History and Purpose

The Educator Licensure Steering Group was formed by the Illinois P-20 Council at the request of Superintendent Chris Koch to advise the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and other Illinois policymakers on educator licensure and teacher preparation as a result of changes to the Illinois licensure structure that are included in Public Act 97-0607. The new Illinois licensure structure, which takes effect July 1, 2013, streamlines how teachers are licensed in Illinois, reducing the number of Illinois certifications from 66 to 3 with the opportunity to earn endorsements based on grade span, content area and student population. Illinois will develop new standards for endorsements previously covered by other certificates. The new endorsements will also include implementation of the Common Core, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS), Test of Academic Proficiency, Social-Emotional Learning Standards (SEL), the edTPA, the Elementary and Middle School Content Standards and other initiatives. These changes necessitated a systemic examination of how teachers are identified and prepared in Illinois, in order to ensure that we have coherent recommendations for strategies and practices that will identify and develop a highly-qualified, culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidate pool who possess the competencies necessary to ensure success for Illinois students.

The Steering Group is comprised of multiple stakeholders including state agencies such as ISBE, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), public/private colleges and universities that prepare teachers, districts, local education agencies, professional organizations, unions, field practitioners and policy/advocacy groups.

As a preliminary piece of the work, the Educator Licensure Steering Group also assisted ISBE with convening a meeting of stakeholders in order to recommend options for potential grade span configuration to build on the work of the Elementary and Middle School Advisory Group (EMAG), and the Early Childhood Advisory Group (ECAG). These recommendations were submitted to ISBE on June 8, 2012. ¹

Following those recommendations, the Educator Licensure Steering Group formed two subcommittees that engaged additional stakeholders in exploring recommendations in two key focus areas: 1) Partnerships and Clinical Experience and 2) Educator Pipeline. These focus

¹ Grade Span Configuration Recommendations can be found at http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/COMM9.aspx.
areas built on existing reform initiatives locally and nationally and on successes and best practices already in place in Illinois teacher preparation programs.

The Steering Group and subcommittee members reviewed research as well as national and Illinois trends and standards. The Steering Group also conducted surveys of over 2500+ non-tenured teachers, cooperating teachers, school and district administrators and faculty of colleges and universities. The Steering Group held public meetings and webinars to engage stakeholders, discuss findings and draft potential recommendations.

Key Findings

Illinois teachers need to be rigorously prepared to address the changing demographics and needs of students in Illinois, as well as the increasing rigor of state and national standards and global competition. While Illinois teacher preparation programs already prepare many high-quality teachers, the implementation of the Common Core, Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, and other reform initiatives significantly raises the bar for both Illinois students and teachers. These initiatives demand that teachers improve content knowledge, pedagogy and the ability to serve an increasingly diverse student population in Illinois. Higher standards for teacher performance in Illinois also mean that teacher preparation programs, districts, and other stakeholders have a key role with setting up aspiring teachers for success.

Research from the field indicates that strong partnerships between preparation programs, districts, and other stakeholders are key to strengthening the rigor and relevance of teacher training. NCATE, in their 2009 Blue Ribbon Report on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships For Improved Student Learning, and the 2010 report from the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, The Clinical Preparation of Teachers: A Policy Brief recommend strengthening partnerships between programs, districts, and other stakeholders to improve teacher recruitment and preparation, and through program design that is grounded in and well-integrated with clinical practice. This research was also supported by the Steering Group’s survey of 2500+ practitioners and faculty of Illinois teacher preparation programs. They also shared multiple recommendations that aligned with the research on how partnerships between districts, programs, teachers and other partners, could be strengthened to enhance the quality of clinical experiences through clinical practice-centered program design, and improved structures and supports for teacher candidates, school sites, cooperating teachers and faculty supervision.

