

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS

THE STATE WE'RE IN
2016-2017

A REPORT ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS



FELLOW ILLINOISANS,

It has been eight years since Advance Illinois began its work to support a healthy state public education system—an education system with clear goals, high standards, sufficient resources and excellent educators. While Advance Illinois has accomplished much, we still have more to do to ensure all students receive the high-quality education they deserve—and our futures demand.

It's not an overstatement to say that the economic success of our state, and our citizens, hinges on our progress toward this educational vision. Our next generation of employees, our next generation of entrepreneurs, engineers and innovators, our next generation of Illinois' leaders, is entering kindergarten today. The schools that greet them must be competitive with cutting-edge education available overseas and elsewhere in the United States.

With this report, we take a clear-eyed look at the state of public education in Illinois today and offer educational milestones on the road to 2025. For the first time, *The State We're In* includes interim targets to meet market-place demands and achieve the state's goal of 60% of Illinoisans with a postsecondary degree or credential by the year 2025. Some may believe these are too aspirational or even unrealistic. But we believe reaching these goals will help to achieve the ideal outcome: a robust, student-centered public education system that improves the current well-being and future livelihood of our children.

As we approach our 10th anniversary, Advance Illinois intends to build on its past legislative successes and continue to advocate in Springfield for equity-driven and data-centered policies that benefit all students, particularly low-income students who need the most support.

Fundamentally, Illinois must invest in its chronically underfunded school districts and raise our ranking—now worst in the nation—for state funding of education. The state should begin by addressing inequitable school funding and close gaps between high-income and low-income districts. Our elementary test scores show some of the largest income-based disparities in the nation. The terrible spread of concentrated poverty throughout Illinois exacerbates this inequity.

At the same time, transformational initiatives already under way can help guide the state toward its goal of 60% of adults with a postsecondary education by 2025. We know we can't develop these initiatives alone, but we can set reasonable yet ambitious interim targets and partner with business, communities, educators and policymakers to build the local education infrastructure, as the state provides the framework and supports for success.

We look forward to working with partners across the state to imagine solutions and galvanize transformative action. Our future depends on it.

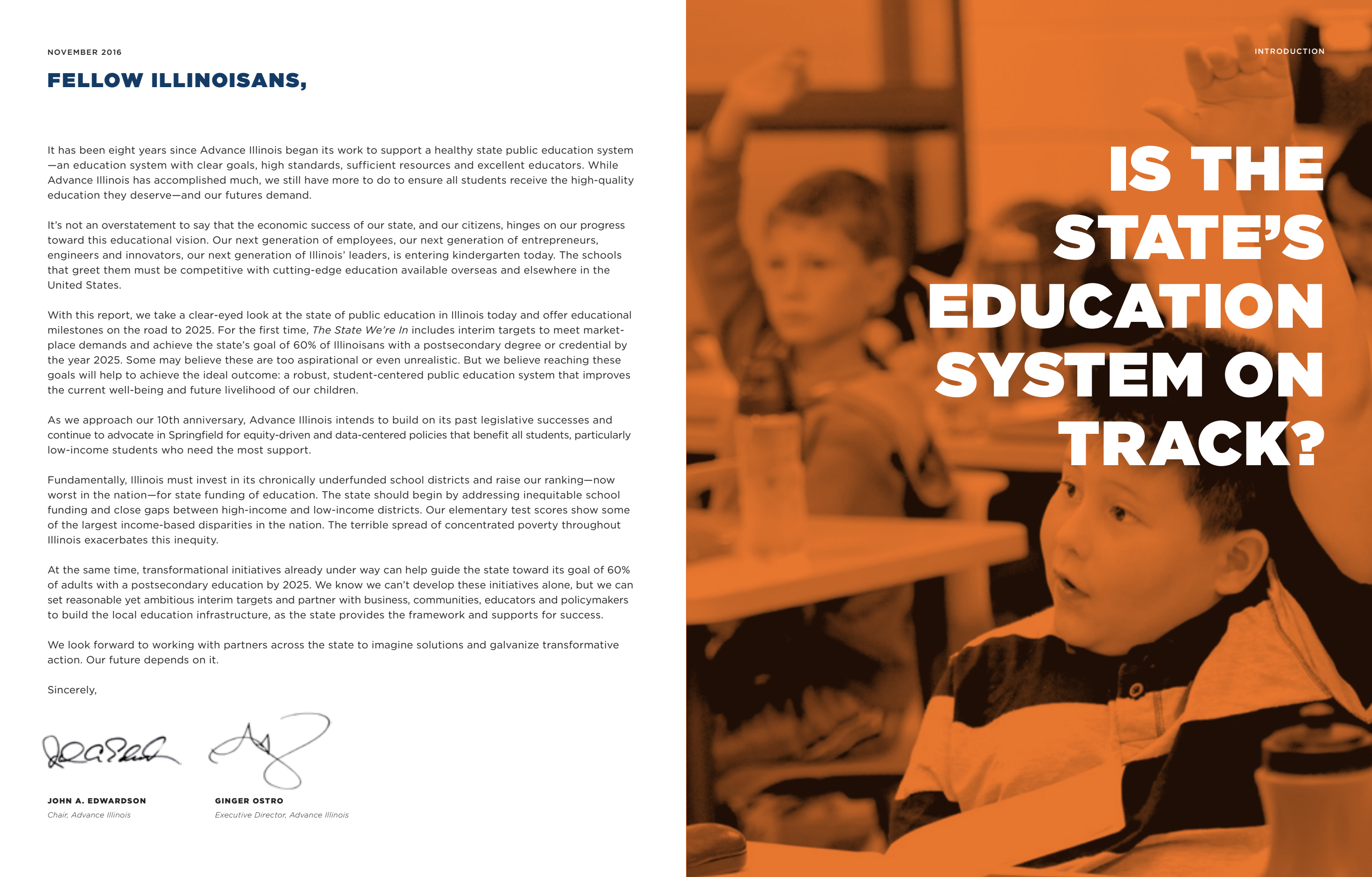
Sincerely,



JOHN A. EDWARDSON
Chair, Advance Illinois



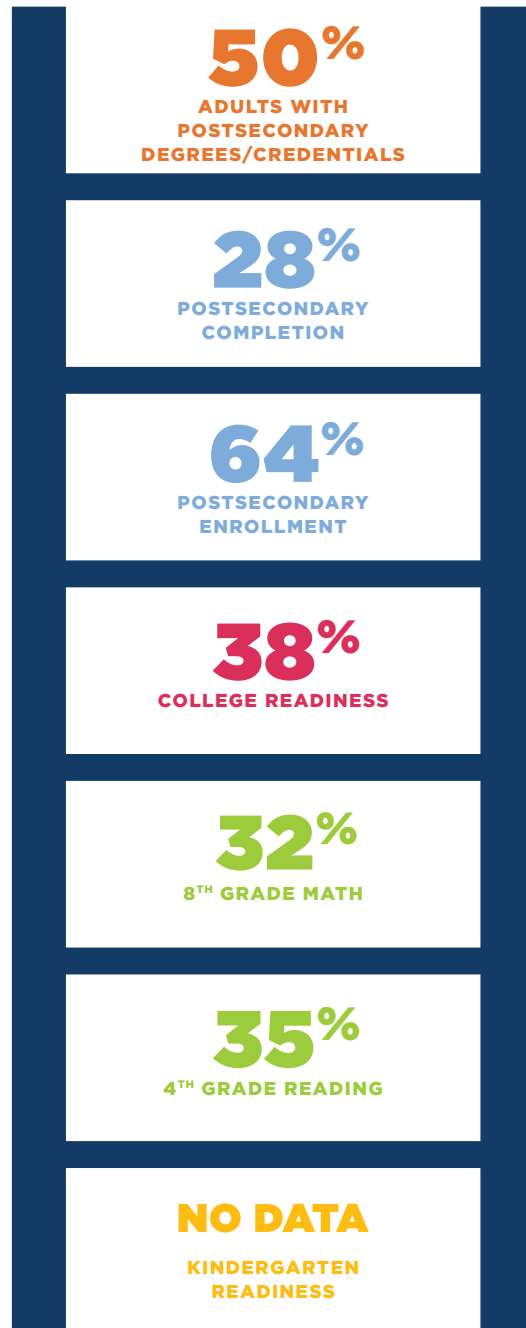
GINGER OSTRO
Executive Director, Advance Illinois



IS THE STATE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM ON TRACK?

KEY ACADEMIC MILESTONES

WHERE ILLINOIS STANDS TODAY ON THE STEPS TO 60 BY 25



ILLINOIS MUST MEET KEY ACADEMIC MILESTONES TO BE “ON TRACK”

Illinois has set an ambitious target: 60% of working adults will hold a college degree or credential by 2025, as research suggests that at least 60% of jobs will require some type of educational credential past high school. Today, only 50% of the state’s working adults hold college credentials. How can we get to where we need to be?

