-APT

### Outcomes/Proficiency Levels

NAEP: 4th Grade Proficiency in Reading



NAEP: 8th Grade Proficiency in Reading



\*The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas, including math, reading, science, writing, and the arts.



The following analysis describes some of the major provisions of ESSA and how they might impact the education of ELs in Illinois. Some of these sections are reflected in the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) initial **ESSA State Plan Draft #1\*** (see Section 2: Challenging State Academic Standards and Academic Assessments, starting on p. 6; also see p. 7 of the **Reader's Guide**). While the current Draft is an important starting point, ISBE, districts, and stakeholders should consider these areas as opportunities to reexamine, refine, and strengthen their work with ELs.

**Note New Content From ISBE's ESSA State Plan Draft #1**

## Goals for Student Achievement and High School Graduation Rates

### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

States must set long-term goals with measurements of interim progress for student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and math (as measured by proficiency); high school graduation rates; and English language proficiency (ELP). The goals and interim progress measures must take into account the improvement to make significant progress in closing proficiency and graduation rate gaps.

States must also set a long-term goal for 4-year high school graduation rates with measurements of interim progress. In addition, states may set goals for extended-year high school graduation rates, but those goals must be higher than the 4-year graduation rate goal.

### What Does this Mean for ELs?

An SEA's goals for English proficiency should reflect the state's primary objectives for English Learners (ELs). For example, proficiency standards might include specific language objectives or social emotional learning standards in addition to core content.

While setting progress goals around rates of English Language Proficiency is important, it is only one facet of an English Learner's academic progress. ESSA also requires that states continue report on the progress of English Learner students four years past redesignation as English Language proficient to ensure that students are not reclassified too soon or retained too long which has an impact on their access to future coursework, as well as their overall academic success.

### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

Illinois works to ensure that ELs are able to access the high-level content of the new state standards and remain at grade level while also developing English academic language proficiency. IL has set two overarching performance goals for all students:

- To reduce by half the percentage of all students who are not meeting proficiency levels within 6 years
- To reduce by half the state's achievement gaps within 6 years

IL's achievement gap reduction goals are set both for overall and for specific subgroups, including ELs. IL also measures both a 4- and 5-year cohort graduation rate and sets targets for all students (90% for 4-year, 95% for 5-year) differentiated by traditional ESEA subgroups, the high needs group (students with disabilities, EL and low-income students), and former ELs.

### Questions to Consider

- Is English language proficiency sufficiently addressed? Does English language proficiency include students reclassified as "proficient"?
- Is the primary objective for English proficiency to have access to general core content and/or are there other language objectives (e.g. goals for socialization and social emotional learning)?
- How do goals and standards for ELs align to Common Core or Next Generation Science standards? What is the relationship of ELP goals with interim progress goals for ELA and math?
- What are the expectations of how ELP standards support high school graduation requirement?
- How might these objectives be best served by various instructional models/options?
- Should Illinois introduce a new reporting category of former EL to track the progress of students over time, beyond four years?

\*The ISBE ESSA State Plan Draft #1 can be found at [ISBE.net/ESSA](https://www.isbe.net/ESSA)



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Accountability Indicators and N-size

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

States must use a multiple indicator accountability system that includes the performance of all students and each student subgroup – including ELs – for each indicator. States must set the minimum number of students from a subgroup needed for reporting and accountability purposes (N-size). The N-size must be the same for all subgroups and for all indicators.

The required accountability indicators for elementary, middle and high schools are:

- Achievement in ELA and math as measured by proficiency on statewide assessments\*
- English language proficiency rates\*
- At least 1 additional indicator of school quality or student success that allows for meaningful differentiation among school performance, can be disaggregated, and is valid, reliable, statewide, comparable (e.g., rates of school discipline, chronic absenteeism). *This indicator must carry “substantial” weight*
- High schools must also include their 4-year graduation rate (in addition, states may use an extended-year graduation rate)\*

*\*In the aggregate, these indicators must carry “much greater weight” than the indicator(s) of school quality or student success.*

#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

N-size and the additional indicator are two major areas that can impact how accurately a state’s accountability system monitors their EL students. N-size is also related to how schools are identified as in need of targeted support for improvement: the “bottom performing 5% of schools,” and those where any subgroup is under performing at the level of the lowest 5% on a particular indicator. N-size will determine how sensitive the accountability system is for the state’s subgroups – which is especially pertinent for states with rapidly growing EL population.

