

Leadership to Integrate the Learning Continuum (LINC) Goal and Recommendations

Goals are listed below in order of highest rank of agreement. Strongly Agree and Agree were combined to calculate Agree numbers and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were combined to calculate Disagree numbers.

Goal	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Goal One: The learning continuum should be bridged at the state level by policies and mechanisms for cross-sector communication and collaboration among service agencies, early childhood representatives, and K-12 education	16	0	0
Goal Two: Early childhood director and school principal preparation programs should be revised to prepare early childhood and K-12 leaders who understand the dynamics of the different sectors and how to integrate the two into a seamless learning continuum.	14	0	1
Goal Four: The state should develop a statewide data infrastructure that supports data collection and analysis of student development across the continuum from preschool (i.e., care and education programs prior to kindergarten) through higher education.	13	0	3
Goal Three: Incentives should be provided to professional development providers to offer professional development for early childhood and K-12 leaders that provides “lifespan” learning theories and developmentally appropriate practices from birth through adulthood.	12	1	2
Goal Six: Funding should be shaped to support a seamless learning continuum approach to educating and caring for our students, in place of the current system that promotes program fragmentation.	11	1	4
Goal Five: Early childhood and K-12 should collaborate to launch a statewide marketing initiative showing the positive effects of high quality early care and education programs on short- and long-term developmental, learning, and social outcomes for our children.	11	2	3

Comments on Goals

Goal 1: The learning continuum should be bridged at the state level by policies and mechanisms for cross-sector communication and collaboration among service agencies, early childhood representatives, and K-12 education.

Feedback Summary:

Generally strong support for this goal was reflected in both the ratings and the comments. Communication and collaboration were cited as the most common barriers to creating a true learning continuum. Some themes suggesting refinements to the goal and recommendations emerged:

- Use terminology of “early care and education” throughout
- Representatives from the Early Learning Council could serve on the P-20 council, but the ELC should continue to do its own work as well
- Terminology is still an issue, especially in characterizing the 0-5 years

- Alignment of the Early Learning Standards with the Illinois Learning Standards was supported, but care should be taken to (a) update the ELS to and (b) not let the ELS be diluted or lost in the alignment process. Mingling with program standards (e.g., Quality Counts, QRS, PFA) would further confuse the alignment process.

Goal 2: Early childhood director and school principal preparation programs should be revised to prepare early childhood and K-12 leaders who understand the dynamics of the different sectors and how to integrate the two into a seamless learning continuum.

Feedback Summary:

This goal was also strongly supported. Most commentary agreed with its intent, but pointed out that the details of implementation would be challenging. Some *implementation challenges* cited by more than one member:

- Tension between qualified personnel shortages/local flexibility and the ever-increasing requirements for more stringent and differentiated credentials
- Aligning new coursework and preparation program requirements with faculty expertise and availability
- Pervasive issues of terms and definitions (e.g., birth-to-five, developmentally appropriate, early learning, primary education, lifespan learning)
- Costs

Goal 3: Incentives should be provided to professional development providers to offer professional development for early childhood and K-12 leaders that provides “lifespan” learning theories and developmentally appropriate practices from birth through adulthood.

Feedback Summary:

This recommendation received moderate to strong support. A few themes emerged from the comments:

- If incentives are monetary, they should not be funneled from other educational programs.
- “Lifespan” may be too far-reaching when applied to early education/K-12 leaders
- Practiced-based requirements may not be practical in all cases, and may scare people away from courses
- Higher education institutions should be considered as potential professional development providers and added to the list

Goal 4: The state should develop a statewide data infrastructure that supports data collection and analysis of student development across the continuum from preschool (i.e., care and education programs prior to kindergarten) through higher education.

Feedback Summary:

This goal received fairly strong support. Several members characterized the unification and improvement of data systems as “imperative,” “very much needed,” and “a high priority.” However, its recommendations drew the most specific commentary in terms of caveats and concerns:

- Concern that this may be duplicating work already in progress through other initiatives (ISBE, Gates Foundation, etc.) The goal could be reworked as being in support of these other efforts.
- Not sure how this would play out in early care settings.

- A great deal of concern regarding data access, student and family privacy and data use/misuse.
- A lot of concern about the universal readiness assessment recommendation (e.g., tests for this age group should not be used for placement, but rather for observing trends; current instruments have many flaws and are difficult to administer; what happens to children who are “screened out” by these tests?)

Goal 5: Early childhood and K-12 should collaborate to launch a statewide marketing initiative showing the positive effects of high quality early care and education programs on short- and long-term developmental, learning, and social outcomes for our children.

Feedback Summary:

This goal received the least support. The general theme of the comments is that this goal is least related to the LINC charge and would provide the least tangible return on effort.

- Concern that this is not related to leadership or promoting leadership to create a learning continuum
- Efforts in other venues are already doing this.
- Past efforts have not been overly successful.

Goal 6: Funding should be shaped to support a seamless learning continuum approach to educating and caring for our students, in place of the current system that promotes program fragmentation.