2 Detailed survey results are available at http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/COMM9.aspx.
Illinois must also do more to improve its educator pipeline, including the diversity and quality of future educators and addressing teacher endorsement shortage areas. Higher education costs, current public perception of teachers, lower teacher morale and lower compensation relative to other professions, make teaching careers less desirable for both college students and those changing careers. In addition, while increasing numbers of Illinois students are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, the majority of Illinois educators are overwhelmingly white, female and monolingual. For example, in 2012, 49 percent of the state’s 2.1 million public school students were racially and ethnically diverse while just 16.7 percent of teachers similarly were diverse. Nearly 1 in 4 students in Illinois (22%) speak a language other than English in the home while nearly one out of every 10 students has been designated at one point as an English Language Learner (ELL), an amazing 83% growth over the last 15 years. And while Illinois has made gains in recruiting more racially, culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, more improvements are needed with identification, equity of resources for higher education, preparation, placement, and retention, which are historically lower for minority teachers, and create barriers to the profession.

At the same time, teachers and administrators report wanting more training and support for teaching in diverse schools and supporting the needs of socio-economically, culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Research shows that a diverse teacher workforce trained in culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy positively impacts minority student achievement and can help close the achievement gap.

**Development of Key Success Factors and Recommendations for Teacher Identification and Preparation in Illinois**

Based on the Educator Licensure Steering Group’s research review, key findings and survey recommendations, the Educator Licensure Steering Group reviewed components of teacher identification and preparation including:

- Partnerships
- Program Design, including clinical experience
- School sites, leadership and cooperating teachers
- Faculty supervision
- Teacher candidate assessment and support
- Building an educator pipeline

This review drove development of consensus Key Success Factors for teacher preparation in Illinois. These Key Success Factors define quality factors that are necessary for development of

5 Source: Illinois State Board of Education
a high-quality, diverse teacher candidate pool with the essential competencies necessary for teacher candidate and student success in Illinois.

Based on these Key Success Factors, the Steering Group identified specific recommendations for ISBE to inform rules for teacher licensure and preparation in Illinois based on Public Act 97-0607 as well as drafted additional statewide policy recommendations. These recommendations are intended to:

- Influence adoption of key success factors which enable the development of teachers who can meet the needs of students;
- Encourage systemic and programmatic innovation in Illinois;
- Empower districts, units/programs and other partners and stakeholders to develop solutions to meet local needs;
- Acknowledge the constraints of units/programs, districts and other partners engaged in teacher preparation.

Key Success Factors and Recommendations

Key Success Factor I: Partnerships are opportunities for meaningful collaboration among P-12 districts and schools, community colleges, teacher preparation units and programs, other college divisions, local education agencies, unions and other stakeholders to address the needs of future educators, teacher candidates and students. This includes:

i. P-12 districts and schools that are fully engaged in preparing the next generation of teachers.

ii. Units/programs, districts and other partners’ collaboration in the design and supervision of teacher preparation programs, including clinical experience.

iii. Partnerships between P-12 districts, community colleges and 4-year colleges/universities, and among college divisions (e.g. College of Education and College of Arts and Sciences) to support recruitment and retention (e.g. alignment of curriculum between community colleges and teacher preparation programs).

iv. Guidelines for collaboration that build on existing partnerships with clear roles and expectations for the partnership.

Steering Group Recommendations

- Partnerships should be the primary vehicle for units/programs, districts and other stakeholders, to demonstrate mutual engagement and collaboration in the implementation and evaluation of the Key Success Factors outlined in this report. This also includes these recommendations:

  i. Units and districts should be required to incorporate partnerships. Partnerships should include P-12 districts, community colleges, other college divisions and 4-year colleges/universities, as appropriate, in the comprehensive design, implementation,
execution and continuous improvement of teacher recruitment and preparation. While units may have multiple district partners for teacher preparation and/or clinical experience, units/programs should be required to engage a minimum of one district partnership that will engage and collaborate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Success Factors.

ii. Partnerships should be developed at the unit level in order to strategically and coherently leverage partnerships across multiple programs. Units should be required to have an Advisory Committee which includes district partners, community colleges, teachers and other relevant partners.

