

Illinois

Analyzing the pathways matter framework in Illinois.

Illinois has a strong set of interconnected policies and practices that help prepare students for college and career, for example automatically enrolling students in the most difficult courses offered at their school, a comprehensive College and Career Pathways Endorsement in high school and a cross-agency Career Pathways Dictionary describing what constitutes a high-quality pathway. To complement its current work, Illinois should consider conducting a return on investment analysis focused on pathway offerings and labor market alignment to answer the fundamental questions of 1) are CTE programs aligned with what business and industry needs? 2) What happens to learners who complete these programs? and 3) Who has access to which programs? The data can be used to continue to drive change and data-driven decision making across agencies.



STRENGTHS

- Illinois's robust college acceleration programs and policies, including required access and automatic enrollment, support learners in accelerating their educational journeys.
- Illinois's articulation agreements across K-12 and postsecondary help reduce lost or stranded postsecondary credit.
- Illinois's apprenticeships model spans both the K-12 and postsecondary levels, increasing access for learners.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Conduct a formal return on investment analysis of K-12 and postsecondary CTE program offerings for alignment, quality and equitable access.
- Offer last dollar and last mile scholarships to strengthen postsecondary access and attainment for all students.
- Establish clear, transparent selection criteria for state promoted industry-valued credentials to ensure real market value for K-12 and postsecondary students.



LEARNER PATHWAYS

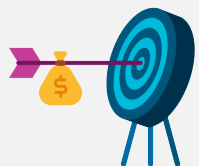
Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS				
TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING				
RETRUN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS				
STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES				



HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS

Align all CTE programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations that reflect the state's economic and workforce priorities. Ensure that these programs feature the academic and technical skills and knowledge learners will need to be successful.



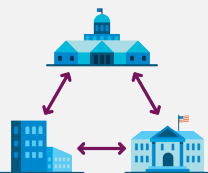
TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING

Dedicate state funding for CTE programs—but only if they are aligned to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations. Target specific funds for pathway completion and demonstrated learner outcomes.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

Conduct a biennial return on investment (ROI) analysis of CTE programs to assess whether all learners have access to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways. Collect school- and student-level data to evaluate outcomes of CTE programs against established shared metrics for quality and equity.



STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES

Establish shared priorities and collective accountability across state agencies and education systems for learner pathway development, supports and success. Ensure that business and industry have a seat at the table and can lead discussions related to demand and training requirements.





KEY POLICY

High-Quality CTE Programs



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Career and technical education (CTE) in Illinois is run through a partnership between secondary schools and public community colleges (and other partners including business/industry, community organizations, and 4-year postsecondary institutions). The State Board of Education oversees secondary CTE and distributes Perkins funding via 56 regional Education for Employment Systems (EFE). The EFE provides the planning, support, and delivery of resources to school districts and area career centers. Secondary CTE programs are grouped into 7 endorsement areas that align with the 16 federal career clusters, plus a cluster for Energy. Students can earn the comprehensive College and Career Pathway Endorsement on their high-school diploma. Information on college and career pathways in Illinois is communicated through the Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework, required in statute. The PaCE framework contains information on career exploration and development, postsecondary, and financial aid and literacy.

Postsecondary CTE is coordinated by the Illinois Community College Board, which also published Model Programs of Study guides that can serve as a template for collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions. Illinois's *Career Pathways Dictionary*, developed collaboratively across K-12, postsecondary and workforce entities, describes what constitutes a pathway and includes statutory definitions of core components, like work-based learning. Program review for alignment, equity, and quality occur separately across K-12 and postsecondary programs, based on quality criteria included within the State's Perkins V Plan which are aligned to the PWR Act and State Career Pathways Dictionary. Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 435/2e requires the State Board of Education submit a written CTE report to the governor annually, which includes many Perkins requirements, but could be more comprehensive in its analysis.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

To complement current work, Illinois should consider conducting a thorough return on investment of its existing K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs of study to (1) ensure that the programs of study vertically align with postsecondary and with state workforce and economic demands and projections in high-wage, high-skill and high-demand occupations, (2) determine where there are program gap opportunities, and (3) ascertain program quality. A plan should be developed and implemented to phase out all misaligned or low-quality programs of study and phase in revised or new high-quality programs of study fully reflective of the state's priorities.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Career and Technical Education Programs](#)
- Tennessee – [Career and Technical Education Programs](#)
- Texas – [Program of Study Initiative](#)

RESOURCES

- [CTE Illinois State Board](#)
- [Career Pathways Dictionary](#)
- [Education Systems Center- College and Career Pathways](#)
- [Illinois Perkins V Plan](#)
- [2020 Illinois CTE Report](#)

POLICIES

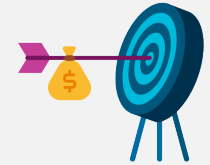
- [105 ILCS 435/2e](#) Vocational Education Act
- [110 ILCS 148/1](#) Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act
- [110 ILCS 148/75](#)
- [HB3296](#) College and Career Readiness Systems





KEY POLICY

Targeted CTE Program Funding



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois funds CTE through the required match to the federal Perkins V funding. CTE funding is a line item in the state budget and over the last several years has been flat-funded based on a funding formula. Historically, this funding formula has largely been based on course offerings and not participation of students. Additionally, the State Board of Education provides annual CTE pathway grants designed to target specific areas of interest as identified by the state. The grants are competitive, so not all LEAs receive funding. In 2022, the amount was \$5 million and schools could apply for up to \$50,000. The allowable uses of the funds include evaluation of CTE delivery systems, teacher support (including professional development, and recruitment), support for special populations and technical assistance.

