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To the Members of the Illinois General Assembly and the People of Illinois:

Welcome to the future of your state.

Actually, this report – the Public Agenda for College and Career Success – is a portrait of two states of Illinois. One Illinois is well educated and prosperous, with virtually unlimited opportunities. The other is vastly underserved educationally and struggling economically, with severely constricted opportunities.

Between these two states of Illinois is a “prosperity gap” that relates directly to large and widening disparities in educational attainment – by race/ethnicity, by income, and by region.

Closing the attainment gap is no longer only just a moral imperative; it can be ignored only at the economic peril of Illinois. It requires action and requires action now.

Simply put, Illinois needs effective and quality education for all people.

I wish to applaud the members of the General Assembly for initiating the development of this Public Agenda by adopting House Joint Resolution 69, in the spring of 2007. After a year of study, deliberation, and collaboration with literally hundreds of stakeholders in higher education and the state economy, the Task Force presented the Public Agenda for College and Career Success to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which has statutory responsibility for master planning for higher education. On December 9, 2008, the Board unanimously endorsed the Public Agenda as the blueprint to guide education policy – from preschool to graduate school – in Illinois for the next decade.

In one sense, this report marks a significant accomplishment – the concerted effort to understand the challenges and opportunities facing Illinois, and to chart a course for meeting them. But nothing will have been accomplished if this report sits on a shelf.

Therefore, more importantly, this report represents a beginning – a call to arms for students, parents, educators, labor unions, business executives, civic leaders, philanthropic organizations, state agencies, and elected officials from the local school board to the General Assembly and Governor.

The Public Agenda for College and Career Success can make Illinois one state that is ready to face the future.

Very truly yours,

Carrie J. Hightman
Chairwoman
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Agenda for College and Career Success is the product of a yearlong planning process initiated by the Illinois General Assembly and conducted by the Public Agenda Task Force and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The Illinois Board of Higher Education, which has statutory responsibility for master planning, was directed by House Joint Resolution 69 to create a task force to study the challenges and opportunities facing the postsecondary education in Illinois, the state’s workforce needs, demographic trends, and higher education funding and student financial aid. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a nonprofit public policy research center based in Boulder, Colorado, has provided counsel, research, and technical assistance for the planning process.

The Public Agenda Task Force, appointed by the Governor and chaired by IBHE Chairwoman Carrie J. Hightman, was directed to develop an action agenda, based on quantifiable evidence, to address the urgent educational, workforce, social, and economic needs of the State by setting priorities, developing policies, and allocating resources.

The Public Agenda Task Force embraced five principles to guide its deliberations on a master plan for higher education:

- Higher education is a public good and, therefore, a public responsibility.
- Priorities, policies, and budgets should align with state goals.
- The unique missions of institutions and of higher education sectors – public, private, two-year, and four-year – should be supported while also aligning with state goals.
- Adequate and equitable funding, deployed effectively and efficiently, is essential for the entire preschool-to-graduate school – or, P-20 – spectrum.
- A comprehensive P-20 student information system is vital.

What the Task Force found was a tale of two states of Illinois. One is prosperous; the other is struggling. One is well educated; the other lags in educational attainment. One is economically vibrant; the other is economically stagnant. Between these two states is a prosperity gap that is wide and growing and the direct result of disparities in educational attainment by race, ethnicity, income, and region.

Clear and compelling trends and conditions, which affect all Illinoisans, demand an action agenda for the State of Illinois:
• Illinois’ population is aging and becoming rapidly and dramatically more diverse.
• Competition for jobs is now global with the majority of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs requiring at least some postsecondary education and a college credential or degree.
• The growth of nontraditional students and students of racial and ethnic diversity and those with disabilities is altering the face of postsecondary education.
• There is a convergence between the state’s economic needs and what higher education can provide – knowledge, skills, training, entrepreneurialism, and the ability to work in diverse settings.
• Large disparities exist in educational attainment by race/ethnicity, income, disability, and region.
• Affordability of a college education is in jeopardy.

The Public Agenda was developed through a transparent and collaborative process involving hundreds of stakeholders in the P-20 system: legislators, students, faculty, administrators, trustees, labor and business groups, state agencies, and civic leaders throughout Illinois. The Task Force met formally six times at independent institutions, sponsored regional forums at 17 community colleges, and conducted hearings at six public universities. On November 21, 2008, the Task Force unanimously endorsed the Public Agenda for College and Career Success.

A Vision for Illinois

The Public Agenda for College and Career Success is the pathway to one Illinois, where all residents have affordable access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the jobs of the present and the future.

➢ Its populace will be among the best educated in the world.

➢ It will be one of the five most affordable states in the nation in which to pursue a college education.

➢ It will have a well-educated workforce with the skills and competencies to compete in the modern economy.

➢ It will rank among the five top states in economic growth and vitality.

To achieve this vision the Public Agenda will advance four goals:

Goal 1: Increase educational attainment to match best-performing U.S. states and world countries.

Recommendation 1: Increase success of students at each stage of the P-20 educational pipeline to eliminate achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability.
Recommendation 2: Increase the number of adults, including GED recipients, reentering education and completing a postsecondary credential.

Recommendation 3: Reduce geographic disparities in educational attainment.

Goal 2: Ensure college affordability for students, families, and taxpayers.

Recommendation: Make Illinois one of the five most affordable states in the country measured in terms of a) the percent of family income required to pay net cost of attendance for low- and middle-income families, and b) the average amount of debt per undergraduate student.

Goal 3: Increase the number of quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.

Recommendation 1: Increase the number of people with quality postsecondary credentials to ensure the state has an educated workforce and an engaged citizenry.

Recommendation 2: Improve transitions all along the educational pipeline, including from adult education to postsecondary education, from remedial classes to credit-bearing coursework, and from associate to baccalaureate degree levels.

Recommendation 3: Increase the number of postsecondary degrees in fields of critical skills shortages, such as, initially, nursing, allied health, and information technology.

Goal 4: Better integrate Illinois’ educational, research, and innovation assets to meet economic needs of the state and its regions.

Recommendation: Boost Illinois into the ranks of the five states with the fastest growing economies through cutting-edge research, technology transfer, workforce training, innovation education, and a culture of entrepreneurship.

The Public Agenda is an organic document, a plan that will evolve as it is implemented. It also is a plan that will produce documented evidence of progress through annual performance reports. In addition, the Illinois Board of Higher Education commits to a formal five-year review of the Public Agenda to gauge its success and need for modification.
Preface

In the spring 2007, the Illinois General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution 69, directing the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to develop a Public Agenda for higher education and the state. The Governor appointed a Task Force to guide the planning process. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) was commissioned to collect and analyze demographic, economic, and educational data and assist the Task Force in developing an action agenda to meet the state’s urgent educational and workforce needs.

From the beginning, the Task Force was committed to an open, transparent, and collaborative process. The Task Force held six official meetings and convened working groups to shape the Public Agenda goals. The Task Force conducted regional public forums at 17 community colleges throughout the state where nearly 700 people offered insights and suggestions on the state’s educational and economic challenges. The Task Force also held briefings for a variety of stakeholders, including presidents and trustees from all higher education sectors, business executives, labor representatives, civic leaders, elected officials, and faculty and students. The Task Force sponsored public hearings at six public universities across the state to receive feedback on the preliminary Public Agenda, and created a special web portal for interested groups or individuals to comment. Finally, while the Task Force numbered 25 members, an advisory group of interested constituents and stakeholders who attended various meetings, briefings, and forums totaled nearly 1,000 individuals.

What did we learn?

Strengthen P-20 connections.

