

# The Road to Recovery: Illinois' Investments in Learning Renewal

The Illinois State Board of Education is working in partnership with school districts, educators, state agencies, and communities across the state to support recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These efforts are driven by the federal government's investment of nearly \$8 billion in federal pandemic relief funding through three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. Ninety percent of that funding was distributed directly to Illinois school districts; the remaining 10 percent has been directed by ISBE in alignment with the Strategic Plan goals. The plan is built around three overarching goals, all underpinned by equity: **student learning**, **learning conditions**, and **elevating educators**. The following provides a snapshot of the impact of recovery efforts to date.

## STUDENT LEARNING

### High-Impact Tutoring

Illinois invested \$25 million to create two pathways for districts to offer high-impact tutoring to accelerate student learning. The Illinois Tutoring Initiative was developed in partnership with institutions of higher education. A district-led program was funded by grants distributed directly to them.

### What is high-impact tutoring?

High-impact tutoring is an evidence-based strategy to accelerate student learning with the following characteristics:

- Focused one-to-one and small group (maximum of three students) tutoring totaling three hours per week
- Sustained and strong relationships between students and their tutors
- Monitoring of student knowledge and skills and alignment with school curriculum
- Oversight, training, and support of tutors to assure quality interactions

## IMPACT

A total of 123 districts are implementing this evidence-based strategy to overcome gaps in learning. More than 3,000 students – and counting – have been matched with one of more than 800 tutors to receive individual or small group instruction aligned with classroom curriculum.

### Illinois Tutoring Initiative

ISBE partnered with the Illinois Board of Higher Education and Illinois Community College Board to train, support, and match tutors with students in school districts of need in six regions across the state.

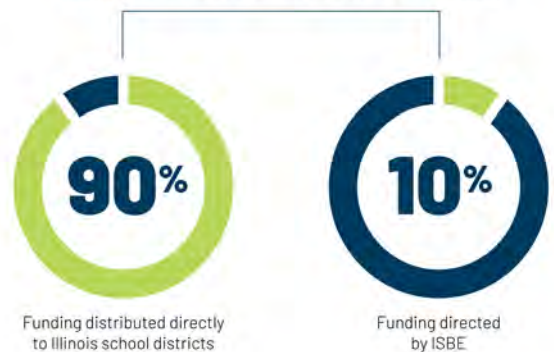
More information about these initiatives is available at [isbe.net/learningrenewal](https://isbe.net/learningrenewal).

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March 2023

# \$8 billion

Federal government's investment in pandemic relief funding



# Illinois State Board of Education

## TUTOR SPOTLIGHT

**"I am studying to be a middle school social studies or language arts teacher at Northern Illinois University, so tutoring felt like the perfect fit for me. Not only has it helped prepare me to be an educator, but it has also opened my eyes to how important it is to build connections with your students. I am currently tutoring two fifth grade students in reading, and I have learned so much from both of them in just a few months. They come to tutoring every week excited to learn something new, but little do they know I am also learning so many great things from them!"**

### Camryn Swann

Illinois Tutoring Initiative Tutor and Teacher Education  
Candidate at Northern Illinois University  
Hiawatha CUSD 426



## Jump Start

Illinois invested \$12.5 million in the Jump Start program to provide educational support to younger learners who were the most impacted by the pandemic. It has served 127 districts and reached over 20,000 students before they started kindergarten and first grade.

## OneGoal Postsecondary Success

Illinois invested \$7.5 million to establish a partnership with OneGoal to bring the organization's postsecondary success support to districts and high schools across the state. OneGoal is offering leadership coaching and a classroom model to increase students' college and career readiness to ensure more equitable postsecondary outcomes for students. More than 150 school and district leaders have participated across more than 30 districts. In a OneGoal survey of participants, 93% of leaders agree or strongly agree that coaching and feedback from OneGoal helps them improve postsecondary readiness in their district.

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

**"Our OneGoal coach has been very persistent and has kept us on track in meeting our goals. Because of her experience as a high school leader, she understands those minute details that help us get over some humps. Developing systems for tracking data, having the experience of leading a group of counselors ... it's all been very valuable," said Dr. Williams. "We needed someone to help us clarify our thoughts about how we should engage with and energize our counselors. And now we have action plan that keep us on track, and she encourages us to use our time wisely in order to complete those action steps."**

### Proviso Township High School District 209

Proviso District 209 began working with the OneGoal Postsecondary Leadership Network in 2022, partnering with Postsecondary Leadership Coach Julie Fregien. Julie facilitates learning experiences for school and district leaders like Deputy Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sharon Williams, providing one-on-one coaching to build capacity to create systemwide solutions to support postsecondary success for all students.

## Digital Equity

Illinois invested \$182.6 million in Digital Equity Grants to assist 591 school districts in closing the digital divide and enabling digital-age teaching and learning.