iii. Partnerships between units/programs, districts, community colleges, and teachers should be required to demonstrate collaboration in the design and supervision of the overall program, including clinical experience.

iv. Partnerships should demonstrate that they have clearly defined roles and expectations for each partner, including a written agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. This also includes evidence of unit/program and district collaboration to identify and provide district information and data that supports program design, implementation and continuous improvement efforts (e.g. district challenges, student population performance, and alignment opportunities).

v. ISBE should engage stakeholders in the development of a rubric which will guide the development and evaluation of Memoranda of Understanding that meet state requirements for those partners a) engaged as primary partners in design and supervision of programs or b) as partners in providing field or clinical experience to teacher candidates.

⇒ **Key Success Factor II**: A rigorous program is designed to increase the competency of teachers to implement research and evidence-based instructional strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners, including those with diverse cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and physical needs. This includes:

i. Program design and partnerships between units/programs, districts and other partners that demonstrate collaboration in designing and delivering clinical experiences that promote development and assessment of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and other standards (i.e. Content standards, Social-Emotional Learning Standards, assessed through edTPA) as well as performing the role of a teacher.

ii. Field and clinical experiences that are fully integrated into and supported by coursework that exposes teaching candidates to a wide variety of learning environments, including opportunities to work in diverse schools and with diverse students (e.g., race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, gifted, English language learners (ELL), etc.)

iii. Teacher candidate engagement in authentic learning experiences that encompass an annual, school-year cycle for students and teachers. An annual, school year cycle includes the regular events and activities of students and teachers that occur during an entire school year in a classroom or school. This includes activities such as setting
up a classroom, implementing classroom norms and routines, proctoring interim and state student assessments, etc.

Steering Group Recommendations

- This Success Factor and our recommendations acknowledge that programs are already required to align with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, which were adopted in 2010, the Social-Emotional Learning Standards, Content Standards, and assuring that teacher candidates demonstrate proficiency in standards assessed by the edTPA, which will be implemented in 2013 and required for educator licensure by 2015. In addition to these current requirements, the Steering Group also recommends that programs be required to demonstrate evidence of this success factor including:

  i. Units/programs should be required to demonstrate collaboration with districts and other relevant partners in the design and delivery of clinical experiences that incorporate opportunities for teacher candidates to develop all of the required standards including the IPTS, Content Standards, SEL, those assessed by edTPA and in performing the role of a teacher.

  ii. Units/programs should be required to demonstrate that the design of clinical experiences engages teacher candidates in authentic learning experiences that encompass an annual, school-year cycle for students and teachers. Programs should have flexibility in how they design clinical experiences to meet this requirement, and does not require a full-time school year of student teaching.

  iii. Programs should be required to demonstrate that field and clinical experience is fully integrated into and supported by coursework which exposes teaching candidates to a wide variety of learning environments, including opportunities to work in diverse schools and with diverse students (e.g., race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, gifted, English language learners, gender).

Additional Policy Recommendations

- ISBE should continue to monitor program, teacher candidate and student outcomes to ensure that the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and teacher preparation programs are effectively preparing teacher candidates to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

- Information and data on how programs and districts collaborate to design and deliver clinical learning experiences as well as performance outcomes should be collected in order to be able to disseminate best practices to the field.

⇒ Success Factor III: Units/programs have access to school sites, cooperating teachers and faculty supervision that promote a positive learning environment for teacher candidates and students. This includes:
i. District collaboration with units and other partners that directs the optimal staffing, design and structure of clinical experience within schools and classrooms.

ii. Unit and district/school collaboration to identify and select cooperating teachers based on high-quality instructional practices, overall performance and ability to develop adult learners and through engagement with teachers and unions.

iii. Cooperating teachers that are formally trained and have access to a wide variety of supports according to standards that develop efficacy.

iv. Frequent collaboration between faculty supervisors, schools and cooperating teachers to guide effective clinical experiences and interventions.

v. Faculty supervisors who are rigorously selected to ensure they can support the needs of teacher candidates in developing high-quality instructional methods and practices.

vi. Faculty supervisors that are trained and have access to a wide variety of supports that develop efficacy in coaching, assessing and providing support for teacher candidates.