The “additional indicator” also presents an innovative opportunity to track aspects of school quality that might not always be apparent by looking solely at academic proficiency. While academic achievement measures will still carry “higher weight” (in a formula determined by the SEA), an additional indicator that considers factors that impact EL progress and proficiency rates could provide a clearer diagnostic tool to better understand the challenges facing schools and districts with lower rates of EL success. For instance, states who choose to include special education referral rates or behavioral/disciplinary action, might discover that disproportionality of those rates for ELs correlates with their academic gains.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

Illinois uses a multiple measures accountability system\* based on the following four components:

- **Outcomes** (high schools only)- Progress toward graduation rate goals
- **Achievement**- Student performance by students on state assessments
- **Progress** - Growth in “Content Proficiency” measured by annual PARCC assessment each year, grades 9-11 (high school); growth on PARCC (Grades 4–8) in math and ELA
- **Context (Bonus)\***- “Excellent” rating on various other categories, including the percentage of students receiving a 3 or higher on AP or IB exams (high school); percentage of students taking honors or dual credit classes (high school); percentage of students receiving recognized credentials (high school); and a school rating of excellent on a culture and climate survey

N-size for subgroup reporting is 10, except for “high needs” and former ELs, for which N-size is 30. Illinois disaggregates achievement by subgroup, including major racial/ethnic groups, gender, students with disability, and low-income students.

#### Questions to Consider

- What weight should each indicator hold in the accountability system? Which indicators are most important to ensure that schools and districts are held accountable for student performance, and which are most important to gain a better picture of school quality and student success for ELs?
- Should Illinois change the N-size for subgroups to 20 to match the Illinois School Code statute on Bilingual Education? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- What other “additional indicator(s)” have been included? Are there other indicators that should be included? How reliably do these indicators measure school quality, particularly relevant for EL students?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Report Cards and Data Reporting

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

ESSA requires state and district to produce annual report cards that include readily accessible information on:

- **Long-term goals** and measures of interim progress for all students and subgroups, on all accountability indicators
- **N-size:** Minimum number of students for subgroups
- **The system used to meaningfully differentiate** among schools, and how schools are identified for additional Support & Improvement
- **Performance on annual assessments** disaggregated by: economic disadvantage; each major racial/ethnic group; gender; disability, EL and migrant status; homeless; foster care; and military-connection
- **Educator Equity:** professional qualifications of teachers overall and in high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools, including the percentage of teachers who are inexperienced, teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, or who are not teaching in the field they are certified
- **Measures of school quality, climate, and safety,** which may include data reported as part of US ED's Office for Civil Rights Data Collection
- **Early Childhood Data:** percent of students enrolled in preschool programs



#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

Annual report cards must not only reflect accurate information, but must be accessible in the language of the families of students. Investments in producing digestible information reflects the SEAs recognition that families are indispensable partners and advocates in their child's education, and also reflects a commitment to transparency and accountability to all families.

Promoting accessibility to information is not just a function of report cards, or 1-way information distribution. SEAs and LEAs should consider strategies to help families and community partners understand and act upon the information that they are given. Developing partnerships with local community organizations and leaders can help provide a trusting learning environments to ask questions and learn about how to be advocates for their students.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

Illinois' annual report card includes the following:

- **Academic Performance-** including, for high schools, performance on ACT and/or SAT (which do not offer language accommodations or native language options); college enrollment; high school graduation rates; 9th grade students on track to graduation
- **Students** – including demographics
- **Instructional Setting** – including family engagement; student-staff ratios; class size; and teacher retention
- **District Finances** – including teacher/administrator salaries; expenditures, etc.
- **Performance on State Assessments** – grades 3-8 and high school on PARCC in ELA and math
- **12- and 16-month enrollment statistics** – for high school students in 2-year and 4-year colleges