Although not specifically CTE-focused, Illinois does have a unique state-education Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) system. The EBF system calculates an adequacy target for each district using a variety of factors including core investments, per-student investments, and additional investments for low-income, English learner and special education students. State funding is then utilized to help ensure districts are close to funded at their adequacy target through tiered money.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider shifting CTE funding to incorporate equity factors consistent with the EBF formula (which currently does not include CTE). Additionally, Illinois should consider continuing targeted K-12 funding to further incentivize LEAs in their development and implementation of high-quality, aligned programs of study that are accessible and produce equitable outcomes. This could include funds to support the startup and sustainment of high-quality, aligned programs and incentive funds for students who complete a high-quality, aligned programs of study or obtain aligned industry credentials.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Funding Methodology](#)
- Ohio – [Innovative Workforce Incentive Program](#)
- Texas – [House Bill 3](#)

RESOURCES

- [College and Career Grants](#)
- [Evidence-based Funding](#)
- [Education Systems Center and ICCB: Model Programs of Study](#)

POLICIES

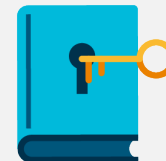
- [SBE Admin Code 256.400](#)
- [105 ILCS 5/18-8.15](#) Evidenced-Based Funding





KEY POLICY

Return on Investment Analysis



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation that governs a return on investment analysis looking at high-quality CTE programs of study that reflect high-skills, high-wage, high-demand (H3) occupations/industries could be identified.

The statutorily required (105 ILCS 435/2e) annual CTE report contains minimal elements of a return on investment analysis but could be strengthened in terms of the inclusion of postsecondary and vertical alignment, increasing the analysis of alignment to high-demand, high-skill, higher wage occupations, and student outcomes, broken down by student demographics including race, special education, and English learner status. Illinois' current report is required by the Gender Equity Advisory Committee to analyze gender equity in access and participation in CTE, especially regarding non-traditional fields.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider conducting a thorough return on investment analysis to ensure that existing high-demand, higher-wage, and high-skill CTE programs are offered across K-12 and postsecondary and use already collected student data to further analyze student access, participation, completion, and outcomes data by student groups, schools, institutions and regions to determine potential inequities. ExcelinEd's playbook [Auditing a State Career and Technical Education Program for Quality](#) provides a roadmap for developing and implementing an audit.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Mississippi – [Comprehensive CTE Reform Act](#)
- Colorado – [Return on Investment Reports](#)
- Florida – [Executive Order 19-31](#) and [House Bill 7071](#)
(NOTE: While promising, both Colorado and Florida could be strengthened by more focused analyses on equity and quality of offerings.)

RESOURCES

- [2021 Illinois Career and Technical Education Report](#)

POLICIES

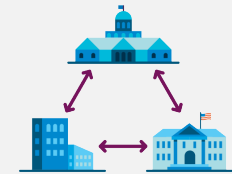
- [105 ILCS 435/2e](#) Vocational Education Act
- [105 ILCS 435/2.1](#) Gender Equity Advisory Committee





KEY POLICY

State Cross-Agency Shared Priorities



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Over the last decade, Illinois has had multiple state cross-agency initiatives focused on college and career pathways that have morphed and changed with state priorities. The multiple groups, however, have varying levels of oversight and an ad hoc coordination. Cross-agency groups include the governor-appointed Workforce Innovation Board, which oversees the state plan and the strategic leadership of the state workforce development system, and the P-20 College and Career Readiness Committee, which coordinates efforts across external programs and state initiatives.

In 2015, HR 477 directed the Illinois Pathways Interagency Committee to study methods used to prepare high school graduates for success in college and/or career. The analysis and research informed the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act, which created the framework of Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) for learner planning and CCP Pathway Endorsements and integrated a competency-based approach to college and career readiness. Northern Illinois University Education Systems Center is a statewide intermediary organization dedicated to the implementation of the act. The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth was established in 2016. Cabinet membership includes multiple state agencies, including K-12, postsecondary, economic development and the workforce, as well as health services, juvenile justice, and senior elected positions. There is one strand of the cabinet focused on college and career pathways, the Workforce Readiness Through Apprenticeship and Pathways (WRAP) initiative. The WRAP committee has been inactive since an administration change in 2018, though there was a similar structure called the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) related to workforce training and education systems.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider conducting an analysis of current workstreams and overlaps of the current cross-agency initiatives to consolidate/coordinate authority and oversight on a jointly developed set of priorities, goals and metrics. ExcelinEd’s resource [Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Support Career and Technical Education](#) provides a step-by-step process on building cross-agency shared priorities.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education \(DACCTE\)](#)
- Indiana – [Governor’s Workforce Cabinet](#)