Steering Group Recommendations

- Program design and partnerships between units/programs and districts/schools should demonstrate evidence of this Success Factor. This includes:

  i. Partnerships between units and districts should demonstrate evidence of collaboration in developing specific selection criteria and methods for identifying cooperating teachers based on high-quality instructional practices, overall performance and ability to develop adult learners. The selection criteria should include, but is not limited to:
     a. Evidence of high quality instructional practices (as defined by the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards)
     b. Evidence of positive impact on student growth
     c. Minimum 3 years of teaching experience
  
  ii. Partnerships between units and districts should demonstrate collaboration in providing formal training and supports for cooperating teachers to develop efficacy. This includes, but is not limited to:
     a. Clearly defined expectations for school sites, cooperating teachers and teacher candidates
     b. Assessment of teacher candidates
     c. Providing feedback to teacher candidates
     d. Mentoring skills that are aligned to the Illinois Guidelines for Teacher Mentoring
     e. Program philosophy and curriculum

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8 [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/certification/html/mentoring.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/certification/html/mentoring.htm)
iii. Units/programs should be required to demonstrate that they have selection criteria in place for faculty supervisors who are directly supervising teacher candidates during clinical experience. Selection criteria should include, but is not limited to:
   a. Evidence of ability to develop and support teacher candidates
   b. Evidence of strong instructional skills (as defined by the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards)
   c. Previous P-12 teaching experience

iv. Units should collaborate with district partners to ensure consistency between cooperating teachers and faculty supervisors and demonstrate that they have training and supports in place for faculty supervisors to develop efficacy in coaching, assessing and providing support for teacher candidates.

v. Partnerships between units/programs and districts should be required to demonstrate evidence of expectations for faculty supervisors in collaborating with schools and cooperating teachers to guide effective clinical experiences and interventions. This evidence should include the definition and frequency of collaboration expected of all faculty supervisors engaged in supervising clinical experience.

⇒ Success Factor IV: Teacher candidates have frequent, meaningful and standards-based assessments, including the use of observations, in order to assess readiness and provide opportunities for meaningful reflection and feedback. This also includes:

   i. Programs and school sites that provide opportunities for engagement in professional learning communities, peer networks and collaboration.
   ii. Unit/program and district collaboration to facilitate cooperating teacher, teacher candidate and faculty supervisor understanding of expectations for teacher performance, including tools used for performance evaluation by districts (e.g. instructional frameworks and student growth models).

Steering Group Recommendations

▷ Program design and partnerships between units/programs and districts/schools should demonstrate evidence of this Success Factor. This includes:

   i. Programs should demonstrate evidence of frequent, meaningful and standards-based assessments throughout the program, including the use of observations, in order to assess readiness and provide opportunities for reflection and meaningful feedback.
   ii. Partnerships between units/programs and districts/schools should be required to provide evidence of opportunities for engagement in professional learning communities, peer networks and collaboration.
   iii. Partnerships between districts and units/programs should demonstrate evidence of cooperating teacher, teacher candidate and clinical faculty supervisor understanding of expectations for teacher performance, including tools used for performance
evaluation used by districts such as instructional frameworks and student growth models (e.g. training on evaluation requirements, requirement for teacher candidates to complete an evaluation, etc.).

Key Success Factor V: Partnerships between the state of Illinois, ISBE, P-12 districts, community colleges, units/programs and other stakeholders develop and implement strategies that support the recruitment, selection, preparation and retention of a highly qualified, culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidate pool. This also includes:

i. Providing opportunities for early field experiences for teacher candidates to inform career choices.
ii. Developing strategies that educate and guide teacher candidates in identifying career choices which consider trends in job placements and changing student demographics.
iii. Creating a positive and nurturing climate that supports teaching as a noble profession in Illinois.
iv. Providing incentives to attract and retain high-quality and diverse teachers to Illinois.

