Part V. Redacted Version
Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
A. Cover Page

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B. Executive Summary

In the document to follow, we propose Center for School Improvement (The Center) diagnostics, goals, design, personnel, implementation and assessment around a straightforward logic model that focuses on a systemic approach to building the organizational and instructional capacity of schools. Unless we find ways to support the improvement of instruction in all classrooms, we will not significantly improve student learning outcomes in the highest need schools in Illinois at scale. It will require helping schools develop the organizational capacity to improve instruction systemically, which will require supporting the development of leadership capacity in each under-performing school. This logic model can be represented as follows:

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP → ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY → INSTRUCTION → STUDENT LEARNING

Cutting across this logic model, we propose five “themes for transformation of learning”, reflecting the spirit of contemporary education reform, as evidenced in initiatives such as Race to the Top:

1. A generation of standards with widened ambitions for student learning outcomes;
2. New systems and processes of measurement of learning, including new summative assessments and the greater integration of formative and summative assessment;
3. Sophisticated, web-mediated educational information support systems, from longitudinal data systems to on-the-fly readings of student performance;
4. Learning systems and learning information systems capable of providing accurate diagnostic and accountability information on diverse student groups, as well as supporting differentiated learning delivery; and
5. Increasingly devolved governance accountability structures, transforming the nature and processes of ‘leadership’ at a school level.

1. Design and Organization of the SSOS

A. COMPREHENSIVE AUDIT OF CURRENT SSOS
An initial task and deliverable described in the RFSP is conducting a comprehensive examination/audit (CA) of the current Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to assess the overall structure, program effectiveness, human capital and governance that will identify and address needs and inequities across the state. Once these factors have been identified, The Center will design a statewide plan to address these needs and inequities. Following the backward mapping approach of “beginning with the end in mind,” the CA will begin by gaining access to and analyzing existing data to better understand how the districts, schools, and in some circumstances, grade levels are relative to the Illinois Multiple Measures Index. Once the school and district needs have been identified, we will assess the status of the existing SOSS relative to needs.

The primary drivers for the CA will be guided by a series of assessment and outcome questions designed to capture the structures, organizations, actions, progress, successes and challenges of the current SOSS. The CA will explore state, regional, community, district and building level systems and supports that provide, link and participate in the SOSS initiatives.

The data and information methods for the CA will involve a multi-method, multi-level approach that will include accessing existing data and records, conducting interviews and surveys and reviewing documents to develop a historical and current understanding of SOSS. These methods will provide an understanding of the specific efforts necessary to ensure that high need schools meet Illinois educational goals and objectives. Major work tasks are delineated in the work plan.

B. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Center proposes to implement a performance management system designed to gauge the effectiveness of its efforts to monitor, analyze, recognize and disseminate resources that promote comprehensive planning, professional development, leadership, successful learning environments, community and family engagement, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The Center envisions its performance management practices as more than an evaluative strategy to hold itself accountable for the delivery of its contractual obligations. By utilizing a web-based data-driven
system, The Center will maintain a “real-time” listing of those improvement initiatives in which districts and schools are engaged. That is, educators will not need to wait for information to be delivered to them; they can proactively investigate solution strategies on demand.

2. Coordinating Activities and Resources

A. USE OF STATE’S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM TO PROVIDE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICES

Districts will receive a performance designation (High-priority Districts, Districts with Priority Schools, Districts with Focus Schools, and Districts and Schools Receiving Foundational Assistance) that will signal the interventions, services and assistance they may receive. The Center will create an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) for all districts based upon the district and/or school’s designation and the needs determined by an audit performed by The Center as well as performance data available from Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) and the Local Education Agency’s (LEA) Rising Star plans.

The results of the audit will be analyzed and used to create an ISP that will identify the district assistance team members, content specialists, and/or turnaround specialists that best match district needs. The ISP will guide the delivery of services and assess the impact of those services. It will include activities, personnel, measurable outcomes, and assessment measures. In addition, the plan will provide for a review of district practices for implementing and sustaining effective team processes, as well as the type and frequency of training and support needed by district staff to use the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Process with fidelity. The reports embedded within this tool will be monitored by the district assistance teams, rapid response teams, and the assistant directors of each region to help differentiate services and resources to assist districts and schools.

B. ALIGNMENT OF IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Integration of ISBE improvement initiatives will be accomplished by assessing and cataloging the programs, staff, skills and expertise of all improvement initiative stakeholders to build a system that is coherent, non-duplicative, and coordinated in order to deliver services and support that are timely, accessible to all,
targeted to LEA and partner needs. The multiple pathways identified through audits and other quality indicator measures will be prioritized to ensure all needs are met swiftly and efficiently.

District leaders will be asked to narrow their focus to the achievement gaps and the systemic and organizational processes that contribute to student under-performance. Just as district leadership is asked to focus on the root causes of the district performance issues, The Center teams will focus on the four core components of Illinois educational reform – continuous improvement, educator quality, learning environments, and teaching and learning. These four areas are supported by data-based decision-making and accountability/alignment processes, as well as by our logic model identifying each school culture as the primary locus of change and each school leader as the leader as the change agent in that school.

C. COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Components of this customized online management system will enable The Center to ensure its staff, ISBE, partners, districts and schools are able to access ongoing, on-demand, real-time data organized to enable The Center to fulfill its fundamental functions: 1) providing oversight and management of the SSOS; 2) maintaining alignment with ISBE's vision and reform initiatives; 3) deploying staff (and resources) to work with identified districts to develop, implement and monitor customized improvement plans; 4) designing and aligning the use of connected tools and resources to build district capacity to improve teaching and learning; 5) developing system-wide evaluation for the SSOS and using data to monitor and improve processes; and 6) creating a database of all resources aligned to categories of services based on the Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support Systems and all partners within the SSOS.

3. Professional Development

In considering the professional development necessary to improve student learning outcomes in Illinois, the logic model of this proposal again becomes salient:

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ➔ ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ➔ INSTRUCTION ➔ STUDENT LEARNING
Utilizing the information and improvement plan developed from *Rising Star*, professional development activities will be created, designed and delivered in concert with the leadership of each school, based on the selected indicators aligned with the Eight Essential Elements. A consistent set of high quality professional development tools and resources, categorized by the Eight Essential Elements, will be created or selected by The Center and made available for delivery statewide.

**A. TOOLS & RESOURCES**

The Center will establish a comprehensive intervention system that includes aligned and connected professional development services, supporting tools and resources to address the identified needs of the school districts and schools it serves. The scope, level, intensity, type and duration of the these professional development services, tools and resources will be directly aligned to the designation of the district and school and its current level of implementation of the Eight Essential Elements as identified through their *Rising Star* continuous improvement plan.

All professional development services will be aligned with the Eight Essential Elements and the Indicators of Effective Practice, as detailed in this proposal. Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes: 1) organizing adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district; 2) using disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement, and 3) deepening educators’ content knowledge, in order to provide them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing teachers to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

For schools and systems to deepen their content knowledge, external providers of professional development can be invaluable resources, when properly used.

**B. TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Center management will create training pathways for its staff based on the Focus Categories and Eight Essential Elements. All staff must complete baseline three-step training in continuous improvement,
in effective coaching for improvement, and in theory and practice of developing internal school capacity for creating continuous learning organizations. Professional development will be specifically evaluated according to the following areas of effectiveness that answer the following questions: 1) Is it matched to needs? 2) Is it delivered with fidelity? 3) Does it meet quality standards? 4) Is it relevant? and 5) Does it impact behaviors and results?

4. Staffing Plan

A. Role Descriptions

The Contractor has a standardized format that The Center director and managers will use to develop job descriptions that will be approved by ISBE.

B. Recruiting, Hiring, and Developing Staff

The Contractor will review and update a process that encompasses all of the areas of recruiting, hiring, and developing staff. The process has been developed using specialized human resource personnel and vetted for compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and guidelines.

C. Performance Evaluation System

The Contractor will implement evaluation process for all employees that will be completed by the administrator/supervisor for each category. Employees participate in a pre-observation, formal observation, and post observation process culminating in a summative evaluation to determine the final rating.

5. Evaluation Plan for the Statewide System of Support

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the degree to which The Center achieves its stated goals, with regard to the following: 1) providing oversight and management to the SSOS with a focus on bringing coherence and coordination to the regional delivery system and partners throughout the state; 2) working with the ISBE Roundtable to maintain alignment with the agency's vision and reform initiatives; 3) deploying staff to work with identified districts on the development and implementation of customized
continuous improvement plans; and 4) designing and supporting the use of the connected set of tools and resources to increase district capacity to improve teaching and learning. To that end, the evaluation team will utilize existing data and resources, including the Rising Star system, and apply new evaluation components to continually assess and report on the progress of The Center and to measure the impact on Illinois districts and schools.

6. Organizational Capacity

A. Prior Experience with Turning Around and Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools

The University of Illinois

The University of Illinois has a rich history of working with low-performing schools, ranging from the groundbreaking work of the University of Illinois Council on Student Mathematics in the 1960s to the noted achievements of the UIUC Center for the Study of Reading in the 1980s and 1990s to the CPS system-wide impact of the UIC Center for Literacy and the UIC Center for Urban School Leadership in the 2000s. Although both UIC and UIUC Colleges of Education are most widely known for their research, both institutions work directly with school districts and state agencies to improve student learning in high-need schools. Both UIUC and UIC Colleges of Education have also generated a number of different research and action units to organize collaborative faculty activity around the needs of schools.

Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS)

The IARSS is one of sixteen lead partners pre-approved by the Illinois State Board of Education to offer services and programs designed to assist school districts with school improvement efforts in persistently low performing schools in the state. Lead Partners are responsible for implementing whole school reform efforts that integrate structural and programmatic interventions. IARSS was selected as the Lead Partner by three schools and districts that were awarded School Improvement Grants (SIG). IARSS, which represents the forty-four Regional Offices of Education and three Intermediate Service Centers, has delivered the Statewide System of Support Services since 2003. Specifically, the ROEs/ISCs work with
Title I schools identified as not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and on the state/federal Academic Watch status list. ISBE data shows that SSOS coaches worked with 166 districts in Corrective Action or Restructuring and 503 schools in academic status during FY12.

B. ORGANIZATIONS’ PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS, WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF IMPACT

The University of Illinois

The University of Illinois’ collaboration with and commitment to low-performing schools has made a documented impact. For example, the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, one of UIUC College of Education’s strategic initiatives, has now shaped new teacher leadership teams in every elementary and high school in Champaign and Urbana. Many of these schools are in the Statewide System of Support, and qualitative data on teacher assessments of the initiative are strong.

Another project, Charting a Course to Literacy, with documented gains in student achievement involves both campuses partnering with three Chicago charter schools to help three- and four-year-old students – primarily low-income youth, and those with limited English proficiency or disabilities – learn to read and write. By the 2010 project, children who participated in the program significantly outscored comparison classrooms, according to an independent evaluation conducted by the Bureau of Education Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools

IARSS was selected as the Lead Partner by three of the twenty-three schools in nine districts that were awarded School Improvement Grant funds in FY2011 and FY2012. These three high schools have shown notable progress. School climate has improved and a culture of high expectations for all students is emerging. There have been positive changes in student outcomes, including increased attendance and graduation rates. All three have seen gains in student achievement as measured by the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and the ACT. As a regional delivery system for Statewide System of Support (SSOS), the forty-four regional offices of education and three intermediate service centers
represented by IARSS demonstrate successful and effective work with underperforming schools, as
documented in individual and statewide case studies, as well as an outside evaluation of the system.

**C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, FINANCIAL STABILITY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

The University of Illinois and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools bring
statewide organizational structures, financial stability and the capacity to deliver the services in the RFSP.

**University of Illinois**

With campuses in Champaign-Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, as well as medical college facilities in
Peoria and Rockford, the University of Illinois now consists of more than 800 buildings across 2,418
acres, with additional holdings totaling 10,496 acres that include an airport, agricultural experimental
fields, and timber reserves. Over 68,000 students are taught by more than 5,500 faculty members on these
campuses. The total operating budget for the University of Illinois in 2011-2012 is $5.01 billion.
Separately funded research in 2011-2012 is $740.8 million.

**Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools**

The forty-four Regional Offices of Education and three Intermediate Service Centers make up the
membership of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. Duties of the ROEs/ISCs
are specifically enumerated in the Illinois School Code. ROEs and ISCs partner with ISBE to carry out
policy implementation and professional development in addition to developing local programs to meet the
specific needs of districts in each region. Their funding comes from multiple federal, state, county and
local sources, which provides financial stability.

ROEs and ISCs have first-hand knowledge, experience, and ongoing relationships with the 867 school
districts and more than 4000 schools located throughout Illinois. Such a network, existing in all counties
throughout Illinois (except for the city of Chicago, itself) supports the capacity to deliver services
throughout the state. The Center will bring coherence and consistent high quality to this system.

**D. NON-NEGOTIABLE COMMITMENTS AND DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**
E. Summary of Staff Qualifications

See full proposal for details

7. Subcontractors

The RFSP requires a single contractor, but the nature of the work proposed requires the expertise and skills of researchers, practitioners, and administrators alike. The Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education will be the contractor, and thus submits the proposal for the Center for School Improvement with the support of the administration of the University of Illinois and its campuses and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS). UI and IARSS have joined forces with other organizations involved in the key reform areas of The Center. Harnessing the resources of the University of Illinois, IARSS, and Project Partners such as the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards, maximizes the potential for the Center for School Improvement to meet its mission.

Champaign-Ford ROE #9 is the lead entity or contractor with fiduciary responsibility. The University of Illinois has submitted a proposal to subcontract for specific deliverables, as has the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards.

8. Process for Hiring Project Personnel

The contractor has a complete set of protocols and sample documents for all areas of recruiting, hiring and developing staff. Employees of The Center will be hired without regard to age, race, color, religion, gender, sexual preference, or national origin, and will uphold affirmative action practices to ensure equal employment opportunity without regard to those factors.

Never before has there been a coordinated, consistent process for staffing the school improvement initiatives across the entire state. The most-critical school support services delivered by ISBE through The Center will now be completed with a system perspective, assuring high quality services in every area of the state.
III. Work Plan and Timelines

0. Introduction: Developing Instructional Leadership Capacity to Improve Student Learning the Highest-Need Illinois Schools

Under-performing schools in the United States have been notably resistant to improvement efforts, as Charles Payne points out in *So Much Reform: So Little Change* (2008). One key reason that billions of school improvement dollars have failed to produce results, as Richard Elmore reminds us in *School Reform from the Inside Out* (2004), is that efforts to improve schools routinely fail to address the "instructional core," the fundamental interactions among teacher, student, and learning content.

It is not uncommon for a single mid-sized school district in some areas of Illinois to spend the equivalent of the entire annual budget of the proposed Center for School Improvement (The Center) on school reform efforts without making a marked impact on student learning. If The Center is to make a significant difference throughout Illinois with such a modest budget, it will have to be strategic—in ways we have not typically seen in school reform—to ensure that as many dollars as possible are targeted toward improving the quality of the instructional core in every classroom in need.

There are two critical steps to optimizing the The Center's impact. First, inherent in the The Center concept itself, resources must effectively target the highest need schools in the state. For illustration purposes, focusing on the bottom quartile schools, in terms of standardized student performance measures, quadruples the resources available to those schools as opposed to a plan that disperses The Center services across all schools equally. However, such targeting of resources to high-need schools is common practice and not necessarily effective. The second step is to use the most powerful levers we have to maximize the impact of those dollars on classroom practice. Failure to affect classroom practice systematically will guarantee failure to improve student learning.

This is particularly sobering when we consider the numbers: if, for example, the The Center successfully targets the bottom-performing quartile of schools in the state, or roughly 25,000 classrooms, a ten million
dollar budget provides an average of $400 per classroom to improve student learning. Because such a small sum provides very little leverage to improve student learning outcomes in a single classroom, school reformers typically aggregate dollars above the classroom and school level so that larger sums of money can support more systematic initiatives. The historic problem with such initiatives, however, is that they routinely fail to affect the quality of classroom practice (as Payne, Elmore, and others have pointed out). How will the The Center find a way out of this dilemma?

For over thirty years, we have known that a truly effective school leader could have a profound, and fairly rapid, impact on student learning outcomes. Since the work of Ron Edmonds and the Effective Schools Research of the 1970s, it has become commonplace to remark on “outlier” schools -- regular public schools in low-income neighborhoods, that are dramatically outperforming socio-economic predictors. Karin Chenoweth has recently published three volumes (2007, 2009, 2011) on such schools, and like Edmonds has found that school leadership is a key variable in each instance. This should no longer be a surprise to us, of course, as the centrality of school leadership in improving student performance has become increasingly noted in the literature. The landmark study by Bryk, Sebring, et al., Organizing Schools for Improvement (2009), places school leadership first among five variables that distinguish high performing from low-performing high-poverty schools in Chicago.

High quality school leadership, it turns out, is a high-yield, comparatively low-cost intervention with a lasting record of success. As one of the key levers of change for low-performing Illinois schools, it offers a way for the proposed Center for School Improvement to maximize the impact of its resources by focusing on each school as the unit of change, and each school leader as the change agent. As UIC is now demonstrating with sixty school principals in Chicago, and UIUC is now demonstrating with schools in downstate Illinois, focus on instructional leadership can target resources on classroom practice in ways that produce remarkable results in standardized test scores, reduced dropout rates, and increased graduation rates. Because of its impact on student learning in schools, the George W. Bush Institute Alliance for Reform of Education Leadership named UIC as the first Exemplary higher education school
leader preparation program in the nation, and UIUC's reputation in school leadership research and practice is long-standing. Both UIC and UIUC have Centers of School Leadership that go beyond the academic department structure to concentrate resources around school leadership as a vehicle for improving schools.

In the proposal to follow, we orient The Center diagnostics, goals, design, personnel, implementation, and assessment around a straightforward logic model that focuses on a systems approach to building the organizational and instructional capacity of schools. Simply put, we will not significantly improve student learning outcomes in the highest need schools in Illinois at scale unless we find ways to support the improvement of instruction in all classrooms; which in turn will require helping schools develop the organizational capacity to improve instruction systemically; which in turn will require supporting the development of leadership capacity in each under-performing school. Put schematically, this logic model can be represented as follows:

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ➔ ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ➔ INSTRUCTION ➔ STUDENT LEARNING

As the RFSP demonstrates, the pieces that have to be assembled to support improved student learning in Illinois schools are many and complex. In the history of school reform, this complexity itself becomes an enemy of well-intentioned efforts to improve schools. The logic model that guides this proposal offers a clear north-star that can help keep the many components of a complex system focused: if we are to improve student learning, we have to coordinate all of our efforts to improve the quality of classroom instruction in schools. The most direct route to that improvement is building the organizational capacity of schools to improve instruction, which will require the support of districts, regional offices, intermediate service centers, colleges and universities, and leadership organizations throughout the state.
Cutting across this logic model we propose five ‘themes for transformation of learning’ (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012), reflecting the spirit of contemporary education reform, as evidenced in initiatives such as Race to the Top:

1. A new generation of standards with widened ambitions for student learning outcomes;
2. New systems and processes of measurement of learning, including new summative assessments and the greater integration of formative and summative assessment;
3. Sophisticated, web-mediated educational information support systems, from longitudinal data systems to on-the-fly readings of student performance;
4. Learning and learning information systems capable of providing accurate diagnostic and accountability information on diverse student groups, as well as supporting differentiated learning delivery; and
5. Increasingly devolved governance and accountability structures, transforming the nature and processes of ‘leadership’ and stakeholder relations at a school level.
1. Design and Organization of the SSOS

A. Comprehensive Audit of the Current SSOS

An initial task and required deliverable described in the Center for School Improvement (The Center) RFSP that will be undertaken by the evaluation team is the comprehensive audit (CA) of the current Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to assess the overall structure, program effectiveness, human capital and governance that will identify and address differentiated needs and inequities across the state. Once these factors have been identified, The Center will design a statewide plan to address these needs and inequities. In other words, the baseline CA will lay out the landscape for understanding where Illinois SSOS needs exist, and direction and effort for how The Center should proceed to attain the goals and objectives delineated in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver request, with a focus on the eight essential elements of effective education. Following the backward mapping approach of “beginning with the end in mind,” the CA will begin by gaining access to and analyzing existing achievement school and community level data to better understand how the districts, schools, and in some circumstances, grade levels are relative to the Illinois Multiple Measures Index and targets for elementary and secondary schools. Once the school and district needs are identified, we will assess the status of the existing SSOS relative to those needs.

The CA of the SSOS incorporates multiple levels and layers of assessment for the ISBE, Regional Assistance Centers (RAC), Key Partners (KP) and local districts and schools in terms of services and supports for improving student outcomes. We envision CA, in part, an assessment of the consumers and providers within Illinois state, regional, and local systems. That is, each level (state, regional, local) in the Illinois state system is a provider of services and a consumer of services that needs to improve continuously. The ultimate goal will be to provide a differentiated pathway for understanding the type, combination, intensity, and quality services and supports that will likely result in a district and school meeting and exceeding outcomes or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
Research on the effectiveness of SSOS Regional Assistance Centers (RAC), or intermediate educational organizations on improving student outcomes, particularly on a large scale, has not been well studied. A number of reports and a few peer reviewed publications have described the programs and practices associated with the work of regional centers, but data on the impact of large scale reform by regional centers, districts or external partners is limited (Herman, 2012; Hansen & Choi, 2011). However, integrating research from school reform and improvement and systems development provides a framework for using evidence-based programs, policies and practices. For example, a research brief by American Institute of Research (AIR) identified eight key indicators of high quality state support systems that should be considered and assessed as part of the CA process. These indicators include coherence (efforts and energy should be going in the same direction), comprehensiveness (addressing multiple causal and contributing factors), stability (remaining consistent and constant, without personnel or whimsical programmatic changes), responsiveness (listening and examining feedback and appropriately adapting), intensity (appropriating human, technological and fiscal resources to influence indicators and outcomes), prescriptiveness (selecting effective programs and practices and implementing properly), fit (aligning resources and supports with school needs and challenges), and timeliness (sequencing implementation matters) (AIR, 2008).