The State We’re In 2016-2017 takes a snapshot of our state’s education systems—early education, K-12 and higher education—with a focus on progress toward the 60 by 25 goal. Reaching the 60 by 25 goal will require expanding current strategies, identifying new strategies and holding ourselves accountable for results on the milestones to college and career success. *The State We’re In* also highlights promising practices that could be replicated, or scaled up, to accelerate the state’s progress toward 60 by 25. With a combination of state action and local effort, we can achieve this goal. The metrics and projections we offer help Illinois more clearly envision a day when every child has a fair shot at completing a degree or credential that leads to a productive career.

WHAT ARE THESE “KEY ACADEMIC MILESTONES” AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Many but not all children come to kindergarten ready to learn. Yet we don’t know how we’re doing because the state is still developing the data tools. However, research has long shown the benefit of high-quality pre-kindergarten programs for later academic success,¹ especially for low-income students. Measuring access to pre-kindergarten programs shows how we are doing in setting children on track for kindergarten readiness.

4TH GRADE READING

At 4th grade, students must be able to move from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” other subject areas. Today, when we look at the National Assessment of Educational Progress (the so-called “Nation’s Report Card”) only 35% of 4th graders are reading at proficiency. Illinois ranks 30th nationally, while 50% of 4th graders are reading proficient in the best state (Massachusetts).

8TH GRADE MATH

As early as 8th grade, math scores correlate with ACT scores three years later. To ensure students are ready for college, the number of 8th grade students who are proficient in math must grow from the 32% that it is today. Illinois ranks 29th in 8th grade math proficiency, while Massachusetts leads the nation with a rate of 51%.

We track a larger data set, including many metrics focused on the conditions of teaching and learning across the state, that helps tell if we are on track for these key milestones. We invite you to explore them through our new interactive website, at advanceillinois.org/2025.

COLLEGE READINESS

The ACT is frequently used as one measure of whether students are ready for college. Today, only 38% of Illinois high school graduates met college-ready standards on the ACT; in Minnesota, which leads the nation, 54% of graduates met college-ready standards.

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

To state the obvious, students must enroll and persist in a post-secondary program if they are to complete one. We estimate that today only 64% of 9th graders complete high school and enroll directly in a postsecondary program.²

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

A gulf exists between postsecondary enrollment and postsecondary completion. While 64% of 9th graders enroll, only 28% of them will complete their program within six years at any school—even accounting for those who transfer to a different school to finish.²

60 BY 25

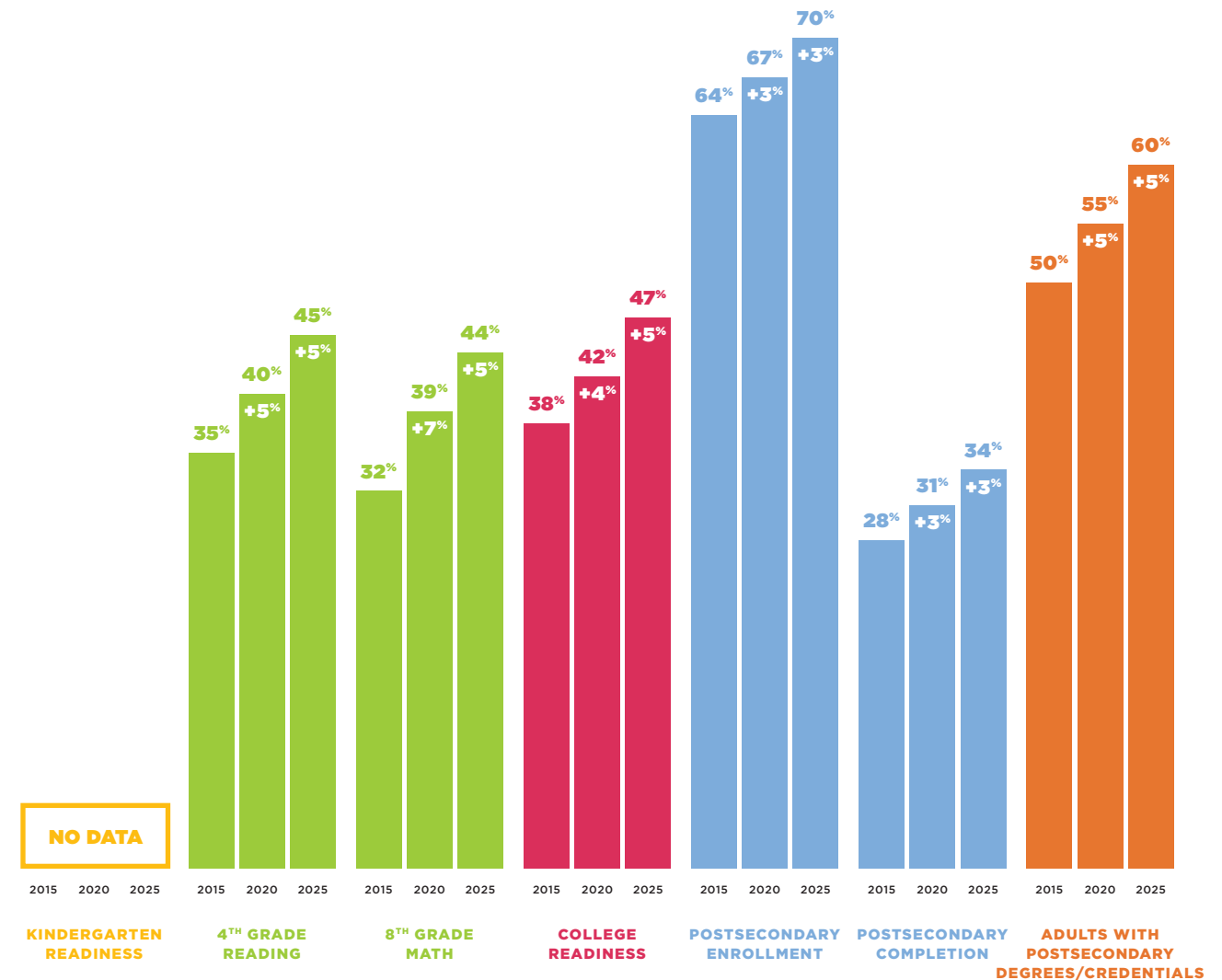
Today, half of Illinois adults hold a postsecondary degree or credential. Reaching 60% by 2025 will require movement at every step, beginning with preparing children for kindergarten.

ACHIEVING 60 BY 25

HOW MUCH DOES ILLINOIS NEED TO IMPROVE TO REACH 60 BY 25?