#### Questions to Consider

- How has Illinois designed the system so that that data systems will be in place to ensure that all of these student subgroups are accurately accounted for? Are there additional subgroups that are or should be included in Illinois' accountability system?
- What measures of school quality, climate, and safety have been included in statewide reporting? Early childhood data? Are there additional measures of school quality, climate and safety that should be included in Illinois' accountability system?
- Should the Illinois School Report Card provide more longitudinal data on subgroups, dspecifically ELs, for the public at large?
- How much weight should English proficiency have in the accountability system? What should the timeline for inclusion of ELs in the accountability system be?
- How might IL report on the long term progress of redesignated ELs?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### English Learners – Identification and Assessment

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

The move of EL accountability from Title III to Title I did not significantly change the general requirements states were expected to fulfill for ELs. It does, however, add more weight to how states respond and how they will be held accountable. ESSA requires that states:

- include English proficiency as an indicator in their accountability systems;
- annually assess and report English proficiency, and students who have not attained English proficiency within 5 years of identification as an EL;
- clarify a standardized process for classifying ELs and re-designating students as English proficient; and disaggregate ELs with a disability from ELs in general.

In addition, states have two options regarding timing for testing ELs:

- Include test scores after they have been in the country 1 year (consistent with current law); OR
- Refrain from counting EL test scores in a school's rating in their first year, but require ELs to take both math and ELA assessments and publicly report the results



#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

Identification, assessment and accountability for ELs is crucial for understanding how schools are serving ELs and how to respond most effectively to demographic changes. And, having high expectations for students AND schools is an important aspect to ensure that EL progress is not simply “reported out,” but serves as actionable information for continuous improvement. While reaching English proficiency varies by individual, the goal of 5 years proficiency is a reasonable number and benchmark to assess the ability of schools to respond to ELs’ learning needs.

Furthermore, measuring rates of growth, and following the long-term progress of English Learners after they are redesignated as English language proficient can help to build a more complete profile of how EL students and families can be best supported to succeed throughout their academic careers.



#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

**EL proficiency assessment:** ACCESS is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure ELs’ social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains -- Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. All public school districts are required to assess annually all identified ELs in grades K-12 using the ACCESS for EL assessment until the students test as English language proficient.

**Accommodations for ELs:** IL continues to investigate and advocate for additional supports to further enable access in a way that demonstrates what students are able to do related to the standards and in a manner that is not confounded by acquisition of a second language.

**Assessment languages:** Math on the PARCC assessment is trans-adapted into Spanish. ISBE does not currently offer academic assessments for accountability purposes in any language other than English.

Note New  
Content From  
ISBE's ESSA State  
Plan Draft #1



#### Questions to Consider

- What additional native language assessments are needed for ISBE to ensure accurate assessment of content mastery for ELs (e.g. ELA, Science)?
- Should Illinois raise the transition criteria for transitioning from services and EL status to align with the skills needed to meet state standards?
- How might increasing the rigor of English Language proficiency assessments impact teaching and learning for ELs?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Schools Identified for Comprehensive and Targeted Reform: Interventions, Supports, and Timelines

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

At least once every 3 years, the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools, and all high school with a graduation rate at or below 67%, will be identified by the SEA as *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* – schools must demonstrate improvement within 4 years or face additional action. SEAs must also annually identify schools in need of *Targeted Support & Improvement*—those schools with a subgroup of students who are consistently underperforming based on the indicators in the state accountability system. Districts have the responsibility of developing improvement plans for *Comprehensive* and *Targeted Support & Improvement* schools which must:

- be informed by all of the accountability indicators;
- be evidence-based;
- be based on a school-level needs assessment;
- be approved by the school, district, and state;
- be monitored and periodically reviewed by the state; and
- identify resource inequities to be addressed.

Targeted Support and Improvement schools may face additional action for continued under performance as determined by the district.