In many ways, the CA is a way to assess the various components of the SSOS in terms of providers and consumer of services. That is, each level and layer provides a service to the layer across and below to a group of persons that consumes the services designed to ultimately impact student learning and outcomes. Our goal is to assess each level in terms of their service provided and the impact they have on the consumer of those services. The ISBE, through The Center and with Key Partners, will provide services to the RAC, which, in turn, will provide services to low performing schools. As the consumer of these services it is imperative to develop a continuous improvement process to ensure their appropriateness, quality, coherence, continuity, and, most of all, effectiveness of these services.
The primary drivers for the CA will be guided by a series of assessment, process and outcome questions designed to capture the structures, organizations, human resources, actions, progress, successes and challenges of the current SSOS. The CA will explore state, regional, community, district and building level systems and supports that provide, link and participate in the SSOS initiatives. A consumer and provider services approach will be used to ascertain perceptions and evidence of quality from one level to the next. This provides convergence of each consumer and provider level to understand how services are perceived and rated, and creates a starting point for continuous improvement. We believe that the best approach to understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of the SSOS is to propose performance questions that will drive the indicators and methods. Below are the key questions that we believe will provide a baseline understanding of Illinois SSOS.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Question</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Methods and Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Illinois schools and students are most in need of educational resources and supports to meet Illinois goals and outcomes? How do these schools divide among the state and RACs?</td>
<td>Number of schools, types of schools and reasons for schools not meeting or exceeding academic and education related outcomes</td>
<td>Review and analyze Illinois School Report Card data, census and education related data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What local, regional and state resources and supports will be necessary and sufficient for assisting districts and schools in meeting and exceeding goals?</td>
<td>District and school adoption of evidence-based programs, policies, and practices</td>
<td>Review school improvement plans, and survey central office and building administrators on the implementation of programs, policies and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What capacity and levels of readiness do districts and schools have to deliver and impact targeted outcomes?</td>
<td>Number and types of educational initiatives linked to instructional specialist (math, reading, science, ELA, data and learning supports) District/school, RAC &amp; KP perceptions of needs &amp; resources</td>
<td>Document review of funded programs and staff quality providing staff development for whole school reform, focused professional development and data based decision making Online survey of RAC, KP and district/building administrators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do districts and schools (consumers) perceive the quality and effectiveness of support services provided by the SSOS?</td>
<td>Percent of districts reporting high quality professional development and support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do ISBE, RAC, KP, districts and schools rate professional development services, coaching and support services on the key school improvement skills and competencies?</td>
<td>Rating of professional development coach on level of coaching skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are SSOS services and supports implemented with proper fidelity and dosage?</td>
<td>Number of lessons, sessions or elements implemented relative to the number recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the barriers and lessons learned from current implementation of SSOS?</td>
<td>Identify and rate barriers encountered to implementation issues Description of solutions attempted or proposed Results of attempted solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent were RAC and KP plans accomplished during the last grant period?</td>
<td>Review updated strategic plans, and identify progress and process indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What state, regional and local district resources have been aligned or integrated to maximize more efficient and effective school improvement efforts?</td>
<td>List of funded programs and practices to each level of school improvement (state, RAC, KP, district). Description of each funding stream and how they have been aligned or linked at the RAC, KP or district level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| How are data used for decision making with respect to priorities, professional development, refinement and outcomes? | Percentage of RAC, KP and schools who report using data for key educational decisions | Survey of RAC, KP and school administrators
Interviews
Review strategic plans and other planning documents
Results of staff and professional evaluations
School Report Card data |
|---|---|---|
| What were the consensus decisions regarding local causal and contributing factors to low student performance and how are programs, policies and practices identified and implemented to address those factors? | Perceptions of the causal factors, decisions and priorities for addressing low performing schools | Review strategic plans
Interview key stakeholders
Survey and RAC, KP, and school district administrators regarding the planning, prioritization and implementation process |
| What procedures/plans were established by RAC and KP to align and integrate services into a coherent professional development system of support? | The number and types of support services aligned and integrated across one or more levels of support and professional development activities | Document Review- State, regional and local districts
Survey and interview RAC, KP, and administrators regarding alignment issues |
| What policies/procedures and actions were provided with joint funding and/or resources? | Document examples where funding was blended between various agencies/organizations to provide services and supports within and across the SSOS | Document Review- State, regional and local district plans and contracts
Survey and interview RAC, KP, and administrators regarding alignment issues |

**Illinois Key Entities of the Comprehensive Audit**

Illinois Student Achievement Outcomes: To create a better understanding of the communities where Illinois students and families live and the schools they attend, a critical task of the CA will be to examine academic achievement measures for mathematics, reading and science that will be organized and sorted into rankings at the state, region, district and community levels. These data are already available in the Interactive School Report Card, but will require the creation of a state dataset that allows for manipulation.
and analysis of achievement scores to break them down further by region, district, building, grades, and student subgroups. These units of analysis are critical for understanding the status of districts and schools in terms of academic achievement, buildings and structures, and community risk factors [including but not limited to free lunch, race/ethnicity, English Language Learners (ELL)].

**Illinois School Districts:** In addition to understanding where Illinois districts and schools are, relative to their status based on AYP or proposed NCLB waiver measures, the CA, via building administrators and/or proxy, will conduct school level survey and assessments that provides an overall view of each component of the SSOS (ISBE, KP, RAC, local district and other sources of support such as SIG). This will include perceptions and experiences of their schools’ needs in terms of key causes and contributing factors to low performance, leadership, resources, teacher quality, instructional practices and policies, data systems and skills for continuous improvement, curriculum instruction and assessment, and parent and family involvement. Additionally, we will ask school leaders to report on the services and supports they have received during the past three to five years from the RAC and KP (IPA, IASB, RtI Network, Illinois Resource Center) or other key resources and contributors they have used in their school improvement efforts. These services will provide a baseline understanding of the work of the key service providers in terms of the importance, quality, and overall satisfaction with these services. Data will be analyzed, summarized and provided back to key service providers and schools for planning and incorporating services into the development of their service delivery cycle.

**Regional Assistance Centers (RAC):** The next major structure for examination will be the ten RACs that have been the providers of services under the current SSOS, and the process they will undergo to assess their history, capacity and resources for supporting low performing schools and districts. The CA will schedule a site visit by members of the evaluation team to review documents, interview staff, conduct assessments, and ultimately, complete a rubric delineating the RAC key capacity issues related to the functions of The Center, with focus on design and structure, coordination of activities, professional development, performance management, system evaluation, and human resources. Several examples of
educational support services rubrics or benchmarks have been collected to guide our development. In addition to the rubric, information regarding the RAC will also be collected from surveys regarding perceptions of the services they have provided districts and schools in their regions. An online survey of RAC will assess their perceptions of roles, responsibilities, functions, coordination of services, service delivery and evaluation to provide a better understanding of the way RAC services integrate with KP, ISBE and local school districts. Ultimately, the overarching goal for the CA is to understand each RAC's current capacity and determine what needs to be identified, developed, expanded or improved to maximize each one's effectiveness to high need schools in its service area.

**Key Partners Organizations (KP):** The third component of the CA will focus on the variety of ISBE-funded professional service centers and organizations that provide direct or indirect services to high need schools. The IPA, IASB, RtI Network, Special Education Cooperatives, IRC, and ISTAC are partners receiving funding and providing training, technical assistance and advocacy for Illinois schools. It is imperative to understand the roles, responsibilities, and outputs – training, technical assistance, seminars – for which they are funded. The capacity analysis of KPs will catalogue services they perceive are needed, what they provide, how they are evaluated, and what opportunities exist for continuous improvement. We will also provide opportunities for their target schools and co-collaborators to provide their input on the quality, satisfaction and effectiveness of the services provided by each KP, and the support they receive from ISBE. An online survey of KPs will assess their perceptions of roles, responsibilities, coordination of services, service delivery and evaluation to provide a better understanding of the way KP services integrate with RAC, ISBE and local school district services.

**Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE):** A fourth level will focus on the function of ISBE in the overall SSOS with respect to their roles and responsibilities regarding leadership, resources and supports, and policy for the RACs, KPs and districts. As described in the RFSP, ISBE engenders a new and expanded role through its resources and policies for improving instruction, technology, and data assessment systems that support high need schools. Of course, the role of the funding, support
organization and monitoring agency are, at times, at cross purposes, as ISBE is required to make difficult and unpopular decisions due to their legislative role and responsibilities versus their support role. As part of the CA, we will conduct interviews with ISBE Roundtable members (agency administrators, deputies, and area coordinators) that provide services and monitor policies related to the SSOS down to local school districts. Nonetheless, The Center will be a middle partner for ISBE legislative responsibilities and will provide leadership, resources and supports to Illinois schools, particularly high needs schools. The schools receiving support and services from the RACs and KPs will also evaluate ISBE’s capacity and leadership.

Methods

The Comprehensive Audit (CA) methodology will involve a multi-method, multi-level approach that will include accessing existing data and records, conducting interviews and surveys and reviewing documents to develop a historical and current understanding of SSOS. These methods will provide an understanding of the specific efforts necessary to ensure high need schools meet Illinois educational goals and objectives.

Student achievement and student outcome data: The CA analysis will utilize existing ISBE School Report Card and other data sources to identify the districts and schools that are not making AYP and the trends that these schools have been experiencing over the previous five years. Standardized test scores have become the single most important factor in how our education system is gauged, and are used as part of the No Child Left Behind measure of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as well. AYP is a measure based on the proportion of students and subgroups that meet or exceed student achievement benchmarks on the state standardized tests – Illinois Student Achievement Test (ISAT), Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA). Additional student outcome data identified in the Waiver include graduation rates, ACT readiness benchmarks and the several forthcoming assessments, such as school climate, National Career Readiness Certificates, WorkKeys National Career
Readiness Certificates and industry credentials. We envision that, when the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (LDS) and these new assessments become fully operational; these systems will be integrated into a high quality and reliable data system that will help key stakeholders understand causal and contributing factors for determining the effectiveness of the SSOS, in terms of teacher effectiveness, school climate, instructional practices, and school and student outcomes. These data also provide a rich source of information for evaluating student outcomes relative to the differentiated, multi-tiered interventions in the diverse Illinois cultures and community settings. In other words, these highly integrated data systems may help to create or fully understand best practices or evidence based programs and policies that are most appropriate and effective in different settings and with different populations.

The LDS will create new options and opportunities for understanding AYP by district, school and their socio-demographic composition: racial/ethnicity, poverty level, parent language spoken at home, or educational status of adults. Dr. John Evans from the University of Illinois will serve on the Evaluation Advisory Committee and has committed to working with the evaluation teams to developing a thorough understanding of the LDS functioning and potential (see letter of support). As part of the SSOS comprehensive audit, we intend to examine the achievement levels of all the schools associated with each of the ten SSOS centers at the regional, district and school levels. For schools not making AYP, we will identify the severity of failure (proportion of students failing as well as history of failure), reasons for failure (AYP benchmarks missed), and subgroups not meeting state standards. The context for school failure and success are critical to the SSOS ability to meet and address the needs of these schools, and develop successful school improvement efforts.

**Online Surveys:** The evaluation team will conduct online surveys of SSOS schools and districts, RACs and KPs. The purpose of the surveys will be to understand and gather feedback on the current SSOS received at multiple levels and to gather lessons learned and recommendations to improve SSOS services and supports for the next generation of SSOS provided by The Center. The evaluation team will utilize survey software that allows for online, “just-in-time” surveys and responses. Email addresses will be
obtained from each of the respective agencies and organizations and the surveys will be specially focused on the services that the organization provides and has received. All surveys will be anonymous to the evaluation team, and data results will be presented in ways that will not allow for individual identification of respondents. If response rates are adequate, profiles of survey respondents (e.g. administrator, coach, education professionals) by RAC and KP will be provided.

**Interviews:** An integral part of the CA will be structured in-person or telephone interviews with a sub-sample to be obtained from consumers and providers of SSOS services at the state, regional and local levels. These interviews will collect information on contextual and community attributes, as well as the type, quality, appropriateness and satisfaction with services provided to districts and schools. The RAC and KP interviews will ask questions about their backgrounds, roles and responsibilities, relationships with districts, relationship to ISBE and other service providers, alignment and adequacy of resources and support, barriers to success, data based decision making and perceived effectiveness of their services.

It is imperative that the CA investigate the perspectives and expectations of the funding agency to determine whether they believe that resources are maximized and impact is significant. ISBE leadership and staff will be interviewed to determine an understanding of the agency’s role and responsibility to support high needs districts and schools with services. They will be asked about their knowledge and experiences with the RAC and KP and their own agencies’ work in providing resources and supports to the SSOS and school districts.

**Document Review.** The organizing framework for the document review will follow the logic model for capturing the context, inputs, processes, products and outcomes at the four levels of work efforts - ISBE, RAC, KP and school districts. Essential components of the CA will include the review of past and current documents that reflect the policies, plans, products and impacts of the SSOS. Documents will likely include grants and contracts, strategic plans, reports, meeting minutes, staff rosters, decision memos, memoranda of agreements, evaluation reports and legislative policies. These documents provide
convergent information regarding the work of the SSOS. Each provider and consumer of SSOS utilizes documents and artifacts that reflect the work, decisions, products and policies under which they operate. The evaluation team will collect, collate, and catalogue documents into a searchable database that will allow them to be organized and understood.

**Final Products**

The final product of the comprehensive audit of SSOS will be a series of documents and reports that will serve as a baseline for understanding Illinois SSOS in preparation for the development of a statewide SSOS plan. The CA goal will be to provide a big-picture report that captures the baseline of the SSOS, as well as sub reports that will be made available to other entities - KPs and RACs. In preparation and throughout the CA process, the evaluation team, Evaluation Advisory Committee and IARSS will collaborate to review protocols, provide feedback and pilot tools, rubrics and surveys to ensure they capture the key elements and constructs delineated in the SSOS model.

**Major Work Tasks** (timeline for comprehensive audit & evaluation in Section 5)

1. Finalize the contract and subcontract for proposed comprehensive audit
2. Submit IRB to the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board
3. Develop an analysis plan for accessing and analyzing Illinois School Report Card data
5. Map high needs schools across Illinois and within the 10 Regional Centers.
6. Develop online surveys for each of the key participant groups
7. Develop interview questionnaires for key participant groups
8. Identify ISBE, RAC, KP and school districts to participate in the online surveys and interviews
9. Conduct visits to two or three RACs to review documents for conducting audit.
10. Solicit RAC, KP, ISBE and school districts for key documents
11. Implement online surveys, interviews and document reviews

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
12. Analyze results of surveys, interviews and document review

13. Summarize results of surveys, interviews and document reviews

14. Integrate CA information into a summary document

15. Present CA to ISBE

**B. Performance Management System**

The Center proposes to implement a performance management system designed to gauge its effectiveness in its efforts to monitor, analyze, recognize and disseminate those resources that promote the following:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Professional Development
- Leadership
- Successful Learning Environments
- Community and Family Engagement
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
Through the structure of a comprehensive database The Center proposes to catalogue programs, initiatives, and services districts and schools engage in for the purposes of improvement. These resources will be catalogued according to those headings demarcated above. Using well-established, intelligent, analytic models, The Center will monitor and evaluate the success of these programs, initiatives, and services, disseminating those successful strategies to districts and schools based on regional and/or demographic similarities.

The Center will “seed” the database with existing programs, initiatives, and services that have evidence of success. Rather than facilitating the implementation of isolated programs that may or may not improve the
academic performance of all students, The Center will catalogue scientifically based models for comprehensive improvement that focus on all aspects of the school’s/district’s operations. The purpose is to identify approaches to reform that work, and reduce the introduction of reforms that have failed, by eliminating hasty and uninformed decisions about what approach to adopt. Monitoring The Center’s facilitation and school’s/district’s adoption in the selection of reforms that are sustainable and result in increased academic attainment is fundamental to The Center’s success.

The Center’s performance management model will utilize integrated knowledge, rather than disparate pieces of information, collected and stored in multiple ways and locations. The centralization of this information coupled with success metrics will allow the Center to monitor strategies that result in improved teaching and learning. Publication of successful strategies through a web-portal allowing for districts and schools to query The Center’s catalogue will facilitate timely communication. Additionally, it will allow The Center to monitor those inquiries and enhance its efforts to align strategies to regional, district and school needs.

The structure of a resource-based catalogue within an electronic database allows for multiple sources including, but not limited to products, services, tools, assessments, consultants and partnerships. The transparent and efficient communication of these resources to districts and schools in a manner that is timely and results in improved teaching and learning is central to measuring the effectiveness of The Center.

The Center will employ a formative evaluative model as one method of judging the efficacy of its communication and dissemination of successful interventions. The Center will use information from the formative evaluation to strengthen or improve its strategies of communication with a particular interest in program deliveries and adoptions resulting in improved teaching and learning. While this evaluative model is envisioned as continuous, quarterly formative reports will be prepared and publically shared. The purpose of the quarterly reports is to provide documentation of those resources leveraged through
The Center that have resulted in improved student attainment. The reports will be designed to inform varied constituencies: schools, districts, regions and state.

The performance management system will also have an integral role in the ongoing external evaluation to assist The Center and RAC in process evaluation by identifying types, purposes, fidelity satisfaction and continuous improvement processes, practices and tools that enhance the delivery of strategies to its regional, district and school partners. Ultimately, the goal of the process evaluation from performance management system will be to improve the capacity and quality of services to low-performing schools.

The process evaluation elements that will be part of the performance management system are described in greater detail in the evaluation plan (Section 5B, Process Evaluation)

The Center envisions its performance management practices as more than an evaluative strategy to hold itself accountable for the delivery of its contractual obligations. By utilizing a web-based data driven system, The Center will maintain a “real-time” listing of those improvement initiatives engaged in by districts and schools. Coding those initiatives with success metrics, by region and demography, will assist districts and schools in selecting strategies that best fit their needs. Continual monitoring and database updating will allow The Center to highlight those strategies that are most effective. And because districts and schools will be allowed to query the information from a web-based interface, the communication flow is bi-directional. That is, educators do not need to wait for information to be delivered to them; they can proactively investigate solution strategies.
2. Coordinating Activities And Resources

A. Use Of State’s Accountability System To Provide Differentiated Services

Individualized Service Plans for Targeting Supports and Interventions

Districts will receive a performance designation (High Priority Districts, Districts with Priority Schools, Districts with Focus Schools, and Districts and Schools receiving Foundational Assistance) that will signal the interventions, services and assistance they may receive. The Center will create an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) for all districts based upon the district and/or school designation and the needs determined by an audit performed by The Center as well as performance data available from Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) and the LEA’s Rising Star plans.

A comprehensive audit conducted by Center staff will identify specific areas of need for the district. The audit will include an in-depth diagnostic review using the 8 Essential Elements of Effective Education Systems (i.e., Comprehensive Planning, Conditions for Learning, Community and Family Engagement, Professional Development, Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment).

The following components and procedures will be utilized during the audit process:

- Data from sources included in the Multiple Measure Index in the areas of Outcomes (for high schools and high school districts only), Achievement, Progress, and Context
- In-person interviews and walk-throughs conducted by The Center staff with districts
- Data available from IIRC and Rising Star continuous improvement process tool
- Itemization of services and practices in place from other partners

The results of the audit will be analyzed and used to create an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) that will identify the district assistance team members, content specialists, and/or turnaround specialists that best match district needs. The ISP will guide the delivery of services and be used to assess the impact of those services. It will include activities, personnel, measurable outcomes, and assessment measures. In addition,
the plan will provide for a review of district practices for implementing and sustaining effective team processes, as well as the type and frequency of training and support needed by district staff to use the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Process with fidelity.

The reports embedded within the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Process tool will be monitored by the district assistance teams, rapid response teams, and the assistant directors of each region to help differentiate services and resources to assist districts and schools.

B. ALIGNMENT OF IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Integration of ISBE improvement initiatives will be accomplished by assessing and cataloging the programs, staff, skills and expertise of all improvement initiative stakeholders to build a system that is coherent, non-duplicative and coordinated so that services and support can be delivered in a timely manner that is available to all and targeted to LEA and partner needs. The multiple pathways identified through audits and other quality indicator measures will be prioritized to ensure all needs are met swiftly and efficiently.

A baseline catalogue of existing services and initiatives will be compiled and aligned in order to: 1) serve student needs, utilizing best practices for teaching and learning; 2) expand boundaries of service and articulation to include the entire educational community; 3) align funding and accountability processes to support the most urgent work; and 4) coordinate statewide improvement efforts thoughtfully and systemically. Districts will be able to access resources to address identified and prioritized needs, surfaced by the audit and other quality indicators, through this online catalog.

School improvement coaches in Illinois and across the country identify barriers of geography, time, systems mismatch, and task overload as impeding school turnaround. These must be reduced. Inside schools and districts, barriers often identified are resistance to change, unstable district leadership, and time. The work of The Center must include reducing or eliminating the first set of barriers. The
professionals inside each district system must be given the tools they need to manage available time and resources needed to address the challenges within their system. The integration of the resources of the various initiatives in an online system will help to reduce these barriers.

District leaders will be asked to narrow their focus to the achievement gaps and the systemic and organizational processes that contribute to student under-performance. Just as district leadership is asked to focus on the root causes of the district performance issues, the Center for School Improvement teams will focus on the four core components of Illinois educational reform – continuous improvement, educator quality, learning environments, and teaching and learning. These four areas are supported by data-based decision making and accountability/alignment processes.
**Model for Initiative Integration**

![Diagram showing the integration of various initiative components]

- **Continuous Improvement**
  - Leadership support from IPA and IASB
  - PERA Evaluation processes
- **Educator Quality**
  - Leadership from Professional Development
- **Teaching and Learning**
  - Common Core Standards
  - RtI
  - Early Learning
  - ELL supports
  - College and Career pathways
  - Technology Integration
- **Learning Environments**
  - ISTAC Projects
  - Social and emotional learning supports
  - Special Education
  - Clean, safe schools
  - Healthful meals
- **Data Based Decision**
  - Rising Star
  - Strategic Planning
  - Monitoring and Feedback
  - Critical Friends
- **Fiscal and Program Accountability and Alignment**
  - Teacher and Principal mentoring

**Content Integration**

Each of the Illinois improvement initiatives (including ISTAC, RtI Network, IRC, Education for Employment (EFE), and Learning Technology Centers (LTC)) brought together under the SSOS umbrella, has a specific training cycle, protocols, tools, and processes that are essential to the integrity of the initiative, but they share common philosophies. Based on the common focus of improving student performance, initiative representatives identified within each of the four components of Illinois Education Reform will come together in facilitated conversations to identify the best practices common to their core
area and the specific lessons learned by each project or initiative that will be conveyed to implementers of their project. The complex nature and specific content of the initiatives will be integrated and delivered through the ISBE Continuous Improvement Framework, and the lens of the eight essential elements maintaining a focus on student outcomes. Initiative-specific content will be organized by implementation level (baseline, novice, practitioner, trainer) and put into an electronic delivery format that will allow equitable access across the state. The electronic delivery system will also allow each district, school or individual to join the learning about a particular initiative or focus area at their level of knowledge and expertise.