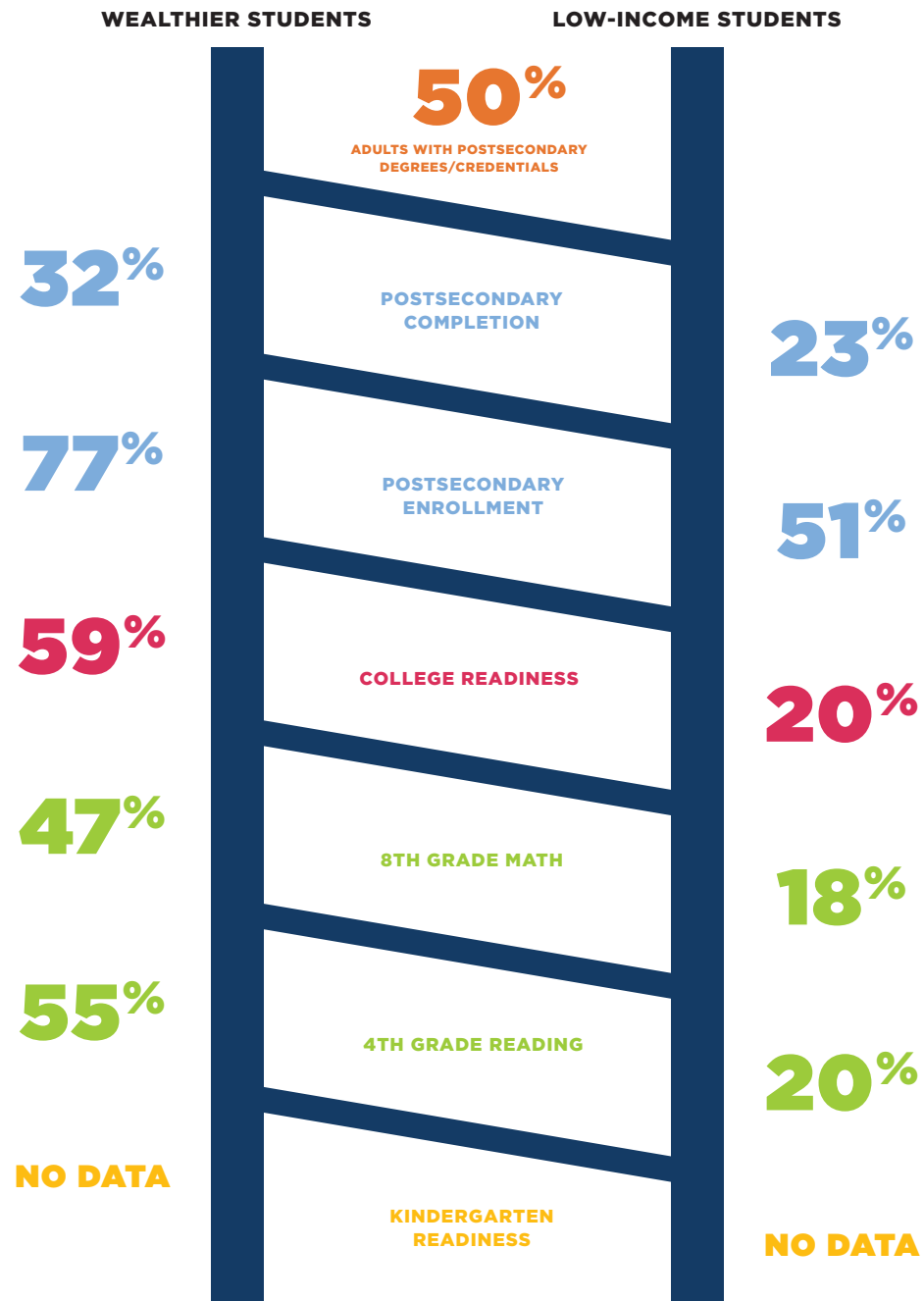
The short answer is that we need to make more progress in the next 10 years than we have in the past 10 years. That means we will need to do better at each of the key academic milestones. We looked at what it will take and set interim targets to show where Illinois needs to be in 2020 and in 2025.³ In each and every milestone we have to improve by three to as much as seven percentage points to be on track for 2025. That means thousands more children need to be reading at grade level by 4th grade, performing math at an 8th grade level, showing college readiness and enrolling in and completing a postsecondary program. And it means thousands more of our at-risk students will need resources and support to ensure they are on-track. Simply put, if we don't do what it takes to accelerate our progress, we will fall short of meeting the state's 60 by 25 goal and leave many students behind.

Throughout this report we show you what it will take to accelerate our progress and meet the challenges that Illinois faces.



THE CHALLENGES ARE EVEN GREATER FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

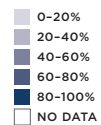
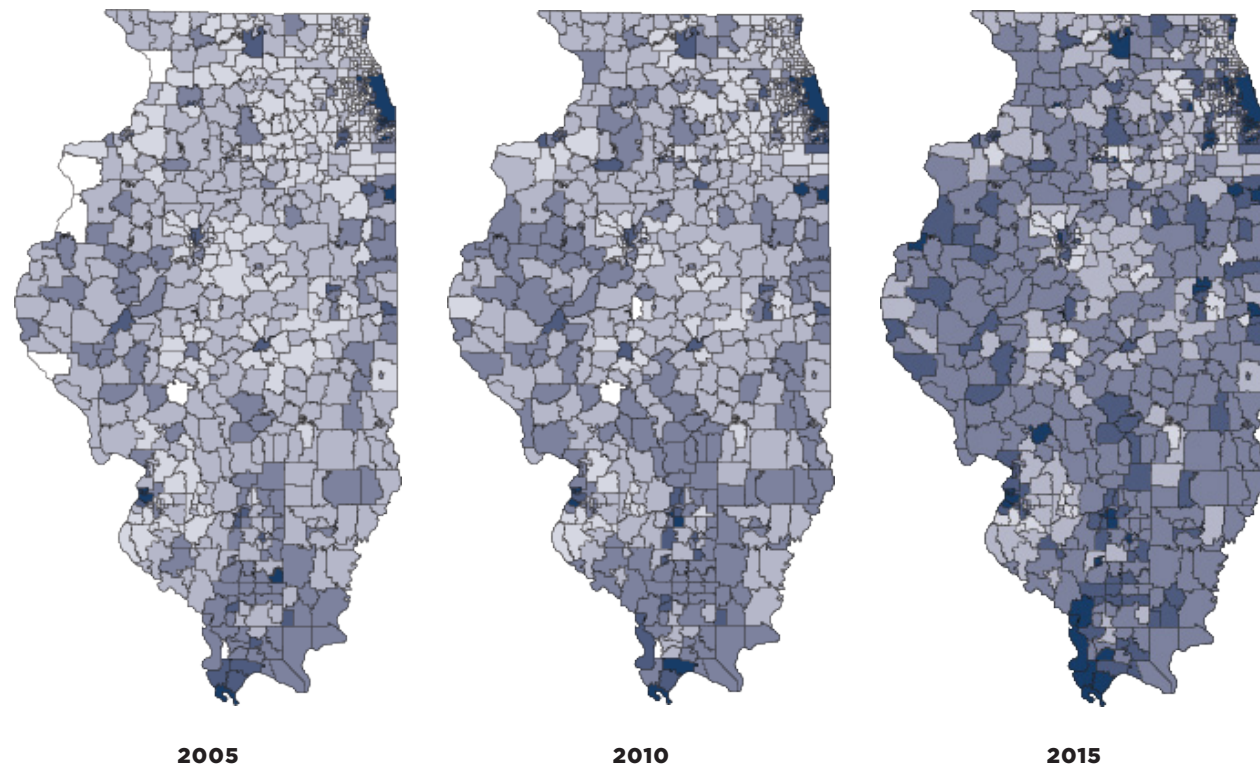
Low-income students are often behind their wealthier peers when they begin kindergarten and too often remain behind throughout their academic careers. We must do more at every step to change this pattern.



KIDS' NEEDS INCREASE ACROSS THE STATE

MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVE LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

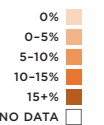
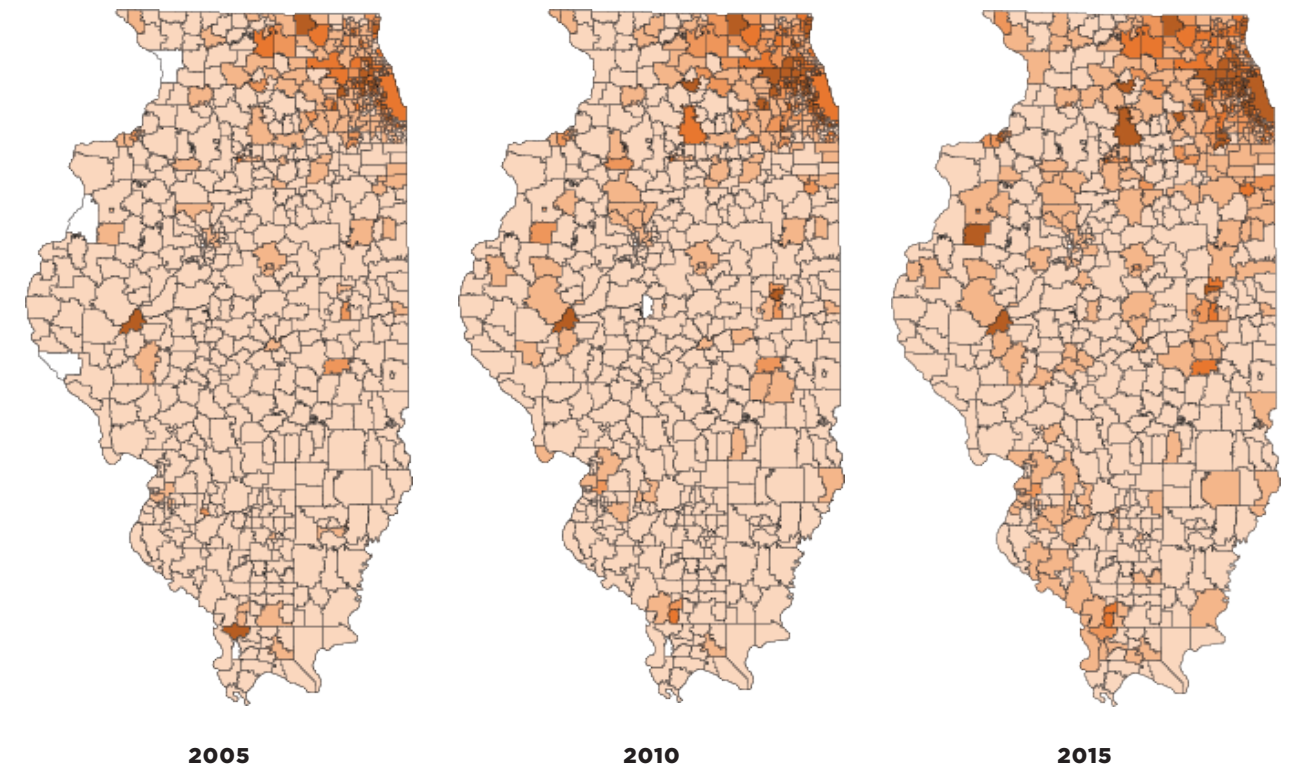
In recent years, far greater numbers of Illinois school districts are teaching students who are living in poverty. In 43% of school districts in 2015, more than half of the students are coming from low-income homes, up from 13% in 2005. Research shows that it costs more to educate low-income students, many of whom start school academically behind their more affluent peers.⁴ These students may need, for example, help to build vocabulary and background knowledge, extra learning time, or links to other services, such as healthcare, to meet the full range of their needs.⁵