## Learning Renewal Interim Assessments

The Illinois State Board of Education is providing school districts with three free interim assessments to support learning recovery – one in the fall, one in the winter, and the final one in the spring – to ensure teachers and families have the tools and information they need to support each student's growth. These assessments allow teachers to pinpoint knowledge gaps and immediately adjust instruction and support to match students' needs. Thirty schools in 13 districts have utilized the assessment system, with nearly 24,000 assessments completed.



## LEARNING CONDITIONS

### Community Partnership Grants

Illinois invested \$86.4 million to establish and expand partnerships between school districts and community organizations through the Community Partnership Grants to address the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of students and staff. Grants were awarded to 136 entities that are currently serving over 700 schools to address trauma related to the pandemic.

### GRANT SPOTLIGHT

**“I’ve seen a lot of happy social workers and counselors who are glad to see students receive our resources and information. The way that we have conversations is focused on building community, creating empathy, empowering students to ask for help, and how to be a better community member.”**

#### **Alison Herman**

Hope for the Day  
Director of Education



Hope for the Day, a nonprofit organization based in Chicago, is working to equip schools and communities to be proactive in suicide prevention and mental health education. The goal of its work is to provide tools for early recognition and intervention to disrupt the highest-risk factors for mental health crises and suicide. The organization is helping to start the conversation about mental health in schools so that students can be better prepared to handle real-life situations.

Thanks to funding from the Community Partnership Grants program, Hope for the Day has more than doubled the number of schools it has been able to provide with educational programming. The organization presented 32 educational sessions and eight cafeteria tabling experiences, engaged with 18 individual schools, and educated 1,299 people from September to December 2022.

### REACH Statewide Initiative

Illinois invested \$11.5 million into the Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) Statewide Initiative to improve student well-being and mental health by building the capacity of schools to implement trauma-responsive policies and practices. A total of 464 Schools have participated to date.

Components of the REACH Statewide Initiative:

- **READY** to expand knowledge and create a trauma-responsive school? Educators and school leaders are invited to sign up for the REACH Learning and Resource Hub. Free and available on demand, the hub is an online platform offering a variety of interactive resources and gamified tools. The hub focuses on trauma-responsive practices, personal and professional resilience, social-emotional (SEL) awareness, and self-care. Educators can earn professional development hours for completing qualifying training modules.
- **SET** students and staff up for success. Schools can complete a needs-assessment and create a REACH action plan for their school. SEL Hub coaches from regional offices of education throughout Illinois can provide guidance and recommendations as school teams build out their individual action plans. These plans serve as a roadmap for educators to effectively enact REACH's trauma-responsive strategies throughout their schools.
- **GO!** REACH Communities of Practice are a statewide network of educators who have developed a REACH action plan and are committed to ongoing learning, sharing, and growth.

### Social-Emotional Learning Hubs

Illinois invested \$12 million to establish seven SEL Hubs to build the capacity of schools to be trauma-responsive. The hubs support districts in the implementation of the REACH model and expand social-emotional learning

programs by utilizing coaching, professional development, and targeted training. The hubs have reached nearly 23,000 participants – including school administrators, teachers, counselors and more – through 963 professional learning sessions and provided services to 1,254 schools across 419 districts.

## ELEVATING EDUCATORS

To support and strengthen Illinois' educator workforce, the state invested:

### \$13 million

in teacher mentoring to pair first-, second-, and third-year teachers and clinicians with mentors in their building and virtual instructional coaches. The program currently is serving a total of 1,365 new teachers and clinicians to help guide them through these unique years of teaching.

### \$1.2 million

in ESSER funds for a program that has matched 500 first-year principals with mentors.

### \$2 million

to establish 44 affinity groups to support the retention of educators of color. These groups are led by 45 facilitators in 35 school districts and serve 420 educators of color.

### Teacher Mentoring

**"This mentorship program has solidified my love of teaching. I am so fortunate to work with other teachers who want to continue learning and growing. The discussions my colleague and I have had brought us closer and because of this, we are able to collaborate more effectively. I am thankful for this program as it helped me as well – it made me thankful for all the people who have helped me on my journey as I became a teacher as well."**

#### Brittany Muller

Special Education Preschool Teacher  
Lighted Way  
LaSalle



### Principal Mentoring

**"Mentoring is important to new principals because new and veteran principals are faced with a myriad of challenges and situations that they must navigate. Hearing from principals who have experience helps to make better decisions and save time trying to figure everything out on your own. It also helps normalize the feelings of worry and uncertainty that can crush a leader's confidence. Having someone to encourage you and support you can make all the difference in the world between retention and attrition."**

#### Dr. Don Parker

Former Principal at Posen Intermediate School  
Posen-Robbins School District 143.5  
School Professional Development Provider  
DPCP Corporation