An illustrative example of this framework follows.

Best Practices for

- Teaching and Learning - (on-line delivery)
  - Overview and Program Selection Criteria for RtI, EFE, ELL (on-line delivery)
  - Novice Implementation (on-line delivery)
    - Practitioner Implementation (multiple delivery formats)
    - Customized Implementation Support (on-site technical assistance)

Integration of Student Needs

Across Illinois, students are educated in school districts of varying configurations. Only about 1/3 of districts are pre-K through grade 12. In the remaining districts, students are in one system for elementary school and a different system for high school. To better address the comprehensive spectrum of student needs, integration across high school catchment areas will allow for community-wide needs to be more systematically addressed.

The transition from eighth grade to high school is often difficult and can be compounded by system mismatches between elementary and high school districts. Viewing sister elementary districts, both public
and non-public, and their receiving high school, as a cluster for needs assessment, analysis and resource allocation will build community connections, parent support of schools, and better articulation of instruction and services. Such a model of cluster professional development and articulation is in its third year of implementation through The Chicago Community Trust funded Mathematics Initiative. This project focuses district collaboration on preparation for and success in algebra. The project is designed to increase a teacher’s depth of knowledge of mathematics and provide instructional strategies to stimulate students’ mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills. The project also facilitates cross-district networking and collaboration and intentional articulation between middle and high school math departments.

A similar cluster model can be implemented statewide where there are non-unit priority high school districts. Closer connection with the public or private elementary schools sending students into the priority high school will give the high school additional opportunities to impact student learning and allow new opportunities for the community to rally around the success of their young people.

Program and Fiscal Accountability

*Rising Star* provides an excellent structure for monitoring improvement plans and implementation, but it provides no connection to district allocation of Title I resources. In many districts the grant managers are not on the improvement teams and the lead teachers are not involved in fiscal decisions. The goal of federal program monitoring is to ensure that funds are directed to the areas of highest need.

District leadership teams are involved in both *Rising Star* improvement plans and allocation of Title dollars, but often as separate activities. Blending these two tasks, and including the DAT, RRT or coaches in consolidated Title plan writing, monitoring, and allocation processes will open the door for additional creativity and effective utilization of federal funds. This collaboration will also provide the opportunity for *Rising Star* and Consolidated application goals and objectives to be more closely aligned and monitored simultaneously.
Staffing

The integration of the Illinois improvement initiatives and The Center's focus on creating common statewide access to professional development will create professional growth opportunities for teachers. Monitoring, selecting and scheduling professional development matched with the district identified needs and priorities will become increasingly complex. Materials, tools, assessment products, and resources also being generated by The Center staff that will need to be matched with the range of district improvement priorities as identified in their ISP.

The RFSP refers to district liaisons, but does not describe their role in detail. These individuals are paid by The Center and based regionally. District liaisons are ideally situated to take on the role of resource facilitator for one or more clusters of priority high schools and their feeder districts within a specific region. This role would mirror the process facilitator role that is part of the Rising Star protocol. District liaisons will participate in district leadership meetings along with the DAT or RRT members. The District liaison must have a broad knowledge of the Illinois improvement initiatives, The Center's on-line resources and training schedule, and first-hand knowledge of the specific needs and priorities of each high school cluster. The district liaisons will require administrative experience at the district level and participate in ongoing training in all the initiatives and activities of The Center. They will also need to be at the core of the The Center’s communication structure in order to ensure they have the full range of The Center’s resources at their fingertips.

C. Communication Infrastructure

A Communication Infrastructure to support clear and systematic communication among all the stakeholders within the Statewide System of Support

Horizontal and vertical communication is critical to ensure coherence and consistency statewide amongst the many organizations and individuals involved in the Statewide System of Support managed by The Center. The communication systems created must be able to serve multiple purposes including promoting, reinforcing and monitoring a shared understanding and alignment with the goals, objectives, operating
principles and practices that will underline the work of all those engaged in the SSOS. In addition, the communications infrastructure must serve as an effective tool for continuous alignment, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the staff within The Center and the many partners statewide. The communication infrastructure will have multiple channels and media. Scheduled and as-needed face-to-face and virtual meetings will be held to plan, implement and monitor the specific work of The Center. Because time is one of the most critical resources of the SSOS, members of The Center staff will be trained and will use a common set of meeting management and meeting facilitation tools. They will be able to use similar tools and terminology to maximize the effectiveness of meeting time and ensure follow-through and tangible and track-able results. One critical component of this communications infrastructure is a customized online management system that will contain customized portals and dashboards for those involved with the SSOS according to their particular job requirements and management needs.

Components of this customized online management system will enable The Center to ensure ISBE, The Center Staff, partners, districts and schools are able to access ongoing, on-demand, real-time data organized to enable The Center to fulfill its fundamental functions:

- To provide oversight and management of the SSOS
- To maintain alignment with ISBE's vision and reform initiatives
- To deploy staff (and resources) to work with identified districts to develop, implement and monitor customized improvement plans
- To design and align the use of connected tools and resources to build district capacity to improve teaching and learning
- To develop system-wide evaluation for the SSOS and use data to continuously monitor and improve processes

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
• To create a database of all resources aligned to categories of services based on the Differentiated Recognition and all partners within the SSOS

The online management system will include the following components:

• A database of all statewide resources available within the system, including The Center, ISBE and all the SSOS partners. Staff, programs, professional development as well as other resources within the system will be assessed and cataloged in the database. The categories will be based on targeted supports and interventions that are identified for delivery according to the Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support system and the Eight Essential Elements of Effective Education. This database module will include specific areas of expertise in professional development, consulting and technical assistance so that anyone can access these resources regardless of the partner or specific program employing staff members. The database will permit The Center and ISBE to identify duplicative or overlapping services and select the best quality services available, as well as better align and bring greater coherence to the system deliverables.

• A database of all districts and schools receiving (and eligible to receive) services according to the state Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support System. The database entry for each LEA will be linked to IIRC for instant access to all data and improvement plans of each LEA. The profiles of each LEA will contain the specific areas of need identified through the audit and the data available from IIRC and any Rising Star plans they may have developed or will later develop. Again, the needs will be entered in categories created according to the Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support system and the Eight Essential Elements of Effective Education.

• The online management system will allow SSOS management and staff instant access to LEAs in the system and will easily identify approved system-wide resources that can be deployed to address LEA needs.
• Customized portals and data dashboards that will enable users, based on their administrative access, to monitor and assess their work and that of LEAs on demand and in real time.

• Enterprise level, intranet-based, internal social networks for internal communication will allow system administrators to form groups around relevant departments, projects, special needs or special interests, enabling system users to share information and ideas, as well as resources with each other.

The online management system will be created using the resources of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois, the Illinois Principals Association Ed Leaders Network, the Illinois Interactive Report Card, and enterprise wide customizable software available in the marketplace.

The features available through the online management system will enable and promote both horizontal and vertical communication, and will be fully integrated with The Center's performance management system as a ready source of information for both internal and external evaluations of the performance of The Center and the overall SSOS. ISBE senior management will have instant online access to critical performance and outcomes data throughout the SSOS. Using customized portals and dashboards, they will be able to access real-time reports, data, graphs and tables at the state level, the regional level, the partner level, the district level and the school level. A calendar of services to be delivered, including professional development, will be accessible to those within the system.

Examples of Possible Meeting Schedules (Face-to-Face and Virtual)

• Monthly meetings with ISBE Deputy Superintendent, ISBE Roundtable, The Center director, chief officer for accountability, and managers

• Monthly meetings of 10 regional assistant directors and content area specialists with The Center manager for regional supports and the manager for curriculum and instruction.
• Monthly statewide meeting with The Center director, managers, DAO officer, regional assistant
directors, content area specialists, and SSOS partners
• Meetings (quarterly at a minimum) of The Center management with the independent evaluators
• Virtual Meetings between and among partners, as needed
• In addition, during the fiscal year, The Center director and managers will visit each of the ten
regions and attend the regional meeting
• Monthly regional meetings (in each of the ten regions) with content area specialists, assistant
directors, coaches from district assistance teams, turnaround specialists from rapid response
teams, Rising Star coaches, and representatives from the SSOS partners. These meetings will
have structured agendas that incorporate the sharing of information and updates, professional
development and skill building, and collaborative sharing of best practices and lessons learned
• Frequent meetings with The Center manager for curriculum and instruction with content area
specialists and The Center manager for priority school interventions with rapid response teams
• Meeting protocols and procedures, with outcomes, benchmarks, and timelines entered into the
online communication system
• Bi-annual forums with district leaders within geographic areas for sharing information,
professional development, best practices, and lessons learned.
• Biannual Center for School Improvement advisory board meetings including presentation of
current data collection summaries and formative and summative evaluation reports
3. Professional Development

In considering the professional development necessary to improve student learning outcomes in Illinois, the logic model of this proposal again becomes salient:

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ➔ ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ➔ INSTRUCTION ➔ STUDENT LEARNING

For over 30 years, we have known that a truly effective school leader can have a profound, and often rapid, impact on student learning outcomes. Since the work of Ron Edmonds and the Effective Schools Research of the 1970s, it has become commonplace to remark on “outlier” schools, regular public schools in low-income neighborhoods, that are dramatically outperforming socio-economic predictors. Karin Chenoweth has recently published three volumes (2007, 2009, 2011) on such schools, and, like Edmonds, has found that school leadership is a key variable in each instance. This should no longer be a surprise to us, as the centrality of school leadership in improving student performance has become increasingly noted in the literature. The landmark study by Bryk, Sebring, et al., Organizing Schools for Improvement (2010), places school leadership first among five variables that distinguish high performing from low-performing high-poverty schools in Chicago.

High quality school leadership, it turns out, is a high-yield, comparatively low-cost intervention with a lasting record of success. As one of the key levers of change for low-performing Illinois schools, it offers a way for the proposed Center for School Improvement to maximize the impact of its resources by focusing on each school as the unit of change and each school leader as the change agent. As UIC is now demonstrating with sixty school principals in Chicago, and UIUC is now demonstrating with teacher leader teams in all schools in the Champaign and Urbana districts, a clear focus on instructional leadership can target resources on classroom practice in ways that produce remarkable results in standardized test scores, reduced dropout rates, and increased graduation rates.
As both UIC and UIUC are demonstrating, principals do not lead alone—the myth of the principal as superhero does not improve schools (Spillane, 2005). The practice of leading in schools, distributed over many different actors and shared by many individuals, is made evident in the structures and routines that are established and the artifacts that emanate from those routines. A comprehensive strategy includes not only developing the capacity of the individual school leaders, but other key individuals who also lead: high school department chairs, assistant principals, district curriculum coordinators, coaches, assistant superintendents, external facilitators, consultants, and trainers.

The upshot of this revolution in school leadership as the essential key to improved classroom instruction is that professional development is not something that is delivered to schools and teachers; instead, adult learning becomes a priority of the school culture itself. Schools have to be organized and led as places where novice teachers and experienced teachers alike continue to develop their abilities to meet the needs of their students—abilities that are only at the beginning stage when the initial teaching license is granted. The partners in this proposal—from school, district, regional, university, and statewide levels— all have significant experience in building the capacities of individual schools to develop instruction within those schools.

Professional development, moreover, must address the touchstones of contemporary educational reform, which we identify as five, crosscutting ‘themes for the transformation of learning’:

1. Next-generation standards;
2. Innovations in the measurement of learning;
3. Web-mediated learning information systems;
4. Effective negotiation of learner diversity; and
5. Devolved governance, accountability and stakeholder relations (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012).
Utilizing the information and improvement plan developed from Rising Star (assess indicators using data; identify indicators they will work on; plan tasks and monitor the progress toward fully implementing the identified indicators), professional development will be created, designed and delivered based on the selected indicators thus aligned:

1. The Eight Essential Elements. These can be considered to be a basis for information gathering, analysis and action. A consistent set of high quality professional development tools and resources, categorized by the Eight Essential Elements, will be created or selected by The Center and made available for delivery statewide. The Statewide Professional Development Coordinator will help to catalog, coordinate and disseminate professional development for the Statewide System of Support.

2. The five cross-cutting ‘themes for the transformation of learning’

3. The logic model of school improvement:

   SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ➔ ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ➔ INSTRUCTION ➔ STUDENT LEARNING

The professional development designed and delivered will meet quality standards by using consistently applied instructional design processes that are research-based and used by leading businesses to ensure training impact is measurable and provides a significant return on investment. In addition, all professional development designed and delivered will align with the professional learning standards developed by Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council).

**A. TOOLS & RESOURCES**

The Center will establish a comprehensive intervention system that includes aligned and connected professional development programs, supporting tools and resources to address the identified needs of school districts and schools. The scope, level, intensity, type and duration of the these professional development services, tools and resources will be directly aligned to the designation of the district and
school and its current level of implementation of the Eight Essential Elements as identified through their Rising Star continuous improvement plan.

All professional development services will be aligned with the Eight Essential Elements and the Indicators of Effective Practice.

A carefully selected and trained design team, under the direction of The Center director and managers will develop a statewide training system using the research-based practices of training design to address identified needs of the school districts and schools in the Statewide System of Support. These trainings and the connected tools and resources that are developed to accompany them, will access currently delivered training, resources and tools through ISBE’s many delivery systems, initiatives and partners. Each of the Focus Categories and Eight Essential Elements will have a Level I, II, or III (as needed) aligned to the Comprehensive Audit and aligned to closing achievement gaps, turning around low performing schools, engaging in continuous improvement, improving educator quality, and continuously improving the learning environment, teaching and learning.

For instance, a training and accompanying materials, online supports and follow-up that will be necessary for districts and schools to fully implement continuous improvement through Comprehensive Planning (Element 1) would include a 3-part training on full utilization of the Rising Star on IIRC tool and process. This training and supporting resources and tools will be delivered statewide by a select group of knowledgeable and experienced staff to ensure consistency and alignment to this Element of Effective Practice and its support indicators across all regions.

The following table represents many of the resources and tools currently available to our consortium in creating the professional development delivered through The Center. The information is aligned to the Focus Categories and Eight Essential Elements. They are first described in Illinois Operations Manual for

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work 46
Rising Star Implementation found at

Category 1 - Continuous Improvement (Illinois Operations Manual page 9)

Comprehensive Planning, the process of engaging community stakeholders:

- To collect and analyze data;
- To define district or school goals;
- To Identify management structures (e.g., leadership, data systems, resources, operations);
- To research effective strategies and activities to meet those goals;
- To develop methods to implement the strategies and activities; and
- To evaluate the success of that implementation.

During comprehensive planning, resources, timelines and persons responsible for implementation oversight are considered. Evaluation of the plan’s success occurs both throughout the timeframe of the plan and at the end of the planning cycle. A fully implemented planning process requires a commitment to sustain a continuous improvement model approach to district and school planning. This commitment will ensure the development and implementation of organizational structures, processes and practices that are efficient and effective in supporting and improving student learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resource for Comprehensive Planning</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Center and External Entity</td>
<td>Comprehensive Audit</td>
<td>Districts with Focus and Priority Schools</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation Plan</td>
<td>Districts with Focus and Priority Schools</td>
<td>After CA</td>
<td>ISBE – assign RRT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work

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Category 2 – Educator Quality

Element - Professional Development (Illinois Operations Manual page 15)

A continuous improvement approach to professional development builds on scientific, evidence-based research, incorporates innovative instructional practices, engages teachers in new curricular designs, explores assessment techniques, and requires educators to develop needed skills in areas identified in the plan. The fundamental grounding of professional development is in student needs, which will drive decision-making and student learning and form the basis on which professional development is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Districts and schools must plan for professional development that is ongoing and job-embedded, aligned with student performance goals, and aligned with the analysis of the test data. Collective professional development aimed at student learning goals requires focused leadership that is distributed among faculty and administration. The best way to have distributed leadership is to have a professional development leadership team. High-quality professional development adheres to national professional learning standards.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Organizing adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- Using disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Deepen educators’ content knowledge, providing them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resource for PD</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Communities Professional Development for Core Curriculum</td>
<td>Learning Teams created and trained. PD for Teacher Leaders and Team Process and Decision Making</td>
<td>Teachers form learning teams who write essential outcomes and objectives aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaggregating Student Data</td>
<td>Learning teams participate in data protocols to disaggregate student assessment data</td>
<td>Ongoing each school year</td>
<td>Content Area Specialists in Data/Assessment deliver to District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Changes</td>
<td>Learning teams plan and deliver instructional changes in core classes based on student data</td>
<td>Ongoing each school year</td>
<td>District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions and Supports</td>
<td>Multi-tiered problem solving system</td>
<td>Schools implement multi-tiered set of interventions</td>
<td>District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RtI Network</td>
<td>All district RtI coaches can attend to receive professional</td>
<td>Monthly and quarterly</td>
<td>RtI Network staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rtl Modules</td>
<td>Deliver of the ISBE Rtl Modules</td>
<td></td>
<td>Train the trainer was completed spring/summer 2012</td>
<td>Rtl Trainers available statewide and Online Modules will be available Fall 2012 at Illinois Virtual School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Choices</td>
<td>Support for districts struggling with special education indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development and Coaching</td>
<td>Project Choices Staff along with online training available from Illinois Virtual School 2012-2013 school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBIS</td>
<td>Support for district needs in behavior along with districts identified through Educational Environment (EE) indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development and Coaching</td>
<td>PBIS Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC for English Language Learners</td>
<td>Support for district needs in language development and assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development and Coaching</td>
<td>IRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content PD based on CCSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>Level I implementation training</td>
<td>Delivered Winter and Spring 2012 Statewide</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Content Area Specialists delivered to District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Grade level modules focusing on standards of mathematical practice</td>
<td>Winter 2012</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Content Area Specialists delivered to statewide trainers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
| Illinois Math and Science Partnerships | Intensive math and science PD focused on content knowledge needed for Common Core | 10 days of summer training and 4 days of school year follow up and coaching | On going | CM Curriculum and Instruction, Content Area Specialists deliver to District Assistance Teams and Coaches |


Leaders create and sustain organizational direction, expectations, and a system that promotes excellence.

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community; (2) advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (3) ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (4) collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (5) acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (6) understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Shared leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning throughout the school;
- Articulation of a compelling need for improvement and providing meaningful ways for the professional learning community to focus on its performance; and
- Engagement in practices that support the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Leaders</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Evaluation</td>
<td>Qualification training for superintendents and principals</td>
<td>Online multi-module training</td>
<td>Summer 2012 and then ongoing</td>
<td>CM Regional Support, Regional Assistant Directors, DuPage ROE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Evaluation</td>
<td>Qualification training for principals according</td>
<td>Online multi-module training</td>
<td>Summer 2012 and then ongoing</td>
<td>CM Regional Support, Regional Assistant Directors, DuPage ROE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielson Training</td>
<td>Statewide Train the Trainer for Danielson Framework</td>
<td>More than 50 train the trainers will be available throughout Illinois to assist districts with the new teacher evaluation system</td>
<td>Summer 2012</td>
<td>CM Regional Support, Regional Assistant Directors, Henderson/Mercer/Warren ROE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Create recommendations for districts in implementing new teacher/principal evaluation</td>
<td>Recommendations complete but expanding to provide more resources</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>The Center Director, PEAC Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL Principals Association</td>
<td>Ed Leaders Network PD – webinars and courses about leadership effectiveness</td>
<td>Number of courses based on plan</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>The Center Director, IPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL Association of School Boards</td>
<td>Governance training - School Board use of data for appropriate policy level decision-making</td>
<td>Based on results of Comprehensive Audit</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>The Center Director, IASB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Mentoring</td>
<td>Statewide trained principal mentors available</td>
<td>50 hours of contact throughout the year</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>CM Regional Support, ROEs/ISCs and IPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
Summer Institutes

| Administrator updates on Race to the Top, Accountability Waiver and ISBE Reform Initiative | 5 hour sessions delivered 7 times across the state | Annually | CM Regional Support, ROEs/ISCs |

How can school leadership, a proven approach to improving low-income school performance, offer a high-leverage, cost-effective strategy to the proposed Center for School Improvement? We propose the following steps, all of which are designed to increase instructional leadership capacity for improved student learning outcomes in the highest-need Illinois schools:

1. *Filling leadership vacancies strategically at scale.* The Center will assist local districts with principal vacancies for low-performing schools in locating principal candidates with strong instructional leadership skills. This will be done in collaboration with colleges and universities now in the process of converting their principal preparation programs to highly selective, clinically intensive programs under the new state licensure law, as well as in collaboration with the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois Association of School Boards, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers. On the basis of naturally occurring vacancies alone, over half of the lowest performing schools in the state could hire new principals in the next five years. Because the annual turnover rate of such principals is only about 100, this is well within the capacity of Illinois colleges and universities, working together with The Center, to achieve. For the next five years, any high-need Illinois school that has a principal vacancy will receive assistance from The Center in “upgrading” to an instructional leader who understands the “instructional core” of school improvement.

2. *Creating new leadership vacancies.* In addition to naturally occurring vacancies, this process can be accelerated by those districts that choose to replace existing principals who are not performing at a satisfactory level.
3. *A distinctive approach to professional development that resides in the school as an organization.*

The key insight here is that, by far, the majority of teacher professional learning takes place during the first few years of teaching. Effective schools in low income neighborhoods are effective adult learning environments, so teachers at all stages of career development can improve their abilities to meet the learning needs of diverse groups of children. The Center will pilot a series of intensive workshops, support and coaching on instructional leadership for improving student performance in elementary and high schools for principals in under-performing schools. Again, in this approach, the school is the unit of change and principals are the leaders of change. Principals and their lead mathematics and literacy personnel will develop new understanding of how the school can become an effective adult learning environment for all the mathematics and literacy teachers.

