



FROM VISION TO ACTION: 2019-2020

Vision 20/20 has identified four priorities for the State of Illinois in order to have the most immediate and profound impact on public education. Financial equity and equity of opportunity for all students must be one of the basic foundational principles of Vision 20/20 going forward.



Highly Effective Educators

Increasing the availability and equitable distribution of high quality educators must be a top priority, not only because of the teacher shortage situation but because research shows the best thing we as a state can do to improve public education is attract and develop highly effective educators. Continuous, high-quality, job-embedded professional development and opportunities for educator collaboration are a necessary part of an effective continuous improvement process.

Recruit and Retain High-Impact Educators

Recruit Teachers into the Profession. Develop a comprehensive guide and resources to inform aspiring and prospective teachers in Illinois to address short and long-term educator needs. Expand additional statewide recruitment strategies and incentives for hiring educators. Remove barriers to drawing potential educators from a larger pool of talent.

Expand Alternative Teaching Licensure Programs/Partnerships with Higher Education. Create a process to review deficient courses for undergraduate education degree programs, to streamline the process to become teachers. Create University partnerships for flexibility into student teaching placement. Partnerships should continue to create pathways into education and expand mentorship through grants or job placement. Maintain rigorous standards for entry into alternative teaching licensure programs while also allowing additional routes to credentialing.

Provide Student Loan Forgiveness and Tiered Incentives. Continue to support and appropriate funds to expand student loan forgiveness to all licensed individuals so educators, particularly minority educators, at all districts, not just low-income districts, can benefit. Expanded forgiveness amounts and incentives for entering the education field to assist with career retention.

Provide Relevant Professional Development

Fully Fund Mentoring for New Educators. Provide financial support for the required mentoring for new teachers, principals, and superintendents.

Allocate Collaboration Time. Include teachers, staff, administrators, and board members in the creation of and support for job-embedded professional development.

Enhance Professional Learning and Innovation. Collaborate to create resources for professional development tailored to the unique needs of school districts. Innovative approaches to professional development including online learning and micro-credentials should continue to be explored.



21st Century Learning

All Illinois students deserve 21st-century instruction that provides equitable access to modern learning environments that allows them to learn and apply knowledge, think creatively, and be well-prepared for a global citizenry. Learning is not limited to the classroom or school day. Illinois's public education must provide a pathway from high-quality early childhood education to beyond grade 12; preparing students for college and careers, both known and unknown, as well as for global citizenship.

Develop the “Whole Child”

Align and Expand Social and Emotional Standards. Align current social and emotional standards across curriculum and expanded to include safety and cyberbullying resources.

Promote Individualized Learning, Creativity, and Innovation. Create and support policies that acknowledge children learn in different ways and at different speeds. Policies must consider 21st Century needs and skills and enhance educational opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math (STEAM) that encourage student creativity and innovation.

Engage Parents, Family, and Community. Policies must encourage effective home-school partnerships, welcoming school communities, effective communication and supportive student learning both at home and at school and the importance of student attendance at school.

Develop a Balanced State Assessment System. Continue to develop a state assessment that can produce timely and reliable data that can effectively inform instruction and support innovative instructional practices. A balanced state assessment system (consistent for at least five to seven years) must be aligned, consistent, flexible, fully funded by the state, based on realistic and effectively communicated timelines, and offer relevant professional development.

Invest in High-quality Early Childhood Education

Offer Incentives for Expanding Early Learning Opportunities and Full-Day Kindergarten Education. Increase funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant and create better incentives for districts to invest in early learning to capitalize on the benefits of early childhood education. Explore additional incentives to support full-day kindergarten, parent education, and support services while expanding and protecting existing programs.

College and Career Readiness

Promote Partnerships with Business, Industry, and Post-Secondary Institutions. Ensure that all students have access to a wide-range of quality dual-credit and technical opportunities. Align high school course progressions and testing with community colleges, local industry requirements, and other post-secondary institutions. Provide additional incentives for teachers to teach dual credit courses.

Encourage Career Exploration. Increase graduation requirement flexibility for students who participate in internships or apprenticeships.

Expand Equity in Technology Access

Provide High Speed Internet Connectivity to Every School and Community. Increase the investment in technology and infrastructure to meet State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) internet connection recommendations.

