



# Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001  
www.isbe.net

**Gery J. Chico**  
Chairman

**Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.**  
State Superintendent of Education

In April 2014, The Illinois State Board of Education received approval for a flexibility waiver from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), in exchange for a [state-developed plan](#) to prepare students for college and careers, focus aid on the neediest students and support effective teaching and leadership.

The waiver's flexibility and relief from NCLB becomes effective as of the 2014-15 school year.

## Overview of the State's waiver for NCLB Flexibility

- The waiver builds on a foundation of comprehensive education initiatives already being implemented in public school classrooms around the state and in universities that prepare tomorrow's educators.
- Among those foundational pieces are new Illinois Learning Standards in English Language Arts and Math which set higher benchmarks for what students should know and demonstrate at each grade level in order to be ready to succeed in college and careers.
- Following the adoption of these standards in 2010, Illinois educators have been implementing curriculum and instructional approaches to meet the new benchmarks.
- The next step is to assess students' progress using a new assessment designed to measure the new standards. This new assessment, called the [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers \(PARCC\)](#), will replace the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for third through eighth graders in 2014-15 and will replace the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) which was only given to 11<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The PARCC will assess students in third grade through eighth grade and at least one year in high school, provide more precise information about student comprehension and skills through more engaging exercises and an online format, and ultimately provide timely data that can help teachers target instruction as needed to improve student learning.
- Student, school and district academic performance will be reported for accountability purposes through a variety of metrics, called a Multiple Measure Index (MMI) that will report data on graduation rates, achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics, including annual student achievement gap data, performance on the ACT, attainment of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), as well as student growth over time and progress narrowing achievement gaps between groups of students.
- Some specific achievement goals for the MMI have still to be refined but there are two overarching performance goals: 1) to cut or reduce in half the percentage of all students who are not meeting proficiency levels within six years (by 2020.) and 2) reduce by half the state's achievement gaps within six years (2020).

- The waiver allows for flexibility of Title funds to improve schools.
- Districts will receive support services, from general to more intensive, depending on need from the Illinois Center for School Improvement.

### **NEXT STEPS FOR THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION( ISBE)**

- ISBE will offer a series of webinars on the waiver application.
- ISBE will convene accountability experts and stakeholders as we finalize performance and achievement gap goals for specific subgroups by Fall 2014. Modifications to an accepted waiver are expected and common practice across the nation.
- ISBE expects to use the 2014-15 administration of the PARCC as the baseline year for the Multiple Measures Index.
- Any related NCLB sanctions or provisions will not go into effect, however, as by the time of the final School, District and State Report Card (October 2014), the state will be operating under the approved waiver.
- ISBE will provide a range of professional development and support services, from general to intense targeted intervention, depending on the achievement metrics of schools, to help them better prepare students for college and careers.
- ISBE will recognize schools with high levels of performance and those making significant progress.
- Focus Services will be provided to districts with schools in which subgroups are furthest behind and will be supported by the Illinois Center for School Improvement (IL CSI) – identified Summer 2014.
- Priority Services will be provided to districts with the lowest-performing schools with support of the Illinois CSI  
([http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip\\_1003.htm#priority](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm#priority))

### **NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS**

- Districts will continue to implement the new Illinois Learning Standards. Districts will will administer the PARCC to students in third through eighth grade , and at least once during high school, beginning in the Spring 2015.
- Districts will submit data on a variety of metrics for a more complete overview of achievement and growth.
- Districts will have access to a range of professional development and support services, depending on performance and need. Schools in status are no longer obligated to offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Districts may want to consider providing after-school type activities, either on their own or through private entity(ies) of their choosing. Such after-school activities will look different for targeted buildings vs schoolwide building<sup>1</sup>.
- Schools in status are no longer obligated to offer school choice, a provision of NCLB. Students who have previously transferred to another school via the `Choice' provision are allowed to stay at that school until they reach the highest grade in the building. However, the district is no longer obligated to pay for transportation.

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<sup>1</sup> Schoolwide buildings can serve everyone, targeted buildings can only serve the lowest achieving students. Schoolwide buildings must be at least 40 percent poverty and have a board approved schoolwide plan.

- Districts will have more flexibility on how they can use federal Title funds. The 10 percent professional development set aside for districts in status and the 20 percent set aside for SES and Choice are eliminated. Varying student performance goals will allow districts to improve outcomes that take into account the varied starting points of students.
- Districts will continue to implement a new, more holistic and comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system with all schools in the state administering evaluations that include student growth as one measure in student and principal evaluations.
- Districts can learn more about the waiver application and upcoming webinars via the ISBE website and Weekly emails to superintendents from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch.

## **NEXT STEPS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

- Students will have access to a more challenging and informative assessment system that aims to give them timely information about each student's academic performance and trigger any necessary targeted classroom help on a timely basis.
- Students and families will have access to a variety of meaningful performance metrics, rendering a more complete picture of their student, school and district's achievement, progress, school climate and learning conditions.
- Students and families will be a part of a new holistic and comprehensive differentiated recognition, accountability and support system that will help Illinois ensure that each and every child is prepared for post-secondary success.
- Students and Families can read more about waiver, approved by the U.S. Department of Education, on the State Board's waiver webpage at:
- [http://www.isbe.net/nclb\\_waivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers/default.htm)