Source: Illinois School Report Card

MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVE STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH

Students learning English are now over 10% of the total Illinois public school population and live all over the state. Schools that never served English learners in the past are now realizing they must adjust to meet changing needs, as students learn English and a full array of traditional subjects.



Source: Illinois School Report Card

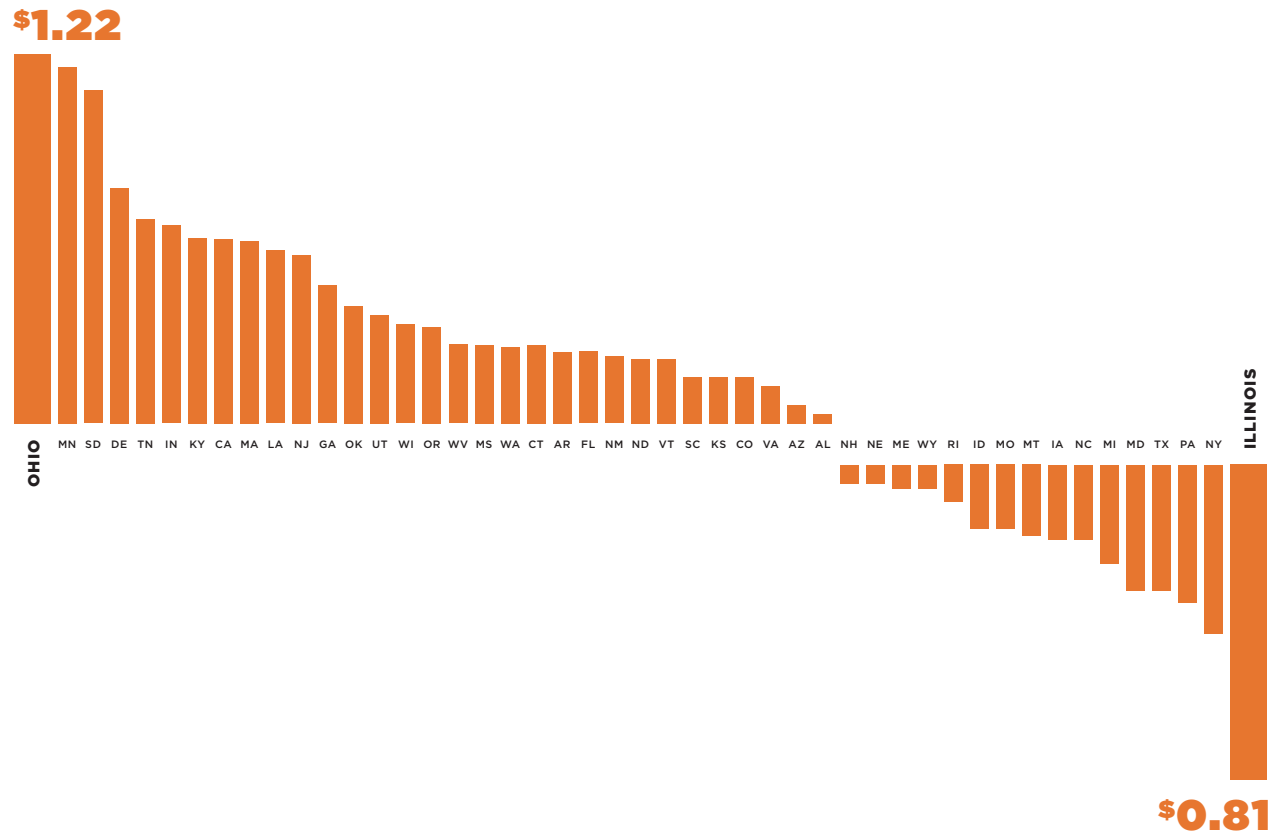
UNFAIR K-12 FUNDING SHORTCHANGES THE STATE'S NEEDIEST STUDENTS

More than half of Illinois state education dollars go to districts regardless of their wealth, shortchanging poor districts that have students with greater needs. For every dollar Illinois spends on a non-low-income student, the state spends only 81 cents on a low-income student. The existing funding system fails to provide adequate funding to address the social, emotional and physical needs of low-income students, English learners and students with special needs. Because of inequitable funding, students in low-income and majority African American and Latino districts are too often faced with larger class sizes, fewer special classes like art and music, outdated textbooks and increased student activity fees, when they need the opposite.

After a nearly year-long budget impasse, the General Assembly passed a stopgap budget in late June 2016 that ensured that schools would open on time in Fall 2016. However, structural reform is still needed. At the time of this writing, the Governor's School Funding Reform Commission is in discussions to fix the structural issues of Illinois' notoriously inequitable state education funding formula. This longstanding inequity demands change when the General Assembly returns in Spring 2017.

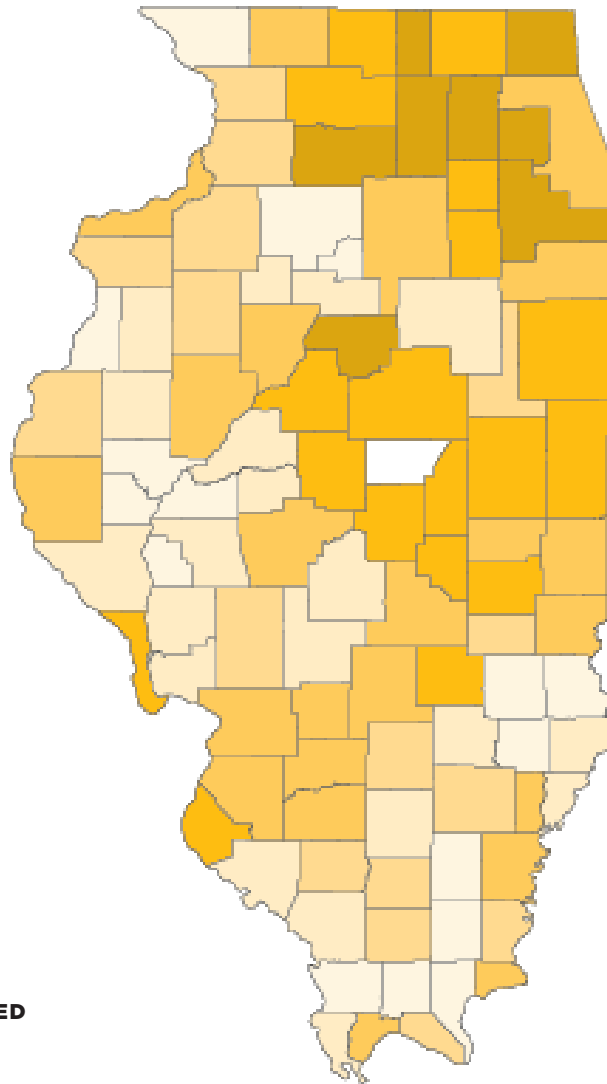
FOR EVERY \$1 SPENT ON A NON-LOW-INCOME STUDENT, OHIO SPENDS \$1.22 ON A LOW-INCOME STUDENT. ILLINOIS SPENDS \$0.81.