There needs to be a greater alignment between what is taught in the P-12 system and what is expected that students will know for postsecondary success. Stronger P-20 links are needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning to obviate the need for collegiate remediation. Supporting improved access and participation in preschool education programs provides long-term improvements in educational development and success. Secondary schools must prepare students for life beyond high school through a rigorous curriculum that readies them for college and careers. Senior institutions and community colleges must work closely to smooth the articulation and transfer of credits for baccalaureate completion.

Meet students where they are — educationally, socially, geographically, and financially.

Course load requirements and financial aid rules must account for the needs of working students. Assistive technologies must be available for disabled students. Institutions must recognize the special needs of low-income students for child care, transportation, and other costs. Place-bound students need education to come to them. Remedial education is an asset for returning adult students, but a costly redundancy for those fresh out of high school. Remedial education needs to be
improved while working to make it unnecessary for recent high school graduates. Mentoring, education and career planning, and improved adult and parent involvement with first generation and underachieving students can reduce the achievement gap and keep students on track for a college credential. Adult basic skills, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), and GED courses need to reflect cross cutting competencies and workforce development skills.

Get serious about affordability.

Dwindling state support for colleges and universities has resulted in significant tuition increases. The buying power of a Monetary Award Programs (MAP) grant has diminished as state financial aid has failed to keep pace with tuition increases. One-quarter of students eligible for MAP are denied aid because of funding shortfalls. Middle-income students increasingly rely on loans to finance college. Textbook costs rival the cost of tuition at some community colleges and higher transportation expenses present additional financial burdens. Rising tuition forces students to work more hours, often extending their time-to-degree and total educational costs. Increasing dual credit offerings – in which high school students take college courses – can provide college credit at no cost to the high school students preparing for college.

Forge partnerships for workforce development and job creation.

Community and economic development groups must work with higher education to expand academic programs to meet critical workforce shortages and to create or expand enterprises to produce new jobs. Postsecondary institutions and employers should better collaborate to ensure workforce training produces the skills and competencies required in the 21st century workplace. Regional planning focused on the available jobs and needed skills must include higher education and secondary educators to ensure adequate workforce preparation. Partnerships should develop career pathways, focused on high-wage, high-demand fields and sensitive to the needs of those who must combine work with postsecondary education.

The Public Agenda for College and Career Success is an ambitious but achievable blueprint to one Illinois, where all residents have affordable access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the jobs of the present and the future.
Illinois: A Tale of Two States

**One Illinois** is well off, well educated, economically dynamic, with a seemingly bright future.

Consider:

- *Illinois is a prosperous state.* Its per capita income exceeds the national average. Illinoians earn more than the national average at every level of educational attainment.

- *Illinois is an educated state.* It does better than the nation as a whole in getting students through the educational pipeline, from high school graduation to a college degree. The state ranks 17th in the proportion of working-age adults with a college degree and 12th in those who have a bachelor’s degree.

- *Illinois is an economically healthy state.* It exceeds the nation in almost every category of economic activity.

**The other Illinois** struggles to make ends meet, lags in educational attainment, and is economically stagnant.

Consider:

- *Illinois’ prosperity is declining and uneven.* Per capita income in Illinois, as a percent of the national average, has been in a long and steady decline. And wealth is concentrated in a few areas of the state.

![Per Capita Personal Income as a Percent of U.S. Average—Illinois, 1960-2005](image)

*Figure 1. Illinois’ personal income exceeds the national average, but the trend shows Illinois moving steadily downward.*
Many Illinoisans are left behind by the education system. Illinois ranks far below the most-educated U.S. states in educational attainment. A wide and stubborn achievement gap exists that leaves minorities and low-income persons with far lower levels of educational attainment.

Figure 2. While Illinois is considered a wealthy state, there are vast regional disparities.

Figure 3. Although Illinois does better than the nation as a whole, it trails the best-performing state significantly in getting students through the education pipeline.
The Student Pipeline in Illinois

Figure 4. There are major leaks in the education pipeline at all key transitions along the way to a college degree. For the typical four-year bachelor’s degree, 150% of program time equals six years; for an associate’s degree, it would equate to three years of study.

Percent Educational Attainment of Population Age 25-64
By Race/Ethnicity—Illinois, 2005

Figure 5. The education ladder becomes less and less diverse as one climbs to the upper rungs. Asians and whites dominate the bachelor’s level and above where Latinos and African Americans are underrepresented. The “other” category represents students of mixed race/ethnicity or those who choose not to reveal their race.
Educational attainment and demographic trends portend serious economic consequences. All population growth is projected to be among persons of color. Whites will comprise a dwindling share of the population in every age category but one – 65 and older. Current educational attainment performance, coupled with population projections, mean Illinois will not have the educated workforce it needs to meet future economic demands.

Illinois’ economic health is in jeopardy. The state’s economy has grown much slower than other states, ranking 44th in the pace of economic expansion from 1997 to 2007. Illinois also ranks low in high-tech jobs and on measures of innovation assets, such as academic research and development expenditures and businesses generated from research. The state lags in development of entrepreneurial endeavors from the state’s enviable standing in academic research.
➢ **Illinois is not keeping pace with the changing nature of the workforce.** Unlike the jobs of the past, most jobs of the future require skills that come with a college degree or some postsecondary credential. The state presently imports a significant number of college graduates to fill its workforce needs.

➢ **Illinois risks pricing students out of postsecondary education.** As college increasingly becomes a necessity, it is increasingly being priced as a luxury. Dwindling state support has resulted in soaring tuition and fees at public universities and community colleges (along with rising property taxes), while student financial aid has been outpaced by rising costs.

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**Figure 8.** In just the past 7 years, the proportion of college expenses required from families has risen dramatically.
The Public Agenda for College and Career Success is the pathway to one Illinois, where all residents have affordable access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the jobs of the present and the future.

Five Principles, Four Goals, One State

The Task Force embraced five principles to guide its deliberations:

- Higher education is a public good. There is general recognition that individuals benefit from a college degree through greater personal satisfaction, increased lifetime earnings, healthier lifestyles, and greater wealth accumulation. There must be a commensurate recognition of the societal value of higher education. College grooms good citizens who vote, volunteer their time, donate to worthy causes, and contribute to their communities. Society also benefits from reduced healthcare and criminal justice costs, and increased tax revenue. As a public good, higher education also is a public responsibility.

- Priorities, policies, and budgets must align with state goals. The Public Agenda is a blueprint for the state, meant to guide the actions of policymakers, including the Governor and General Assembly, in setting priorities, allocating resources, and enacting policies aimed at raising Illinois’ educational and economic standing in the nation and the world.
The integrity of institutional and sector missions must be respected and supported while aligning those missions with state goals. The strength of Illinois’ system of higher education is its diversity, a varied menu of institutional missions and distinct roles for each higher education sector – public universities, independent nonprofit and for-profit institutions, and community colleges – that well serve the assorted needs of the state and its residents. Even so, institutions are the means to an end. Each college and university must accept responsibility for helping achieve state goals.

Adequate and equitable P-20 funding, deployed effectively and efficiently, is essential. Vast funding disparities among P-12 schools mean that zip code can be a greater determinant of success in school than academic ability. Inadequate resources force colleges and universities to compromise academic offerings and/or increase the financial burden on students.

A comprehensive P-20 student information system is vital for sound policymaking and accountability. Policymaking and accountability must be objective and data-driven. Data on students in Illinois are fragmented and inadequate to answer key policy questions regarding student demographics, mobility, and performance. A comprehensive data collection system – including readiness for kindergarten, college, and careers – is vital for informed policy decisions and accountability.