Incorporate Technology in State Learning Standards. Embed digital learning skills into the Illinois Learning Standards and into professional development of educators.



Shared Accountability

Student learning should be the number one priority of the education system. Providing greater flexibility in local decision-making will allow for innovation and a direct impact on student performance. Ultimately, accountability for student learning rests in the local school district. As such, educators' experiences and voices are essential to crafting effective education policy.

Expand Educator Role and Responsibility in State Governance

Allow Current Educators Representation on the Illinois State Board of Education. Add practicing educators to the ISBE Board to provide professional expertise to help guide the implementation of state initiatives and ensure that oversight and regulatory efforts positively impact student learning. (HB4284 Vetoed by Governor 8/19/18.)

Implement a Balanced Accountability System

Adopt a Balanced Accountability Model (Enacted as Public Act 99-193 Balanced Accountability Model). Carefully monitor the implementation of the new accountability model to ensure it remains consistent with the intent of PA 99-193. It must ensure a focus on continuous improvement, recognize the diversity of struggling schools, measure systems' capacities, and eliminate achievement gaps across the state. Ensure the balanced accountability model allows for local flexibility, identification of systems' capacities, promotes shared accountability and is sensitive to local district improvements.

Restructure Mandates

Distinguish Between Essential and Discretionary Regulations. Ensure educating students is the first and foremost priority of schools. Promote flexibility and local decision-making. Address financial and operational hardships by instituting a new local control analysis prior to placing additional legislation or regulations over-regulated school system.



Equitable & Adequate Funding

The General Assembly made great strides toward financial equity with the adoption of an Evidence-Based Funding Model, a Vision 20/20 initiative (Enacted as Public Act 100-0465 - Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act). Now, it is imperative to fund more than the minimum funding level required by statute to ensure all students have equitable access to a high-quality educational programs and safe educational environments. In addition, local school districts must have autonomy and flexibility to match resources most effectively with local needs.

Fund Education Based on Local Need

Evidence-Based Funding Model. To reach the statutory mandate of adequate funding by 2027 the General Assembly must allocate more than the minimum funding level. Maximizing new resources into school districts over the next ten years should have the effect of increasing education funding by billions of dollars and eliminating the gap between adequacy and current spending. Until funding for all schools is adequate, it will be unfair to make any universal analysis with the new accountability system results. For greatest efficiency, districts should be allowed flexibility to allocate state funds throughout their local district allowing them to align resources to student needs better.

Stabilize State Funding for Education

Enhance State Spending. Enhanced state funding should be identified and secured to meet the needs of students and the continually expanding services that public schools are counted on to deliver above and beyond those provided through the evidence-based funding model, such as the additional needs in the areas of special education, early childhood, and transportation.

Ensure Safe Schools. Provide dedicated funding to ensure the ongoing safety of our students when they go to school each day. Each local district should determine how to utilize these dollars best to maximize their effectiveness based on their unique needs; be it upgrading facilities, installing security cameras, hiring resource officers, training teachers, or conducting school climate seminars with students. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to address school safety, but each school and district needs additional resources to ensure each school is safe.

Protect Local Resources. Localities need stability in their revenue streams. Measures need to be taken to prohibit any reduction of revenues of funds that have been previously allocated to schools, such as Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) or Cook County Personal Property Replacement Tax (CCPRT) situations.

Restructure the Ramp for Unfunded Pension Obligations. With more and more of the incremental increase in annual revenues going to the “pension ramp” it is imperative that the ramp be restructured to allow for more certainty that revenues will be available to fund the evidence-based formula and enhance state funds for other needs as stated above.

MOVING FORWARD

Vision 20/20 is a process that will lead to meaningful and lasting change by serving as a blueprint for public education policy and is intended to be a decision-making framework to guide ongoing advocacy and align public educators around a common vision for the future. In collaboration with lawmakers and other stakeholders, the policies outlined in this document can be enacted as part of a continuous improvement process to improve the education experiences and outcomes of all Illinois students for the benefit of the entire state of Illinois.

Vision 20/20 is a long-term plan that challenges the State Legislature and Governor, along with all stakeholders, to take action to fulfill the promise of public education in Illinois by the year 2020.