**Category 3 – Learning Environment**

*Element – Conditions for Learning (Illinois Operations Manual pages 16-17)*

In order to ensure desired results of improved teaching and learning, districts and schools must cultivate safe and stabilized environments. These environments need to provide the necessary conditions for learning and embed improvement in daily practices.

Successful districts and schools engage in an improvement process where administration and school personnel do the following:

- Share a common vision and goals that have student learning as the focus;
- Ensure an optimal learning environment that promotes a healthy development;
- Address barriers to teaching and learning;
- Support student motivation and re-engage the disengaged student;
- Improve individual and collective performance by coming together regularly for learning, decision-making, problem solving, and celebration;
• Enhance continuously individual effectiveness through inquiry, practice, and peer reflection; and
• Supports a culture of collegiality, collaboration, respect, and trust.

By implementing this type of improvement process, all children are enabled to succeed while varying factors that interfere with their success at school are addressed. These practices may tend to overlap or are fragmented unless a comprehensive integrated system is developed to enhance coordination of these fragmented efforts. When a “Learning Supports” system is implemented, the conditions necessary for teaching and learning are provided so teachers can teach and students can learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Conditions of Learning</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race to the Top Survey</td>
<td>State survey developed by an independent contractor for ISBE</td>
<td>Delivered statewide to educators, students and parents</td>
<td>2012-2013 school year and then annually after</td>
<td>ISBE/Contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional Learning</td>
<td>Training developed and delivered statewide</td>
<td>Training and coaching to assess, implement and evaluate SEL standards in the schools and districts</td>
<td>Formerly delivered through Children’s Mental Health Partnership/ISBE grants to each area</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Content Area Specialists for Learning Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTAC groups</td>
<td>PBIS, Choices, Autism, ISRC and Project Reach</td>
<td>Each project delivers training and support to build district capacity</td>
<td>Immediately available</td>
<td>ISTAC projects <a href="http://is-tac.org/">http://is-tac.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A broad base of stakeholders reflects the entire community and includes staff, students, primary caregivers such as parents/families, business and community representatives, and school board members. Stakeholders maintain significant involvement in the development, implementation, plan review, parent involvement practices and compacts, and ongoing communications about student achievement. Family activities provide academic enrichment and learning support to help students meet state learning standards.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

• Involve stakeholders in the school improvement process;
• Communicate school improvement progress;
• Identify activities for parent/family involvement in the school improvement plan; and
• Involve parents in the development and review of the school parental procedures, practices, and compacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Community and family engagement</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Report Card</td>
<td>New community-family friendly report card disseminated</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>CM Regional Support and Regional Assistant Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTAC/Parent-Educator Partnership</td>
<td>Parent Leadership Training</td>
<td>Training throughout the areas as part of RtI Network and PEP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>PEP train Regional Assistant Directors and District Liaisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTAC/Parent Mentoring</td>
<td>Training for parent mentors to work with parents of special needs students</td>
<td>Mentors positioned throughout the state</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regional Assistant Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Training for ELL parents and advisory committees</td>
<td>Statewide team training for TBE/TPE districts</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>District Liaisons and District Assistance Team Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IASB</td>
<td>Training for district planning with community engagement</td>
<td>Series of sessions that result in a district strategic plan focused of student priorities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>District Liaisons and District Assistance Team Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating the American Educational System</td>
<td>Networking and training sessions for parents of English Language Learners</td>
<td>Series of Sessions</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>DuPage ROE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 4 – Teaching and Learning**


A school or district curriculum is an educational plan that defines what the expectations are for the content, knowledge, and skills to be learned as well as the resources to be employed for documenting student progress and achievement. It is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards, and it allows for the collection of data to inform instruction. Ideally, the curriculum is vertically aligned between grade levels and horizontally integrated across content areas.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Development and continuous review of the curriculum.
- Alignment of the curriculum to state and national standards; and
- Monitoring of the fidelity of curriculum implementation at the classroom level.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Curriculum</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Core State Standards</td>
<td>Write essential outcomes and student objectives</td>
<td>Building Learning Teams will review/write new outcomes and objectives</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Content Area Specialists and District Liaisons and District Assistance Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K-12 Articulation</td>
<td>K-12 articulation teams in the core content areas will review essential outcomes and objectives</td>
<td>K-12 district alignment could be challenging in dual districts, especially where one elementary feeds into several high school districts</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post - Secondary</td>
<td>HS-Community College-Higher Ed articulation teams</td>
<td>Series of meetings to plan for transition of students from high school through completion of a post-secondary degree or certificate</td>
<td>Training was spring 2012 and meetings should start fall 2013</td>
<td>District Assistance Teams and Coaches, ICCB and IBHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Pathways</td>
<td>Career skill and readiness support for the 9 National Career Clusters</td>
<td>Programs of Study support for P-20 articulation</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>DCEO and EFEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM Learning Exchanges</td>
<td>Statewide networks of P-20 partners in STEM disciplines</td>
<td>Networks will support the career ready skills development and high school articulation to post secondary</td>
<td>Begin Fall 2012</td>
<td>To be determined (RFSP not awarded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts Content</td>
<td>English Language Arts CCSS alignment</td>
<td>Awareness and Level I implementation training</td>
<td>Delivered Winter and Spring 2012 Statewide</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Content Area Specialists delivered to District Assistance Teams and Coaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Element – Instruction (Illinois Operations Manual page 20)

Instruction refers to how teachers implement purposeful, planned methods, strategies, and activities to teach curriculum so students achieve mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards. Effective instruction recognizes and respects the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of every student. Effective instruction is responsive to and directed by student data. Data from progress monitoring and formative assessments identify student learning needs and then drive appropriate and timely intervention.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Applying varied effective instructional methods, strategies, and activities for all students based on data;
- Targeting early intervening services both to students at risk of failing to meet the Illinois Learning Standards and to the academically gifted; and
- Aligning instruction to the Illinois Learning Standards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Instruction</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff /Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC Standards Aligned Classroom</td>
<td>Learning team training on using Standards to build assessments whose results will drive classroom instruction.</td>
<td>Several 3-4 hour modules with monthly team support</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Regional Assistant Directors, ROEs/ISCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Teacher Mentoring</td>
<td>Induction for the 21st Century Learners Training</td>
<td>30 hours of training for mentors of new teachers</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Illinois New Teacher Center and ROE/ISC Statewide Mentor Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTAC – special education support</td>
<td>Various ISTAC projects</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>ISTAC entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted Education Seminar</td>
<td>GES Seminar – with focus on delivery of differentiated instruction</td>
<td>45 hours of professional development on needs of gifted/talented students</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Regional Assistant Directors, ROE/ISC Statewide GES Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Integration</td>
<td>Learning Technology Center support and professional development</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction and new area LTC directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading First</td>
<td>Online Reading First Modules K-3</td>
<td>45 hours of training for each grade level</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>District Liaisons, Illinois Virtual School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL instructional strategies</td>
<td>ELL instructional strategies</td>
<td>Levels of training for teachers on meeting the instructional needs of ELL students</td>
<td>Delivered 2008-2011</td>
<td>IRC and ROEs/ISCs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Element – Assessment (Illinois Operations Manual pages 22-23)

Assessment is the process of judging and measuring the students’ acquisition of the intended content, knowledge, and skills as set out in the curriculum. It includes collecting, recording, scoring, monitoring, and interpreting information about a student’s progress, a teacher’s instruction, and a school’s overall effectiveness. Some assessments are used for accountability purposes, but the primary purpose of assessment at the classroom level is to inform instructional decisions and ultimately to improve student achievement. In addition to state assessment data, each district, school, and teacher must be engaged in using formative assessment to monitor student learning progress and inform classroom instruction.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Aligning assessment with the district or school curriculum and the Illinois Learning Standards;
- Collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data or order to apply the analysis to problem solving; and
- Using assessments frequently to monitor student progress and to guide instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Resources for Assessment</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
<th>Scope/Intensity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Center Staff/Partner Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IIRC</td>
<td>My IIRC collects all district student assessment data online</td>
<td>3-4 hour training on accessing the data</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>IIRC, IPA and ROEs/ISCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISLE</td>
<td>National technology solution that uses student assessment data to create learning maps that will deliver individualized instruction</td>
<td>Still unknown</td>
<td>Fall 2013 for Race to the Top districts</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction and Race to the Top Director for Performance Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC Standards Aligned Classroom</td>
<td>Learning team training on using Standards to build assessments whose results will drive classroom instruction.</td>
<td>Several 3-4 hour modules with monthly team support</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction, Regional Assistant Directors, ROEs/ISCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data and Assessment</td>
<td>Series of short power points to describe quality assessment practices</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>CM Curriculum and Instruction and Content Area Specialists for Data and Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFAST – Effective Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers</td>
<td>Online modules to take teachers through a process to write and evaluate classroom formative assessment with virtual teams</td>
<td>Six modules</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Illinois Math and Science Partnership, Illinois Virtual School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processes will be put in place to ensure that coaching support, constructive feedback and reflection opportunities are provided after professional development, as stressed by the Learning Forward Implementation standards, to support long-term change at the classroom level. The Eight Essential Elements and indicators of effective practice will also guide development of resources and tools for the areas of continuous improvement, educator quality, the learning environment, and teaching and learning.

**Assessment Elaboration: Improving Metrics and Metric Representation to Support Growth in Instructional Effectiveness in Underperforming Schools and Districts**

We propose that a key function of The Center will be to work with principals, superintendents, school boards and ROEs/ISCs to make more strategic use of available data to inform school decision-making. When principals and districts understand what the data really tells them, they can act more effectively to
support student learning. Cost-effective workshops and materials can be made available to put schools and districts in greater command of available data for purposes of improving schools. A major, unintended consequence of scaled, standards-based assessment since NCLB is that it has become as much a part of the problem of school reform as it has been a part of the solution. For close to a decade, UIC has been building, road-testing and refining school- and district-level protocols to report and analyze data in ways that address the structural limitations of standards-based assessment that are outlined below. To a degree that most policy makers have yet to acknowledge fully, these limitations have kept standards-based assessment from fulfilling its promise as a powerful lever for supporting school improvement at scale:

1. At the technical level, standards-based assessment 1.0 has not yet been very successful at using scaled assessment to produce data representations that are simultaneously:
   a. valid and reliable for summative purposes (accountability) and
   b. user-friendly and deeply informative for formative purposes (improvement of instruction).

2. At the deep structure of school and district culture, standards-based assessment 1.0 has tended to
   a. outsource the practice of interim and “formative” assessment to external providers rather than building stronger local capacity for assessment (Black and Wiliam; Wiggins) and
   b. reinforce (rather than confront and support reexamination of) the persistent bias in American teaching culture to package most aspects of teaching and learning into discretely teachable skills and procedures (Stigler and Hiebert).

Left unaddressed, these problems will systematically undermine future efforts to teach students how to size up and work through academic complexity in accordance with Common Core State Standards and will have a disproportionately negative impact on schools and districts that have been identified as needing assistance under SOSS.

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work 63
Concerted, state-wide action will be needed to confront these problems directly and to introduce better assessment alternatives as Illinois gears up to meet rising expectations for universal college and career readiness that are reflected in Common Core State Standards; makes increasing use of student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of individual teachers and administers in accordance with Senate Bill 7; and adopts new ways of representing student achievement (through participation in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or PARCC) that will make past failures to advance college readiness/close chronic achievement gaps more overtly apparent to policy makers and the public at large.

**Bringing the Four Categories together--Integrating Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment with Leadership and School Capacity Building: The Mathematics Example**

The four categories discussed above could be addressed in the most traditional of ways through a trainer-of-trainers model that is thoroughly familiar to educators who have been around schools for any length of time—a model that largely has not produced the results at scale that educators and policy makers have been seeking. Our proposal, however, is to demonstrate how traditional training models can be integrated with a focus on school capacity building through leadership teams so that schools can become sites of ongoing adult learning. External expertise is typically necessary to help each school build internal capacity, and ROEs and ISCs, administrator associations and universities have to organize their expertise to ensure that the internal capacity is built.

We propose to do this in literacy and mathematics, working with leadership teams from targeted schools to build internal capacity at an accelerated pace. Literacy faculty from both UIC and UIUC are nationally and internationally known for their impact on curriculum, instruction, and assessment and are committed to the logic model of this proposal. The example we elaborated here to demonstrate this approach for both literacy and mathematics, however, is in mathematics teaching and learning.
Mathematics support for schools and districts

The proposed mathematics support for schools and districts is based on existing successful models of school and district partnerships, including UIC’s South Cook and West Cook Mathematics Initiatives. The proposed work focuses on three critical levers for supporting schools and systems: developing content-specific leadership knowledge and capacity; implementing high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and developing and strengthening school and system structures to support curricular coherence, collaborative work, and continuous improvement.

The goal is to establish an aligned system in targeted schools and districts that includes a shared vision for mathematics improvement and ways to support and nurture such improvement. The efforts will target leaders (principals, teacher-leaders, mathematics department chairs), district leaders (mathematics curriculum leaders; assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction), as well as personnel from The Center and ROEs/ISCs who are working with districts and schools.

The system of supports will be aligned to the needs of districts drawing on the content expertise of faculty and staff at UIC and the University of Chicago and will be closely coordinated with the broader leadership work outlined in the proposal.

Targeted goals for the leadership component include the following, which will result in improved student outcomes, engagement, and success in mathematics:

1. Establishing communities of school district leaders that work together on mathematics improvement and seek joint solutions to commonly held problems;
2. Strengthening schools’ and districts’ capacity to support improved mathematics instruction and hire and retain highly qualified staff;
3. Strengthening cross-district collaboration;
4. Expanding district administrators’ capacity to effectively lead mathematics improvement; and
5. Expanding the capacity of The Center and ROE/ISC staff to effectively lead mathematics improvement.

District-level administrators and principals will participate in a core professional development program designed to develop a community of administrators who have the knowledge and tools to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M) and high-quality mathematics instruction and assessment. Proposed project activities involve close collaboration with stakeholders from districts and schools.

District and school administrators will participate in a comprehensive, ongoing Administrator Leadership Academy. The Academy will include both summer and school year components and will be delivered through a blended model of in-person and online professional development. The Academy will provide administrators with experiences, information, and resources needed to guide them in key areas of school practice known to have an impact on students’ mathematical learning.

The Administrator Leadership Academy is designed to do the following:

- Build a professional community of administrators and instructional leaders;
- Develop participants’ understanding of the knowledge and dispositions students need to be mathematically literate in today’s world; and
- Develop participants’ understanding of the learning opportunities that need to be created to make significant mathematics available to all students.

Designated staff from The Center and ROEs/ISCs will also participate in a separate strand of ongoing professional development to build their capacity to support district and school improvement in mathematics. A key component of this professional development will be an ongoing collaborative review of mathematics strategies, improvement plans, and funding allocations at the school and district levels to increase transparency about the leadership “moves” that are being made around mathematics teaching.
learning, and leading, providing both technical assistance and political cover for leaders to make the
difficult decisions needed to drive student achievement forward.

The professional development program will be delivered through a blended model of in-person and online
sessions.

**Curriculum and Assessment**

The UIC and University of Chicago team will outline a series of targeted strategies related to aligning
classroom instruction and assessment with the core content and practices in the CCSS-M. These
strategies are being used with success in the West Cook and South Cook Mathematics Initiatives.

Targeted goals for the curriculum and instruction component include:

1. Introducing a series of formative assessment tasks and related tools for scoring and analyzing
   them to key stakeholder groups;
2. Preparing stakeholders to implement and/or support implementation of the assessment tasks as a
   step in the process of improving classroom instruction;
3. Introducing high-quality tools for analysis of mathematics instructional materials with respect to
   the CCSS-M;
4. Establishing a means for regional, cross-district collaboration around instructional materials
   adoptions and professional development delivery and acquisition; and
5. Providing a process for districts to analyze their current assessment systems and to design
   efficient systems for assessing students and programs.

A starting point for improving classroom instruction will be implementation of a series of high-quality,
formative assessment tasks that reflect the demands of the CCSS-M. The Mathematical Assessment
Resource Service (MARS) Assessment tasks and related materials provide a means to focus teacher and
administrator attention on student learning. These tasks are designed to build student content knowledge
and are aligned with the CCSS-M Standards for Mathematical Practice. They assist teachers in implementing lessons that maintain a high level of student thinking and provide a clear manifestation for administrators of high-quality mathematics instruction. Implementation of MARS tasks and corresponding re-engagement lessons in the classrooms of participating schools and districts complements existing instructional materials.

With instructional materials playing a central role in defining effective mathematics instruction, one goal is to encourage districts to move towards high-quality instructional materials that embody the content and practices of the CCSS-M. We will work with the ROEs/ISCs to facilitate a process that leads to cross-district collaboration around instructional materials adoptions. Common, cross-district adoptions, in turn, allow for efficiencies in providing targeted professional development, other implementation supports, common assessments, and classroom observation protocols that are closely linked to expected classroom instruction in mathematics. A related strand of this work involves helping districts align their formative and summative assessments with the CCSS-M and create efficient mathematics assessment systems.

The UIC team will introduce this work to personnel from The Center and ROEs/ISCs and will facilitate state-wide implementation by local (ROE/ISC and district) personnel of these elements of the school improvement program.

**B. Training & Professional Development**

**Training and Professional Development Needs of Staff Within and Associated with The Center**

The Center management staff will create training pathways for its staff based on the Focus Categories and Eight Essential Elements. All staff must complete the baseline three-step training in continuous improvement and effective coaching for improvement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus category</th>
<th>Essential element of effective education</th>
<th>Key PD services</th>
<th>Key tools and resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Continuous Improvement** (completed by all The Center staff) | Comprehensive planning | • 3-step training for fully utilizing the RS on IIRC Tool for District Level Team and School Level Teams  
• Overview  
• Engaging in the Continuous Improvement Process  
• Monitoring and Sustainability  
• Online Coaching and Team Training will build the capacity of the staff to work and coach district teams to implement the goals/activities in their continuous improvement plan. | • Online with self-paced components  
• Cadre and networking meetings for job-alike staff from The Center  
• ISBE designed Coach Capacity Building Modules  
• Rising Star  
• Strategic Planning  
• Monitoring and Feedback  
• Critical Friends Environment |
| **Educator Quality** (completed staff such that the resulting team has members with deep expertise in various areas, but are interdependent on other members for a complete support network) | • Professional Development  
• Leadership | • Teacher evaluation using the new IL system  
• Danielson Framework  
• Professional learning communities  
• IPA Ed Leaders Network | • Leadership support from IPA and IASA  
• PERA Evaluation Processes  
• Teacher and Principal Mentoring |
| **Learning Environment** (completed by staff such that the resulting team has members with deep expertise in various areas, but are interdependent on other members for a complete support network) | • Conditions for Learning  
• Community and Family Engagement | • Danielson Framework  
• SEL Standards | • ISBE designed LSS trainings  
• ISTAC Projects  
• Social and Emotional Learning Supports  
• Special Education  
• Clean, safe schools  
• Healthful meals  
• Up to date learning tools |
**Standard Components of the Professional Development Design and Areas That Will Be Customized to Fit the Illinois SSOS**

To be effective, professional development must be of high quality and matched to the specific needs of the staff working directly in and for The Center, staff working with SSOS partners, and staff from LEAs. The professional development must be matched to the specific needs of the LEAs based on data gathered and analyzed from the LEA audit, *Rising Star* Improvement plans, IIRC data, and interviews with LEAs. Professional development will be created and/or customized to align with targeted supports and interventions for districts identified by ISBE to meet the needs of LEAs according to ISBE’s Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support System. The Center will carefully design professional development and related resources to meet the specific areas of need identified and matched with the unique needs of the LEA. The professional development will be customized and differentiated accordingly.

In addition, The Center will address professional development quality first through consistently-applied design and delivery methods and standards that are research based and have track record of success. The design will be backward mapped from the specific changes in knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes identified as needs, and will begin with identifying specific, measureable learning outcomes for the training event. Next, methods for measuring the outcomes will be determined, followed by the creation of learning activities will be created that engage adult learners in connecting with their past knowledge and
experience, processing information and experiences to make meaning that will be retained in long term memory, and whenever possible, practicing skills that are intended to be transferred to the job. Standard design templates and processes will be used for consistency in design. In addition, those selected to deliver the professional development will be trained in the appropriate training delivery methods and techniques.

Evaluating the Fidelity of Implementation, Quality, Relevance, and Utility/Impact of the Professional Development Provided

The standard framework for the evaluation of professional development is often based on Donald Kirkpatrick's four-level model shown below.

1. Reaction - How does the learner feel about the training?
2. Learning - What facts, knowledge, etc., did the learner gain?
3. Behaviors - What skills did the learner develop?
4. Results or effectiveness - What results occurred? Did the learner apply the new skills to the necessary tasks in the organization and, if so, what results were achieved?

Professional development will be specifically evaluated according to the following areas of effectiveness, answering the following questions:

*Is it matched to needs?* The Center will identify the professional development and resources that will be made available statewide based on assessed needs of LEAs as identified from an analysis of *Rising Star* plans, audits and the Eight Essential Elements of Effectiveness.

Staff will determine if there is a need for professional development or support that is not being adequately met with existing resources. If a gap exists, training, resources, consulting and technical assistance will be created for The Center staff and others to deliver. A training-of-trainers model will be adopted when
needed to scale up services in a timely manner for consistent statewide delivery and to build capacity within the districts.

An assessment of The Center staff and SSOS Partner staff will be conducted to determine areas of existing expertise. Using The Center's online management system, listings of available professional development, consulting services, programs and staff within the system and with partners will be accessible. The database will also include the availability of resources with regard to locations and time availability. The system will provide contact information, forums and links to communicate with staff as needed.

The professional development and resources listed in the database will be screened for inclusion based on specific criteria, including whether it is research based, aligned with specific needs, and adheres to the standards of effective practice included in Learning Forward’s professional learning standards.

Is it delivered with fidelity? This will be determined by evaluating the ability of trainers and presenters to deliver the training effectively as designed. Evaluators will observe trainers and presenters and those who are able to deliver the training according to a fidelity checklist will be certified as such. In addition, designated The Center staff or experts contracted by The Center will monitor fidelity and quality from time to time by attending trainings and evaluating fidelity using a standard criteria checklist.

Does it meet quality standards? There are two aspects to determining quality: Design and Delivery.