The Public Agenda for College and Career Success establishes four goals, crosscutting and interrelated, to a new pathway of progress and prosperity. They are to:

1. **Increase educational attainment** to match best-performing U.S. states and world countries.

2. **Ensure college affordability** for students, families, and taxpayers.

3. Increase **the number of quality postsecondary credentials** to meet demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.

4. Better **integrate** Illinois’ educational, research, and innovation assets to meet economic needs of the state and its regions.

*The vision of the Public Agenda for College and Career Success is that the two states of Illinois become one state where all residents have affordable access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the jobs of the present and the future.*

What will that one Illinois look like?

*Its populace will be among the best educated in the world.* Illinois will be among the leaders in the states and developed nations in the proportion of its population with a high school diploma and college credentials. It will narrow the achievement gap by race at all stages of the educational pipeline and will increase
college attainment for persons of color and those with disabilities to compete with the leading states. It will rank among the top states in number of adult learners with college credentials and will raise college attainment in underserved geographic regions of the state to levels of the best-performing counties.

- **It will be one of the five most affordable states in the nation in which to pursue a college education.** Illinois will reduce the proportion of family income needed to pay for college for the lowest income quintile to compete with the best-performing states. Similarly, the average student debt load will be in line with leading states. And the college participation rate for low-income students will rise annually to the level of the top states.

- **It will have a well-educated workforce with the skills and competencies to compete in the modern economy.** Illinois will increase the number of people with quality postsecondary credentials, with particular emphasis on fields of critical skills shortages, such as, initially, nursing, allied health professions, and information technology. It will remove barriers to transfer between associate and bachelor degree levels to meet the needs of students and employers.

- **It will rank among the five top states in economic growth and vitality.** Illinois will use its vast research, education and training, and innovation assets as the sparkplug to spur entrepreneurial activity and economic expansion to compete with the leading New Economy states, those which have embedded knowledge, technology, and innovation into their economies.

*The Public Agenda for College and Career Success will create one Illinois ready to face the future, a state where all residents have affordable access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the jobs of the present and the future.*
Goal 1: Increase educational attainment to match best-performing U.S. states and world countries.

For many Illinoisans, educational destiny is written before they even enter school, influenced by factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, access to quality preschool, and zip code. People of color, low-income students, persons with disabilities, those who live in rural or certain inner-city areas are less likely to earn a high school diploma, attain a college degree, get a good-paying job, or have the mobility to find the schooling they need or the jobs they want.

Increasing educational attainment is vital to ensuring economic opportunity is open to all. But to accomplish this goal, the state and its leaders face steep – and urgent – challenges.

First, there is a stubborn and pervasive achievement gap for minority and low-income students, particularly Hispanic and African American, at every stage of the educational pipeline. Closing that gap is a moral imperative that is fast becoming an economic one.

Second, a high proportion of adults “stop out” of their education, including high school dropouts, individuals with college credit but no credential, and working adults who need new skills or credentials. Illinois needs the full workforce participation of all its residents to meet the economic challenges it faces.

Third, there are wide geographic disparities in educational attainment. Residents of many Chicago suburbs and certain pockets of downstate Illinois are far better educated than others living in inner city and rural areas.

Postsecondary education is the gateway to financial well-being for Illinois families and economic security for the state.

Recommendation 1: Increase success of students at each stage of the P-20 educational pipeline to eliminate achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability.

The Issue: Achievement Gap

Illinois, like the nation, suffers a significant and enduring disparity in academic achievement and educational attainment affecting racial and ethnic minority students. This gap shows up early and worsens as students move through – or fall out of – the educational pipeline.

- Illinois has one of the worst achievement gaps in the nation – only 7 states have a greater disparity in educational attainment. Whites are 28% more likely to have a college degree than minorities.¹
• Fewer low-income students are entering college – between 1999 and 2006, the college participation rate for low-income students dropped 5%.\textsuperscript{ii}

• Less than one-quarter of the state’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in prekindergarten programs in 2007.\textsuperscript{iii} The achievement gap is apparent in early elementary school and follows minority students through their schooling. Disparities in reading and math scores in the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade worsen or improve only marginally by 8\textsuperscript{th} grade for African Americans and Hispanics, compared to whites.\textsuperscript{iv}

• While 83 of every 100 white students graduate from high school, just 6 in 10 Hispanics and barely over half of African American students leave high school with a diploma.\textsuperscript{v} An astonishing 6 out of 10 black males are high school dropouts.\textsuperscript{vi}

• Remediation to correct academic deficiencies that high school graduates bring to college is a common and costly postsecondary challenge. In Illinois, community colleges shoulder the primary responsibility for remedial/developmental education. An average of 50\% of first-time, full-time community college students are required to take at least one remedial course; the figure rises to 80\% in some college districts.\textsuperscript{vii}

• As a result of their responsibility for remedial/developmental education, community colleges spent $120.8 million on remedial/developmental education in fiscal 2007.\textsuperscript{viii} Public universities spent $5.2 million.\textsuperscript{ix}

• For people with disabilities, the educational attainment gap widens significantly beyond high school.\textsuperscript{x}

• The students left behind by the achievement gap – predominantly students of color – are those who make up the largest segment of Illinois’ population growth over the next two decades.\textsuperscript{xi}
Figure 1. By 4th grade, significant gaps already have developed between white and minority students in the percentage performing at basic level or above. NAEP, 2007.

4th Grade Math and Reading

Figure 2. By 8th grade, performance gaps have widened or improved only marginally. NAEP, 2007.

8th Grade Math and Reading
High School Graduation Rates—Percentage of 9th Graders Graduating Four Years Later by Race/Ethnicity (Average 2005 and 2006)

Source: Illinois State Board of Education; NCES, Common Core Data

Figure 3. The first major leak in the education pipeline comes at high school graduation when barely half of African American students and just 3 in 5 Hispanics leave with a diploma.

Graduation Rates Within 6 Years (or 3 Years for Community Colleges) by Race/Ethnicity and Sector, 2006 (Percent) *

Figure 4. Achievement gaps that begin in grade school (see Figures 1 and 2) are reflected in college graduation as well.
**Difference in College Attainment Between Whites and Minorities,* 2006**

* Minorities include African-American, Hispanic, and Native American

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 ACS (PUMS)

**Figure 5.** Only 7 states have a greater disparity between white and minority students in college attainment.

**Percent Educational Attainment of Population Age 25-64**

*By Race/Ethnicity—Illinois, 2005*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 ACS (PUMS)

**Figure 6.** Minority students are disproportionately represented on lower rungs of the attainment ladder, portending future problems for the Illinois workforce and economy.
Strategies to Eliminate the Achievement Gap

A. Improve College Readiness

Action Steps:

1) Align a rigorous P-12 curriculum with college and workplace competencies and expectations through participation in the American Diploma Project (ADP).

2) Improve access to quality preschool education for all students through creation of a school-readiness assessment tool.

3) Increase the number of high-quality P-12 teachers and school leaders in low-performing schools.

4) Leverage student financial aid to provide incentives for low-income students to take a more rigorous high school curriculum.

5) Reduce remediation for recent high school graduates through stronger postsecondary/high school partnerships for early identification and correction of gaps in knowledge and skills.

6) Provide incentive grants for postsecondary institutions to work with P-12 schools to establish creative and effective student support services, such as

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 ACS (PUMS)

Figure 7. The gap in educational attainment between whites and African Americans is wider for younger generations than for their elders.
mentoring, and college information campaigns, to improve college readiness and lower the achievement gap.

7) Implement a High School to College Success Report that will give high schools feedback on how their graduates performed in college.