Source: The Education Trust



NOT ENOUGH KIDS HAVE ACCESS TO PRE-K

TOO FEW EARLY CHILDHOOD SEATS AVAILABLE FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS



PERCENT OF SEATS AVAILABLE TO MEET NEED

- UNDER 50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%
- 100-125%
- 125-150%
- OVER 150%
- NO DATA

Source: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map

High-quality preschool improves students' social, cognitive and developmental readiness for kindergarten, putting them on track to long-term success in school.⁶ The benefits are especially critical for low-income students, who typically hear 30 million fewer words spoken than their wealthier peers by age 2 and face an uphill battle to early literacy and math proficiency throughout their education.⁷

Less than a decade ago, Illinois was a national leader in early education. In 2007 the state launched Preschool for All and a year later led the nation in preschool access for 3-year-olds.⁸ But when the recession prompted budget cuts, Preschool for All lost ground. By 2014, state-funded preschool was serving only about three-quarters of the children it had reached just five years earlier.⁹ Disappointingly, today Illinois only has enough publicly funded preschool spots to serve about 80% of low-income 3- and 4-year-olds.¹⁰ Worse, preschool providers across the state have reported unfilled seats, highlighting barriers to participation.

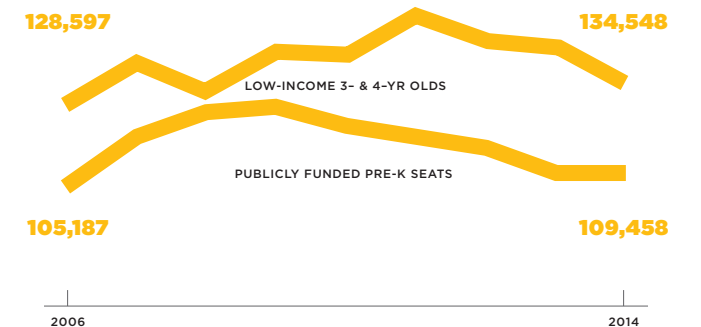
There are too few public preschool seats available in many areas of the state. For example, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties need approximately twice as many seats to serve low-income 3- and 4-year-olds. Meanwhile, the Cook County suburbs have almost 8,000 fewer preschool seats than eligible low-income children, the greatest shortfall in the state. Even as the state made a significant investment to restore Preschool for All to 2012 funding levels, continued support will be needed to increase the number of seats available across the state to serve every child who needs one.¹¹

STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOL MEETS ONLY 80% OF NEED

Sources: National Institute for Early Education Research; American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT EAST ST. LOUIS

Improving access to early education programs and services for children under 5 has been a major priority in Greater East St. Louis, where 99% of public school children are considered low-income¹² and too few families were taking advantage of available preschool programs. In 2015, Greater East St. Louis launched a regional effort to solve this problem. East Side Aligned and the Greater East St. Louis Early Learning Partnership & Innovation Zone (ELP) launched Ready, Set, ENROLL!—an effort to educate families about their program options and reduce barriers to enrollment. ELP collaborated with early childhood centers, Head Start, Preschool for All, Prevention Initiative, and Home Visiting programs to create a universal application for early education and prioritize the applications of families with the highest need. Since its launch in 2015, Ready, Set, ENROLL! has reached approximately 10% of Greater East St. Louis children who are 5 and under.¹³ Visit advanceillinois.org/2025 to read more about East St. Louis.



ACHIEVEMENT GAPS PERSIST

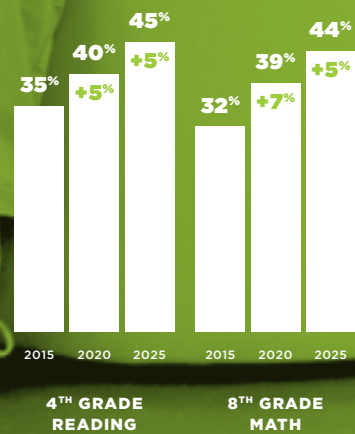
LOW-INCOME STUDENTS LAG BEHIND MORE AFFLUENT PEERS

Over the last decade, the number of Illinois 4th graders reading at grade level has grown slowly from 31% to 35%. For 8th grade math, the share of students at grade level has grown from 29% to 32% with a jump to 36% in 2013.¹⁴ While it's unclear what caused 8th grade math to drop in 2015, the trend is fairly flat.

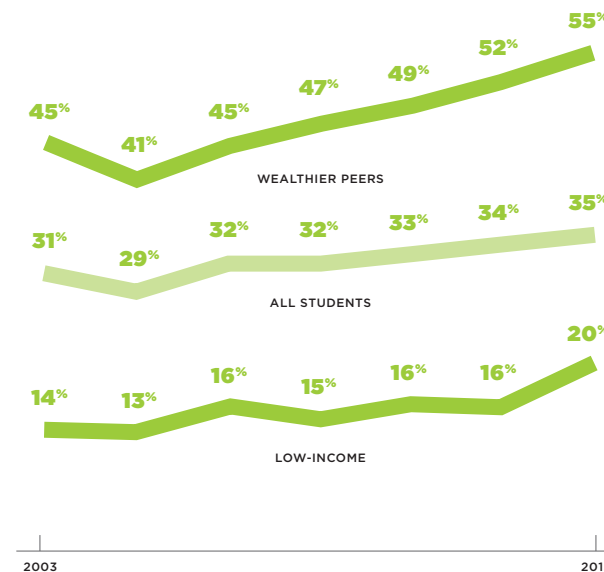
Despite improvements by low-income students, Illinois continues to face some of the largest income-based achievement gaps in the nation. Only 20% of low-income Illinois 4th graders are proficient, 35 percentage points lower than their more-affluent peers. In 8th grade math, just 18% of low-income students are proficient, 29 percentage points lower than their more-affluent peers.¹⁵ If we are going to improve the performance to meet our 2025 goal, we have to focus on low-income students and close these gaps.

To achieve the state's goal by 2025, 4th grade reading performance must reach 45%, and 8th grade math performance must reach 44%. That means in addition to the nearly 53,000 4th graders already reading proficient, we need an additional 15,000 4th graders—1,500 more 4th graders every single year—reading proficiently by 2025. For 8th grade math, on top of the 49,000 already there, we need an additional 18,000 8th graders—1,800 more 8th graders every year—proficient in math by 2025.