#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

ESSA doesn't frame school identification in terms of punitive measures or failure, but in terms of continuous improvement and support, thereby recognizing that schools facing challenges – particularly serving subgroups like ELs – need time, resources, and expertise to address and confront their challenges. With ELs as a required accountability subgroup, there is emphasis on the need to provide high quality technical assistance to districts and schools to assess the entire continuum from identification to placement, assessment to redesignation. Piecemeal approaches to EL reform will not be effective unless it is explicitly aligned to the broader educational system and infrastructure – including instructional pedagogy, curricular standards and the availability of high-quality proficiency goals, and instructional and non-instructional supports.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

Illinois has established a Statewide System of Support (SSoS) as a way to supply research-based support, services, and resources designed to improve student outcomes for all Illinois districts and schools. Services are differentiated based on the needs of each school district, and Illinois utilizes a regional delivery system to provide direct assistance to districts and their schools.

**Priority schools:** Once a school has been identified as a Priority school, districts are required to submit a detailed school transformation plan that addresses a variety of elements, including teacher professional development, increasing learning time, improving learning outcomes, etc. Plans must be approved by local stakeholders and the state superintendent.

**Focus schools:** Illinois leverages its SSoS to support improvement practices with its Focus schools. In 2015-16, SSoS coaches have been replaced by a district assistance teams that support Focus schools with the implementation of targeted intervention strategies to address achievement gaps.

#### Questions to Consider

- What considerations should inform the identification and implementation of “evidence based practices? How might that help support schools confronting EL achievement gaps?
- For how long should a student group be underperforming before it meets the definition of “consistently underperforming”? The proposed regulations suggest identifying schools with these student groups every two years. What are the practical implications of a two-year timeline?
- How might redesignation of English Language students as proficient positively or negatively impact identification of schools that have “consistently underperforming” ELs?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### School Improvement Funding

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

States must use 7% of Title I allocations for school improvement activities. States will determine if these funds are distributed by formula or competitive grants.

States may use 3% of Title I allocations for “direct student services,” in consultation with districts, including:

Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other advanced coursework; career and technical education that leads to an industry-recognized credential;

- credit recovery programs;
- personalized learning; and
- transportation from Comprehensive Support & Improvement schools to higher performing schools.

#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

Direct-student services school improvement funds are a potential funding source for additional instructional supports for EL students, particularly to support students that are transitioning into and out of EL programs.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

IL uses a two-part formula for school funding that includes:

- Main Funding General State Aid, which is calculated according to varying formulas based on a set “foundation level”; and
- funding according to the District Concentration Ratio (DCR), which is the percentage of low-income students (increased funding per pupil as DCR goes up).

NOTE: IL’s base level of state funding is \$6,119 per pupil annually, but has never been fully funded by the state, and therefore this minimum has not been met.

#### Questions to Consider

- How can Title II be leveraged to increase teacher capacity to serve ELs?
- What should be the EL professional development priorities that could be funded by Title II?
- Considering the reality that the state funding formula must be addressed in order to support a new accountability system, how can Illinois ensure equitable distribution of school improvement resources?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Standards

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

States must demonstrate that their challenging academic standards are aligned with entry-level course requirements in the state's public system of higher education and the state's career and technical education standards.



#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

Clear, explicit content standards are very important for EL students, and must be intentionally aligned to English proficiency standards. That is, if English proficiency standards and assessments are not aligned to general education content standards, there may be challenges for students progressing towards English proficiency to also gain grade-level content mastery.



#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

**EL Standards:** With respect to EL standards, Illinois has been a World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium member since 2004. Illinois has contributed to and benefited from the work the WIDA consortium has undertaken since 2003 to develop English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. ELP Standards were developed using the ILS and incorporate the current college- and career-ready goals. Illinois officially adopted ELP Standards in 2004 and codified the 2007 version of the standards into the Illinois State Bilingual Rules and Regulations.

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#### Questions to Consider

- Illinois has set a goal for third grade students to read at grade level. Along those lines, should IL adopt literacy assessments available in Spanish, to complement the current Spanish mathematics assessments?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Educator Equity

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

States no longer need to define and track Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs), but states must develop, report and share plans describing how they will identify and address educator equity disparities that result in poor and minority students being taught by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other students.

States *must* collect and publicly report data on these disparities and describe the metrics used to determine the disparities. States must also report on, where available, the annual retention rates of effective and ineffective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

States *may* use federal professional development funds to increase access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and students of color.

Districts must describe how they will identify and address educator equity, and must have mechanisms to notify parents regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher.