8) Increase high-quality dual-credit opportunities for all high school students, including implementation of early college high schools.

9) Establish a P-20 data system to improve accountability.

10) Support secondary/postsecondary program alignment through implementation of Perkins Programs of Study, a major federal grant program for career and technical education designed to reduce remediation and increase attainment of postsecondary degrees and certificates.

B. **Strengthen Teacher and School Leader Quality**

Action Steps:

1) Strengthen requirements and standards for subject-matter competence and pedagogy for teachers at elementary, middle, and secondary levels.

2) Establish high-quality professional development programs for teachers and school leaders, including professional development schools, with the focus on increased student achievement.

C. **Improve Access for Students with Disabilities**

Action Steps:

1) Improve student success in college through improved accommodation of students with disabilities through full access to the Internet and online information for students with disabilities, regardless of disability; the use of assistive technology; providing students information about careers and employment, internships, and work study, along with information about the importance of self-advocacy and how to do it.

2) Collaborate with P-20 institutions to improve transition of students with disabilities from P-12 to college, and from college to employment, including documenting employment status of students and graduates with disabilities.

3) Implement Perkins Programs of Study that specifically target individuals with disabilities.

**Performance Measures**

1) Proportion of adults age 25-34 with associate degree or higher.

2) Trend of ethnic and racial groups with high school diploma.
3) Trend of ethnic and racial groups and students with disabilities with post-secondary credential.

4) Trend of students in collegiate remedial courses.

5) Trend of attainment by income level.

Benchmarked Against:

1) Best-performing OECD countries.

2) Five best-performing U.S. states.

3) Selected competitor/neighbor states.

**Recommendation 2: Increase the number of adults, including GED recipients, reentering education and completing a postsecondary credential.**

**The Issue: College Credentials for Adult Learners**

To meet future economic demands, Illinois cannot rely alone on improving educational attainment among traditional age college students and importing college graduates from outside Illinois. The state and employers must reach out to adults who make up a reservoir of untapped talent – those needing a GED, a specialized certificate, or a college degree, from associate’s to graduate education – to provide the skills, knowledge, and credentials from postsecondary education.

- Illinois has 8 million working-age adults, of whom:
  - 65% have not completed college;
  - 24% have attended college but have no degree;
  - 28% have a high school diploma but no postsecondary experience;
  - 14% have not completed high school;
  - 15% live in families whose combined income is less than a living wage;
  - 5% speak little or no English.xiii

- Illinois ranks in the bottom third of states in the number of GEDs awarded.xiii

- Only 25% of the parents of students with disabilities indicate that their child received career development training before or during postsecondary education. xiv

- Although Illinois rates relatively high (12th) in working age population with a bachelor’s degree or higher, it is only 27th in the percentage with an associate’s degree.xv

- Illinois has had an in-migration of high school dropouts, age 30-64. In all other categories of educational attainment, more people in that prime working-age population leave the state than enter it.xvi
Educational Attainment and Rank Among States—Illinois, 2005 (Percent)

Figure 8. Illinois does relatively well in attainment at the bachelor’s level and above, but needs to improve attainment of credentials beyond high school to meet workforce demands.

Enrollment in State-Administered Adult Basic Education Programs Per 1,000 Adults Age 18-64 with Less than a High School Diploma, 2005

Figure 9. Illinois does relatively well in getting adults into Adult Basic Education, though still far below best-performing states.
**GEDs Awarded per 1,000 Adults Age 25-44 with Less than a High School Diploma, 2005**

![Bar chart showing GEDs awarded per 1,000 adults age 25-44 with less than a high school diploma, 2005.](chart1.png)

Source: GED Testing Service; U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

**Figure 10.** Illinois’ low rank in awarding GEDs leaves a significant pool of talent untapped and ill-prepared for employment at a living wage.

**Adults Age 18-64 Who Speak English Poorly or Not at All, 2006**

![Bar chart showing adults age 18-64 who speak English poorly or not at all, 2006.](chart2.png)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

**Figure 11.** English-language limitations present a barrier for many in achieving educational attainment.
Strategies to Increase College Credentials for Adults

A. Increase Support for Adult Students to Complete a Postsecondary Credential

Action Steps:

1) Increase support for adult education programs, GED completion, and specialized training, such as occupational bridge programs, leading to postsecondary certificates and degrees.

2) Improve financial aid opportunities for part-time adult learners.

3) Ensure place-bound students have adequate and appropriate academic, career development, and support services to complete a college credential.

4) Develop a state incentive to identify adults with substantial postsecondary credit hours and assist them in completing a degree.

B. Establish Partnerships Aimed at Expanding Opportunities for Adult Learners

Action Steps

1) Establish regional partnerships involving educational institutions and agencies, employers, and labor unions to improve educational attainment for adult learners, including those in the workforce, particularly in high-wage, high-demand fields.

2) Develop a system of employability certification.

3) Expand baccalaureate completion opportunities through partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions.

4) Develop incentives for working adults to complete degrees or other postsecondary credentials.

5) Establish partnerships between community organizations and educational institutions to provide new entryways into college for low-skilled residents with support services to enable them to complete their programs.

C. Strengthen Accountability

Action Steps

1) Report annually on number and trend of adult learners earning certificates or degrees.
Performance Measures

1) Number of GEDs awarded to adults 21-44 as a proportion of adults age 21-44 with less than high school diploma.

2) First-time freshmen age 25-44 as a proportion of adults age 21-44 with a high school diploma but no college.

3) Degrees awarded to adults age 25-44 as a proportion of population age 25-44 with no college degree.

4) Develop a report showing annual job placements.

Benchmarked against:

1) Five best-performing U.S. states.

2) Selected competitor/neighbor states.

Recommendation 3: Reduce geographic disparities in educational attainment.

The Issue: Reducing Geographic Disparities

Illinois is a wealthy state, but the wealth is spread unevenly. Likewise, educational attainment varies significantly from one region to another. A significant challenge to ensuring that Illinois has a 21st century workforce for the 21st century economy is reducing disparities in educational opportunity and performance by region.

- Significant regional variations exist in high school graduation and postsecondary participation.\(^\text{xvii}\)

- Income varies greatly from one region to another.\(^\text{xviii}\)

- High-wage jobs are held by residents in very few parts of the state, primarily in Chicago suburban communities and around major universities.\(^\text{xix}\)
**Percent of Population Age 18-24 with No High School Diploma, 2006 (Public Use Microdata Areas)**

![Map of Illinois showing percent of population age 18-24 with no high school diploma, 2006.](image)

Illinois = 216,798

Source: 2006 ACS (PUMS)

**Figure 12.** Geographic disparities in educational attainment present impediments to improving regional economies.

---

**Percent of Population Age 25-64 with an Associate Degree or Higher, 2006 (Public Use Microdata Areas)**

![Map of Illinois showing percent of population age 25-64 with an associate degree or higher, 2006.](image)

Source: 2006 ACS (PUMS)

**Figure 13.** The state has large regional gaps in college attainment of the working age population.
Strategies for Reducing Educational Attainment Disparities by Region

A. Expand Capacity

Action Steps:

1) Expand access to postsecondary opportunities for students in less populated regions and for place-bound students.

2) Expand baccalaureate completion opportunities through partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions.

3) Employ technology to improve statewide access to high-quality courses and degree programs.

4) Implement programs to expand access to computers and broadband Internet access to reduce the digital divide for rural and low-income students.

5) Increase high-quality dual-credit opportunities for all high school students to earn dual and early college credit.

B. Strengthen College Readiness

Action Steps:

1) Implement a High School to College Success Report that will give high schools feedback on how their graduates performed in college.