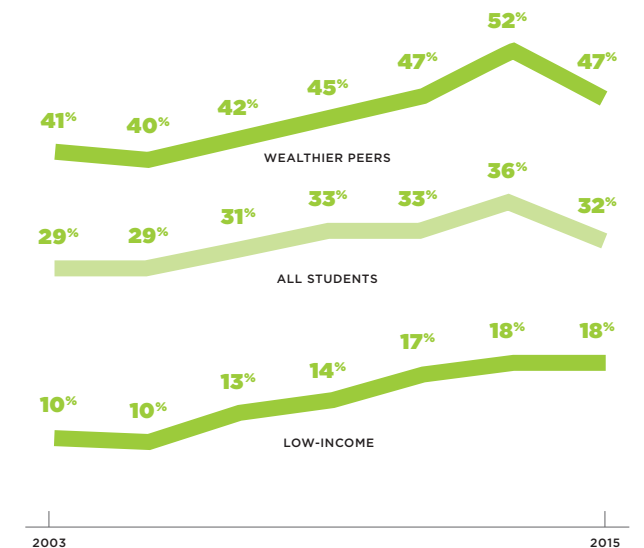
ROAD TO 2025



MODERATE BUT STEADY GROWTH IN 4TH GRADE READING, BUT WIDE GAPS BASED ON INCOME



INCOME-BASED GAPS ALSO PERSIST IN 8TH GRADE MATH PERFORMANCE



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

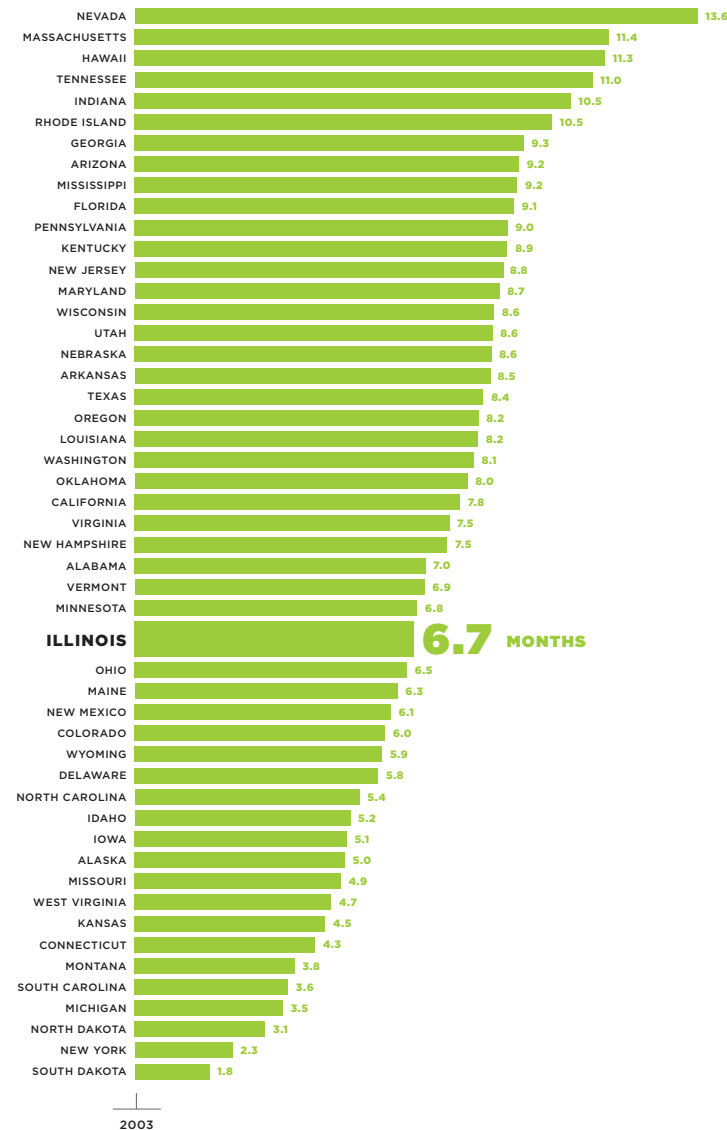
ILLINOIS' PROGRESS TRAILS MANY STATES

An analysis by the Urban Institute showed that while Illinois has made some progress in helping students achieve proficiency in reading and math, other states are outpacing our gains.¹⁶ Their analysis showed that Illinois ranks 30th nationally in change on the National Assessment of Educational Progress since 2003.

When looking at 4th and 8th grade scores for math and reading, the study found that in 2015 Illinois students were 6.7 months ahead of where they were in 2003, while students in the top states were more than 10 months ahead.¹⁷ This means, for example, a student entering 4th grade in 2015 knew material equivalent to a student that had been in school for seven months in 2003.

ILLINOIS STUDENTS IMPROVED 6.7 MONTHS SINCE 2003

Source: Urban Institute



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT AURORA

The John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School building itself is a STEM teaching tool. Building mechanicals are on display to show how HVAC systems work, and a wind turbine and rooftop garden help students understand energy and the environment. That's because the school is focused on real-world learning. And it's hands-on, collaborative approach shows how all students of all backgrounds can succeed. The 3rd through 8th grade school, founded in 2014, grew out of a collaboration among Aurora University, faculty, nonprofit partners, four school districts and corporations.

The school's project-based learning environment offers students classes in a hands-on, laboratory setting equipped with the latest STEM technology. It also has another benefit in that it equips teachers from partner districts with innovative teaching practices. Teachers rotate through the Partnership School every few years and take graduate coursework in STEM content and curriculum during their residency at the school. They then return to their home districts to serve as teacher leaders. Every month, representatives from Caterpillar, Cabot Microelectronics, Exelon, Nicor Gas, Fermilab, and Brookfield Zoo meet with teachers and administrators to co-develop curriculum and lesson plans and arrange field trips to work sites.

The Partnership School's students are selected randomly from four participating districts through a lottery. They must express an interest in math and science to qualify for the school. On the 2016 state PARCC exam, 71% of the school's students met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts and 78% did so in math, compared to the statewide averages of 36% and 32%,¹⁸ even though the school has about the state average in percent of low-income students.

Visit advanceillinois.org/2025 to read more about the Dunham STEM Partnership School.



OPPORTUNITY THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Through rigorous new learning standards, an updated teacher evaluation system and tightened requirements for principal preparation, Illinois has many of the building blocks for an effective public education system in place. Now there is an opportunity to add one more. In 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to develop an accountability system, providing data on students' performance and giving schools, educators and parents the tools and information they need to help improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. For more building blocks, visit advanceillinois.org/2025.

TOO FEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE COLLEGE-READY

GRADUATION RATES INCREASE, BUT ACT SCORES STAGNANT

The good news is increasing numbers of Illinois students are graduating high school within five years: currently 88% of high schoolers are graduating versus 84% in 2012.¹⁹ The graduation rate has increased for students of all backgrounds, including low-income students and students of color.²⁰ Educators, parents and community members should be commended for coming together to support students in their efforts to earn a diploma.

However, on a key measure of whether students are ready for college—the ACT—only 38% of Illinois high school graduates are scoring as college ready. This figure has not budged since 2012. The gap means too many students are graduating high school but are not college ready.

Higher scores on the ACT correlate with college degrees: students who meet three or more ACT college readiness benchmarks have a better than 75% chance of earning a postsecondary degree.²¹



ROAD TO 2025



COLLEGE READINESS

**COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
ROCKFORD**

A new approach in Rockford is uniting unlikely stakeholders to solve the complex transition from high school to college. Alignment Rockford, the backbone of a public-private initiative, has the school district in the midst of a dramatic transformation that has gained national recognition. The nonprofit worked with Rockford Public Schools to launch a new approach which emphasizes project-based learning, smaller learning communities, career planning, and input and expertise from the business community. Early indications suggest it has yielded higher attendance rates and less truancy.

At the core of the changes in Rockford are college and career “academies,” formatted as schools within schools that span business, engineering, human services and health sciences, and align high school courses with postsecondary expectations. At Guilford High School’s Engineering, Manufacturing, Industrial and Trades Technology academy, for example, English, math and social studies incorporate project-based concepts from real-world engineering and manufacturing. Students interested in professional degrees and certificate programs work side-by-side in classes such as Construction I, held in the school’s construction and fabrication lab. The school had done away with a similar industrial arts lab years ago, only to bring it back as the community recognized that hands-on learning had value in preparing all students for life after high school. When students enter Guilford, they identify a career pathway in 9th grade, enabling them to develop skills that will be relevant across careers.

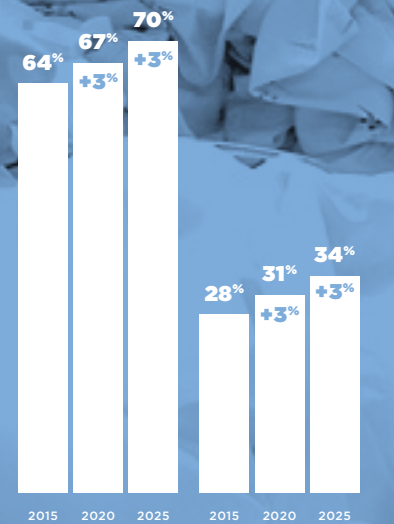
All 9th graders attend a citywide Academy Expo to help determine their high school academy. The expo brings together 140 careers from participating businesses, 3,000 students and 900 volunteers. “At the expo, you learn that you don’t have to go to San Francisco to be part of a tech firm,” said Jack Snedegar, an 11th grader in the Business, Arts, Modern World Languages and Information Technology Academy at Guilford.

Visit advanceillinois.org/2025 to read more about Alignment Rockford.