RESOURCES

- [Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth](#)
- [Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act](#)
- [Illinois Workforce Investment Board](#)
- [P-20 College and Career Readiness Committee](#)

POLICIES

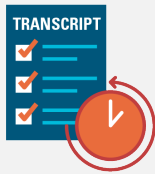
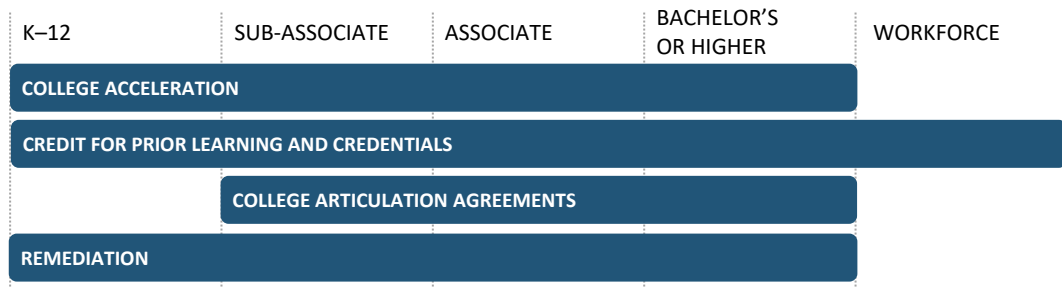
- [EO 2016-03](#) Establishing the Governor’s Cabinet On Children And Youth
- [110 ILCS 148/1](#) Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act
- [HR 477](#) Pathways Interagency Committee (IPIC) Resolution





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.



COLLEGE ACCELERATION

Provide and incentivize a range of options for learners to earn college credit while in high school. Ensure that all learners have access and financial support to accelerate their journey to a postsecondary credential.



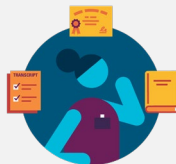
CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS

Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.



COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

Establish statewide articulation agreements to ensure college credits earned in K-12 or at one institution transfer and count toward a degree at another. Minimize or eliminate credit loss and misalignment for transitioning learners.



REMEDICATION

Replace outdated developmental and remedial education with college credit bearing options paired with intensive supports. Adopt co-requisite remediation programs or offer remediation to learners before they graduate high school.





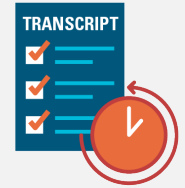
POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Illinois



KEY POLICY

College Acceleration



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois promotes a portfolio of early postsecondary credit opportunities, including dual credit, AP, and IB. Illinois Code (110 ILCS 27) Dual Credit Quality Act is a sweeping piece of legislation designed to provide K-16 guidance on what and how dual credit can be offered. The Model Partnership Agreement, which establishes the statewide framework for dual credit delivery, controls the costs that can be charged for dual credit, ensuring affordable delivery for districts, and limits what may be charged to low-income families. The act was amended to support professional development and added mixed enrollment courses to alleviate scheduling pressures on secondary districts.

In pursuit of increased enrollment and access, the Accelerated Placement Act required districts to expand eligibility to all students, increase notification to parents, and put in place a multiple measures policy for determining if a student is eligible to participating in a college acceleration course. In 2021, statute requires secondary districts to establish an accelerated placement policy with provisions for automatic enrollment into the next most rigorous level of advanced coursework offered, including early college credit coursework.

Illinois also supports early college high schools, including P-Tech and other early college models (often in partnership with local community colleges), where students to graduate from high school with an associate degree.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Although some funding is available for students, to continue to make access more equitable, Illinois should consider providing supplemental funding so all advanced-level offerings can be accessed and completed at no cost to the student. Currently, the cost of accelerated coursework is controlled through the Model Partnership Agreement for dual credit and the State also offers AP grants.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [High School Acceleration Programs](#) and [Statewide Agreements on Credit](#)
- Idaho – [Advanced Opportunities Funding](#)
- Louisiana – [TOPS-Tech Early Start Program](#)
- North Carolina – [Automatic Enrollment](#)

RESOURCES

- [IL Community College Board: Dual Credit](#)
- [P-Tech Schools in IL](#)
- [Dual Credit Quality Act Summary](#)
- [ISBE College and Career Readiness Division](#)
- [PaCE Framework](#)

POLICIES

- [110 ILCS 27](#) Dual Credit Quality Act
- [105 ILCS 302/30](#) College and Career Success for All Students Act
- [105 ILCS 5/14A-32](#) Accelerated Placement Act
- [110 ILCS 152](#) Articulation Initiative Act
- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1501.313](#): Dual Credit





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois passed the Prior Learning Act in 2017 (110 ILCS 160). Under this legislation, both the Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board are required to develop policies on awarding credit for prior learning. Under the act, acceptable forms of prior learning include standardized tests, college examinations, published guides and portfolios, but each institution can develop their own process and definition that are then approved by the Board of Higher Education. Some institutions also award credit for industry-specific credentials.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should prioritize collecting and reporting on data that examines the overall effectiveness of their prior learning policies in terms of student outcomes. This includes understanding which students have access and successfully complete college credit coursework aligned to high-wage, high-demand, high-skill occupations. Illinois should also consider standardizing the awarding of credit across areas such as industry-specific credentials.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Prior Learning Assessment Credit Policy](#)
- Kentucky – [Prior Learning Initiative](#)
- Ohio – [Military Strategic Implementation Team](#)