2) Reduce remediation for recent high school graduates through stronger community college/high school partnerships.

Performance Measures

1) Report annually on employment and educational attainment trends by region.
   a) Postsecondary certification.
   b) Associate’s degree or higher.
   c) Bachelor’s degree or higher.

Benchmarked against:

2) Illinois trends over time.

3) Five best-performing states.

4) Selected competitor/neighbor states.
Goal 2: Ensure college affordability for students, families, and taxpayers.

Illinois’ historical status as a state with multiple affordable higher education alternatives is increasingly threatened. During the current decade state support for public university and community college operations has declined in real terms. In addition, state grant support for independent colleges and universities has disappeared. As a result, Illinois’ colleges and universities have become ever more reliant on tuition and fees. At the same time, the state’s need-based grant program has experienced little funding growth, resulting in both grant amounts that are increasingly inadequate and a smaller proportion of needy students receiving grants.

Recommendation: Make Illinois one of the five most affordable states in the country measured in terms of a) the percent of family income required to pay net cost of attendance for low- and middle-income families, and b) the average amount of debt per undergraduate student.

Trends in Educational and Related Revenues at Illinois Public Universities, Fiscal Years 1994 to 2009 (dollars adjusted for inflation)

![Graph showing trends in educational and related revenues at Illinois public universities, fiscal years 1994 to 2009.](image)

Source: IBHE records.

*Figure 1. State support for public universities has declined since fiscal year 2002, leaving students to shoulder an increasing share of the cost of their education.*
The Issue: Low-Income Students

Tuition and fees have climbed rapidly over the past decade, but funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), Illinois’ primary program for providing need-based aid to qualifying low-income students, has not kept up with tuition and fee increases or the increasing number of eligible applicants.

- Though the MAP program is among the most generous need-based grant programs in the country, tuition and fees at all public universities exceed the maximum MAP award, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is currently able to offer awards to only three-quarters of the eligible students who apply.

- Colleges and universities are spending more institutional funds on student financial aid, which contributes to tuition and fee increases, and students are paying more out-of-pocket costs. These out-of-pocket costs are increasingly being met through work and/or borrowing, which affect students’ time-to-degree and future life choices.

- Rising costs of textbooks, transportation, and, childcare exacerbate affordability problems. Unlike federal Pell grants, MAP grants cannot be used for these expenses.

- Over the past decade, the out-of-pocket costs – what students must pay after need-based grants are applied to their college expenses – of students from the lowest 40 percent of families by income has increased substantially. The increase has affected their pursuit of postsecondary education. The bottom line for Illinois is a decrease in the proportion of
students from low-income families who are enrolling in college during the current decade.\textsuperscript{xx}

**Average Tuition and Fees Compared to Maximum MAP Awards, 1997 vs. 2007**

![Average Tuition and Fees Compared to Maximum MAP Awards, 1997 vs. 2007](chart)

Source: 2007 ISAC Data Book; proprietary institutions first eligible for MAP in FY98.\textsuperscript{xxi}

**Figure 3.** The increase in average tuition and fees has far surpassed the increase in the maximum MAP award over the past decade.

**MAP, Pell, EFC, and Remaining Need for Dependent Students at Community Colleges and Public Universities, Dollars Adjusted for Inflation**

![MAP, Pell, EFC, and Remaining Need for Dependent Students at Community Colleges and Public Universities, Dollars Adjusted for Inflation](chart)

Source: Illinois Student Assistance Commission, www.collegezone.com/media/Affordability2007FINAL.pdf\textsuperscript{xxii}

**Figure 4.** Affordability – measured by increase in out-of-pocket costs – declined between FY 1997 and FY 2007 for low-income students who are considered dependent on their parents. Total costs include tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is based on a federal formula.
MAP, Pell, EFC, and Remaining Need for Independent Students without Dependents at Community Colleges and Public Universities, Dollars Adjusted for Inflation


Figure 5. Affordability also declined between FY 1997 and FY 2007 for low-income students who are considered independent of their parents but have no dependents of their own. The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of independent students includes no parental financial support.

MAP, Pell, EFC, and Remaining Need for Independent Students with Dependents at Community Colleges and Public Universities, Dollars Adjusted for Inflation


Figure 6. Low-income students who are considered independent of their parents for financial aid purposes and have their own children or other dependents also experienced erosion of affordability between FY 1997 and FY 2007. The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for these students at the lowest income quintiles is $0.
Change in College Participation Rates for Students from Low-Income Families by State, 1999-2006

Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity #188, February 2008

Figure 7. In Illinois, as in most states, the proportion of students from low-income families enrolled in college has decreased during the past decade. This measure is calculated by dividing the number of Pell grant recipients by the proportion of 4th to 9th graders nine years earlier who were approved for free or reduced price school lunches.

The Issue: Middle-Income Students

Figures four through six show the increases in out-of-pocket costs experienced by students in the two lowest income quintiles over the past decade, but middle-income students – students at the high end of the second income quintile through the low end of the fourth income quintile – typically don’t qualify for need-based grant aid from either state or federal sources and have been greatly affected by the rise in out-of-pocket costs as well.

- While eligibility varies due to factors such as family assets and number of children, state MAP grants are seldom received by students from families earning more than $70,000 per year, and federal Pell grants are seldom received by students from families earning more than $50,000 per year. As a result, middle-income students must rely heavily on family resources, loans, and institutional aid when available.

- According to recent data published by the Institute for College Access and Success’s Project on Student Debt, 52 percent of Illinois students graduating from four-year colleges and universities in 2006 graduated with debt, and the average debt of those students was $17,650. This places Illinois in the lower half of states ranked by average debt of graduates with debt, but it still constitutes a significant burden for many students.
The Issue: Institutional and State Efforts

- Illinois, like most states, faces serious long-term fiscal challenges that will constrain its ability to fund higher education at a level it once did. Those challenges include underfunded pension systems, funding for K-12 education, paying for infrastructure maintenance and improvements, and paying for Medicaid and other health care.

- As a result of these challenges, colleges and universities will need to continue efforts to deliver a high quality education more efficiently.

- Although the state’s fiscal challenges are numerous, Illinois’ economic resources, as measured by the U.S. Department of Treasury’s total taxable resources calculation, exceed the national average, while the state’s effective tax rate just reaches the national average. Increasing the effective tax rate slightly could provide additional resources for investment in higher education and other state priorities while maintaining a competitive tax environment.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

\begin{center}
\textbf{State Tax Capacity and Effort – Illinois Indexed to the U.S. Average}
\end{center}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{This chart compares Illinois’ tax capacity, calculated annually by the U.S. Treasury Department as total taxable resources, to the national average state tax capacity. It also compares Illinois’ effective tax rate to the national average effective tax rate. Effective tax rate is calculated by dividing actual state and local tax revenues per capita (published by the U.S. Census Bureau) by total taxable resources per capita.}
\end{figure}
Strategies to Ensure Affordability

A. Review state financial aid programs for low-income students to ensure that programs are effective, efficient, widely understood, and aligned with all Public Agenda goals.

Action Steps:

1) Develop a funding strategy that makes more explicit and intentional the links between state appropriations, tuition, and need-based student financial aid.

2) Review state need-based student financial aid programs, including their coordination with federal tax benefits, federal grant aid programs, and institutional grant aid programs, to increase effectiveness and efficiency. The review should examine the costs and benefits of implementing a “shared responsibility” model in the MAP formula with students responsible for a fixed, “first-dollar” commitment and the state responsible for covering remaining need through a “last dollar” commitment.

3) Improve information and assistance available to low-income students who may be unfamiliar with college and financial aid application processes through early intervention, mentoring, and outreach efforts.