Quality of Design: First, The Center will designate a standardized statewide design methodology, including tools, and will train staff in the methodology and research based principles of Instructional Design. This process with including having the training design peer-reviewed for quality by trained designers. A design team will be created comprised of members who are specifically trained in research-based instructional design procedures and principles. A standard set of templates and tools will be used consistently. This design team will utilize subject matter experts as needed during the design planning,
and will use subject matter experts and end users to validate the content of training. The design team will also use trained peer designers to review each training plan. The quality of the design will be assessed using rubrics based on criteria of quality design standards.

Quality of Delivery: Those who deliver the professional development will be trained to use standardized statewide training techniques and tools, and research-based principles of instructional delivery related to adult learning theory. The quality of the delivery will be assessed by applying a rubric based on criteria for quality delivery standards, as well as from participant feedback and The Center staff review. Quality of impact will be determined by assessing the level of implementation in the workplace and results in outcomes.

Is it relevant? The relevance of the professional development delivered to LEAs will be assessed by matching the learning outcomes in the professional development to the specific needs of the districts and schools identified in their Improvement plans and The Center's Individualized Service Plan based on audits and data used to develop that plan.

Does it impact behaviors and results? The assessment of impact should strive to measure levels 3 and 4 of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. Evaluating impact involves the use of key performance measures -- measures that can be observed, and from which the professional development training is designed. The training design model will backward map from this level of behavior and results, whenever feasible, and will be tied to the extent possible to the performance management system. The evaluation of the impact of professional development will be ongoing and directly tied to the level of implementation of knowledge and skills exhibited by staff at the LEA and by assessing progress while monitoring the level of implementation of Rising Star indicators and tasks assigned toward full implementation.
4. Staffing Plan

A. Role Descriptions

Job descriptions describe in detail the general tasks, functions, and responsibilities of a particular role. It may also include to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, and terms of employment. Job descriptions will provide an explanation of the different positions at The Center for stakeholders and potential candidates.

The Contractor will work with The Center director and ISBE to create role descriptions for each person and team within the SSOS using the format described below. Input from ISBE Roundtable members and current SSOS employees and partners will guide the development of the job descriptions. The ISBE Deputy Superintendent will have final approval of all role descriptions.

Job descriptions will be created by using a standardized format found in Appendix A. The format is designed to permit administrative personnel to create job descriptions for all positions based on the following:

1. Title (Official title for position as listed in Records/Payroll.)
2. Department (Center for School Improvement.)
3. Qualifications (Numerical listing of requirements/expectations of those items which qualify the individual to perform the job.)
4. Reports to (Indicates the person or supervisor to whom this individual will report.)
5. Supervises (Indicates, if anyone, who this person will supervise or manage.)
6. Job Goals (A written statement of job goal(s) which is/are essential in order to perform this job.)
7. Performance Responsibilities (Complete numerical list of performance duties [with or without headings] that are the essential functions of this position. Each heading shall begin with a verb.)
8. Terms of Employment (Indicates what the individual will receive or be assigned if working in this position: salary, fringe benefits, and work year, if applicable.)
9. Evaluation (Indicates the frequency of evaluation and who will perform the evaluation.)

Evaluation shall be based entirely on the job description and its performance responsibilities.

The job description and required qualifications for The Center director have been developed by ISBE and are part of the RFSP. Job descriptions including qualifications for The Center managers and chief officer for district accountability and oversight will be developed within 30 days of contract award. Job descriptions for the remaining positions in The Center will be developed within 60 days of the contract award.

B. Recruiting, hiring & developing staff

The Contractor will review and update a well-developed process that encompasses all of the areas of recruiting, hiring, and developing staff. The process has been developed using specialized human resource personnel and vetted for all applicable state and federal laws and guidelines.

The Contractor will ensure that qualifications including expertise in working with students with disabilities (SWDs), English Language Learners (ELLs), racial and ethnic minorities and low-income populations are included in the job description, the postings and screening guidelines. Other factors considered when building the statewide team will be a variety of experiences from elementary to high school, rural, suburban and urban backgrounds and even former experience as an administrator and teacher. By supervising a statewide recruiting and hiring process The Center will be able to employ a diverse group of experts to support schools and districts.

There will be interview questions to learn a candidate’s knowledge and experience in general skill areas as well as the targeted areas. Candidate’s expertise in these areas will be a factor in the hiring decision. With this statewide focus on knowledgeable, experienced staff with diverse expertise, staff with less experience in a specific area can be trained by another staff member with more knowledge and experience on the topic.

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
The contractor’s current Employment Process is included in Appendix A. Specifically, it includes the following:

1. Posting Guidelines, the details of how to and what to include in advertising positions
2. Screening Guidelines, a detailed procedure for determining which candidates may be selected for interviewing
3. Interview Process, complete set of guidelines, audits, rubrics, and forms to complete progression for candidate selection

C. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Contractor has an evaluation process for all employees completed by the administrator/supervisor for each category. Employees participate in a pre-observation, formal observation, and post observation process with a summative evaluation as the final rated result. The process includes:

1. The evaluation of personnel is based on the development of job descriptions.
2. Ratings for each evaluation are Proficient, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory.
3. The evaluation process includes goal setting. This process serves a continuous improvement function for employees who are rated Proficient or “Satisfactory”. The function of the goal setting process for employees rated “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” is to identify the problems or concerns, set the goal(s) for improvement, and evaluate whether or not the goals and/or concerns have been successfully achieved or remediated.

The contractor’s current Evaluation Report is included in Appendix A
5. Evaluation Plan for the Statewide System of Support

A. EVALUATION PLAN

Introduction

The evaluation for the Statewide System of Support will be led by a consortium of investigators from the University of Illinois, including the following:

- Steve Tozer, Ph.D., and Sam Whalen, Center for Urban Education Leadership (CUEL), UIC
- Stafford Hood, Ph.D., and William Cope Ph. D., Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA), UIUC
- Peter Mulhall, Ph.D., and Nancy Flowers at the University of Illinois’ Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD)

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation team will consist of a combination of faculty and staff from two of the University of Illinois campuses—Urbana and Chicago. Several colleges, three research centers and faculty from multiple departments agreed to participate in evaluation design to assess the capacity, competencies, services and effectiveness of the Center for School Improvement and their partner organizations. In addition, we identified a group of faculty from both campuses who have committed to participate on an Evaluation Advisory Group (see support letters) in a planning and advisory role or conducting the evaluation activities as prescribed by the RFSP. Faculty and staff members' areas of expertise include education policy, educational leadership, educational psychology, curriculum and instruction, economics, sociology, special education, psychology, evaluation research and quantitative and qualitative research methods. A brief review of the key units, departments, faculty and staff participating in the evaluation are described in greater detail in the Section 6 regarding capacity.
The evaluation of the Statewide System of Support will commence following the comprehensive audit of the current system and will utilize the data and knowledge gained from the comprehensive audit to ensure that the design and development of evaluation components, measurement constructs, and the like address any needs and inequities across the state identified via the audit process. The data collected as part of the audit will serve as baseline information for the evaluation.

The main objective of the evaluation are to assess the degree to which the Center for School Improvement achieves its stated goals, with regard to (a) providing oversight and management to the SSOS with a focus on bringing coherence and coordination to the regional delivery system and partners in the state; (b) working with the ISBE Roundtable to maintain alignment with the agency’s vision and reform initiatives; (c) deploying staff to work with identified districts on the development and implementation of customized continuous improvement plans; and (d) designing and supporting the use of the connected set of tools and resources to increase district capacity to improve teaching and learning. To that end, the evaluation team will utilize existing data and resources including Rising Star and apply new evaluation components continually to assess and report on the progress of the Center for School Improvement and to measure the impact on Illinois districts and schools.

The evaluation will be organized into two broad areas: process evaluation and impact evaluation. The process evaluation will focus on an evaluation of the assessment, planning, delivery, implementation, dissemination, and replication of the SSOS at the state and regional levels in order to promote continuous improvement. Process evaluation will also occur at the district and school levels as implementation occurs so that information about progress toward improvement goals can be built into the continuous improvement planning process. The impact evaluation will focus on determining the effects of implementation of strategic plans and strategies (evidenced-based programs, policies and practices), on student and teacher outcomes, including achievement scores at the district, school, grade and subgroup levels. Additionally, the evaluation team will collaborate with the external evaluators contracted by ISBE.
Evaluation Questions

The research questions guiding the evaluation plan for the SSOS are as follows:

1. How is the Center for School Improvement providing contracted levels of services via the SSOS to regions, districts and schools in the state?
2. How is the Center for School Improvement providing services via the SSOS to the satisfaction of the regions, districts and schools in the state?
3. Do the Regional Centers and Key Partners have the capacity to deliver effective services consistently across regions?
4. How do the Regional Centers and Key Partners develop and sustain capacity and improve the organization, to provide and improve the quality of service?
5. Do the SSOS targeted supports and interventions have a positive impact on school-wide professional practices and teacher effectiveness?
6. Have the The Center, SOSS, Regional Centers, Key Partners and local districts and schools employed a data-based continuous improvement process at each level?
7. Do the SSOS targeted supports and interventions have a positive impact on student achievement as measured at each school by the Illinois state standardized tests?

B. Evaluation Activities

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation will be implemented at the state level, the regional level, the district level, and the school level in order to assess the implementation of the SSOS. The focus of the process evaluation will be on assessing what is being done, when, by whom, and to whom; and it will provide a mechanism for a feedback loop to inform and address continuous improvement at all levels. The initial comprehensive assessment will identify the district and schools eligible to receive school improvement services; however, there may be other factors that determine when and how services are received. For example,
some schools may not be ready to take on reform efforts due to a change in district or leadership, school board turnover, or some other complex issues. This information will be important to know and understand, as district readiness is critical for using resources most effectively. Nonetheless, once districts and schools have been identified for services, process evaluation will (a) provide information that can be used to inform the type and improve the quality of services and delivery; (b) ensure that services are consistently delivered; (c) help The Center, Regional Centers and Key Partners be accountable to ISBE, various stakeholders and the regions, districts, and schools served; and (d) provide information to districts and schools on the progress of their implementation of improvement programs and practices in order to guide them in the process.

State Level Process Evaluation

The comprehensive audit of the current system conducted as part of this project (see Section 1) will serve as baseline information for the state level process evaluation. As such, the state level process evaluation activities will occur in years three and five of the project and will serve as a follow-up to the audit, using similar measures and data collection methods.

At the state level, therefore, data collection elements for the process evaluation will consist of key stakeholder interviews (i.e., SSOS partners, ISBE, advisory group), document reviews, and surveys of Regional Centers, Key Partners, and school district administrators. Consideration will also be given to including other entities affiliated with The Center such as other educational cooperatives that work with the center but are not partners. Inclusion of these partners may not occur initially in the process evaluation, but will be added in subsequent years. The purpose of the interviews, document review and surveys is to assess the functioning of The Center in order to make improvements and to measure customer satisfaction levels with the services The Center provides. Similar to the comprehensive audit/assessment, the following functions of The Center will be addressed with the interviews, document review, and surveys:
1. Oversight and management
2. Coordination of the regional delivery system
3. Communication with ISBE and partners
4. Alignment with ISBE vision and reform initiatives
5. Service delivery and effectiveness
6. Resource allocation and support
7. Dissemination strategies.

Given the groups to be included, we estimate conducting one-hour interviews (key partners, ISBE leaders, and advisory group members,) and administering online surveys (Regional Centers, Key Partners, and school/district leaders) in project years three and five. We will likely oversample local schools and districts to address non-response and thus ensure an adequate sample size. The interview and survey questions will build on the data collected as part of the comprehensive audit, thus using similar measurement constructs. New information and insights will also be considered from the evaluation team, EAG, and The Center leaders as services, delivery mechanisms, and resources are developed, and will be adapted from prior work by the evaluation teams, to ensure they are consistent with the structure and roll-out of support services. Interviews will be audiotaped, transcribed and, subsequently, analyzed with qualitative analysis software (e.g., Atlas.ti, NVIVO) to deconstruct interview sections and create common themes. Surveys will be administered in an online format and data downloaded and analyzed with statistical software (e.g., SPSS) to arrive at summary statistics, correlations, and regression. Findings will be reported to ISBE, Regional Centers, Key Partners and The Center staff for review, reflection, and identification of improvement areas.

**Regional Center and Key Partner Process Evaluation**

At the Regional Center and Key Partner level, data collection elements for the process evaluation will consist of tracking services and service delivery via an online data collection system. The evaluation
team has developed assessment and feedback mechanisms for multiple projects over a number of contracts and provided various types of professional development for centers, schools districts, state agencies and regional support systems. The current i3 grant evaluation being conducted by the evaluation team has three professional development hubs utilizing these data for assessments, planning, implementation and evaluation. The purpose of the data collection system for the Center is to provide a structured way to collect and house information in order to assess the implementation of services and functioning at the regional level. The following regional functions will be included in the online data collection system:

1. Type of services delivered, units of delivery—sessions, number/hours, methods, (coaching, professional development, curriculum, improvement assessment and planning)
2. Service delivery teams-participant identification, alignment/coherence across systems and services
3. Service delivery cycle (identification, assessment, planning, supporting, monitoring)
4. Fidelity of implementation of services and service delivery
5. Satisfaction with services
6. Continuous improvement benchmarks and goal attainments
7. Evaluation methods for impact assessment

An online data collection system will be developed to provide a centralized way to enter and manage regional process data collected as part of the SSOS, specifically services, delivery mechanisms, and measurements of the fidelity with which services are delivered. The online data collection system maximizes the ability to enter and review data in “real time.” By integrating reporting functionality into the system at the school, district, region, and state levels, all stakeholders can easily access and use data in an efficient and effective manner in order to support continuous improvement.
Services delivered by the regions, such as implementation assessments, coaching, and professional development, will be logged into the online data collection system and tracked over time. Additionally, a rubric will be developed and completed by regional staff that assesses the activities occurring during each stage of the delivery cycle (identification, assessment, planning, supporting, and monitoring) in order to track progress toward goals.

The fidelity of implementation of services, or the extent to which the delivery of services, adheres to the program model originally developed will also be collected as part of the online data collection system. This important aspect of the evaluation will allow the evaluation team to determine why and under what conditions services are effective. Measuring the fidelity of implementation will be accomplished with the development of a fidelity measure. Using documents produced by The Center (e.g., service descriptions, plans, activity reports, etc.) and the logic model for targeted supports and interventions, an operational definition will be developed that describes each service component in terms of content, actions, quality, and observable indicators to identify its implementation. Because the regions will oversee services in diverse settings, both rural and urban, some of the operational definitions will include slight variability in their definitions to account for the realities of these varied settings. The evaluation team and The Center will discuss each component, arrive at an agreed-upon definition, and document the definitions. Where variances exist, they will be noted in the operational definition of the component. By documenting the variances, the evaluation team will be able to collect data about them and utilize this data in the analyses.

In addition to the operational definition, the fidelity measure also identifies the data collection strategy to measure each program component. A variety of methods will be used to gather this data such as surveys, attendance records at professional development, coaches’ logs, Rising Star data, and activity reports. A fidelity scale for each component will also be developed to assess exposure/dosage. Additionally, where appropriate a criterion for assessing implementation levels (high, medium, low) will be developed and included in the measure.
A fidelity measure will be completed every year of the project for each individual component, and then a composite score will be calculated based on all of the individual component scores. Composite scores will allow for an assessment of the level of fidelity of implementation being assessed—high, medium, or low implementation. Future discussions with The Center will focus on the possible need to weight the key components when calculating the composite score.

**District Level and School Level Process Evaluation**

Research has continuously demonstrated that the district office and leadership must play a critical role in addressing and supporting low performing schools to improve their outcomes (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2012). Leadership, human resources, incentives, sanctions, other resources and commitment are fundamental to improving poor schools. For example, a common problem in many low performing schools is the presence of new or less qualified teachers and administrators. This is a local issue that can be addressed if the understanding and will is there. At the district and school levels, data collection elements for the process evaluation will consist of tracking the implementation of the four focus categories and eight essential elements of education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Categories</th>
<th>Essential Elements of Effective Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>Comprehensive planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator quality</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Conditions for learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Community and family engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
At the district level, surveys of districts leaders will be used to measure the level of focus the district employs to address the key categories and essential elements. The survey questions will be developed with The Center leaders as services and delivery mechanisms are finalized in order to ensure they are consistent with the structure and roll-out of support services. Surveys will be administered in an online format and data downloaded and analyzed with statistical software (e.g., SPSS) to arrive at summary statistics, correlations, and regression. Findings will be reported to The Center staff and districts for review, reflection, and identification of improvement areas.

At the school level and aggregated to the district level across schools, the implementation of the four key categories and the eight essential elements will be accomplished with the following two methods: 1) ISBE’s climate survey, and 2) CPRD’s School Improvement Self-Study. The ISBE climate survey, an annual data collection requirement for all schools in the state, will be used to assess and track changes in school climate over time. These data will assist in assessing essential element four (conditions for learning) and essential element five (community and family engagement).

The School Improvement Self-Study (SISS) will also be used to assess and track changes in school programs and practices aligned with the eight essential elements. The current Self-Study Surveys address the following four elements: professional development, leadership, conditions for learning, and community and family engagement. The remaining four elements (comprehensive planning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment) are addressed by the surveys, but will be strengthened in order to measure them more thoroughly and completely. The SSIS is a data collection system consisting of a set of survey measures designed specifically for staff and parents in the school setting. The design and purpose of the SSIS are twofold. First, it provides schools with evidence to document and track the changes in their schools as part of continuous improvement. Second, it provides data at an aggregate level (e.g., district, region, state) that is particularly beneficial in identifying promising programs and practices linked to improved teaching and learning for students.
The SSIS is comprised of numerous validated measures and key constructs (Table 1), but the central tenets are focused on the collection of data pertaining to teaching and learning practices (e.g., classroom instructional practices), school climate, student academic expectations and aspirations (e.g., plans to do better in school next year), and student outcomes (e.g., student belonging). The evaluation team believes the sine qua non for improving low performing school and student achievement and success is related to the relationship between the teacher and students and the quality of instruction. Over the past decade, the team has published multiple reports and studies that support these relationships and that the SISS helps schools improve school and student outcomes. (Flowers, Mertens, Mulhall, Krawczyk, 2007). Other researchers using more rigorous research designs have also reported the importance of teacher-student relationships and instructional practices in both elementary and high schools (Crosnoe, Morris, Burchinal, Pianta, Keating, Friedman, & Clarke-Stewart, 2010; Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami & Lun. 2011). The SISS measures may need to be adapted for The Center project based on the final Illinois school climate survey and further review of the eight essential elements to reduce duplication and time burden for schools and students.

Table 1. Self-Study Measures and Key Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Survey</th>
<th>Staff Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attitudes toward school reform practices</td>
<td>• Interdisciplinary team activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in school activities</td>
<td>• Classroom instructional practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Educational activities with students</td>
<td>• English classroom activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School’s efforts to involve parents</td>
<td>• Mathematics classroom activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Familiarity with educational practices</td>
<td>• Academic standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Satisfaction with the school and student experiences</td>
<td>• Collaborative review of student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching efficacy and role clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher decision-making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Classroom and work climate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• School safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contact with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional development participation, preferences, value, and needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The CPRD research team has been developing and refining the SISS for a number of school reform and improvement initiatives dating back to 1990 with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation under the Middle Grades School State Policy Initiative; it has evolved over the past 22 years (See history in Appendix B.) In fact, the SISS is currently being used as part of a US DOE Investing in Innovation (i3) grant that CPRD is evaluating on middle grades reform in three states (California, Illinois, North Carolina), including Chicago Public Schools. At the end of year 2, i3 results from the SISS, coaches’ logs and implementation analysis demonstrated positive school and achievement outcomes (CPRD, 2012). Other initiatives evaluated by CPRD, and their data based decision-making processes have been described in several publications over the past decade (Flowers, Mertens, Mulhall, Krawczyk, 2007; Flowers & Carpenter, 2009).

CPRD capacity to collect, process and return data to schools rapidly (4-6 weeks) has been augmented by the use of online surveys and computer technology which makes it possible and cost-effective for conducting large data collection efforts across states, regions and large districts. A critical aspect of the SSIS is that schools receive their data back within 4-6 weeks of submitting hard copies and within two weeks for online surveys. SSIS options include the following:

- Paper and pencil surveys
- Online surveys (registration, survey administration, and survey reports generated through an online survey system)
- Spanish language survey option for students and parents

An abridged sample notebook of charts and graphs created from the SSIS are shown in Appendix C.

In addition to collecting and processing SSIS data, the evaluation team, working with The Center and Regional Centers, will adapt and develop existing training and technical modules integrating SSIS and multiple sources of school data. The project and evaluation teams will collaborate to develop data analysis
and data-based decision making skills that integrate achievement, behavior and SSIS data allowing for understanding relationships of causal and contributing factors between school practices (instruction, planning time, high expectations) and student outcomes (achievement, student engagement, etc.). The SISS data results will be mapped to the Rising Star improvement indicators using a crosswalk document that links the two sources in order to assist schools and districts in using both data types. From these data (SISS and Rising Star) will be district and school level performance goals and objectives that help administrators, teachers, coaches and parents understand the relationship between school programs, policies and practices and how targeting and monitoring these performance measures provides ongoing feedback and “milestones” to check progress and monitor results. If an objective is not attained, these data should provide an understanding of why not and what directions a school needs to move to make a midcourse correction. Over the years, we believe that the SSIS with parents and students is cost effective and beneficial to a school or district when conducted biennially; however, the teachers and staff surveys should be conducted annually in order for the school and district gain a better understanding of the organizational and instructional practices implemented into school improvement efforts. An integral part of the teacher and staff survey is to assess professional development and implementation programs policies and practices.

**Impact Evaluation**

The impact evaluation will be implemented at the district level and the school level to assess the effect of implementation on the following outcomes:

1. **District Level**
   a. District capacity to implement eight essential elements of education
   b. Overall district student achievement scores and closing achievement gaps

2. **School Level**
   a. Implementation of eight essential elements of education
b. Student achievement scores and closing achievement gaps

At the school level and aggregated to the district level across schools, the impact of the SSOS will be assessed with the following three methods: 1) examination of summative survey data from the ISBE Climate Survey and CPRD SISS in order to assess short-term and intermediate outcomes around school-wide professional practices and teacher effectiveness (i.e., school climate, teaching and learning practices, leadership); 2) examination of teacher and principal effectiveness data per ISBE’s state performance evaluation system; 3) examination of summative process data to assess intermediate outcomes pertaining to district capacity for implementation of the essential elements of education; and 4) examination of long-term outcomes as to whether the interventions have a positive impact on student achievement as measured at each school by the Illinois state standardized tests.

