

3. Implementing program and policy changes to improve teacher and school leader effectiveness; and
4. Targeting statewide interventions and support to our lowest performing schools and districts.

We know that our work will never be finished, and the Board will not waver from their strong commitment to supporting a quality education system for every child. Education is the foundation of a healthy economy and strong democracy. Despite the challenging economic times that may seem to impede our progress, we have much to celebrate:

- Illinois' Class of 2010 ACT score leads all universal ACT states, those states that test at least 90 percent of their students, with a composite of 20.7. In addition, while the national average composite score has seen a slight dip in the past five years, Illinois has seen an increase, from 20.5 in 2006 to 20.7 in 2010.
- A record number of our students are taking Advanced Placement exams with nearly twice as many seniors in 2010 receiving a successful score compared to those graduating a decade ago. Illinois ranked 16th in the nation for the number of high school seniors who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. The College Board recognized 27 Illinois school districts for increased participation and performance on the rigorous exams used toward college credit and placement.
- Eight hundred thirty four schools made the Illinois Honor Roll. The latest honor roll list highlighted 300 high-poverty, high performing Spotlight Schools; 459 schools earning Academic Excellence Awards that have maintained high-performance for at least three years; and 93 schools that have demonstrated substantial improvement.
- Even as performance targets continue to increase under No Child Left Behind, making it harder for schools and districts to make AYP, Illinois students are still showing incremental improvement on tests administered by the state. Fifty-six districts and 211 schools beat the odds to make AYP in 2010 despite missing the target the year before. The composite score for all state tests increased to 76.4 percent in 2010, up from 75.5 in 2009.
- For the fifth year in a row, Illinois ranked in the top 10 states for the number of new teachers achieving National Board Certification. The latest figures show Illinois ranked third across the nation for the number of new teachers achieving the teaching profession's highest credential and sixth for the cumulative total of teachers reaching the professional milestone.

The State Board of Education thanks you for your dedication to education. The investments we make in our children today will provide a brighter tomorrow for all of us. We look forward to working with you as we focus on the goal of making sure every student will be prepared for success with the guidance of highly prepared teachers and school leaders in safe and healthy learning environments.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Koch
State Superintendent of Education