B. Take action to help students achieve their educational objectives faster.

Action Steps:

1) Leverage student financial aid to provide incentives for low-income students to take a more rigorous high school curriculum, as demonstrated by such successful efforts in other states as the 21st Century Scholars program in Indiana.

2) Support the expansion of high-quality dual credit and dual enrollment programs and opportunities to participate in Advanced Placement courses to improve student preparation for postsecondary education and shorten time to degree.

3) Provide financial incentives/grants to students that encourage them to complete degrees more quickly.

4) Reduce remediation needs of recent high school graduates and support the expansion of programs that help adult learners transition to and complete quality college certificate and degree programs quickly with minimal need for remedial/developmental coursework.

C. Assist middle-income students who do not typically qualify for need-based grant aid.

Action Steps:
1) Fully implement the Illinois Student Assistance Commission’s Capstone Loan Program at all Illinois colleges and universities.

2) Identify and support programs for middle-income families that do not currently qualify for MAP or federal Pell grants.

D. Find institutional operating efficiencies that reduce costs while expanding access and maintaining quality.

Action Steps:

1) Review college and university operating costs and search for new efficiencies, including more efficient use of facilities, to reduce pressures that have led to tuition and fee increases.

2) Seek opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration including consortial arrangements.

3) Seek opportunities to implement accelerated degree programs and course redesign processes that maintain or increase quality while reducing costs to colleges and universities and students.

4) Encourage the use of electronic textbooks and electronic library reserves that will reduce textbooks costs for students.

5) Identify and eliminate state regulations and statutory mandates that impose costs on colleges, universities, and students without providing clear and compelling benefits to students and taxpayers.

Performance Measures

1) Percent of family income required to pay net cost of attendance (cost less grant aid) for median-income family and low-quintile family at:
   a) Public four-year
   b) Private four-year
   c) Public two-year

2) Percent of low-quintile family income required to pay tuition and required fees at two-year public institutions.

3) Average amount of debt per student.

4) State tax effort compared to state tax capacity.

5) State and local appropriations plus tuition and fee revenue per FTE student – state share of this total revenue per FTE student.

6) Identification of cost avoidance strategies, operating expense reductions, productivity improvements.
Benchmarked against:

1) Illinois trends.

2) Five best-performing states.

3) Selected competitor/neighbor states.
Goal 3: Increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.

Illinois needs more people with college credentials that reflect completion of a quality postsecondary education. A state’s tally of postsecondary certificates and degrees is an important indicator that it has an educated workforce, an attractive quality for employers. Moreover, a growing percentage of jobs require postsecondary education for entry and advancement, a trend expected to accelerate over the next few decades. In addition, several occupations that show substantial current shortages in Illinois, such as nursing, allied health, and technology fields, require postsecondary degrees. A rising tide of college degrees also will lift the state's economy, not to mention the salutary effects that a college education brings to society as a whole.

Simply stated, Illinois does not have enough degree-holders to meet rising social and economic demands, particularly among African Americans and Latinos, who are driving Illinois’ population growth. Compared to the best-performing states and countries — which are the chief competitors in the global economy — Illinois must increase both the number of high school graduates and the number of working-age adults who attain quality postsecondary credentials to remain competitive and to meet future workforce demands.

Recommendation 1: Increase the number of people with high-quality postsecondary credentials to ensure the state has an educated workforce and an engaged citizenry.

The Issue: Quality Degree Creation

The global economy not only requires new skills, such as innovation and problem-solving, but is unforgiving of those who lack them. These abilities, which cut across disciplines and programs of study, are the foundation of a postsecondary education.

- Illinois has historically relied on a significant in-migration of educated individuals to meet its economic needs. xxv
- Although Illinois compares favorably in college attainment with many OECD countries, xxvi it lags behind the leaders in the world and across the nation in the number of residents with a bachelor’s degree. xxvii
- Increasing the number of individuals with college credentials among the African American and Hispanic populations is particularly urgent, given both demographic and educational attainment trends. xxviii
- The 21st century workplace demands skills – analytical ability, creativity, innovation, problem-solving – that are expected and strengthened in postsecondary classrooms.xxx

- Significant discrepancies exist in the number of people with college credentials by region.xxx

- The pipeline of working-age adults attempting to return to school to complete certificates and degrees in high-demand fields has significant leaks.xxxi

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**Percent of Adults with a College Degree (Associate and Higher) by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2006**

![Graph showing percent of adults with college degrees by age and race/ethnicity](chart.png)

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 ACS (PUMS)*

*Figure 1. Increasing college degrees among minorities will be crucial for Illinois to meet the workforce needs of the future.*
**Figures 2 and 3.** Illinois is slightly below the national average in the number of associate degrees awarded and far below the U.S. average in the number of bachelor’s degrees per 100 high school graduates three and six years earlier. Although this is an imperfect measure of degree production, affected by student migration patterns and transfers prior to associate degree completion, it is an important measure that accounts for both college-going directly after high school and persistence through college.
Percent of Population Age 25-64 with an Associate Degree or Higher, 2006 (Public Use Microdata Areas)

Figure 4. Regional variations in college credentials show large gaps – and opportunities – in raising the level of educational attainment in Illinois.
**Figure 5.** Educational attainment levels of a state’s population correlate directly with per capita income. Illinois is slightly above the U.S. averages for both measures, but will need to increase the educational attainment of its growing African American and Latino populations to maintain or improve its position.

**Strategies for Creating Quality Degrees**

**A. Incentives to Complete Degrees**

**Action Steps:**

1) Provide funding incentives to working adults and employers for quality degree completion.

2) Provide incentives for individuals with substantial college credit but no degree to complete their degrees.

**B. Improve Skill Levels**

**Action Steps:**

1) Encourage employers to recognize and make use of assessments of work readiness, such as the ACT WorkKeys.
2) Develop assessment tools that gauge a student’s preparedness to enter the workforce, such as an Illinois Work Ready Certification.

3) Ensure that instructors’ skill levels keep pace through relevant professional development and required “re-internships” with employers.

4) Use competency-based assessments to gauge student readiness to enter the workplace.

5) Engage employers as mentors in the classroom and increase the number of students exposed to the workplace through job-shadowing, internships, work study, and other means.

C. Strengthen Accountability to Demonstrate Quality

Action Steps:

1) Encourage institutional participation in such accountability measures as the College Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, or the Voluntary System of Assessment and public reporting of results.

Performance Measures

1) Number of postsecondary certificates and associate and baccalaureate degrees produced each year by all institutions in the state.

2) Certificates and associate degrees granted as a proportion of Full-Time Equivalencies (FTE) at associate degree granting institutions.

3) Baccalaureate degrees awarded as a proportion of FTEs at baccalaureate degree granting institutions.

4) Pass rates of first-time candidates taking a state licensure or certification examination.

5) Percentage of adults enrolling in postsecondary coursework that complete adult education or remedial coursework and transition to certificate or degree programs.

6) Quality of certificate and degree programs as assessed by employers, graduate schools, alumni, and other stakeholders.

Benchmarked against:

1) Illinois trends over one-, five-, and ten-year periods.

2) Five best-performing U.S. states.
3) Selected competitor/neighboring states.

Recommendation 2: Improve transitions all along the education pipeline – from high school and adult education to postsecondary education, from remedial classes to degree-bearing coursework, and from associate to baccalaureate degree levels.

The Issue: Obstacles to Transfer

Illinois has a robust system of associate-degree-granting and baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions. But for many students, the twain never meet. Students face significant challenges in achieving a seamless transition from one sector to the other, which is essential if Illinois is to produce a well-educated workforce.