RESOURCES

- [Northern Illinois University Prior Learning Assessment](#)
- [College of Lake County Credit for Prior Learning](#)

POLICIES

- [110 ILCS 160](#) Prior Learning Act
- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1501.311](#): Prior Learning





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Illinois



KEY POLICY

College Articulation Agreements



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois has a robust system of articulating credit both from credits earned in K-12 to postsecondary and for learners transferring between postsecondary institutions. Illinois promotes multiple pieces of legislation (110 ILC 150 and 110 ILCS 152) tied to the articulation and transfer of students and credits. Both the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act and the Articulation Initiative Act require cooperative policies across public 2-yr and 4-yr institutions, as well as between K-12 and higher education. Under the Articulation Initiative Act, a school district may offer any course identified in the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum package under the Act as a dual credit course on the campus of a high school, that is then accepted by all public postsecondary institutions for credit.

In 2015, the state passed the College and Career Success for All Students Act (105 ILCS 302/30), which among other items, requires a standardized awarding of AP credit and a report analyzing the implementation of the requirements of this legislation. The 2020-21 report found the vast majority of both AP and IB were articulating to specific courses or a general education elective.

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) is a statewide transfer agreement program and portal (iTransfer) that promotes a transferable agreement with over 100 in-state colleges and universities. To analyze data related to transferring, the Illinois Board of Higher Education provides an interactive transfer enrollment data dashboard to assist with the understanding of who is transferring and the outcomes of students.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

To strengthen this area, Illinois should continue to collect and analyze data on K-12 to postsecondary and within postsecondary transfer articulation to ensure that there is equity in the process. The Illinois Articulation Initiative should also be expanded to include CTE and career-focused coursework.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements](#)
- Indiana – [Core Transfer Library](#)
- Kentucky – [Transfer Articulation Agreements](#)

RESOURCES

- [IAI webpage](#)
- [2020 Joint Report on Student Transfer in IL](#)
- [IBHE Interactive Transfer Data Dashboard](#)
- [IBHE/ICCB Joint Report on AP/IB Credit](#)

POLICIES

- [110 ILC 150](#) Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act
- [110 ILCS 152](#): Articulation Initiative Act
- [105 ILCS 302/30](#): College and Career Success for all Students Act
- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1501](#): Dual Credit





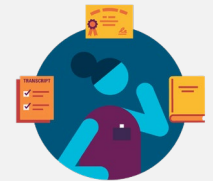
POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Remediation



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois Code (110 ILCS 148/40) addresses remediation criteria and expectations for mathematics by requiring transitional mathematics instruction, as part of a series of strategies including greater alignment between LEAs and postsecondary institutions, math interventions in high school, multiple measures of placement and increasing co-requisite remediation. English remediation is also addressed through a new Transitional English course, which is offered for high school seniors; it was developed as a result of the 2016 Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act to prepare students for college and career literacy skills. Further plans regarding remediation classes were also addressed in the Developmental Education Reform Act passed in 2021.

Through the state’s completion agenda, the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board have committed to the goal of ensuring that 60% of all adults have a college or career credential by 2025. To support this shared goal, in 2018, the Illinois Community College Board – in partnership with the Board of Higher Education – released an implementation guide for institutions wishing to develop co-requisite remedial programs. Both systems have committed to scaling co-requisite courses throughout the state, meaning at least one co-requisite course offered in both English and math at each community college and public university in Illinois. Illinois community college remediation rates are tracked on the Illinois Report Card.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should continue to support and expand the implementation of co-requisite remediation at postsecondary institutions and continue to collect and analyze the data to determine if additional supports or changes are necessary.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – [Complete College Georgia](#)
- North Carolina – [Multiple Measures of Placement Policy](#)
- Tennessee – [Co-Requisite Remediation](#) and [Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support](#) (SAILS)

RESOURCES

- [iTransfer](#) Reverse Transfer

POLICIES

- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1502](#)
- [110 ILCS 175/100](#) Developmental Education Reform Act
- [110 ILCS 148/1](#) Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act





POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.

K-12

SUB-ASSOCIATE

ASSOCIATE

BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER

WORKFORCE

REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS

LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID

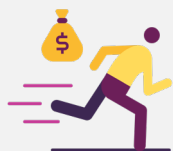
OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING

STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS



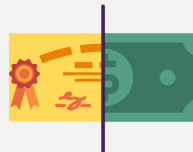
REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS

Establish a statewide policy to allow students to earn an associate degree while continuing to work toward a bachelor's degree. Ensure two-year and four-year college credits can be combined toward the credential.



LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID

Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).



OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING

Transition postsecondary funding models from those based on learner enrollment to ones based on learner outcomes. Dedicate more funding to programs and institutions that show demonstrated success in meeting success metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings.



STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS

Define and promote a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect articulated pathways to advanced learning and employment. Ensure that postsecondary credential programs are widely accessible to all learners and reflect value in the labor market.



POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Reverse Transfer Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois Code (110 ILCS 150/23) addresses the reverse transfer of credits between the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Community College Board. Students must submit an application for his/her transcripts to be reviewed. Additionally, a joint policy on reverse transfer is also in place between the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Community College Board.

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) program and portal (iTransfer) provides public-facing information and assistance with individuals interested in reverse transfer.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should study the data for student participation by factors such as race, disability, and socioeconomic status to help ensure that there is equitable access to the process. The state should consider assessing public awareness of this opportunity by surveying students to determine their level of knowledge; recommendations on additional marketing and communications should be considered.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Reverse Transfer Process](#)
- Florida – [Reverse Transfer Statewide Articulation Agreements](#)
- Texas – [Reverse Transfer Process](#)

RESOURCES

- [iTransfer](#) Reverse Transfer

POLICIES

- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1502](#): Joint Rules Of The Board Of Higher Education And Illinois Community College Board
- [110 ILCS 150/23](#) Reverse Transfer of Credits





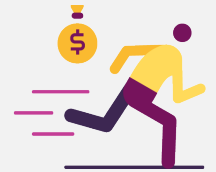
POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Last Dollar/Last Mile Financial Aid



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation that governs state financial aid includes “last dollar” or “last mile” financial assistance could be identified. There is institution-specific financial aid that promotes “last mile” scholarships, but in these few instances the aid is supported by the institution rather than through dedicated state funds.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

To reduce financial barriers and increase postsecondary completion for its citizens, Illinois can implement a last dollar or last mile program for students attending public postsecondary institutions.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [Last Mile College Completion Program](#)
- Rhode Island – [Rhode Island Promise](#)
- Tennessee – [Tennessee Promise](#) and [Tennessee Reconnect](#)

RESOURCES

- [University of IL, Chicago CUPPA Fund](#)

POLICIES

N/A





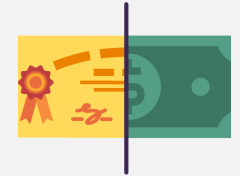
POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Outcomes-Based Funding



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois does not currently have postsecondary outcomes-based funding in place. In 2013 Illinois Public Act 97-320 had required that the Illinois Board of Higher Education's and the Community College Board's annual budget recommendations for public universities must allocate some funding based on performance factors, but funding was only allocated for 2 years.

PA 102-0570 has created the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding to evaluate the existing funding mechanisms and propose recommendations on equity-centered funding to the general assembly by July 2023. .

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

In addition to the work that is occurring, Illinois should consider including outcomes-based budget metrics for two-year technical schools. and create additional incentives for institutions to make the necessary changes to increase their outcomes and alignment with state priorities. Illinois can also add metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings to further assess the long-term success of underrepresented student populations.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Missouri – [Performance Funding](#)
- Tennessee – [Outcomes-Based Funding Formula](#)
- Texas – [State Technical College Funding Model](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Community College Board Performance Metrics \(2017\)](#)
- [Commission on Equitable Public University Funding](#)

POLICIES

- [IL P.A. 97-320](#) Higher Education Funding
- [IL P.A. 102-0570](#) Commission on Equitable Public University Funding.





POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Stackable Degrees and Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation that governs stackable credentials at the 2-year or 4-year college levels could be identified. Both the Board of Higher Education and the Community College Board identified stackable credentials as an appropriate approach for institutions to take with their promoted credentialed programs, but neither system has it in policy. Stackable credentials are a required element of “quality” for postsecondary programs in the State’s Perkins plan and are expected in the program review process. There is evidence that some 2-year and 4-year institutions do promote stackable credentials for students within certain credentialed programs.

The model programs of study guides, developed by the Illinois Community College Board and Northern Illinois EdSystems, include a comprehensive stackable credentials framework.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider collecting and reporting data on the completion and stacking of degrees and credentials to see which and how many students are using these pathways and finding careers. With this data, Illinois can make adjustments around the promotion or availability of various pathways. Illinois should consider also reviewing and updating their postsecondary articulation agreements to ensure the stackable credentials provide seamless transitions between programs when or if they are needed by students.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Stackable Credential Legislation](#)
- Idaho – [SkillStack](#)
- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Community College Board Recognition Manual](#)
- [Illinois Community College Board Competency-Based Education Grant](#)
- [Model Programs of Study Guides](#)

POLICIES

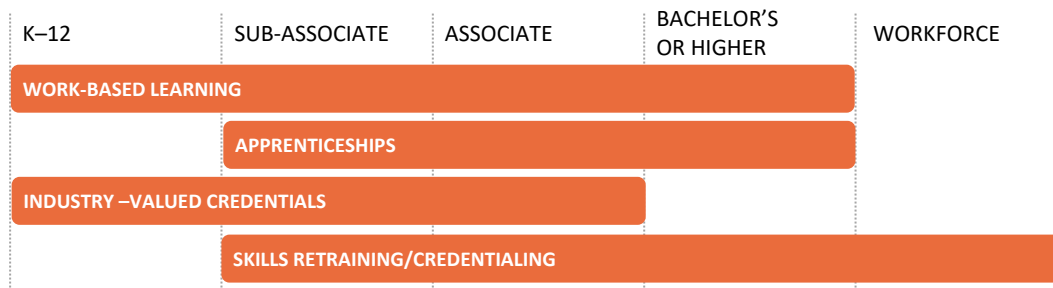
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WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue help to prepare a strong workforce within the state.