MANY STRUGGLE TO FINISH THEIR DEGREE

ROAD TO 2025



POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

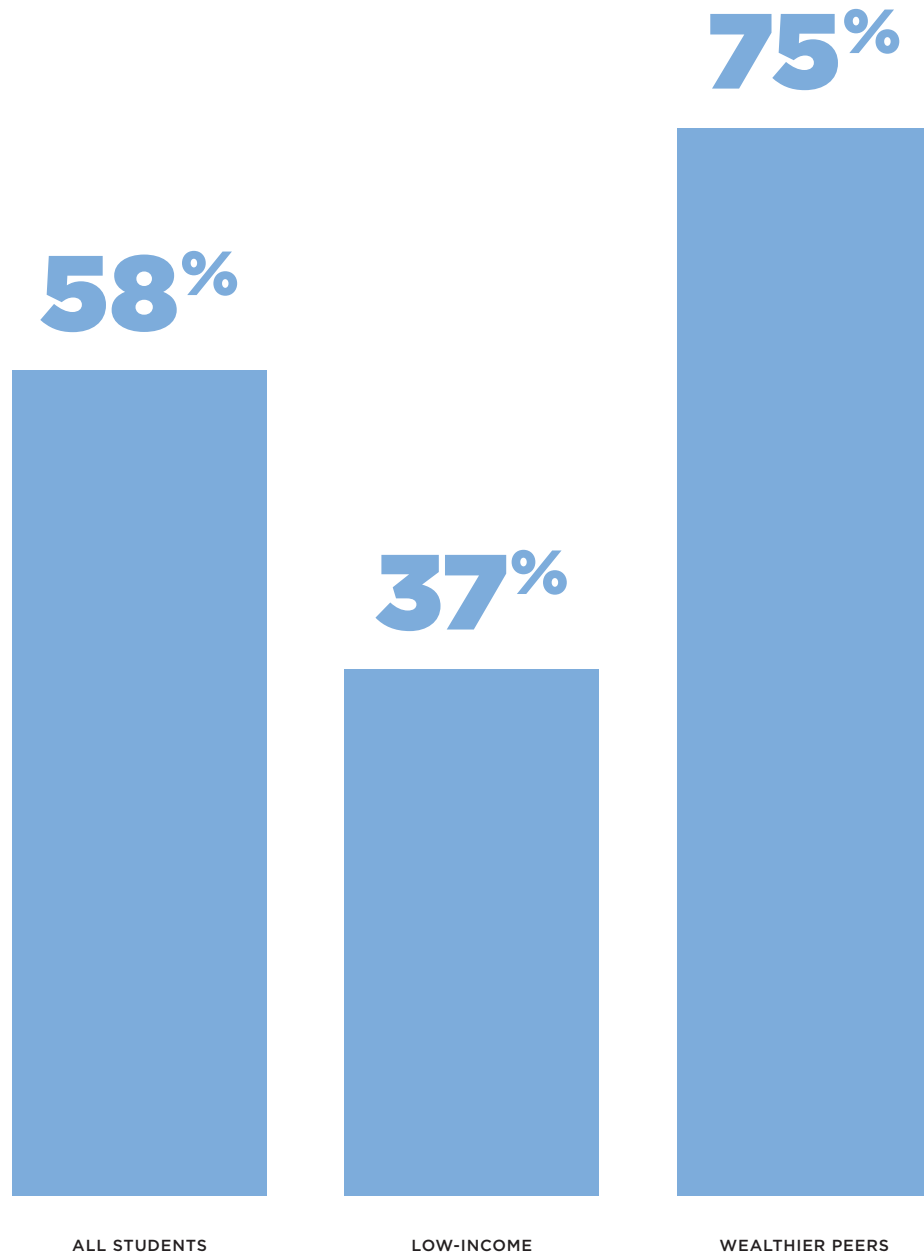
**OPPORTUNITY
ILLINOIS 60 BY 25 NETWORK**

Business leaders, schools and community partners working together to improve student outcomes in seven regions of the state have joined a network to learn from each other and share their successes. The Illinois 60 by 25 Network addresses the challenge of degree completion, filling a shortage of skilled labor and prioritizing educational backgrounds that are in demand locally. The network serves as a model for other communities seeking bold changes to their education systems. For more on inspiring your community, visit advanceillinois.org/2025.

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS LESS LIKELY TO COMPLETE DEGREE

SIX-YEAR POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION RATE FOR STUDENTS WHO ENROLL IN COLLEGE

Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Research tells us that going to college is still the most effective path out of poverty; yet too few students who start college complete it.²² Just 58% of college students from Illinois graduate in six years. Like the pattern in K-12, the gap between low-income and wealthier students is striking: only 37% of low-income students graduate in six years while 75% of wealthier students do.

49%

OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS TAKE REMEDIAL COURSEWORK

Taking remedial non-credit courses lengthens the time necessary to graduate, dimming the likelihood of completion for students who cannot afford either to pay for additional classes or to forgo other work opportunities to stay in school.²³

For many students—especially low-income students—going to college in Illinois is a heavy financial lift. But the payoff is clear: adults with a Bachelor’s degree make 68% more than a high school graduate, and adults with an Associate’s degree make 18% more.²⁴

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT M^CHENRY

In McHenry County, the local community college and the Regional Office of Education have teamed up to offer math classes in high schools that count for credit in college and high school. In five years, McHenry Community College (MCC) has seen enrollment in remedial math drop from 57% to 21%. MCC reports that students who have taken these “dual-credit” courses in high school are more likely to graduate early and transfer to a four-year institution.²⁵ The initiative breaks through the silos that exist between high schools and postsecondary institutions, as high school and community college personnel meet regularly to develop curriculum, ensure consistent expectations and track student progress.

Visit advanceillinois.org/2025 to read more about McHenry.



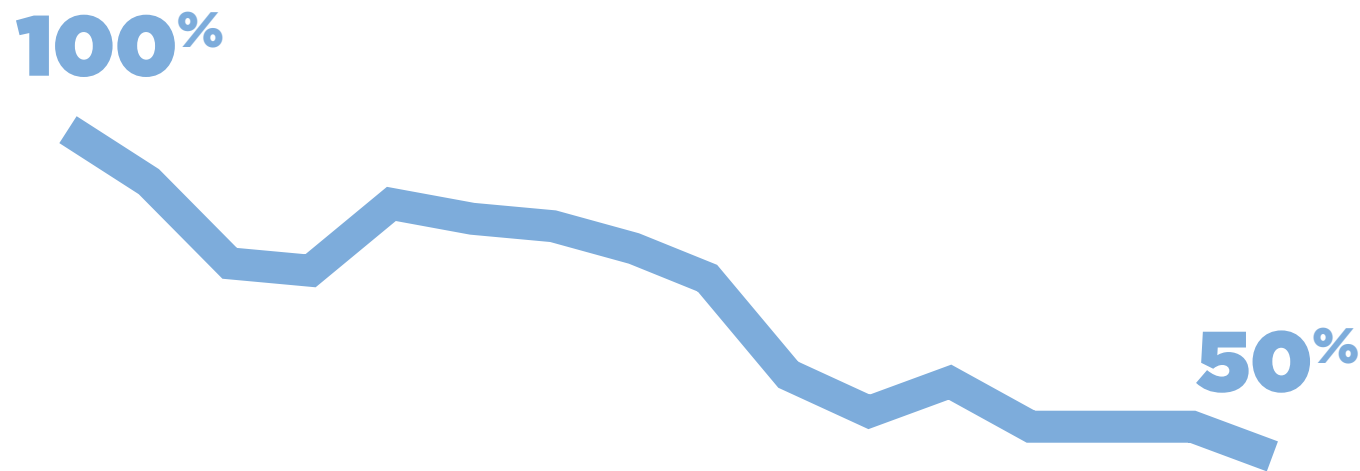
OPPORTUNITY POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS ACT

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act of 2016 is a transformative step for Illinois students making the transition from high school to two-year colleges, four-year colleges and certificate programs. The legislation addresses the persistent issue of remediation for new college students by offering high school students not on track for credit-bearing courses a transitional math course in high school, that if the student passes, will guarantee entry into appropriate credit-bearing courses at any community college in the state. For more on transitional math, visit advanceillinois.org/2025.

LACK OF FINANCIAL AID, AFFORDABILITY STIFLE COLLEGE COMPLETION

HALF AS MANY ELIGIBLE STUDENTS ARE OFFERED STATE MAP GRANTS FOR COLLEGE TODAY COMPARED TO 2001

Source: Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Like federal Pell grants, state-funded Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants provide need-based aid that a student doesn't have to repay, defraying tuition and fee costs and limiting excessive loan debt for students without the resources to pay for college.²⁶ Fifteen years ago in 2001, the state was able to fund all eligible applicants and fully covered average public university tuition and fees. But in the last decade, the number of needy students has grown, and state funding hasn't kept up.²⁷

Today, MAP can serve only about 50% of the students who are eligible and covers about only 32% of tuition and fees at a public university in this state.²⁸

The budget impasse of 2015-2016 worsened the challenges for MAP-eligible students, as the state could not pay colleges and universities in a timely manner and could not guarantee that all grants would be paid. In the end, all student awards were paid. However, students impacted by the funding crisis reported taking fewer classes, seeking additional hours at work and taking out loans to cover tuition costs.²⁹

The state ranks 32nd in college affordability for median-income families.³⁰ A family at the state median income of \$53,937 has to dedicate 25% of its income to college costs. It is more challenging for a low-income family living at the federal poverty level of \$23,550 for a family of four. They will need 48% of their income to cover college costs. This is even after financial aid is taken into account.³¹

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT QUINCY

In the next four years, over 1,000 professional positions are expected to become available in the western Illinois community of Quincy.³² However, local business, education and philanthropic leaders worry that there will not be enough qualified workers to fill these positions in agriculture, manufacturing and health care. These leaders formed Quincy Promise in 2015 to provide free tuition to John Wood Community College for local high school graduates who major in a career or technical program that is in demand with local employers. Quincy Promise is currently in the second year of a four-year pilot, and the program's first 25 students entered John Wood Community College in August 2016.

Visit advanceillinois.org/2025 to read more about Quincy Promise.



WE NEED TO DO MORE TO BE READY FOR 2025

Illinois needs a strong education system to ensure the economic vitality of the state and our competitiveness nationally and internationally. A strong education system is a fundamental right: every child deserves a high-quality education. As poverty has grown, we are at a critical juncture: the state must invest in its lowest-income and most vulnerable students to prepare the workforce of 2025 and remain competitive. As we show in this report, business as usual will not get us there. We will have to expand current strategies, adopt new ones, hold ourselves accountable and partner with communities to reach our goals for 2025.