- Student tools for transfer, such as uSelect (formerly the Course Applicability System), are haphazardly funded and do not include all Illinois institutions.\(^{xxxii}\)

- Despite institutional articulation agreements and the Illinois Articulation Initiative, many students encounter difficulties in transferring credits or find that transferred credits do not fulfill degree requirements.\(^{xxxiii}\)

- Baccalaureate completion opportunities exist between community colleges and public and private four-year institutions, but expansion of opportunities, particularly for place-bound students, is needed. In a 2007 IBHE-ICCB survey, 17 colleges reported the need for additional baccalaureate completion programs, particularly in high-demand fields such as nursing, special and early childhood education, and math and science.\(^{xxxiv}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Comprehensive Transfer Rate</th>
<th>Transfer Rate to Public In-State Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Stateline</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 6. Transfer rates between community colleges and four-year institutions vary widely by region.
- There is no comprehensive source or portal to link the need for baccalaureate completion programs with existing distance learning opportunities.\textsuperscript{xxv}

**Strategies to Remove Obstacles to Transfer**

**A. Strengthen Articulation**

**Action Steps:**

1) Establish long-term and stable funding for uSelect (formerly the Course Applicability System) and the Illinois Articulation Initiative.

2) Expand uSelect to include all independent institutions that receive state funds.

3) Explore feasibility of developing an objective measure for transfer and acceptance of credits.

**B. Bolster Baccalaureate Completion Opportunities**

**Action Steps:**

1) Provide financial incentives for baccalaureate completion programs on or near community college campuses through partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions.

2) Provide financial incentives and coordination for distance and online learning to serve place-bound and adult learners.

3) Undertake a statewide inventory of learning opportunities for degree completion, including distance education models.

4) Enhance use of Associate of Arts in Teaching degrees for math, science, special education, and early childhood education teachers.

5) Increase opportunities for two-plus-two-plus-two programs linking high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions.

6) Use underutilized high school facilities during evenings and weekends for baccalaureate completion coursework.

**Performance Measures**

1) Percentage of Illinois institutions participating in the Illinois Articulation Initiative.

2) Ratio of credits earned to credits accepted in transfer.

3) Average time-to-degree and credits-attempted-to-credits-earned for transfer students compared to native students.
4) Average GPA by field of study for transfer students compared to native students.

Benchmarked against:

1) Illinois trends over one-, five-, and ten-year periods.
2) The five best-performing states.
3) Selected competitor/neighboring states.

Recommendation 3: Increase the number of postsecondary degrees in fields of critical skills shortages, such as, initially, nursing, allied health, and information technology.

The Issue: Shortages in Critical Fields

Illinois has historically relied on importation of educated individuals to fill gaps in the workforce, especially in computer technology fields. The state must develop systemic ways to respond better and more quickly to fast-changing workforce and economic needs.

- The Illinois Department of Employment Security projects that there will be over 4,000 annual openings for registered nurses in Illinois between 2004 and 2014.\textsuperscript{xxxvi}

- “Middle skill jobs,” which require more than a high school education but less than a four-year degree, make up the largest segment of jobs in Illinois. According to Skills2Compete-Illinois, demand for employees in middle skill jobs, which include many occupations in construction, healthcare, public safety, and mechanical fields, is expected to account for almost half of all job openings in Illinois between 2004-2014.\textsuperscript{xxxvii}

- Illinois’ efforts to capitalize on emerging areas of the economy, such as biofuels, biopharmaceuticals, clean coal technology, and wind energy production, will require new and often multidisciplinary certificate and degree programs at levels ranging from technicians to research scientists.
Strategies to Address Shortages in Critical Fields

A. Expand Capacity

Action Steps:

1) Establish expansion grants for critical fields funded through regional public/private partnerships.

2) Increase targeted funding to increase capacity and increase the number of degrees in critical needs areas.

3) Increase incentives for students to enter and complete degree programs in critical needs areas, particularly aimed at underemployed and displaced workers.

4) Provide financial incentives for baccalaureate completion programs on or near community college campuses through partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions.

5) Increase incentives for faculty in critical fields to remain in the classroom.

6) Establish a timetable for review of critical fields needs across the state and by region.

Figure 7. Illinois faces growing shortages of nurses, information technology specialists, and other critical skills workers unless the number of degree-holders is increased.
Performance Measures

1) Absolute number of certificates and degrees awarded in critical fields benchmarked against demand in those fields.

2) Licensure pass rates in critical fields.

Benchmarked against:

1) Illinois trends over one-, five-, and ten-year periods.

2) The five best-performing states.

1) Selected competitor/neighbor states.
Goal 4: Better integrate Illinois’ educational, research, and innovation assets to meet economic needs of the state and its regions.

Illinois has long benefitted from a diversified economy, good physical infrastructure, well-established corporations, and a well-educated workforce. By some measures, Illinois’ economy continues to perform well; e.g., its ranking in the State New Economy Index has improved since 1999, though it still remains well behind New Economy leaders Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, and California. In other measures, however, including growth in gross state product and per capita personal income, Illinois’ recent performance more closely resembles the lackluster performance of its Midwestern neighbors. Furthermore, regional differences in economic performance within Illinois are substantial, with the Northeastern region of the state performing relatively well but many downstate regions experiencing economic stagnation.

Recommendation: Boost Illinois into the ranks of the five states with the fastest growing economies through cutting-edge research, technology transfer, workforce training, innovation education, and a culture of entrepreneurship.

Change in Gross State Product, 1997-2007


Figure 1. Like its Midwestern neighbors, Illinois’ economic growth over the past decade has been far below the national average.
Figure 2. In spite of its slow economic growth over the past decade, Illinois has many competitive advantages. Illinois ranks 16th in the most recent State New Economy Index, having moved up six places since 1999.

Figure 3. Personal income varies widely in Illinois by region with the Northeast region exceeding most other regions.
Illinois received an overall grade of “C” in 2007 from the Corporation for Enterprise Development for innovation assets. The score is generated from ten economic and higher education components including the number of science and engineering graduate students per 1 million state residents, the amount of academic dollars invested in research and development, and the number of businesses created via university research and development.

Illinois ranks slightly above the national average for initial public offerings (IPOs) of stocks to finance new companies, but ranks low in the amount of venture capital provided. Most small business startups, including those that tend to bring to the marketplace the products derived from university basic and applied research undertaking, depend upon venture capital and angel investors to finance their formative stage.

Illinois does an average to below-average job in creating, retaining, and growing technology startups. The state’s scores on innovation assets, initial public offerings, and venture capital show that Illinois needs to step up or risk being left behind in the New Economy.
Illinois’ colleges and universities are central to the development of the state and regional economies, but the roles they play must expand and the connections between higher education and the economy must become stronger. The state must capitalize on the extensive research capacity of Illinois’ colleges and universities and partner with them to help them become more nimble in addressing the workforce needs of regions and employers.

- Illinois universities are in the top 10 states in all major fields with regard to university research and development expenditures, with particular strength in math and computer science. This has not translated into entrepreneurial activity that drives a revitalized economy as previously explained.

- The disparate rankings on the two measurements of how investment financing is secured in new business development (i.e., IPOs and venture capital) may be one of the reasons Illinois ranks fairly high in federal research and development expenditures but relatively low in innovation assets and new business startups.

Figure 5. Illinois ranks below the national average in the amount of venture capital and far below the leading New Economy states. Massachusetts, California, and Washington have much higher rates of venture capital than the state of Illinois.