Survey data (ISBE Climate Survey and CPRD SSIS) will be used for formative feedback (as discussed in the prior sections on process evaluation), but it will also be an important component of the summative/impact evaluation as well. Measures such as school climate, classroom climate, teacher efficacy, and student academic efficacy represent milestones in the implementation of the eight essential elements of education and are critical to assess. Additionally, district and school level summative process data related to overall capacity and implementation of the intervention, as well as teacher and principal effectiveness data will also be examined for summative purposes. These three data sources will be used to help the evaluation team create an implementation measure as a mediating variable when examining both school-level changes and district-level changes in student outcomes (i.e., Do higher levels of implementation of the essential practices in an effective manner result in more improved outcomes for students?).

In terms of the examination of long-term outcomes, student achievement scores will be used to examine the summative results at both the district and the school levels, including the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), and the Illinois Alternate
Assessment (IAA). This long-term or distal outcome, improved student performance on the statewide tests (i.e., reading/language arts and math) and reductions in the achievement gap among subgroups of students (e.g., ELL, disabled, free/reduced lunch), will be examined from all participating schools via access to ISBE’s Interactive Illinois Report Card. These analyses will build upon the baseline analysis of achievement data conducted during the comprehensive audit, of which the results will serve as baseline data for the statistical growth techniques conducted as part of the impact evaluation.

Under Illinois’s NCLB waiver, the new evaluation system will move to using the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) Project, which employs a growth curve model of assessing student performance and teacher effectiveness by improved academic achievement over time. The growth curve models track student academic achievement from one year to the next by taking into account the prior year’s scores and how they have improved over the course of an academic or calendar year. This approach uses the student’s prior year score as a baseline compared to the next year’s score increasing the precision and real changes in student results. It also provides teachers and administrators with a more precise and accurate way of gauging student improvement for the time the student is in a teacher’s class. It is understood that this will also be part of the teacher’s evaluation system.

The evaluation team will use state achievement test scores to examine longitudinal growth at the cohort level over time as students’ progress through school (i.e., from grade 6 to grade 8). The team will also examine cross-sectional data at the school level for specific grade groups over time. Analyses will also examine various key school sub-groups of students (i.e., race/ethnicity, free/reduced lunch, gender) in order to determine whether the interventions via the SSOS are closing the achievement gap among students. Statistical analyses will initially employ comparisons over time (t-tests, ANOVA’s) to determine overall school change and change among subgroups. Additionally, the team will match SSIS data to school achievement data and use hierarchical linear modeling to differentiate two or three nested levels—school, grade/team and individual to determine overall program effects (i.e., implementation of the eight essential elements of education) on student achievement and teacher effectiveness.
Outcome Data Sources

As previously described in this section, numerous data sources will be utilized to conduct the evaluation activities, including:

1. Illinois district and school accountability system (i.e., star level ratings)
2. Rubric results for assessing implementation of eight essential elements of education
3. Interactive Illinois Report Card, including student achievement scores
4. Illinois Longitudinal Data System
5. Rising Star Continuous Improvement Planning indicator data
6. ISBE’s Climate Survey data
7. CPRD’s School Improvement Self-Study Survey data
8. ISBE’s teacher and principal evaluation information
9. Coaches’ Logs, professional development logs, and other service logs

For all data systems housed at or by ISBE, the evaluation team will work with The Center staff and ISBE to assess their availability for incorporation into evaluation activities. These assessments will include important issues such as timing of data availability, data formats, downloading mechanisms, data aggregation capabilities, and the like in order to establish data-sharing agreements for each data system or component. For the online data collection system that will be designed and developed by the evaluation team, issues related to concept plans, design plans, and implementation plans will be made in consultation with The Center staff.

District and School Level Data Collection

The SSOS school level evaluation will be implemented based on conducting the SISS and the proposed new accountability system and performance indicators as part of the Illinois waiver from NCLB, which is currently under review by the U.S. Department of Education. The system is grounded in a multiple measure index. Based on the comprehensive audit and prescribed index score, districts and schools will
receive a performance designation that will be converted into a rating system illustrated by stars (star levels one to five, with five being most desirable). The number of starts will signal the types of supports and interventions each district and school receives. The four levels of support are, as follows:

1. Foundational assistance districts/schools: Star levels 3, 4, and 5 (80% of schools)
2. Focused support districts/schools: Star levels 2 and 3 (15% of schools)
3. Priority intervention schools: Star level 1 and 2 (5% of schools)
4. High priority districts: Star level 1 (1-3% of districts)

The evaluation activities will be incorporated by level of supports/interventions focusing on high priority and focus support schools at Star levels 1 and 2, and will only include students in grades 5 and up. The SISS has not been widely used with students under grade 5, and teaching structures and practices are typically quite different as students enter the middle grades and high school grades. All levels will receive core evaluation services, with certain levels receiving additional and more in-depth data collection and analysis efforts. The most robust evaluation services will be applied to the high priority districts and schools who are receiving more targeted services and intensive assistance. At this time, we have calculated that the two levels of highest support (star levels 1 and 2) would include approximately 700 to 800 high priority schools. These schools will complete the full SISS, including the staff survey, student, survey and parent survey. Schools in star level 3 will complete the SISS staff survey.

**Implementation and Timeline of Evaluation (Including Comprehensive Audit)**

Per ISBE’s instructions in the RFSP, the initial project period will be one year. During the first eight months of the project, the comprehensive audit will be designed and conducted. Other evaluation activities during this time will be focused primarily on data collection system design and set-up, measure refinement and development, and training and technical assistance of all systems with the SSOS and regions. Data collection of the evaluation activities will commence during year 2 of the project. The timeline below assumes funding begins on or around July 20, 2012.

Finalize the contract and subcontract for proposed comprehensive audit and evaluation plan. Submit IRB to the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board for all data collection and analysis activities. Evaluation project staffing, planning and development meetings with The Center staff, and orientation begins. Data sharing agreements established for ISBE-housed data sources.

December 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013

Develop an analysis plan for the comprehensive audit for accessing and analyzing Illinois School Report Card data, matching census data into School Report Card data, mapping high needs schools across Illinois and within the ten Regional Centers, developing online surveys for each of the key participant groups, and developing interview questionnaires for key participants groups. Identify ISBE, RAC, KP and school districts to participate in the online surveys and interviews as part of comprehensive audit. Evaluation team designs online data collection system for the evaluation on paper in preparation for online programming.

April 1, 2013, to May 31, 2013

Conduct visits to two or three RAC to review documents for conducting audit.

Solicit RAC, KP, ISBE and school districts for key audit documents. Implement audit online surveys, interviews and document reviews. Programmers implement the data collection system design in an online format and the system undergoes testing of all data entry screens, queries, reports, and user guides. Additionally, the evaluation team engages in measure refinement and development for evaluation surveys.

May 1, 2013, to June 30, 2013

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
Analyze audit results of surveys, interviews and document review.

June 1, 2013, to July 19, 2013

Summarize audit results of surveys, interviews and document reviews. Integrate audit information into a summary document and present to ISBE.

May 15, 2013, to July 19, 2013

Training and technical assistance provided to all regions on the online data collection system via in-person trainings, webinars, and telephone for upcoming year evaluation activities.

Dissemination Plan

The evaluation team will disseminate the formative and summative data to The Center, ISBE, regions, districts and schools so they can use it to monitor and refine programs and services. The final two to three months of the project will be focused on assembling dissemination materials based on the project findings, followed by explicit dissemination activities, including drafting and disseminating findings, particularly for use by The Center for School Improvement staff, ISBE, and key partners, but also seeking opportunities for dissemination beyond the key partners to other state stakeholders, including parents, local school boards, and communities. The evaluation team is experienced in working in a collaborative partnership that provides data to participating schools for data-based decision making and program improvement (Flowers & Carpenter, 2009; Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2007).
6. Organizational Capacity

**A. PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH TURNING AROUND AND IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

**Theory of Action**

The theoretical framework that guides the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, the University of Illinois, and the Project Partners is that the delivery of regionally-based, high quality, consistent, efficient PK-12 statewide educational support services must focus on and be held accountable for rigorous student academic and institutional outcomes. The Center will implement a delivery model that requires responsive, responsible and results-oriented organizational capacity not only at the state and regional levels, but at district and school levels, as well.

The theory of action guiding this proposal, then, is that the Center for School Improvement will produce results in measurable student learning outcomes to the degree that the organizational and instructional capacities of high-need schools are developed and supported—and that to do so, school leadership improvement is essential.

Recognizing that an education is critical to the quality of life and financial stability of our society, the organizational structure will assist and support districts and schools as they design and implement research-based improvement plans with a focus on high levels of student achievement and a level of rigor that will equip our students for productive and contributing citizenry in the 21st century.

The economic and political culture of the United States of America demands models of leadership and services that produce efficiencies of scale and reduce duplication while improving delivery of programs and services. Provable results are the essence of all programs and there is a need for radical efficiency. Radical efficiency is different, it is better and it should lower the cost of public services. A commitment to radical efficiency does not offer an opportunity to alter current services. Instead, it requires courageous leadership to look at old problems with a new lens; it expects a genuine shift in the nature and efficiency
of the services offered; and most importantly, its goal is to transform the public’s experiences with these services.

As The Center examines its opportunity to employ the strategies inherent in a model characterized by radical efficiency, the leadership recognizes that there is a need for mutually reinforcing roles for both the central and local entities. In fact, an unqualified commitment to radical efficiency requires a central entity strategy and consistent local entity action. The central entity is responsible for establishing a clear agenda and direction based upon the pursuit of long term statewide goals. The local entities become the leaders of innovation, because only they can assume responsibility for connecting their communities at the responsive, empathetic, and personal levels to explore how they can best contribute to achieving the goals in better and more sustainable ways.

As a result of the transition to a model of radical efficiency, a system for implementing support programs and professional development that is responsive to the needs of the schools and districts has been developed. The goal is to provide research-based professional development, which supports local initiatives and innovative practices and assists districts in meeting the demands of increased rigor and academic achievement for their students, along with the demands of new state and federal mandates. This renewed approach focuses on specific programs identified by the schools and districts, establishes high standards for targeted professional development content and uses measurable student learning results to assess the effectiveness of the programs. The goal is to build capacity and sustainability, which are foundational components of substantial and enduring strategies for rapid change.

Organizations’ Prior Experience in Low Performing Schools

University of Illinois

The University of Illinois has a rich history of impact on low-performing schools, ranging from the groundbreaking work of the University of Illinois Council on Student Mathematics in the 1960s, to the noted achievements of the UIUC Center for the Study of Reading in the 1980s and 1990s, to the CPS
system-wide impact of the UIC Center for Literacy and the UIC Center for Urban School Leadership in the 2000s. Although both UIC and UIUC Colleges of Education are widely known for their research, and are, therefore, listed among the top forty graduate schools of education in *U.S. News and World Report*, both institutions work directly with school districts and state agencies to improve student learning in high-need schools. While academic departments are structured to support distinctly individual and unique faculty research agendas, both UIUC and UIC Colleges of Education have generated a number of different research and action units to organize collaborative faculty activity around the needs of schools. These units, typically framed as centers, institutes, or collaboratives, reflect the view that transforming learning and teaching for the new century requires collaborative relationships joining researchers, practitioners and professional colleagues. The UIUC College of Education is focusing efforts on five strategic initiatives aligned to Strategic Campus Goals. They are:

- The Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA)
- The Center for Education in Small Urban Communities
- The Forum on the Future of Public Education
- STEM Education Research Collaborative
- Ubiquitous Learning Institute

Each of these builds the capacity of the college to support collective work around common educational problems, and each unit is documenting impact. One UIUC faculty member is lead staff for the Illinois P-20 Council, a statewide organization to shape policy throughout the continuum of pre-school through undergraduate school. UIUC and UIC are two of the five largest producers of teachers for Chicago public schools, where a large portion of the State’s lower-performing schools are concentrated.

Producing professionals for high-need schools has always been one of the central missions of the College of Education at UIC. Since the Youth Development program started in 2009, over 90% of its graduates have found employment; 100% of UIC’s Special Education MEd graduates were hired in 2010-2011; and
99% of candidates completing the UIC residency portion of the EdD in Urban Education Leadership program secure administrative positions in urban schools – over 60 of them as principals recognized for their impact on student learning in high need schools. In teacher development, UIC’s College of Education is now in its third year leading a $16M federal grant with three other Chicago universities to develop new approaches to training teachers for high-need urban schools. In addition, a significant number of initiatives have been created by UIC to respond to high-need schools. The Director of the UIC Center for Literacy led the formation and implementation of CPS Reading Framework that has shown dramatic improvements in CPS elementary reading scores since its implementation, district-wide. The Director of the UIC Center for Urban Education Leadership led a statewide legislative task force that has made principal preparation more rigorous and more selective throughout the state. The greatest impact of improved leadership preparation will be felt in the lowest performing schools. Finally, Mathematics and Science faculty at UIC now team with the Learning Sciences Research Institute and the College of Education to develop teacher leader teams for high-need Chicago high schools under a five year grant from the National Science Foundation.

**Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools**

**Lead Partner, School Improvement Grant Schools and Districts in Illinois**

IARSS is one of sixteen Lead Partners pre-approved by the Illinois State Board of Education to offer services and programs designed to assist school districts with school improvement efforts in persistently low performing schools. By demonstrating a need for school improvement and a strong commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources to substantially raise the achievement of their students towards the goal of attaining Adequate Yearly Progress, schools will choose a Lead Partner as a result of successfully competing for a School Improvement Grant (SIG), as authorized under section 1003(g) of the Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA). The local school and the Lead Partner share accountability for the successful implementation of the selected intervention model and the goal of substantially raising student achievement. Lead Partners are responsible for implementing whole school

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
reform efforts that integrate structural and programmatic interventions. They work with the districts to identify needs and supports in five areas: 1) leadership, 2) parent and community, 3) professional capacity of the teachers and school staff, 4) student-centered learning climate, and 5) high-quality instruction.

IARSS was selected as the Lead Partner by three of the twenty-three schools from nine districts awarded School Improvement Grant funds in FY 2011 and FY 2012:

**Cohort 1, FY 2011-FY 2013**

- DePue USD #103: DePue High School, DePue, IL ($4.7 million award)
- Egyptian CUSD #5: Egyptian High School, Tamms, IL ($4.4 million award)

**Cohort 2, FY 2012-FY 2014**

- Sandoval CUSD #501: Sandoval High School, Sandoval, IL ($4 million award)

These schools adopted the transformation intervention model under the direction of IARSS. In this model, the school replaces a principal who has led the school for more than two years, uses student growth as part of teacher and principal evaluations, rewards effective teachers and removes those who are not, increases student learning time, and uses data to improve instruction.

These three high schools utilizing IARSS as Lead Partner have shown remarkable progress. School climate has improved and a culture of high expectations for all students is emerging. There have been positive changes in student outcomes including increased attendance and graduation rates. All three have seen gains in student achievement as measured by the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and the ACT.

Statewide System of Support Regional Delivery System

Part I. Narrative Description of the Proposed Work
Organized in nine geographically distributed SSOS areas, the forty-four Regional Offices of Education and three Intermediate Services Centers have delivered the Statewide System of Support Services since 2003. Each area SSOS fiscal agent has coordinated the recruitment, hiring and development of coaches to work with underperforming districts and schools in the Statewide System of Support. Coaches determine levels of district readiness, collaborate with the district/school leadership teams, provide professional development on Rising Star, initiate and monitor implementation of district improvement plans, and assist districts in coordinating initiatives and building them into a sustainable integrated systems. Specifically, the ROEs/ISCs work with Title I schools identified as not meeting AYP and on the state/federal Academic Watch status list. ISBE data shows that SSOS coaches worked with 166 districts in Corrective Action or Restructuring and 503 schools in academic status during FY 12.

**Strategies proven to be most effective for stimulating rapid change that will be used**

School turnaround efforts call for dramatic improvement over a short time period. In *Exploring the Pathway to Rapid District Improvement*, Lane (2009) explains that “rapid district improvement means that there are dramatic changes in district structures, culture, policies, and process within one to three years of the start of the improvement effort; evidence of significant improvement in instructional practices and student academic performance within three to four years of the start of the improvement effort; and evidence that changes and improvements are system wide and sustainable” (p 7).

IARSS has found that changes in culture and climate in SIG schools has led to success, including increased student achievement. The key to changing climate and culture is the transformation administrator and the team that is selected to work in the school. With the local ROE/ISC connected to districts in the region and the statewide organization, IARSS, fostering connections across all parts of the state, IARSS has both central and local entity capabilities. One of the powerful benefits of partnering with IARSS is their network, which allows access to resources including pools of talented teachers, administrators and resource personnel able to undertake the turnaround work. This network has resulted
in the ability of the local ROE and the district to hire capable staff as transformation administrators and 
team members in order to address specific achievement issues and goals in the school. Employing staff 
with knowledge and skills for transforming schools, expertise in the specific areas of need determined by 
the school, and deep understandings of the local environment have been the critical element of success in 
these low-performing schools.

Along with turning around the culture and climate, IARSS has found that intensive work with teachers in 
these districts, in order to increase their knowledge of content, improve their pedagogical and classroom 
management skills, and facilitate a problem-solving approach, has also led to improvement in instruction 
and student academic performance. This work includes curriculum alignment using Common Core State 
Standards, lesson plan development, and implementation of engaged learning practices. The work with 
teachers has been facilitated by the team of onsite coaches and accessible university coursework.

ROE/ISC coaches working in the Statewide System of Support serve as a catalyst for change. They have 
found the following strategies to be most effective: alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment; 
review of data and data systems, and focus on improving instruction. By developing a professional 
relationship with the district leadership team, ROE/ISC coaches are able to assist in analyzing Illinois 
Interactive Report Card and Rising Star data, to support the development and alignment of curriculum 
with instruction and assessment, to facilitate collaborative discussions and decisions about data, and to 
function as a critical friend while assisting in the development of a culture of candor.

At UIC and UIUC, two independent centers for school leadership have found that building the 
organizational capacity of schools to improve instruction in a continuous learning model is a cost- 
effective driver of improved instructional capacity and student learning gains. The work of UIC and 
others has in fact led Chicago Public Schools to make a new $10M investment in school leadership 
development for CPS this year. The UIC approach to building school capacity through leadership 
development has been nationally recognized in publications by the Rainwater Foundation, Wallace
B. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE WORK WITH LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

University of Illinois

The work of the UIUC and UIC Colleges of Education with low-performing schools is described throughout this section, and the following examples demonstrate the effectiveness of this work.

The Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, one of UIUC College of Education’s strategic initiatives, has now shaped new teacher leadership teams in every elementary and high school in Champaign and Urbana. Many of these schools are in the Statewide System of Support, and qualitative data on teacher assessments of the initiative are strong. The Illinois New Teacher Collaborative has now offered mentoring to hundreds of novice teachers in central Illinois and has provided guidance to state policy on new teacher support.

Another project with documented gains in student achievement involves both campuses: UIC Principal Investigator William Teale, along with colleagues Jeffri Brookfield and Maureen Meehan, were first awarded $2.7 million in 2006 to launch Charting a Course to Literacy, which partnered with three Chicago charter schools to help three- and four-year-old students – primarily low-income youth, and those with limited English proficiency or disabilities – learn to read and write. The project ended in 2010. By the end, children who participated in the program significantly outscored comparison classrooms, according to an independent evaluation conducted by the Bureau of Education Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools

Lead Partner, School Improvement Grant Schools and Districts in Illinois
The three high schools with IARSS as Lead Partner have shown notable progress. School climate has improved and a culture of high expectations for all students is emerging. There have been positive changes in student outcomes including increased attendance and graduation rates. All three have seen gains in student achievement as measured by the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and the ACT.

An October 2011 ISBE news release documented how current SIG grants were helping low performing schools.

| Percentage of Students who meet/exceed on Reading and Math PSAE |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| School Name            | District Name   | 2010    | 2011   | 2010  | 2011  |
| DePue H.S.             | DePue USD 103   | Read    |         |       |       |
|                        |                 | 33.3    | 41.7   | 22.2  | 33.3  |
| Egyptian Sr. H.S.     | Egyptian CUSD 5 |         | 44.7   | 50.0  | 15.8  | 36.4  |

More students in the SIG schools earned the minimum ACT score required for college entry. The two high schools in the FY 2010 cohort demonstrated the largest increase in the percentage of students who earned a composite score of 20 or higher of all schools in the cohort as illustrated in the following graph from Illinois Progress Report 2011-12 Improving Our Lowest-Performing Schools. (Advance Illinois, 2011).
Data from Sandoval High School, part of the FY 2011 cohort, shows similar results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Students Scoring above 18 in Each Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the quantitative results, qualitative data paints the whole picture of the positive changes in these SIG schools.

After just one year, staff noted the following changes in the school and shared them in a school-wide teacher survey:

- **Attitudes of the students have become more and more positive in regards to their academic success. In my own classroom, environments have changed dramatically. I now have students who enjoy teaching their classmates after learning a concept and students have expressed excitement about learning to me.**

- **Students are becoming more involved in their own education.**

- **I can feel a change in the students when it comes to adult/student interactions. They seem much more confident in talking to adults than they have been in the past. They are not so quick to be intimidated to ask for help or even to just smile and say hello in the hall.**

Teachers at Sandoval High School made the following statements about the impact of the School Improvement Grant on their teaching after one year of implementation:

- **I am more aware of how I deliver information as well as my awareness of what students are telling me verbally and non-verbally. I have a new and fresher understanding of the power of building strong relationships with the students. When they know you care, they care to learn.**
• This is the first time I have taught with the end in mind. I have directly tied Common Core to activities and reflected on what works, what needs to be changed. My classroom management has improved and I feel more successful in the classroom and have noticed lots of improvement in my students over the course of the year.

• I have improved my reflections on student attitudes toward learning. I have learned how little compliments can help students work harder to be in the learning process. I see that students look for total acceptance in the work they do. I am building relationships to promote understanding of my subject, of others and expectations. I have increased my expectations and standards for student work. I have attempted to make “homework” and other assignments more “fun”.