#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

Some states also specifically include EL students as part of their analysis of the rates that poor and minority students are taught by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. Given the growing prevalence of EL students, SEAs should consider conducting similar analyses to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared, supported to be effective in the classroom, and distributed equitably.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

The Illinois Educator Equity Program Development Grant (competitive grant program) was used for eligible Title I participating Priority districts to support: programming development and implementation; data collection, analysis and reporting; sharing best or promising practices on program structure, implementation and efficacy, related to educator recruitment and retention; teacher leaders; and family and community engagement.

#### Questions to Consider

- Data from 2011-12 shows that school districts with high percentages of minority and low-income students have higher percentages of first-year and uncertified teachers. What should Illinois do to support a more equitable distribution of teachers to all students? What would be the impact for support for EL educators?
- How can lessons learned from the Educator Equity Program Development grant and best practices help to inform LEA Title II grant applications?
- Are there best practices specific to supporting EL students and their families?
- What are the necessary educator competencies specific to serving English Learners? How might educator equity plans increase the number of bilingual educators, as well as general education teachers with strong understanding of the needs of EL (and redesignated EL) students and families?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Title II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting Teachers, Principals or Other School Leaders

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

Under ESSA, SEAs must distribute 95% of Title II allocations to LEAs and reserve no more than 3% for activities for principals or school leaders. 4% of Title II funds may be reserved for state activities. Title II funds can be used to support professional development/learning and leadership opportunities, including recruitment, induction, mentoring, and career pathways. SEAs can subgrant or partner with for-profits, non-profits, institutes of higher education, or tribal organization, so long as strategies are “evidence based.”

#### 💡 What Does this Mean for ELs?

Technical assistance to strengthen and sustain high quality EL programs is an important Title II investment, but should NOT be used as a piecemeal funding strategy to fix “isolated” programming needs – e.g. focusing on pedagogical approaches, without considering broader school climate considerations. Rather, a full analysis of the SEAs and LEAs EL system (identification, placement, instruction, assessment, reclassification, family engagement) should be used to prioritize Title II resource decisions.

#### 🇺🇸 How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

There are several promising programs that invest significant resources and expertise in developing and sustaining strong educator pathways that consider recruitment, training, and support. Strategies include teacher residency partnerships with higher education, and job embedded teacher support.

#### ❓ Questions to Consider

- How does Illinois plan to allocate Title II funding specifically meant to support recruiting, preparing, and developing high-quality teachers and principals, including taking into account the shortage in the bilingual teacher workforce EC-12?
- How are students with disabilities and ELs included in state efforts to increase student access to well-prepared and effective teachers? What additional or different supports are needed and how will they be funded and staffed?
- How will Illinois ensure the fidelity and efficacy of LEA Title II applications? How will ISBE collect information on best practices and strategies?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Early Childhood Education

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

ESSA's provisions aim to promote seamless alignment between high-quality Early Childhood learning and K-12. A new authorization has been created for a **Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program**:

- early learning coordination within communities;
- greater alignment with the early elementary grades; and
- early childhood education focused on capacity building for teachers, leaders, and other staff serving young children.

Authorized at \$250M for FYs 2017-20, the PDG is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) jointly with US ED. Funds can be used to develop, update, or implement a plan to increase collaboration or coordination among existing early childhood programs and participation of children from low-income families in high quality early childhood programs. Secretaries of HHS and US ED are restricted from prescribing early learning development guidelines, standards, specific assessments, and specific measures or indicators of quality early learning and care.

#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

While increased investment in early learning and specifically its connection to K-12 is important, these new investments must be tied to evidence-based strategies that address the particular needs that language minority children and families have in becoming ready for school. For instance, we know that providing children from birth to five with consistent, language-rich experiences—such as talking, reading, and singing—have important benefits on their brain development and future school success. However, it is also true that Latino infants and toddlers are half as likely to have family members read to them, and a third less likely to be sung to or have stories told to, compared with their white, non-Latino peers.

#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

**The Preschool for All (PFA) program** (2007) is a competitive grant program that offers preschool for children ages 3-5 who are not eligible for kindergarten, and who are determined by multiple, weighed risk factors. PFA program curricula must be aligned with IL Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS), and must provide for active and continuous participation of families. In order to form a continuum of service, EL students are identified upon enrollment in ECE programs using Early English Language Development Standards to inform instruction in English as a second language for 3-5 year olds.

