

Illinois State Board of Education



Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
of Education

The mission of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is to provide leadership and resources to achieve excellence across all Illinois districts through engaging legislators, school administrators, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in formulating and advocating for policies that enhance education, empower districts and ensure equitable outcomes for all students.

The 1970 Illinois Constitution directed that the responsibilities for elementary and secondary education in the state be transferred from an elected superintendent to an appointed board of citizens. The resulting nine-member State Board of Education sets policies and guidelines for public schools — preschool through grade 12 — as well as for career and technical education. The board analyzes the goals, needs and requirements of education and recommends legislation to the

General Assembly for the benefit of more than 2 million students in Illinois schools.

Members of the ISBE are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. Upon taking office, a new Governor will appoint five new members to the board with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor appoints the State Board chair and board members elect their officers. The board appoints the State Superintendent of Education, who may be recommended by the Governor. A state superintendent is appointed at the beginning of each gubernatorial term after board appointments have been made. In April 2015, the board appointed Tony Smith, Ph.D., as State Superintendent of Education.

In 2015, the ISBE amended its strategic plan to improve student success in Illinois by refocusing on specific, measurable, high-reaching goals. Every child in each public school system in the State of Illinois deserves to attend a system wherein:

- All kindergartners are assessed for readiness.
- Ninety percent or more of third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.
- Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
- Ninety percent or more of ninth-graders are on track to graduate with their cohorts.
- Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.
- All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

ISBE now has five key areas of focus to guide the agency's initiatives:

- **Funding:** Establish an adequate and equitable education finance system.
- **Quality:** Common definition of, and fair access to, quality education.
- **Autonomy:** Maximize district autonomy to provide quality education to all families.
- **Competency:** Encourage competency-based learning.
- **Community:** Districts and schools as centers of healthy communities.

Illinois Teacher of the Year



The State Board of Education annually recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to elementary and secondary education with the “Those Who Excel” awards program. The top award is for the Illinois Teacher of the Year. Ricardo “Ricky” Castro, a language arts and Spanish heritage teacher at Elk Grove High School in Township High School District 214, was named 2017 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Ricardo “Ricky” Castro, 2017 IL Teacher of the Year, Elk Grove High School

Board Members: James T. Meeks, *chair*; Steven R. Gilford, *vice chair*; Melinda A. LaBarre, *secretary*; Curtis Bradshaw; Lula Ford; Craig Lindvahl; Eligio Pimentel; and Collin Hitt.

Administrative Personnel

- Tony Smith, Ph.D.*State Superintendent of Education*
- Karen Corken*First Deputy Superintendent*
- Jason Helfer.....*Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning*
- Kate Anderson-Foley.....*Assistant Superintendent, Specialized Instruction, Nutrition & Wellness*
- Sarah Hatfield*Executive Director, Professional Capital*
- Stephanie Donovan.....*General Counsel*
- Robert Wolfe*Chief Financial Officer*
- Melissa Oller*Chief Internal Auditor*
- Jackie Rodgers*Chief Communications and Partnerships Officer*

2015-2016 Illinois Education Statistics

Public school enrollment	2,044,358
Elementary students (pre-K-8)	1,425,303
Secondary students (9-12)	619,055
Number of certified staff	127,152
Percentage of third-grade students who met or exceeded	
English language arts expectations	35%
Percentage of fifth-grade students who met or exceeded	
expectations in mathematics	32%
Percentage of freshmen on track to graduate	82%
Four-year graduation rate.....	86%
Percentage of students prepared for college coursework	46%
Percentage of teachers with a master’s degree or higher	61%
Percentage of low-income students	50%

* Number represented is a full-time equivalent (FTE).