

ISBE Strategic Plan will Focus on These Three Goals

(Online feedback survey also available at isbe.net/StrategicPlanSurvey)

IAGC believes the bulleted points must be addressed by ISBE in order to ensure all Illinois students receive equitable access to learning opportunities in an environment that meets their unique needs.

Goal 1: Student Learning

Every child will make significant academic gains each year, increasing their knowledge, skills, and opportunities so they graduate equipped to pursue a successful future, with the state paying special attention to addressing historic inequities.

- In the era of No Child Left Behind, the group of students who made the least gains was gifted students. With most focus on bringing students below grade level to meet standards. Many **gifted students** who had already met standards were **left behind**.
- An underrepresentation of low income and minority student subgroups among students achieving at high levels has created an **excellence gap** in Illinois.
- Recent legislation, **The Accelerated Placement Act**, requires all Illinois districts to have a plan for academically accelerating students to meet their academic needs. Districts need support in implementing this requirement. Support is also needed to help districts meet the requirements in the revised **Report Card Act** which directs districts to gather important information regarding high ability students and their instruction.

Goal 2: Learning Conditions

All schools will receive the resources necessary to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments, and will be equipped to meet the unique academic and social and emotional needs of each and every child.

- In 2003, 85% of IL school districts offered programs for gifted and advanced students in elementary grades and 78.9% of districts offered programs in middle school (ISBE). In 2016, 27% of districts reported providing such programs (Dwyer & Welch 2016). Schools that serve lower income communities **disproportionately eliminated programming**.
- District **gifted education funding** eliminated after FY 2003 should be restored in order to assist schools in restoring and expanding services for students with gifts and talents and promote equitable access to advanced learning opportunities across Illinois communities in accordance with 14A of the School Code.
- The use of **Title II dollars** for gifted educational professional development as required by ESSA should be considered.

Goal 3: Elevating Educators

Illinois' diverse student population will have educators who are prepared through multiple pathways and are supported in and recognized for their efforts to provide each and every child an education that meets their needs.

- District staff need **training in identifying** high potential and high ability students, especially those from underrepresented populations.
- Districts need support in **planning a continuum of services** for high potential and high ability students.
- Teachers need **training in strategies** such as differentiation to work with high ability students within their heterogeneous classroom
- **Psychologists, social workers, and administrators need training** to understand and meet the unique academic, social and emotional needs of high ability students