**Illinois Rank – Federal Academic Research and Development Expenditures, 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expenditures (in $1,000)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,050</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>677,936</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math &amp; Computer Sciences</td>
<td>92,159</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>113,782</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>137,215</td>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Science Foundation, 2008.

Figure 6. Illinois is ranked 7th in total federal research and development expenditures by universities. Illinois has similar high rankings in the subtotals of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields.

Generally, economically competitive states seek to foster a highly skilled and creative workforce and a high quality of life for their residents. A state’s investment or interest in developing human capital can be measured by the availability of quality early childhood development programs; the adequacy and equity of school funding; the P-20 alignment of curriculum; the rigorous math, science, and digital information fluency classes offered to middle and high school students; and the attention to the development of career, technical/vocational, and information technology skills in secondary and postsecondary levels of education. These positive attributes help to build a competitive workforce that contributes to Illinois’ economic growth.

**Strategies to Meet the Economic Needs of the State and its Regions**

A. Develop resource pools and incentives that capitalize on state and regional strengths and address state and regional weaknesses.

**Action Steps:**

1) Create pooled state and private sector matching funds to assist colleges and universities pursuing federally sponsored research grants.

2) Create financing and support for business incubators, particularly in regions that lack sufficient local resources, as vehicles to stimulate research and development technology transfer and small business innovation.

3) Develop public/private partnerships to provide early-stage support and venture capital for commercialization of research and business development.
4) Encourage regular interaction between business, labor, and educational leaders at the regional level to identify regional educational, economic, and cultural needs and develop collaborative solutions.

5) Provide tax incentives that will help fill the gap in financing between seed money and venture capital, including such initiatives as angel tax credit programs that encourage more entrepreneurial activity in high-growth small businesses.

6) Increase the pool of funds for job training that can be accessed through an employer match by businesses seeking to expand or relocate in Illinois or to retrain incumbent workers to retain businesses in Illinois.

7) Expand the number of paid internship and cooperative work study experiences available to students in their fields of study, particularly for students in STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering) fields.

B. Develop cutting-edge educational programs across the P-20 spectrum that will prepare students to succeed in the global economy.

Action Steps:

1) Expand state learning standards to include innovation economy knowledge, such as National Educational Technology Standards, and multidisciplinary skills.

2) Develop, expand, and fund master’s degree science interdisciplinary programs focusing on communication and problem solving skills, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

3) Expand Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy’s reach throughout the state in both teacher professional development and STEM education programs for students.

4) Expand career cluster initiatives in Illinois focusing on key areas such as healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and other sectors critical to state and regional economic development.

C. Remove barriers that impede or interfere with the entrepreneurial spirit without jeopardizing public service, protection, and safety.

Action Steps:

1) Review and improve state policies to create an environment that encourages entrepreneurial activity among faculty, helps create startup businesses, leverages capital, provides business incubator services and support services, and attracts venture capital.

2) Discuss industry and labor expectations of the state approval process for new workforce training programs with the intent to streamline and expedite processes.

3) Provide assistance, including the extension of affordable broadband Internet service to all rural communities, and incentives for regional collaboration for innovation and economic development.
Performance Measures

1) Proportion of jobs considered to be “living wage” jobs.

2) Spin-off companies created per billion dollars of academic research.

3) Patents and commercial licensing agreements.

4) Commercialization of technology first developed at an Illinois institution of higher education.

5) Number of Cooperative Work Study Grant recipients employed by Illinois companies after graduation.

Benchmarked against:

1) Five best-performing states.

2) Illinois trends over one-, five-, and ten-year periods of time.
Public Agenda Task Force Meetings
March 20  DePaul University, Chicago
May 1  Roosevelt University, Chicago
June 20  Robert Morris College, Chicago
August 12  Kendall College, Chicago
October 6  Harold Washington College, Chicago
November 21  Robert Morris College, Chicago

Regional Forums
June 9  Richland Community College, Decatur
June 10  Black Hawk College, Moline
June 11  Illinois Central College, East Peoria
June 12  Kankakee Community College, Kankakee
         John Wood Community College, Quincy
June 13  Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove
June 16  South Suburban Community College, South Holland
         Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville
June 17  College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn
         John A Logan College, Carterville
June 18  College of Lake County, Grayslake
         IL Eastern Community College/Olney Central College, Olney
June 19  Oakton Community College, Des Plaines
         Danville Area Community College, Danville
June 20  Richard J. Daley College, Chicago
June 23  Rock Valley College, Rockford
June 24  Olive Harvey College, Chicago

Public Briefings
March 11  Roosevelt University, Chicago
March 13  Illinois Community College Board, Springfield

Legislative Briefings
March 12  Legislative Breakfast, Springfield
         House Higher Education Committee Briefing, Springfield
March 13  Education Caucus, Springfield
November 20  Legislative Briefing, Springfield

Public Hearings
October 17  Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
October 20  Northern Illinois University, DeKalb
October 22  Eastern Illinois University, Charleston
October 27  Western Illinois University, Moline
October 31  University of Illinois, Springfield
November 10  Chicago State University, Chicago
### Other Stakeholder Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges &amp; Universities</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Public University Peer Group Meeting</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Economic Development Subcabinet, Education Caucus</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Trustees Association</td>
<td>Oak Brook</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Illinois Workforce Investment Board</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Public University Presidents and Chancellor</td>
<td>Bloomington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>Civic Consulting Alliance, Chicago</td>
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<td>Chicago Public Schools and Office of the Mayor of Chicago</td>
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<td>April 23</td>
<td>Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DePaul University</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women Employed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community College Presidents, Harold Washington College</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>Little Village High School, Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Public University Trustees, NIU Naperville</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago Urban League</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 19</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board, Lewis &amp; Clark College</td>
<td>Godfrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Illinois State Board of Education</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>City Colleges of Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Committee of Commercial Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Chicago State University – Board and Staff</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northeastern Illinois University – President and Staff</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>College of Lake County Board of Trustees and Governing Board</td>
<td>Grayslake</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois State University – President and Staff</td>
<td>East Peoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>Governors State University - President and Staff</td>
<td>University Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Southern Illinois University – President and Staff</td>
<td>Carterville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Eastern Illinois University – President and Staff</td>
<td>Danville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Northern Illinois University – President and Staff</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Illinois University - President and Staff</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Innovation Asset Meeting</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>University of Illinois Higher Education Summit</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

i (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
ii (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
iii (Illinois State Board of Education, 2008)
v (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
vi (Illinois State Board of Education, 2007)
vii (Illinois Community College Board, 2007)
viii (Illinois Community College Board, 2008)
ix (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2008)
x (Strategic Planning Leadership Committee, 2008)
xi (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xii (The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning w/ NCHEMS, 2008)
 xiii (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xiv (Strategic Planning Leadership Committee, 2008)
 xv (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xvi (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xvii (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xviii (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
 xix (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
xx (Mortenson, 2008)
x xi (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2007)
x xii (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2008)
x xiii (The Project on Student Debt, 2007)
x xiv (State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2008)
x xv (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x xvi (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x xvii (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x xviii (Mortenson, 2008)
x x ix (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x x (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x xxi (The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning w/ NCHEMS, 2008)
x x xii (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2008)
x x xiii (Illinois Community College Board, 2007)
x x xiv (Deason, 2008)
x x xv (Illinois Community College Board, 2005)
x x xvi (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x x xvii (Holzer & Lerman, 2007)
x x x viii (Atkinson & Correa, 2007)
x x x x x (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008)
x l (Atkinson & Correa, 2007)
x li (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2008)
x lii (Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2007)
x liii (National Science Foundation, 2008)
x liv (Williams, 2008)
x lv (Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2007)
x lvi (National Science Foundation, 2008)
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