Advance Illinois highlighted the work in the SIG schools with Lead Partner IARSS in Illinois Progress Report 2011-12, Improving Our Lowest-Performing Schools. With the infusion of School Improvement Grant dollars, schools utilizing IARSS as Lead Partner have significantly increased their per student funding and structure of support, using teams of talented instructional leaders and coaches and innovative data and community specialists, to transform these chronically low-performing schools. School Improvement Grant work has had a dramatic impact on teacher support and on-the-job professional development, which has helped staff enhance their toolkit of classroom management and effective teaching techniques. The use of weekly and quarterly assessments to gauge student progress, individualized portfolios for each student and a focus on community engagement are resulting in signs of progress in these schools.

**Statewide System of Support Regional Delivery System**

**Individual ROE Case Study of SSOS**

SSOS areas participate in statewide data collection and evaluate their work regionally. A case study conducted by DuPage Regional Office of Education demonstrates successful and effective work with underperforming schools in their region.
DuPage ROE served eleven suburban districts and fifteen schools in SSOS during the 2011-2012 school year. Data was collected for three years for all districts receiving services through the ROE. Data collected include academic achievement scores as measured by the state assessment program and the results from an impact study that establishes a correlation between the time SSOS coaches spend working with a district or school and resulting achievement scores.

The DuPage Regional Office cites representative schools and districts as examples of its success and supports the fact that programs and processes proven effective here can be duplicated across the state.

- An elementary district with an enrollment of 502, an SES rate of 75.7% and an LEP rate of 61.4% made a 6.8% gain in reading from 2010 to 2011, thereby meeting the Safe Harbor provision for improvement.
- A second elementary school in the same district, with an enrollment of 563, an SES rate of 68.4%, and an LEP rate of 74.1%, achieved an 8.3% gain, also meeting the Safe Harbor provision.
- A third school of the same district, with an enrollment of 514, an SES rate of 87.46 and LEP rate of 78.9%, experienced a 7.3% gain, sufficient to meet the target for Safe Harbor.
- A fourth elementary school in another district, which included middle school students, having an enrollment of 462, an SES rate of 73.2% and an LEP rate of 57.1%, achieved a 3.2% gain in AYP.
- A district with a high school enrollment of 4,531 students, an SES rate or 10.4%, and an LEP rate of 1.1%, attained a gain of 2.8% in reading on the PSAE between 2010 and 2011.
- A different district with a high school enrollment of 2,817, an SES rate of 13.5%, and an LEP rate of .7%, achieved a gain in AYP of 1.2%
None of the individual schools cited as examples experienced a drop in AYP between 2010 and 2011, with only one district producing a loss. This degree of success was accomplished as the state increased targets for AYP by 7.5%.

Statewide Case Study of SSOS

Five years of data from a sample of elementary, middle, and high schools in SSOS across the state reveals gains in reading and math. These schools represent small, medium and large districts from urban, suburban and rural areas, representative of the diverse schools found in Illinois. A summary of this school data shows:

- Statewide, reading gains averaged 4.6% in SSOS supported schools. The reporting schools ranged from elementary through high school, with an average gain representing the period from school year 2007 through 2011.
- 78% of the schools reported gains in reading over this five year period, with only two schools showing a decline in AYP reading achievement.
- The districts of the schools that showed declines in reading underwent dramatic demographic changes during those five years with an average increase in SES rate of 15%.
- Statewide, math gains averaged 7.7% in all SSOS schools reporting.
- In math as in reading, 78% of the schools reported gains over the five year period.
- The districts of the schools that showed declines in math likewise had experienced profound demographic changes. They reported an average increase in SES rate of 15.2% and an average increase in LEP rate of 7%.

Evaluation of RESPRO

Measurement Incorporated conducted an evaluation of RESPRO (Regional Service Provider System of Support; now called SSOS) in the fall of 2008 at the request of the Illinois State Board of Education. The evaluation included web-based surveys of RESPRO staff, districts and schools, site visits of each of the
ten RESPRO areas across the state, and targeted telephone interviews with five schools and districts served by the RESPROs. The results detailed in the April 2009 document, *The Evaluation of Illinois State Board of Education's Regional System of Support Providers (RESPROs)*, describe the impact of RESPRO staff on schools and districts:

- Schools and districts felt that RESPRO has *extensively* contributed to the development, implementation, revision, monitoring, and timely submission of the improvement plan which supported the data from RESPRO staff indicating that they provided the most work to schools and districts in improvement planning areas and schools and districts reported that they received the right amount of support for their improvement plans.

- All districts were *greatly* satisfied with the RESPRO staff’s responsiveness to the districts needs, timely communications with the district and staff’s ability to develop professional relationships with administrators and teachers.

- Schools and districts that reported better relationships with RESPRO (86% of the schools and 75% of the districts) as compared to those who reported no, new, or poor relationships with RESPRO, rated the contribution of RESPRO services and support as *extensive* in all areas of school improvement, as well as in other areas.

- District and school administrators *strongly agreed* with the quality of Administrator Academies.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, FINANCIAL STABILITY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The University of Illinois and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools bring statewide organizational structures, financial stability and the capacity to deliver the services in the RFSP.

The University of Illinois

With campuses in Champaign-Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, as well as medical college facilities in Peoria and Rockford, the University of Illinois now consists of more than 800 buildings across 2,418 acres, with additional holdings totaling 10,496 acres that include an airport, agricultural experimental...
fields, and timber reserves. Over 68,000 students are taught by more than 5,500 faculty members on these campuses.

**The University of Illinois**

The University of Illinois has a rich history of impact on low-performing schools, ranging from the groundbreaking work of the University of Illinois Council on Student Mathematics in the 1960s to the noted achievements of the UIUC Center for the Study of Reading in the 1980s and 1990s to the CPS system-wide impact of the UIC Center for Literacy and the UIC Center for Urban School Leadership in the 2000s. Both UIC and UIUC Colleges of Education work directly with school districts and state agencies to improve student learning in high-need schools. While academic departments are structured to support distinctly individual and unique faculty research agendas, both UIUC and UIC Colleges of Education have generated a number of different research and action units to organize collaborative faculty activity around the needs of schools. These units, typically framed as centers, institutes, or collaboratives, reflect the view that transforming learning and teaching for the new century requires collaborative relationships joining researchers, practitioners and professional colleagues. The UIUC College of Education is focusing efforts on five strategic initiatives aligned to Strategic Campus Goals. They are:

- The Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA)
- The Center for Education in Small Urban Communities
- The Forum on the Future of Public Education
- STEM Education Research Collaborative
- Ubiquitous Learning Institute

Transforming learning and teaching for the new century requires collaborative relationships joining researchers, practitioners and professional colleagues. Our charge to serve the public good is recognized through our research centers and outreach units:
Each of these builds the capacity of the college to support collective work around common educational problems, and each unit is documenting impact. The Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, for example, has now shaped new teacher leadership teams in every elementary and high school in Champaign and Urbana, and qualitative data on teacher assessments of the initiative are strong. The Illinois New Teacher Collaborative has now offered mentoring to hundreds of novice teachers in central Illinois and has provided guidance to state policy on new teacher support. UIUC and UIC are two of the five largest producers of teachers for Chicago public schools, where a large portion of the State’s lower-performing schools are concentrated.

At UIC, too, a significant number of units have been created by the College of Education to respond to high-need schools, while the mission of the entire college includes language that foregrounds such schools:

*Our work within our departments and within school and community contexts supports the College's mission by preparing high-quality educators and researchers who can work effectively in Chicago neighborhood schools, institutions of higher education, and other urban educational and community agencies, and who become leaders in urban education locally, nationally, and internationally. Of primary importance to us is the relevance of our work to improving schooling and educational processes in low-income, African American, and Latino communities.*
Producing professionals for high-need schools is therefore one of the central missions of the college at UIC. Since the Youth Development program started in 2009, over 90% of its graduates have found employment; 100% of our Special Education MEd graduates were hired in 2010-2011; and 99% of candidates who complete the UIC residency portion of the EdD in Urban Education Leadership program secure administrative positions in urban schools – two-thirds as principals. The Director of the UIC Center for Literacy led the formation and implementation of CPS Reading Framework that has led to dramatic improvements in CPS elementary reading scores since its implementation. The Director of the UIC Center for Urban Education Leadership led a statewide legislative task force that has made principal preparation more rigorous and more selective throughout the state. The Ed.D. Program in Urban Educational Leadership has produced seventy principals for urban schools, nearly all in Chicago, and has posted nationally-recognized data on improved standardized test scores in elementary and secondary schools in Chicago—data so compelling that UIC became the first (and thus far only) higher education institution to be named Exemplary by the Texas-based Alliance to Reform Education Leadership.

Furthermore, in teacher development, UIC’s College of Education is now in its third year leading a $16M federal grant with three other Chicago universities to develop new approaches to training teachers for high-need urban schools.

The UIC College of Education (Dean, Vicki Chou) is one of the university’s fifteen academic colleges and is consistently ranked among the top fifty graduate schools of education in the nation by U.S. News and World Report (most recently, top thirty-five). Student enrollment in the College of Education is approximately 1,200 and the teaching staff numbers sixty-one. The college consists of four departments: Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Educational Policy Studies. Through the specifically designed curricula of each of the four departments, the UIC College of Education addresses its mission, which maps directly onto the broader urban mission of the entire university. Together with the disciplined inquiry expected of a college in a research university, the core of...
the College of Education's mission is professional preparation of educators in many roles who will make a difference in children's lives – particularly in urban environments:

*The College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to preparing teachers, school leaders, researchers, and policymakers who can transform public education at multiple levels and in ways that benefit children for whom education can, and should make the most difference. Our mission is to prepare educators who can be critical thinkers and advocates, and who continue to develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to prepare children to be productive citizens in the world.*

*Our work within our departments and within school and community contexts supports the College's mission by preparing high-quality educators and researchers who can work effectively in Chicago neighborhood schools, institutions of higher education, and other urban educational and community agencies, and who become leaders in urban education locally, nationally, and internationally. Of primary importance to us is the relevance of our work to improving schooling and educational processes in low-income, African American, and Latino communities.*

**The UIC Center for Urban Education Leadership (Director, Professor Steve Tozer)**

The Center for Urban Education Leadership was founded within the UIC College of Education in July 2011 to improve urban schools through innovation in leadership, school organization, and high quality instruction. The central purpose of the Center for Urban Education Leadership is to help improve the preparation and development of school leaders for high need public schools at local, state, and national levels. The specific ways in which the center does this are through research, policy influence, and consultation and training with those at the local, state, and national levels who want to improve school leader development policy and practice, including innovative uses of data to inform organizational improvement at the district and school level. The Center for Urban Education Leadership is frequently called upon to present to such organizations as the National Council of State Legislatures, Education...
Trust, Education Writers Association, the College Board, and other audiences seeking to learn about school leadership as a cost-effective lever for improving culture, climate, and student learning in schools.

Also at the local level, The Center for Urban Education Leadership supports innovation in, and development of, the UIC Ed.D. Program, which is a leading exemplar of principal preparation. Just over ten years ago, the Department of Educational Policy Studies in the College of Education established an Ed.D. degree that was clearly distinct from the Ph.D. in goals, content, structure, and outcomes. The Ed.D. adapted design principles from professional degrees in such fields as medicine and law, in which case studies and supervised practice based on applicable theory drive development of knowledge and skill. The year-long residency and coaching component, for example, is the hallmark of the Ed.D. program at UIC, which has been recognized at the state and national levels for its impact on improving student learning in public schools. The UIC Ed.D. Program has been featured in a variety of national publications about improving schools through improved leadership, and is the only program to be recognized as Exemplary by the George W. Bush Institute Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL). Currently, nearly sixty UIC Principals are leading Chicago and other urban schools in improving learning outcomes.

The Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is located at the College of Education, Bureau of Educational Research. It is an interdisciplinary endeavor that brings researchers together from across the college and university, as well as domestic and international research partners, to address the growing need for policy-relevant studies that take seriously the influences of cultural norms, practices, and expectations in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social and educational interventions.

The creation of an interdisciplinary evaluation CREA is grounded in the need for designing and conducting evaluations and assessments that embody cognitive, cultural and interdisciplinary diversity; to
address questions, issues, theories, and practice related to what has come to termed “culturally responsive evaluation” (CRE) and culturally responsive educational assessment.

CREA's focus is to establish a national presence in educational research, evaluation, and assessment unique among its peers. Integrating teaching, research and scholarship relevant to the cultural context in educational research, evaluation and assessment, the center not only serves the College of Education but graduate students in applied fields such as social work, nursing, public health and STEM-related areas. The overall goal of the CREA is to encourage not only culturally sensitive research but culturally responsive as well. Culturally sensitive and responsive practices both recognize ethnicity and position culture as central to the research process.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) is an affiliate of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA) at the University of Illinois, with offices in both Urbana and Chicago. IGPA is an interdisciplinary unit dedicated to public service and engagement through research, technical assistance, and expertise to government, public, and private policymakers. Since its inception in 1989, CPRD has conducted applied research and provided evaluation services to federal and state agencies, foundations, and community-based organizations in the areas of educational reform, adolescent health issues, and school-based prevention. The Center has a special emphasis on the development of data systems for self-study and program improvement. CPRD has worked closely with many rural, suburban, and urban communities both in Illinois and across the United States. Our evaluation capacity includes multiple methods and approaches ranging from large-scale data collection in schools with quantitative surveys and achievement scores to more descriptive qualitative work involving interviews, focus groups, and participant observations.

Over the past twenty years, CPRD has conducted research and evaluation on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Turning Points recommendations through its involvement in a number of national and regional initiatives, including Middle Start (W. K. Kellogg Foundation), Mid South Middle Start
(Foundation for the Mid South), National Turning Points Network, and Different Ways of Knowing (Galef Institute). Our work in these projects consisted of large-scale data collection, analysis, publications, technical assistance and training, and presentations. Current research and evaluation efforts using the Self-Study focus on an evaluation of the Schools to Watch: School Transformation Network, which is funded by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform via a U. S. Department of Education’s Investing in Innovation (i3) grant. This project includes an additional layer of analysis through the use of Student Surveys with individual student identification numbers that allow the longitudinal tracking of student cohorts and conduct cross-sectional analyses that can be matched to individual state achievement scores.

Recognizing the need for research and evaluation projects for our nation’s high schools, CPRD began development of a high school Self-Study in 2004. The content of the high school Self-Study is based on national recommendations as posited in Breaking Ranks II (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004) and A Call to Action (National High School Alliance, 2005). Its development was also based on CPRD’s well-validated middle school Self-Study survey constructs that have been used for over fifteen years. CPRD was able to adapt the middle school Self-Study for use in high schools because the tenets proposed by the national high school recommendations are nearly identical to the recommendations put forth for middle schools by the Carnegie Corporation’s Turning Points in 1989 (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). For example, the high school recommendations call for personalized learning communities, academic engagement of all students, collaborative empowered leadership, integrated and relevant curriculum, and community engagement. In consultation with high school teachers, administrators, and central office personnel, CPRD created new items and constructs specific to high school reform, including student reports of the transition from middle school to high school, post-high school plans and aspirations, and levels of satisfaction with the high school experience. Additions to the high school staff survey include teacher reports of high school instructional strategies (e.g., English/language arts, mathematics from all teachers), high school specific professional development
needs/wants, and school policies. We believe that the addition of these items/constructs, combined with the well-validated middle school measures, will provide an overall set of quantitative measures to assist high schools in improvement efforts.

**Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools**

The forty-four Regional Offices of Education and three Intermediate Service Centers are members of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. These entities carry out specific enumerated in the Illinois School Code from 105 ILCS 5/3-14 through 105 ILCS 5/3-15.7, and also partner with ISBE to carry out policy implementation and professional development programs, in addition to developing local programs to meet the specific needs of the region’s districts.

ROEs/ISCs provide an efficient and effective statewide delivery system for multiple and varied initiatives from compliance to student services to professional development and training for teachers, administrators and school staff. A current example involves the Lee Ogle ROE #47 which is the administrative/fiscal agent for the Illinois Response to Intervention (RtI) Network. This group is in the process that is scaling up implementation of a coordinated, statewide system of personnel development designed to increase the capacity of school systems to establish and use a multi-tiered model of scientific, research-based instruction, intervention, and assessment for improving the progress and performance of all students, including those with disabilities. The RtI Network is led by a statewide coordinator and seven Areawide Instructional Leaders (AWILs) located throughout the state, who work with external and internal coaches to provide training, technical assistance and networking. The Illinois Virtual School (IVS) is another example of a statewide project currently under the direction of Peoria ROE 48. IVS provides classes for secondary students and professional development programs for educators.

Although regional superintendents and ISC directors meet monthly within areas and the entire association meets at least five times each year, much of the work of the association is accomplished through committees. IARSS will establish a Center for School Improvement ad-hoc committee consisting of
regional superintendents and ISC directors from each area who are experienced in this type of work. The Center committee will meet monthly to establish and sustain two-way communication between The Center director, the ISBE Roundtable and ROEs and ISCs located throughout the state.

ROEs and ISCs have knowledge and experience, but, even more importantly, have established strong working relationships with 867 school districts and more than 4000 schools. Because this network exists throughout all counties in Illinois, it certainly would seem to possess the capacity to deliver services throughout the state. The Center will bring coherence and consistent high quality to this system.

IARSS conducted a rigorous selection process to determine the ROE/ISC fiscal agent for The Center. An application detailing needed capacity in fiscal services, personnel processes and academic knowledge and delivery resulted in the selection of the Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education #9 as the fiscal agent. Special emphasis was placed on the experiences of the ROE/ISC to deliver statewide projects, the abilities to collaborate with entities across this incredibly diverse state and the capacity to coordinate with the University of Illinois campuses involved in this application.

D. NON-NEGOTIABLE COMMITMENTS AND DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education #9 reserves the right to negotiate the Terms and Conditions as appropriate for a regional office of education and an institution of higher education:

- Ownership of Custom Work Product (7b, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Ownership of Generic Components (7d, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Confidential Information – Both Champaign-Ford ROE #9 and the University of Illinois are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (8, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Default and Termination (10, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Indemnification (11, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Payment of the federal portion of TRS
• Payment of excess employer retirement and/or unemployment costs for staff released after
the term of the grant or in case of closing of the Center for School Improvement.

E. SUMMARY OF STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education #9, Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of
Schools, and the University of Illinois have staff that can facilitate the hiring of The Center Director as
well as provide direction and support for the Center’s activities.

Below are brief biographical sketches for key staff with the project. Resumes are available in Appendix D.

Amy Jo Clemens, as IARSS Professional Development Committee Chair, has been involved in writing,
advising and delivering ROE/ISC professional development and technical assistance projects throughout
Illinois. Most notable are her efforts as fiscal agent for the Illinois Response to Intervention Network, and
instructional advisor for the Race to the Top Illinois Shared Learning Environment. She serves on the
state advisory committee for the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and has assisted in work
with ISBE to deliver the Common Core State Standards supports. As Lee/Ogle Regional Superintendent
she is known for focusing on continuous district improvement using strategies supported by research and
by developing a coordinated system of support for struggling students and families.

Dr. William Cope is a Research Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at University
of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is the author/co-author of a number of books in the fields of
curriculum and assessment, including the recent works including Ubiquitous Learning, University of
Digital Age’—a $2 million research project on digital authoring environments funded by the Australian
Government’s Department of Industry (www.C-2-CProject.com). He is currently the PI for a 3-year, $1.5
million IES grant that focuses on computer-based writing assessment.
Kay Poyner Brown has extensive experience with professional development and working with low-performing schools and districts. Currently, she is Executive Director for West 40 Intermediate Service Center #2 and played a major role in the coordination of the transition of the Suburban Cook County ROE to the Intermediate Service Centers. She was involved in the design and implementation of the following programs: Standards Aligned Classroom, Induction and Mentoring, and Integrated School Improvement Plan. She is a member of both the statewide advisory board for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the Continuous Improvement Partnership subcommittee charged with drafting rules for increased administrator certification requirements.

Dr. Charles Evans is Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Director of University Outreach and Public Academic Affairs for the University of Illinois. He has been the Principle Investigator on multiple projects. In these capacities he coordinates a variety of academic, service and distance learning activities for University of Illinois and its campuses. His research interests include the learning support needs of adult college students and effective collaboration among post-secondary institutions. Dr. Evans has a broad understanding of Illinois' educational system and the varied needs to which it is expected to respond.

Dr. John Evans is Executive Director of Information Systems at the University of Illinois. In addition, he serves as the liaison between University of Illinois and the Illinois Higher Education Consortium (IHEC) in the development of Illinois' P20 longitudinal data system. Dr. Evans is a member of the Illinois State Board of Education Data Advisory Board, the IHEC Data Elements Committee as well as the IHEC Technical Advisory Committee. He is the past chair of the Illinois State Board of Education Assessment Advisory Committee.

Dr. Nancy Flowers is a Senior Coordinator of Research at CPRD at the University of Illinois. She serves as a principal investigator for research and evaluation projects related to educational reform and after school programs. She is experienced in large-scale data collection and the dissemination of results to
improve practice, support data-based decision making, and impact policy for youth.

Keri Garrett became the Regional Superintendent of Schools for Clinton, Marion, and Washington Counties in June of 2006. While in this position, she has coordinated and delivered state and local services, exercised supervision and control, and provided assurances to the public on fiscal responsibilities, local school performance, life safety, certification, and curriculum supports for the school districts within the region she serves. Her efforts include IARSS statewide committee work with schools awarded School Improvement Grants (SIG) at Egyptian, DePue and Sandoval. Mrs. Garrett has focused extensive efforts within her region on the design and delivery of high quality professional development for the thirty-two districts served through an areawide curriculum cooperative. Over the past year, in collaboration with SIG awardee Sandoval District 501, located within her region, she is involved in intense efforts to share the reform lessons learned with individuals in the surrounding districts she serves.