Advance Illinois provides this analysis to inform decision-makers at the state and local level. We believe there are three vital steps the state must take now:

MAKE SURE THE NEEDIEST STUDENTS HAVE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

Fix our last-in-the-nation, inequitable K-12 funding formula

FINISH THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR OUR K-12 SYSTEM

Foster a fair, clear and supportive system to report school performance and offer supports to help schools—and students—succeed

RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF COMMUNITIES, AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO JOIN

Share models that inspire investment in and expansion of community-driven change

In the next two years, we hope to report real progress toward the 60 by 25 goal. Let's come together to make sure Illinois is on the fast track to educational success by 2025.

ONLINE-ONLY FEATURES

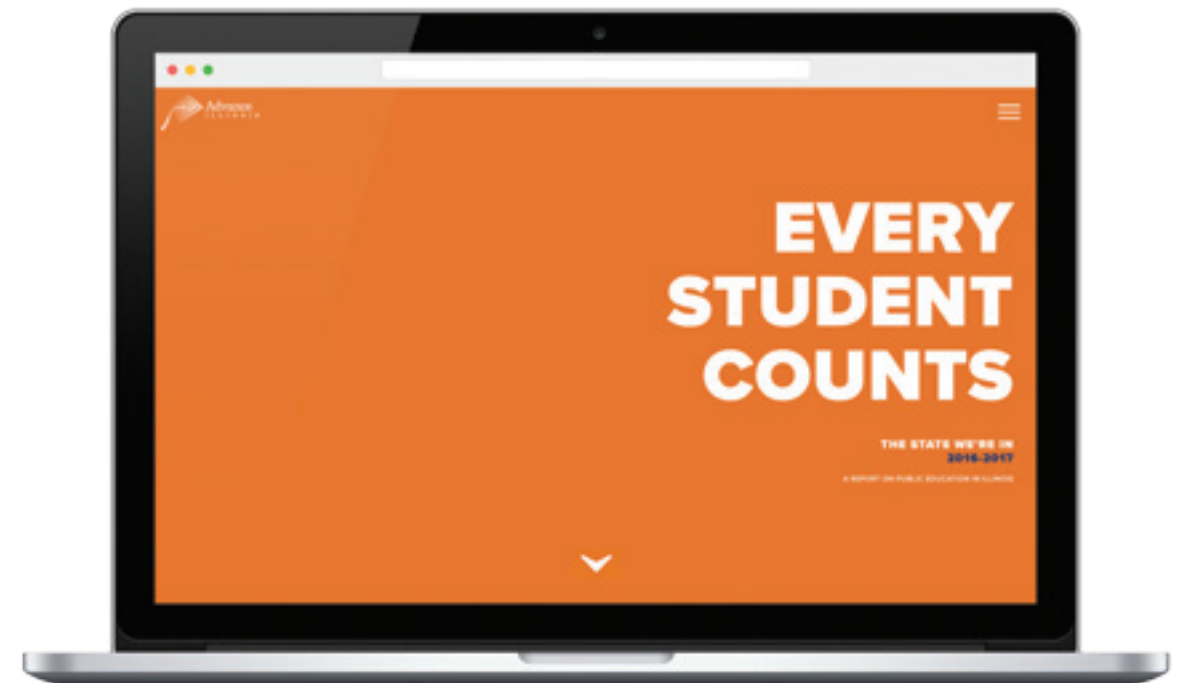
VISIT THE STATE WE'RE IN WEBSITE AT ADVANCEILLINOIS.ORG/2025 FOR:

- **55+ metrics on Illinois' performance** from early childhood through postsecondary education related to student outcomes and the conditions of teaching and learning.
- **How Illinois ranks nationally** in each of these measures.
- **Focus on the opportunity gaps by race and ethnicity** for each of our milestones and metrics.
- **A closer look at the community models** featured in our report: Aurora, East St. Louis, McHenry, Quincy and Rockford.
- **Community-specific dashboards** to view information that could be available to you and your community, and future opportunities.
- **Links to the Illinois School Report Card** and other leading education resources.
- **Interactive downloadable data and maps** for everything you see in this report and more.

ONLINE FEATURE: ILLINOIS' TEACHERS DO NOT REFLECT DIVERSITY OF THEIR STUDENTS

Students of color are more likely to progress academically when taught by teachers of color who share similar cultural experiences while serving as role models.³³ Learn more about efforts under way to address this challenge, including what one school district is doing to grow tomorrow's teacher workforce.

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ABOUT ADVANCE ILLINOIS

Motivated by the urgency that Illinois was not preparing its students to compete in a global marketplace, leaders from more than a dozen civic, philanthropic, business, and education organizations from across the state came together to found Advance Illinois in 2008 to serve as an independent, objective voice promoting a healthy education system that prepares all students for success in college and career.

Advance Illinois is positioned uniquely in Illinois to provide the continuity required to successfully pass, implement, and evaluate policy change. Advance Illinois is equity-driven, student-centered and data-focused. We identify, design, advocate for and help to implement policies that are grounded in nationally recognized best practices and then tailored to the needs of students in Illinois. Since its founding, Advance Illinois has made progress toward the following priorities for the state's education system:

- Recruit, develop, and empower the most effective educators
- Set world-class expectations and provide essential supports
- Empower local innovation in exchange for accountability and results

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NOTES

¹ The Bridgespan Group, Pritzker Children's Initiative, "Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children," 2015

² Public school students in the 9th grade cohort tracked by Advance Illinois

³ Our educational attainment benchmarks offer key metrics for policymakers to watch on the path from early childhood to college completion. To move from 50 percent to 60 percent of adults postsecondary-credentialed, we need to move metrics at every level. Depending on the metric, our methodology for setting those targets varies, but there are two fundamental strategies involved: top-down and bottom up. To examine how successfully our high schoolers are transitioning into and through higher education, Advance Illinois studied the progress of a cohort of students who started 9th grade between 2005 and 2010.

We set targets both by working backward from our overarching goal ("top-down") and by growing the numbers of students meeting targets at earlier rungs of the ladder ("bottom up"). Our top-down strategy works backward from the 60 by 25 goal to set appropriate targets for numbers of 9th graders and first-time

college enrollees to complete postsecondary degrees. Our bottom-up strategy examines the determinants of college readiness and sets growth targets based on past performance of benchmark states who have made noteworthy progress in raising student achievement over the last decade.

⁴ The Education Trust, *Funding Gaps*, 2015.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ The Bridgespan Group, Pritzker Children's Initiative, "Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children," 2015.

⁷ Hart, Betty and Ritsley, Todd; "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3," *American Educator*, 2003.

⁸ Joseph, Larry and Lloyd, David; "The Erosion of Early Childhood Investments in Illinois," *Voices for Illinois Children*, 2014.

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¹⁰ NIEER, "The State of Preschool: 2005-2015," United States Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2006-2014.

¹¹ The Ounce of Prevention Fund, *Testimony at Illinois State Board of Education FY18 Budget Hearing*, Oct. 20, 2016.

¹² Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois Report Card 2016*.

¹³ Greater East St. Louis Early Learning Partnership and Innovation Zone

¹⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*, 2013, 2015

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Chingos, Matthew; "Breaking the Curve: Promises and Pitfalls in Using NAEP Data to Assess the State Role in Student Achievement," *Urban Institute*, 2015.

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¹⁸ Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois Report Card 2016*.

¹⁹ Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois Report Card 2016*.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Lichtenberger, Eric J. and Dietrich, Cecile; "College Readiness and the Postsecondary Outcomes of High School Students," *Illinois Education Research Council*, 2012.

²² Students in the 9th grade cohort tracked by Advance Illinois

²³ Complete College America, "Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere," 2012.

²⁴ Pew Research Center, "The Rising Cost of Not Going to College," 2014.

²⁵ Interview with Tony Capalbo, Associate Dean for College and Career Readiness, McHenry Community College, 2016.

²⁶ Illinois Student Assistance Commission, "MAP Matters," February 2016.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Illinois Student Assistance Commission, "ISAC Survey: Uncertainty About MAP Could Lead Students to Delay a Degree or Drop Out," July 2016.

³⁰ IPEDS, "Average net price (income 48,001-75,000) for students awarded Title IV federal financial aid," "Grand total All students Undergraduate Degree/certificate-seeking First-time," *National Center of Education Statistics*, 2009-2014; *Census Bureau of Education Statistics*, "Table H-8. Median Household Income by State," accessed 2016.

³¹ Ibid

³² Quincy Promise, <https://www.jwcc.edu/quincypromise/>

³³ Center for American Progress, "Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-By-State Analysis of Teachers of Color," 2011.

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