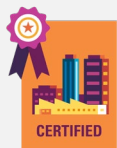
WORK-BASED LEARNING

Establish a statewide K-12 and postsecondary work-based learning program that promotes learning through a series of progressive learner experiences both in the classroom and in a work setting. Provide guidance and support for how education and business and industry collaborate to achieve mutual priorities.



APPRENTICESHIPS

Establish clearly defined program guidance for state-promoted apprenticeships outlining prerequisites, requirements, funding, stakeholder incentives and participant outcomes.



INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIALS

Ensure all industry credentials earned in K-12 or postsecondary are aligned with high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations and valued by state and regional employers.



SKILLS RETRAINING/CREDENTIALING

Identify and promote non-degree programs and credentials that support new, transitioning and displaced learners in career change and advancement. Ensure that supports include funding supports for learners and incentives for participating employers who train or retrain them.





KEY POLICY

Work-Based Learning



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has a comprehensive K-12 work-based learning (WBL) manual, updated in 2022, that defines, and provides examples of WBL as a continuum of experiences spanning from career awareness to career exploration to work-place experiences. The manual includes the guidance on experiences and sample forms. In terms of credit-bearing courses, Illinois promotes 7 types of experiences including clinical-experiences, enterprises, internships, agriculture experiences and youth apprenticeships. Illinois Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.179) requires ISBE to promote and utilize a WBL database to help facilitate relationships and expand WBL. The collected information largely reflects information on businesses engaged at the local level in work-based learning. Additionally, multiple WBL elements are collected for both CTE data collections and for the state's Every Student Succeeds Act College and Career Readiness Indicator. WBL is an integral part of the Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) framework, with a focus on career exploration and development. The Illinois Work-based Learning Innovation Network (I-WIN) through EdSystems provides a comprehensive set of resources for schools in the implementation and delivery of successful WBL at the K-12 level.

The State Career Pathways Dictionary and Perkins plan provide consistent definitions for statewide agencies, but promotion of WBL appears to be inconsistent at different levels. No substantive promotion of WBL appears to be in place from the Board of Higher Education or the Community College Board, although several postsecondary institutions do promote the experiences at the local level with their enrolled students. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity highlights WBL on its Illinois WorkNet Center, however its resources are significantly outdated, which makes it difficult to use for employers and job seekers.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider expanding the type of data collected on WBL experiences and outcomes to provide appropriate supports to enhance equity and access in the offerings and experiences at the K-12 level as well as the postsecondary level. This could include data on participation and completion in different types of WBL activities, and equity of the experiences along the WBL continuum of career awareness, career exploration and career development experiences. Illinois should consider formalizing the promotion and implementation of WBL beyond K-12, pushing more explicitly into the postsecondary level in cooperation with the Board of Higher Education, and aligning with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to update its policies and resources.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Work-Based Learning Practicum](#)
- Georgia – [Work-Based Learning Framework](#)
- Rhode Island – [PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator](#)

RESOURCES

- [ISBE: WBL Manual](#)
- [ISBE WBL webpage](#)
- [Illinois WorkNet Center](#)
- [Illinois PaCE: Postsecondary and Career Expectations](#)
- [I-WIN Resource Hub](#)

POLICIES

- [105 ILCS 5/2-3.179](#) Work-Based Learning Database
- [110 ILCS 148/1](#) Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act
- [HB3296](#) College and Career Readiness Systems





KEY POLICY

Apprenticeships



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois separates apprenticeships into pre-apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, work-based learning and registered apprenticeships. Illinois Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.175) formalizes a registered apprenticeship program for the state. Recognized apprentice placements and programs are promoted at both the K-12 level and postsecondary level (2-year and 4-year institutions). The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DECO), through its WorkNet Center webpage and portal, also promotes apprenticeship opportunities through Apprenticeship Illinois. The program focuses on both in-school and out-of-school adults and youth.

Illinois' Apprenticeship Study Act (PA 101-0364) passed in 2019. It required DECO to "conduct a study on the potential expansion of apprenticeship programs in the State and produce a report on its findings." The Apprenticeship and WBL Report looked at all types of apprenticeships and work-based learning across the state in terms of items such as participation by industry, a qualitative survey of components of apprenticeships, and gender and demographic break-downs.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider continuing to implement the recommendations from the Apprenticeship and WBL Report and analyzing the data to see what improvements have been made and where additional supports or prioritization remain. Key opportunities mentioned in the report include expanding apprenticeships geographically to new industries, diversifying apprenticeships, formalizing apprenticeship coordination and continuing to build knowledge in terms of studying and understanding work-based learning.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Iowa – [Earn and Learn](#)
- Kentucky – [Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky](#) and [Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship](#)
- New Jersey – [Apprenticeship Network](#)
- South Carolina – [Apprenticeship Carolina](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Community College Board – Apprenticeship webpage](#)
- [Apprenticeship Illinois](#)
- [2020 Apprenticeship and WBL Report](#)

POLICIES

- [05 ILCS 5/2-3.175](#) Registered Apprenticeship Act
- [23 Illinois Administrative Code 255](#) ISBE Registered Apprenticeship Program
- [PA 101-0364](#) Apprenticeship Study Act





KEY POLICY

Industry-Valued Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Broadly, Illinois promotes certifications at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. Illinois includes credentials in its state (Every Study Succeeds Act) accountability system as part of the career ready indicators. The ESSA plan, however, did not indicate any guardrails on the types of industry credentials that qualified or place guardrails on their quality or alignment to employer demand. ExcelinEd was unable to collect K-12 credential attainment data from Illinois for K-12 or postsecondary in 2020 as part of the CredentialsMatter.org project.