Steering Group Recommendations

- Units/programs should demonstrate evidence that teacher candidates have opportunities to participate in field experiences prior to or early in the program in order to inform career choices.

Other Policy Recommendations

- The Illinois State Board of Education should improve how it collects and reports educator supply and demand data in order to provide more relevant information to teacher candidates, teachers, districts, programs and others.
- ISBE, P-12 districts, community colleges, units/programs and other stakeholders should be encouraged to develop strategies to educate and guide future educators in identifying education as a career choice and in providing information and data to educate and guide teacher candidates in identifying career choices which consider trends in job placement and changing student demographics.
- Through the P-20 Illinois Pathways Initiative, the Illinois P-20 Council should take a lead role in exploring the launch of the Education Learning Exchange which would enable development of robust partnerships in order to support a highly qualified, diverse pool of future educators along the career pathway from P-12 student to educator.

About the Illinois Learning Exchange

The P-20 Illinois Pathways Initiative aims to improve education, workforce and economic development coordination in an effort to build diverse, effective talent pipelines throughout
the state. Through this initiative, Illinois recently awarded contracts to five Learning Exchanges in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. These STEM Learning Exchanges are developing talent pipelines by providing curricular resources, assessment tools and professional development to support students in career exploration and development.

The current challenges to developing a diverse educator pipeline outlined in our key findings, along with current research, show that career development in middle/high schools is critical to a diverse, high-quality teacher candidate pool. In addition, data also shows that diverse teachers, who often are recruited/placed in hard to staff schools, have higher turnover rates. Engagement of multiple stakeholders and resources at each step of the career pathway from K-12 student to educator are necessary to address these gaps within the challenging context outlined in our key findings.

With the central role that partnerships, including K-12 districts/schools, community colleges, teacher preparation programs and other stakeholders (e.g., unions, Regional Offices of Education, community-based organizations) play at each stage of teacher identification and preparation based on our recommendations, the Learning Exchange could support each step of the career pathway through a coalition between stakeholders to create a meta-partnership of resources and tools using the elements of the Learning Exchange, including professional development, career development resources and curricula, best practices and tools. This would include providing resources and tools to partnerships for education career development in P-12 districts/schools, as well as support for teacher preparation, placement and retention.
## Glossary of Terms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee</td>
<td>A committee appointed by an accredited College of Education or individual program consisting of partners and/or stakeholders who advise the unit or individual program on issues of teacher preparation program design, implementation, supervision, operation, evaluation and continuous improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Experience</td>
<td>Student teaching or internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing. (NCATE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>Cooperating teacher means a teacher employed in a public or nonpublic school who is supervising and mentoring a teacher candidate in a clinical placement or teaching internship for the purpose of fulfilling clinical experience requirements of an approved educator preparation program. (NCATE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td>According the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, diverse learners includes race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, gifted, English language learners (ELL), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity) (ISBE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse Schools</td>
<td>Diverse schools means schools with specific geographic and/or demographic needs (e.g. rural, urban, serves a substantial portion of low-income students, students of color, English language learners, and/or students with disabilities, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Experience</td>
<td>A variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research. Field experiences may occur at off-campus settings such as schools, community centers, or homeless shelters. (NCATE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
<td>A written agreement between two partners which clearly outlines the roles and expectations for each partner, how the partnership will operate, and how the partnership will be evaluated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>A partnership is a mutual, written agreement or memorandum of understanding between two or more entities for the purposes of teacher candidate recruitment and/or teacher preparation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>A program is an individual teacher preparation program that leads to a Professional Educator License and specific endorsement (e.g. Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Special Education, etc.). This includes the program administration and faculty, as well as partnerships with districts, schools or others, in the preparation of teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Site</td>
<td>School site means a public or nonpublic school and the school’s leadership team which is involved in the supervision and mentoring of a teacher candidate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>A unit is the institution or college, school, department, or other administrative body within the institution that is primarily responsible for the initial and continuing preparation of teachers and other education professionals. (ISBE)</td>
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