**IL's Preschool Development Grant – Expansion Grant** (PDG/EG) is part of a 4-year federal grant (2015-19) to enhance infrastructure to provide high-quality preschool programs, and to expand full-day preschool programs for 4-year-olds in high-need communities.

Currently only 40% of Latino children statewide attend early childhood education programs. IL will need to determine if and how they will use Title I funds for early childhood education and how they will consider equitable access to high quality programs. Plans must further develop and describe the district's existing and/or new strategy to support participating students' transition to local elementary schools.

#### Questions to Consider

- How can ISBE provide support and guidance to Districts on how to best use its Title I funds to strengthen early learning and K-12 linkages? What existing network or communication tools can be leveraged to strengthen connections within EL communities?
- How might ISBE consider ways to enhance and refine its approach to EL early childhood education as part of the Preschool Develop Grant/Expansion Grant?
- In what ways can ISBE work with Districts, family and community organizations, and others to support, coordinate, and integrate professional development opportunities, curricula, assessments, family engagement, instructional practices, and student support between early learning and early elementary?
- How might ESSA expand and strengthen practices of native language screening and assessment in early childhood settings?



## OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### At-Risk Students

#### ESSA What Does ESSA Say?

The **High School Graduation Initiative (HSGI)** is eliminated, but a new funding program, the **Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant**, authorizes formula grants to states for three purposes:

- provide students a well-rounded education;
- improve school conditions; and
- improve the use of technology to support digital literacy.

These funds may be used to support dropout prevention and re-entry programs.



#### What Does this Mean for ELs?

A 2014 research brief by the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University, reported that ELs are over-represented in continuation high schools serving students with over 25% of students classified as EL. Similarly, researchers have found that a disproportionate number of the youth detained in the correctional system are ELs. Given that information, SEAs and LEAs should consider targeted funding to support EL students successfully complete high school with full English proficiency.



#### How is this currently addressed in Illinois?

IL does not currently have statewide programming for high school dropout prevention or recovery. Three IL districts were awarded HSGI grants in 2010, focused on comprehensive dropout prevention and reentry program strategies, including collaboration with community organizations, police and probation, and health services. In Chicago, the Department of Dropout Prevention and Recovery has implemented district-wide programming targeting 9th grade course completion and success and credit recovery for students in 10th-12th grade.



#### Questions to Consider

- What are ways that ISBE can provide guidance around best practices (lessons learned from the HSGI grant awards) on comprehensive high school dropout prevention or recovery?
- What existing partnerships with non-profit community organizations or public agencies can be leveraged to strengthen and refine strategies, specific to English Learner communities?
- In what ways can ISBE work with Districts, family and community organizations, and others to support, coordinate, and integrate professional development opportunities, curricula, assessments, family engagement, instructional practices, and student support around dropout prevention and recovery?



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES



### Migration Policy Institute

Taking Stock of ESSA's Potential Impact on Immigrant and English-Learner Students | January 21, 2016  
ESSA Implementation in States and School Districts: Perspectives from Education Leaders | February 2016

### Latino Policy Forum

Every Student Succeeds Act: A Compendium of Accountability Considerations for Illinois | September 2016  
How Assessment Can Promote Equity for English Learners -- Policy Considerations for Illinois | September 2016  
Foundations of Academic Success for Latinos and English Learners | August, 2016  
English learners in Illinois: Investing in Growth, Assets and Opportunity | September 2015  
Shaping Our Future: Building a Collective Latino K-12 Education Agenda | June 2012  
Preparing All Teachers to Educate Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students | 2015

### Council for Chief State School Officers

Critical Area Outline on English Learners | March 29, 2016  
English Learners Considerations in ESSA | December 14, 2015  
Major Provisions of ESSA related to the Education of English Learners | March 2016

### American Federation of Teachers

ELL Fact Sheet | 2016

### National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

Article & Webinar: What the Every Student Succeeds Act means for the Latino Community | February 10, 2016  
ESSA Implications for Latinos and English Learners | April 26, 2016