Illinois Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.163) requires that the State Board of Education, Community College Board, and the Department of Employment Security to work collaboratively to identify industries and occupations with a workforce shortage and approve industry-recognized certification programs to mitigate workforce shortages. According to statute the information should be on the website and provide incentive funds of \$1,000 per student who earned an approved credential. This information, however, could not be located online. Illinois Code (35 ILCS 40/7.5) also requires the State Board of Education to determine and publish that CTE course work that aligns with industry-recognized certifications and credentials.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider establishing clear definitions and criteria for credentials of value across K-12 and postsecondary systems, with business and industry at the table. Illinois should also consider collecting data on industry credential offerings and attainment for both K-12 and postsecondary to be able to analyze attainment and make adjustments as necessary.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Promoted Industry Certifications](#)
- Kentucky – [Valid Industry Certifications](#)
- Louisiana – [Industry-Based Certification State Focus List](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois State Board of Education ESSA College and Career Ready Indicators](#)
- [Illinois State Board of Education CTE webpage](#)
- [Credentials Matter](#)

POLICIES

- [105 ILCS 5/2-3.163](#) Incentive Grants - Industry-Recognized Certifications
- [35 ILCS 40/7.5](#) Recognition of CTE Programs





KEY POLICY

Skills Retraining/Credentialing



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DECO) promotes federal retraining programs that are available to businesses and adults (underemployed/unemployed/underrepresented/employed). The department provides grants to public higher education institutions to develop and provide retraining programs (with postsecondary credit and non-credit programs). The Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) Grant Program, which is in Illinois Code (20 ILCS 605/605-415), provides the avenue for the department to support and fund skills retraining programs. When appropriated funding, DECO provides funding for individuals to participate in skills retraining opportunities. The 2021 JTED grant targeted funding to “hard-hit” sectors from the COVID-19 pandemic including manufacturing, healthcare, arts and entertainment, management and retail, and other industries with work shortages such as IT, and transportation, distribution and logistics.

The Governor’s Commission on Workforce Equity and Access (CWEA; convened in late 2021 through 2022) has been working to define overall system parameters that will move Illinois toward ensuring these types of opportunities are integrated into a cohesive system that is user-centered and easily accessible.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The CWEA should consider as part of its review and recommendations expanding JTED grant to provide adults and employers reimbursement for skills retraining upon completion of a qualifying degree within an in-demand, high-skill, field and which are aligned with state economic and workforce priorities. Additionally, CWEA can consider how the programs are supportive of a stackable progression for learners as they continue their career pathways and align with higher-skill, higher-wage occupations.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant](#)
- Ohio – [TechCred](#)

RESOURCES

- [CWEA](#)
- [Illinois WorkNet Center: Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification](#)
- [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Workforce Development webpage](#)
- [Illinois JTED](#)

POLICIES

- [20 ILCS 605/605-415](#) Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program
- [820 ILCS 65](#) Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act





EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.

K-12	SUB-ASSOCIATE	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	WORKFORCE
INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES				
LEGAL BARRIERS				



INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES

Establish, sustain and promote a comprehensive set of industry and employer engagement incentives for supporting education to workforce pathways. Incentives may include grant funds, tax credits, or local and regional support services.



LEGAL BARRIERS

Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers' compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.





EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Industry Engagement Incentives



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DECO) provides the Illinois Apprenticeship Education Expense Tax Credit Program. Employers are allowed a tax credit for qualified educational expenses associated with qualifying apprentices. Employers may receive a credit of up to \$3,500 per apprentice and an additional credit of up to \$1,500 for each apprentice if (1) the apprentice resides in an underserved area, or (2) the employer's principal place of business is located in an underserved area.

Additionally, DECO promotes the Illinois Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program, which provides annual corporate tax credits to qualifying businesses to support job creation, capital investment and improve the standard of living for all Illinois residents. Additional credits are also available as reimbursement for qualifying training costs. Ten percent of eligible training costs of newly hired full-time employee positions may also be included as part of annual credits. Qualifying credits are also identified as costs incurred to upgrade the technological skills of full-time employees in Illinois.