Stafford Hood is a Professor and Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the U of I. His research and scholarly activities focus primarily on the role of culture in educational assessment and culturally responsive approaches in program evaluation. He is the founding Co-Director of the annual national conference on the Relevance of Assessment and Culture in Evaluation that has been sponsored by the College of Education at Arizona State University and has served as the principal investigator on five grants funded by the National Science Foundation (currently director of a sixth NSF project) for a total of $1.6 million. http://education.illinois.edu/frp/h/slhood

Dr. Jay Linksman, Executive Director, Professional Development Alliance, successfully wrote and received the first ISBE grant to provide services for schools in the system of support for Area 1 C and served as fiscal and administrative coordinator, hiring and coordinating the work of staff at five Regional Offices of Education. Area 1C serves the largest student population of any area outside of the City of Chicago. He developed and deployed the first statewide database to track and report the work of the System of Support, provided specifications, and oversaw the work of the company hired to program the
database. In addition, he worked to ensure reporting requirements for the Department of Education and ISBE were met, managed the development and deployment of the database, and trained users statewide. Linksman chaired the team that developed the first statewide Coaching Manual with online training modules and chaired the design team that created and delivered training to SSOS coaches statewide.

**Dr. Marilyn M. Marshall** is director of University Academic Programs and Research and has responsibility for oversight of inter-campus academic affairs programming activities, acts as liaison with the Board of Trustees staff in the area of academic programs, collaborates in the development of academic policy and procedures, oversees the submission of University grants to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and manages other projects and activities for the Vice President for Academic Affairs. She served as the principal investigator for the u.select Illinois, and is co-leader of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System.

**Dr. Peter Mulhall** has been the director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs' Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois since 1997. CPRD concentrates its efforts in the areas of school reform and after-school evaluation, health and human service reform, and prevention science. The Center specializes in policy analysis, applied research and evaluation, online data systems and professional development and training. Dr. Mulhall has extensive experience and has worked on a number of federal, state and local projects related to the evaluation of programs and interventions that target academic failure, substance abuse, and related problem behaviors.

**Dr. Lisa Monda-Amaya** is an associate professor in the Special Education Department at the University of Illinois and Director of Research Collaboration for the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities. She was principal investigator for a U. S. Department of Education grant, Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education in Positive Education, from 2006-2010. Dr. Monda-Amaya is active in the schools in the community. She co-coordinated a Leadership Book Study for the Champaign Unit 4 School District leadership team and served on the Urbana School District 116 Strategic Planning

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Committee. She is a past president of the Illinois Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Dr. Jane Quinlan is Regional Superintendent of Schools for Champaign-Ford Counties and vice president of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. Dr. Quinlan has been providing professional development and school improvement support to schools for twenty-five years in her roles as language arts/school improvement specialist, Educational Service Center director, ROE SchoolWorks director, assistant regional superintendent and regional superintendent. She was part of the leadership team that developed and implemented the Gifted Education Seminar and six GES Companion Modules for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Kevin Seymour became the Director of ROE SchoolWorks in July of 2004 after serving as a staff development and school improvement specialist with the organization for nine years. During his tenure as director, he has participated on the Leadership Team for the development of the Gifted Education Seminar, has coordinated seven county institutes, co-chaired the planning committee for the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative for six years, and chaired the planning committee for the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendent of Schools Connecting Conference for four years. While Mr. Seymour has been director of ROE SchoolWorks, the organization has assisted multiple schools and districts in the development, implementation, and monitoring of school and district improvement plans using locally developed improvement plan templates, the Interactive Illinois Report Card ePlan, and most recently, Rising Star. Under his direction, ROE SchoolWorks has offered schools customized professional development and improvement activities, including multiple day visits by teams of retired educators assessing a school’s efforts to implement its School Improvement Plan.

Dr. Steven E. Tozer is Professor in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois Chicago and founding coordinator of the UIC EdD Program in Urban Education Leadership. He has served as head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at University of Illinois Urbana Champaign; chairman of
Policy Studies at UIC; president of the American Educational Studies Association; and chairman of the Governor’s Council on Educator Quality in Illinois. Tozer was a charter member of the Illinois Educational Research Council and the chairman of a State Legislative Task Force on school leader preparation that led to the redesign of all school leadership programs in Illinois.

**Dr. Samuel P. Whalen** is Director of Research in the Center for Urban Education Leadership at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Before joining UIC, Dr. Whalen was a Senior Researcher at Chapin Hall Center for Children, Research Director at the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University, and Research Assistant Professor in Northwestern University’s School of Education and Social Policy. His areas of expertise include school leadership preparation, high school reform, school-community partnerships, youth development and program evaluation. In August 2008, he concluded a major evaluation of the Chicago Public School’s Community Schools Initiative, an ambitious project that established community schooling practices in more than 100 inner-city Chicago public schools. He is the author of numerous articles and reports. With Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Kevin Rathunde, he is co-author of *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure*. Whalen is the 1994 recipient of the Social Policy Book Award from the Society for Research in Adolescence.

**7. Subcontractors**

The RFSP requires a single contractor, but the nature of the work proposed requires the expertise and skills of researchers, practitioners, and administrators. Thus, the Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education, as the contractor, is submitting the proposal for the Center for School Improvement with the support of the administration of the University of Illinois and its campuses and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents (IARSS). UI and IARSS have joined forces with other organizations involved in the key reform areas of The Center. By harnessing the resources of the University of Illinois, IARSS, and Project Partners such as the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards, the potential for the Center for School Improvement to meet its mission is maximized.
A. SUBCONTRACTORS AND PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS.

Contractor

Champaign-Ford ROE #9 is the lead entity or contractor with fiduciary responsibility. The University of Illinois has submitted a proposal to subcontract for specific deliverables as has the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards.

Primary Partnerships

The Executive Committee of the IARSS approved the partnership with the University of Illinois and conducted a rigorous selection process that ultimately designated the administration of the Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education #9 as the fiscal agent for the proposed Center for School Improvement. Additionally, the President of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents has submitted a letter outlining the association’s commitment to the partnership and the success of The Center found in Appendix E.

The University of Illinois and the Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education are contractual agencies working together on the Center for School Improvement. The Project Management Team will include representatives from both groups. The University of Illinois has submitted a letter of commitment to the partnership and a proposal to subcontract for specific deliverables found in Appendix E.

Collaborative partnerships have emerged in recent years as the optimal public engagement model for addressing critical education needs, which are often complex and beyond the means with which single institution can deal effectively and quickly. The strength of the collaborative relationship between the University of Illinois and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools lies in the synergy of administration, research, and practice. The University of Illinois is a world class research institution with three campuses (Chicago, Urbana-Champaign, and Springfield). IARRS represents the forty-four Regional Offices of Education and three Intermediate Service Centers that deliver and support
school improvement initiatives and programs across the entire state of Illinois. By harnessing the resources of the University of Illinois and IARSS, the potential for the Center for School Improvement to meet its mission is maximized.

Project Partners

UI and IARSS have joined forces with other organizations involved in the key reform areas of The Center and have identified them as Project Partners in this proposal. These entities have previously been funded by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide services and support to schools and districts as part of the Statewide System of Support or have products and services that The Center may access.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance (the “Alliance”) represents key Project Partners. The Alliance was formed in 1993 by the Illinois Association of School Administrators, Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Business Officials, and Illinois Principals Association to provide school management a strong, unified voice in the state. These four groups represent the leadership in schools and districts. Jason Leahy, Executive Director of the Illinois Principals Association, helped to shape the Alliance’s role in the proposed Center for School Improvement.

Project Partners submitted an application describing the services/products that could be contributed to The Center. As part of the application, each organization outlined past experience, documented results and cost. Project Partners may be subcontractors and will have a role on advisory groups for The Center.

- **Illinois Principals Association** – Jason Leahy, Executive Director
- **Illinois Association of School Boards** – Roger Eddy, Executive Director
- **Illinois Association of School Administrators** – Dr. Brent Clark, Executive Director
- **Illinois Association of School Business Officials** – Dr. Michael Jacoby, Executive Director
- **Illinois Resource Center** – Ron Perlman, President
- **Academic Development Institute** – Dr. Sam Redding, Executive Director

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Supporting Partners

A number of other groups support the UI/IARSS application and are willing to lend resources and expertise to The Center. These Supporting Partners have submitted the letters of found in Appendix F. Supporting Partners may move to Project Partners, as the work of the Center requires knowledge, tools or resources of a particular organization.

- **AdvancED Illinois** – Becky Denimore, Director
- **Center for Urban Education Leadership** - Steven E. Tozer, Professor and Director
- **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)** – Roger P. Weissberg, President & CEO
- **Facilitating Agriculture in Education (FCAE)** – Jess Smithers, Statewide Coordinator
- **Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership** – Colette Lueck, Managing Director
- **Illinois Consortium for 21st Century Schools** – James Bellanca, Executive Director
- **Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) at Northern Illinois University** – Harvey Smith, Director
- **International Renewal Institute** – Kathleen J. Bellanca, Chief Executive Officer
- **Learning Technology Centers**
  - **Area 1C Central Learning Technology Center** – Mary Warren, Director
  - **Area 1C South Technology Center** – Patti Furlano, Director
  - **Area 4 Learning Technology Center** – Cindy Duffy, Director

Subcontractors

The proposed subcontractors are the University of Illinois, the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards. Information on each proposed subcontractor is provided in Number 5 of the Contractual Terms and Provisions (Appendix F) of this proposal.

Applying the Synergy of the Diverse Partners and Contractors

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One way that The Center will maximize the expertise of the various partners is by establishing research/practice groups of twelve to fifteen individuals focusing on each of the essential elements of effective education (comprehensive planning, professional development, leadership, conditions for learning, community and family engagement, curriculum, instruction and assessment). The purpose of these groups will be to unite research and practice through collaboration among university faculty, The Center staff, partner organizations, and ROE/ISC and school district personnel. The University of Illinois will identify at least two faculty members with expertise in each of the essential elements. The Center director will identify The Center staff involved in the area and select a facilitator for the group, and IARSS will choose staff and school district personnel to complete the group’s membership. Project and supporting partners will be invited to participate.

At biannual meetings of each research/practice group, conversations will focus on one essential element from diverse perspectives. Practitioners will share conditions in schools and districts and best practices in the area of the specific essential element, while partner organizations describe the current environment in the state and nation relative to that essential element. University faculty will update practitioners about significant and relevant research findings in the area. The candid exchanges will benefit faculty, partner organizations, educators, as well as The Center and Statewide System of Support staff. This focus will lead to an increased understanding of the essential elements of effective instruction and improvements on the work effort and support for these elements in the institutions represented. The relationships developed through the research/practitioner groups may also lead to additional opportunities for research and outside funding for initiatives in the state.

**B. Subcontractor Efficacy**

The University of Illinois has been a full partner in the preparation of the proposal. The university has submitted a proposal to subcontract for specific deliverables. The Champaign-Ford Regional Superintendent of School, in meeting with University of Illinois administrators and staff from the Office
The Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards are proposed subcontractors. Both organizations submitted an application describing the services/products that could be contributed to The Center. As part of the application, each organization outlined past experience, documented results and cost. Their applications were vetted by representatives from IARSS and the University of Illinois. Champaign-Ford ROE #9 is assured of their ability to produce the desired results as subcontractors.
8. Process for Hiring Project Personnel

The contractor has a complete set of protocols and sample documents for all areas of recruiting, hiring and developing staff (Work Plan Section 4 – Staffing Plan). Employees of The Center, including the ten Regional Assistant Directors, will be hired without regard to age, race, color, religion, gender, sexual preference, or national origin following all affirmative action policies to ensure equal employment opportunities without regard to those factors.

Never before has there been a coordinated, consistent process for staffing the school improvement initiatives across the entire state. The most-critical school support services delivered by ISBE through The Center will now be completed with a system perspective, assuring high quality services in every area of the state.

A. Process for Hiring the Director

The most critical role in this new system is The Center director. A job description for The Center director has been created by ISBE to describe the role and functions of this vital position. In collaboration with ISBE, the contractor will hire The Center director, who will be responsible for staffing The Center as well as planning, implementing and evaluating its work and that of the ten regional assistant directors across the state.

Posting guidelines for the director will be followed with posting both within and outside the state. Screening guidelines will be developed by the project management team and approved by ISBE prior to implementation. All applicants will be screened by a committee comprised of representatives from ISBE, UI and IARSS using those guidelines and identifying no fewer than three candidates for the interview process.

The interview process will include the following:

- An interview with a team representing ISBE, UI, IARSS and other partner organizations;
• A presentation by the candidate to a group of diverse stakeholders;
• A writing sample, to be provided by the candidate; and
• An exit interview with the ISBE Deputy Superintendent and the project managers.

After completing the protocol covering the collection of employment references, data from each part of the process will be analyzed. Using this data, the final decision will be made jointly by the Deputy Superintendent and the contractor. Negotiations for salary, benefits, and other conditions of employment will conclude the process. The Center director will be hired within sixty (60) days of signing the contract, unless an extended timeline is agreed to by ISBE. The director will develop a timeline for hiring the remaining staff within five days of his or her date of hire.

B. PROCESS FOR HIRING THREE FULL-TIME CENTER MANAGERS

The Center will employ three unit managers who will manage the daily operations of the content area specialists, the regional assistant directors, and the turnaround specialists. These managers must be in constant communication, assuring The Center director that high quality services are delivered based on school needs throughout the state. The Center director in collaboration with ISBE and the project management team will develop job descriptions for the curriculum and instruction manager, the regional support manager, and the priority schools’ intervention manager using the employment process described in Section 4. The job descriptions must describe the individual role that each individual selected for these positions will fulfill along with the ways the three will collaborate to best-deliver efficient and effective support in schools. As stated before, posting guidelines will be followed. All applicants will be screened according to screening guidelines developed and approved by ISBE. High quality candidates will be identified for the interview process. The Center managers will be hired no later than forty-five (45) days after the director has been hired.

The interview process will include the following:

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• An interview with a team representing The Center director, ISBE, UI, IARSS and partner organizations;
• A writing sample, prepared by the candidate; and
• An exit interview with ISBE Deputy Superintendent or designee.

After completing the protocol on collecting employment references, data from each part of the process will be collected, analyzed and used in making the final collaborative decision by The Center director, contractor and ISBE representative. The Center director will conduct final negotiations regarding employment salary and fringe benefits.

C. PROCESS FOR HIRING TEN FULL-TIME REGIONAL ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Ten regional assistant directors (RADs) will be hired to manage and oversee the daily operations of the district assistance teams and coaches within the ten geographically designated SSOS regions of the state (i.e., six ROEs, three ISCs, and CPS). The Center director in collaboration with Center managers, ISBE and the contractor will develop a job description for the regional assistant directors using the employment process described in Section 4. As stated before, posting guidelines (Work Plan Section 4) will be followed. Screening guidelines will be used to select candidates for the interview process.

The interview process will include the following:

• An interview with a team representing The Center director, managers, and SSOS region fiscal agents;
• A writing sample, supplied by the candidate; and
• An exit interview with the Deputy Superintendent (or designee).

After completing the protocol on collecting employment references, data from each part of the process will be collected, analyzed and used by The Center director to make the final decisions, in consultation with the SSOS Region fiscal agents.

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D. PROCESS FOR HIRING CONTENT AREA SPECIALISTS

Content area specialists (CASs) have been hired for each of the following areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Data/Assessment, and Learning Supports. Over the past year, the content area specialists have developed and managed the full implementation of professional development, technical assistance, tools, and resources in the identified content areas of the Common Core State Standards. These services support district assistance teams, rapid response teams, and coaches in their improvement efforts with schools and districts. The content area specialists will report to The Center manager for curriculum and instruction and will be located in each of the ten geographically designated SSOS regions of the state. The Center manager for curriculum and instruction will conduct a short interview process with each of the current CASs to determine how any new CAS can fulfill needs identified within the teams this year. For any unfilled positions, The Center manager for curriculum and instruction will complete a hiring process similar to the one used to hire RADs and approved by The Center director, ISBE and contractor.

E. PROCESS FOR HIRING TURNAROUND SPECIALISTS

Turnaround Specialists oversee the implementation of the transformation plans in districts with schools identified for priority services. Turnaround Specialists report to the Center Manager for Priority School Intervention. Turnaround Specialists’ roles will be highly individualized based on the SIG applications and other take-over documents. They will be located in each of the ten geographically designated SSOS regions of the state. Current Turnaround Specialists, hired through the SIG grants, will be interviewed by the Center Manager for Priority School Intervention to identify “best-practices” in turn-around work based on the two full years of experience in this program to date. An online survey will be conducted with staff in schools currently receiving School Improvement Grants in order to evaluate the work of the Turnaround Specialists and help determine what is working and what is not working.

The Center Director in conjunction with Center Priority Schools Intervention Manager, ISBE and contractor will develop a job description for Turnaround Specialists using the Employment Process
described in Section 4. Again, posting and screening guidelines will be followed resulting in candidate selection for the interview process. This interview process will be parallel to the process used in hiring Regional Assistant Directors, resulting in final decisions by the Center Manager for Priority Schools Intervention and the fiscal agent for the SSOS region.

F. PROCESS FOR HIRING DISTRICT LIAISONS AND STAFFING THE DISTRICT ASSISTANCE TEAMS

District Liaisons oversee and coordinate the work of the District Assistance Teams (DATs). The exact number of District Liaisons hired will depend on district need. District Liaisons report to a Regional Assistant Director. District Assistance Team Members facilitate the ongoing continuous improvement of the school district and its focus schools and must have combined expertise in students with disabilities (SWDs), English Language Learners (ELLs), low-income students, and racial and ethnic minority students. Teams will be comprised of individuals who have expertise in closing achievement gaps and will be staffed based on the identified needs of the focus schools. District Assistance Team Members report to a District Liaison. District Liaisons and District Assistance Team Members will be located in each of the ten geographically designated SSOS regions of the state, but might be locally place in area ROEs/ISCs to reduce travel costs and increase direct relationships with the districts.

The Center director in conjunction with the regional support manager and the RADs will develop job descriptions for district liaisons and district assistance team members using the employment process described in Section 4. ISBE and the contractor will approve the job descriptions. Posting, screening, and interviewing processes will be completed. The RADs will negotiate job offers in consultation with The Center manager for regional support.

G. PROCESS FOR STAFFING RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS

Rapid response team (RTT) members assist district leadership teams with the implementation of transformation plans in schools identified for priority services. RTT members report to turnaround
specialists. They will be located in each of the ten geographically designated SSOS regions of the state, and the success of their work is more dependent on local relationships than any other member of the system.

The Center director, in conjunction with The Center manager for priority school intervention, will develop job descriptions for RRT members. The turnaround specialists will follow a consistent statewide process (approved by The Center director, ISBE, and the contractor) to post, screen and interview RRT members. This will be one of the final hiring processes completed because the priority schools must be identified beforehand. The RRT members can be part-time employees placed throughout the area in local ROEs/ISCs, allowing for more people to provide varied expertise across an area. The RRT members must create and maintain local relationships, provide a match to district needs (SWDs, ELLs, low-income students, and racial and ethnic minority students), and live in close proximity to the schools they are supporting. This will decrease travel expenses while increasing the amount of support that can be given to each priority school.
References


Herman, R., & Huberman, M. (2012, September) *Differences in the Policies, Programs, and Practices (PPPs) and Combination of PPPs across Turnaround, Moderately Improving, and Not Improving Schools*. Paper presented at Society for Research on Education Efficacy Fall Conference.


Lane, B. (2009). Exploring the Pathway to Rapid District Improvement. Center for Innovation and Improvement, Lincoln, IL.


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D. Contractor’s Qualifications

1. A description of the contractor’s organization.

Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education # 9 is the contractor, submitting the proposal for the Center for School Improvement with the support of the administration of the University of Illinois and its three campuses and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents (IARSS).

Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education (ROE) #9 (www.roe9.k12.il.us) with offices in Rantoul, Illinois serves a two county area of 215,162 people and 16 public school districts with just over 25,000 students. The chief administrative officer is Regional Superintendent Jane Quinlan who is beginning her sixth year in the position. Champaign-Ford ROE #9 has a solid reputation for partnering with individuals and organizations to successfully develop, implement and manage regional and statewide projects. Core competencies include district and school improvement, professional development, afterschool services, and education for at-risk youth. The professional staff of ROE #9 brings years of first-hand experience to this project. In addition, experienced administrators, faculty and staff from the University of Illinois and other Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers have pledged to work with ROE #9 to ensure the success of the Center for School Improvement.

2. The qualifications and experience of the contractor and any staff assigned to the contract in performing work of a similar nature.

ROE # 9 manages multiple projects ranging from district consortia to distribution of county sales tax for school facilities to state and federal contracts and grants and totally more than $20 million annually. Recently, ROE #9 was fiscal/administrative agent for two statewide gifted grants totaling almost $3 million. An annual financial audit of ROE #9 is conducted by the Illinois Auditor General. During Regional Superintendent Quinlan’s tenure, the auditors have expressed an unqualified opinion on ROE #9’s basic financial statements every year.

Qualifications and experience of the contractor and staff are detailed in Section 7 of the Work Plan.
3. A list of all contracts including contract numbers that the contractor has had with ISBE during the past five years. (Do not include contracts with public entities such as Regional Offices of Education, schools, etc.);

Contract # MY08611, Professional Services Application Reviewing for Supplemental Ed. Services

A list of all grants which the contractor has had with ISBE during the past five years is in Appendix G.

4. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of four references from which the bidder has operated in a similar capacity.

Type of services performed: SSOS / SIG Lead Partner
Dates of service: 2010-2011 / July 2011-present

Type of services performed: SSOS / SIG Lead Partner
Dates of service: 2004-2010 / 2010-present
Type of services performed: SSOS / SIG Lead Partner
Dates of service: 2002-present / 2010-present

Type of services performed: SSOS
Dates of service: 2003 - present

4. Bidder's good faith effort to meet Business Enterprise Program (BEP) goal of 20%.

Champaign-Ford ROE #9 has documented its good faiths effort procedures in the Utilization Plan in Attachment 4.
E. Exceptions to the RFSP

Non-Negotiable Commitments and Decision-Making Authority

The Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education #9 reserves the right to negotiate the Terms and Conditions as appropriate for a regional office of education and an institution of higher education:

- Ownership of Custom Work Product (7b, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Ownership of Generic Components (7d, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Confidential Information – Both Champaign-Ford ROE #9 and the University of Illinois are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (8, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Default and Termination (10, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Indemnification (11, Contractual Terms and Provisions)
- Payment of excess employer retirements costs and unemployment costs for staff released after the term of the grant or in case of closing of the Center for School Improvement.