Effective 2023, the ISBE will publish and maintain a database of “employer champions” that actively engage in work-based learning and career readiness programs, as required in the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should also consider providing financial incentives or tax credits for employers who permanently hire students participating in a formal work-based learning program or funding reimbursement for employers who train, hire and retain new or incumbent workers to fill in-demand positions within recognized job fields.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – [Work-Based Learning Premium Credit](#)
- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant](#)
- Iowa – [Tax Credit](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Apprenticeship Education Expense Tax Credit Program](#)
- [Illinois Economic Development for a Growing Economy \(“EDGE”\) Program](#)

POLICIES

- [110 ILCS 148/1](#) Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act





EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Legal Barriers



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation that governs reducing legal barriers could be identified.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois could consider statewide legislation providing LEAs with insurance coverage to cover students participating in a formal work-based learning experience, which could cover liability concerns and remove this barrier to participation from individual schools or districts.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Kentucky – [Apprenticeship Programs & Partnerships](#)
- Rhode Island – [Work Immersion Training Grant](#)
- Texas – [Insurance Coverage](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois State Board of Education: WBL Manual](#)

POLICIES

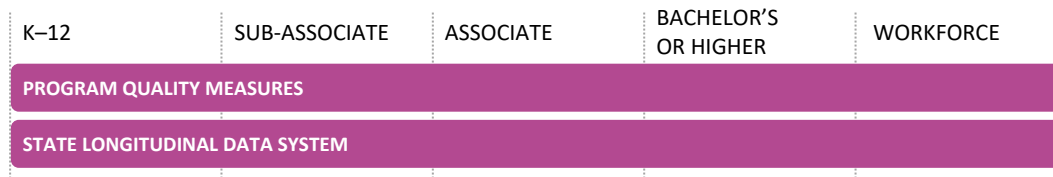
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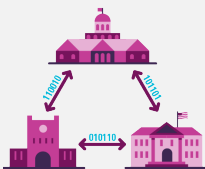
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.



PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES

Establish shared statewide definitions and measures for quality of and success in education to workforce pathways. Ensure these shared priorities extend across agencies and systems and inform decisions about program offerings, funding and outcomes.



STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

Ensure the state's cross-agency data system collects and reports on data needed to evaluate education workforce programs against shared metrics for quality and success. Data should span agencies and education systems and into the workforce to inform decision-making and drive outcomes.





DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Illinois



KEY POLICY

Program Quality Measures



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board routinely collaborate in response to legislative requirements; these agencies all use the same state agency program quality definitions and indicators as listed in the state’s Perkins plan and the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary. In 2022, the Northern Illinois University P-20 Research and Data Collaborative released the College and Career Readiness Metrics and Evaluation Framework which creates a master metric list across all of their CCR projects, but this is not adopted statewide.

Support for shared cross-agency work includes Illinois’ 60 x 25 initiative, which launched in 2009. The Illinois P-20 Council, which includes membership from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board, established a goal for Illinois to increase the number of adults with high-quality college degrees and postsecondary credentials to 60% by 2025.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Illinois should consider the formal promotion of setting shared education to workforce pathway definitions to further support agency alignment and priorities, for example formally adopting across agencies the metrics outlined in the P-20 College and Career Readiness Metrics and Evaluation Framework. The Commission on Workforce Equity and Access (CWEA) should consider using these consistent measures in the system that they develop and make their use clear and user-friendly.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Talent Pipeline Report](#)
- Indiana – [Governor’s Workforce Cabinet](#)
- Rhode Island – [PrepareRI](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Education and Career Success Network](#)
- [College and Career Readiness Metrics and Evaluation Framework](#)
- [Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](#)
- [Perkins Plan](#)

POLICIES

N/A





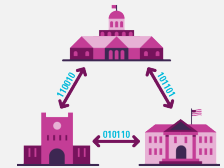
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Illinois



KEY POLICY

State Longitudinal Data System



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Illinois Code (105 ILCS 13) formed the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act in 2009. Under the Act, the system is to establish and maintain the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) from early learners through postsecondary education and employment. Since 2009, the state has undertaken various iterations of the ILDS to reflect changing priorities, incorporating now eight state agencies, including the Office of the Governor. Participating members serve as the system's governing board, which set policies and approves data requests and data sharing agreements. The ILDS will be re-launched in 2022 through a new intergovernmental agreement and newly established priorities. These include the establishment of a comprehensive High School-to-College-to-Career dataset inclusive of data from ISBE, ICCB, IBHE, ISAC, and IDES.

Data on career and postsecondary pathways is presented through public-facing websites including Illinois High School 2 Career, Illinois College2Career, and Illinois Postsecondary Profiles. Of these, the data in the Illinois Postsecondary Profiles has the most up-to-date data and is the only one with a focus on student demographic characteristics including age, gender, and ethnicity, however its equity profiles seem incomplete and focus solely on ethnicity.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

With the relaunch of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System, the state should consider developing and releasing/ updating resources that captures achievements, as well as gaps and opportunities, as it relates to the system and its uses to drive strategic decision making and policies within and across state agencies on shared education to workforce priorities, including a more explicit focus on equity.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Talent Pipeline Report](#)
- Florida – [Talent Development Council](#)
- Kentucky – [KYStats](#)

RESOURCES

- [Illinois Longitudinal Data System Annual Report & Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [Education Systems Center, NIU](#)
- [Illinois Board of Higher Education Information System webpage](#)
- [Illinois High School 2 Career](#)
- [Illinois College2Career](#)
- [Illinois Postsecondary Profiles](#)

POLICIES

- [105 ILCS 13](#) P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act
- IL Community College Board Admin Rules, [Part 1501.115 - 117](#): Data Related Policies