Feedback Summary:

This goal received moderate support. Most concerns focused on the likelihood of attaining new funding in light of current state and federal budget situations. Other themes:

- The recommendations don’t contain enough detail to determine if specific organizations could support them
- For many funding plans, there are winners and losers. These need to be sorted out for this proposal.
- While fragmented funding contributes to programmatic fragmentation, many are protective of their dedicated funds and concerned that merging or comingling could dilute their share.
- The whole topic should be undertaken under the larger discussion of overall education funding reform.

Recommendations are listed below in order of highest rank for agree. Strongly Agree and Agree were combine to calculate Agree numbers and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were combined to calculate Disagree numbers.

Recommendation	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Goal Two - Recommendation Three: Revised principal preparation criteria for approval should require university preparation programs to integrate additional course content into appropriate courses, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmentally appropriate practices and curricula across the lifespan information about the Illinois Early Learning Standards in relation to the Illinois Learning Standards team-building and collaboration with early learning organizations 	18	0	0
Goal One - Recommendation Three: The Illinois State Board of Education should encourage cross-divisional coordination and alignment between staff in early childhood and K-12 units, including at high level policy meetings	17	0	1
Goal Six - Recommendation One: The state should expand funding for to expand preschool programs and Kindergarten classes to accommodate students beyond those considered to be at-risk.	17	0	1
Goal One - Recommendation Two: The Governor should develop a standing committee of the P-20 task force that will serve as a statewide P-3 mechanism to work on alignment, leadership, preparation, training, and communication.	17	1	1
Goal Five - Recommendation One: Tailor the campaign to early learning and K-12 school leaders, providing information on how a learning continuum can help them achieve their learning goals.	17	1	0
Goal Two - Recommendation Six: Principal preparation programs should include early care and education providers as part of their partner network (e.g., serving on the preparation program’s advisory board). Similarly, early childhood preparation programs should include K-12 school representatives as part of their partner network.	16	0	2
Goal Two - Recommendation Nine: The Illinois State Board of Education should expand the special education credential to cover P-12. (Currently, it is a K-12 certificate, which creates a shortage of special needs teachers for early childhood education).	16	0	2
Goal Six - Recommendation Two: Future infrastructure capital bills should include funds to improve and build new Pre-K facilities.	16	1	1
Goal One - Recommendation One: The Governor should appoint additional early care and education representatives to the P-20 Council to better represent the diversity of providers.	16	1	1
Goal One - Recommendation Four: The revised Illinois School Leader Standards should include knowledge and competencies related to understanding and supporting lifespan learning from birth through adulthood.	16	2	0

Recommendation	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Goal Five - Recommendation Four: Educate and stress the importance of the learning continuum to grant funding agencies so that grant programs and funding policies will promote the continuum rather setting up barriers to cross-sector collaborations.	16	2	1
Goal Four - Recommendation One: The data should connect teacher data to student data to school data. These data should be connected in a meaningful way to inform leader and teacher preparation programs, professional development programs, local programs and policies.	15	0	2
Goal Two - Recommendation Two: Preparation coursework should align with the differentiated endorsements.	15	1	1
Goal Two - Recommendation Four: Revised principal preparation criteria for approval should require programs to include internship or practicum experiences at all levels of education – secondary, elementary, and early learning to allow for a big picture view that opens up understanding of the learning continuum.	15	1	2
Goal Five - Recommendation Three: Tailor a third aspect of the campaign to state policymakers, detailing the importance of an integrated state policy system to support local practices bridging the learning continuum.	15	1	2
Goal Six - Recommendation Three: Policymakers should provide financial support for local community collaborations (e.g., pilot programs and early learning grants).	15	1	2
Goal Four - Recommendation Four: Make results of state and local data collected by both sectors transparent for leaders and teachers so they can assess and make improvements to curricula and services.	14	1	3
Goal Six - Recommendation Six: Policymakers should create a unified funding system for early education that reflects a seamless learning continuum approach to educating and caring for our students, in place of the current system that promotes program fragmentation.	14	1	3
Goal One - Recommendation Five: The Illinois Early Learning Standards and Illinois Learning Standards (for K-12) should be merged into one cohesive document so that educators can see learning expectations for students across the continuum. The Learning Standards should also incorporate quality indicators from Quality Counts, the Quality Rating System, and Preschool for All.	14	2	2
Goal Six - Recommendation Five: The legislature should lower the compulsory age for entering school and make Kindergarten mandatory (currently it is 7 years old) to prevent unprepared children from entering the K-12 system at a later stage of the early learning period.	14	2	2

Recommendation	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Goal Five - Recommendation Two: Tailor another aspect of the campaign to parents, providing information on the importance of the learning continuum and their involvement in their children’s schooling from pre-school throughout their children’s schooling years (e.g., IL Action for Children—parent manual). This should include education on developmental and learning milestones, how to help their children learn, and the benefits of Pre-K-3 centers as avenues to bridge the continuum.	14	3	1
Goal Two - Recommendation One: The Illinois State Board of Education should disaggregate its Type 75 administrative certificate to separate endorsements for leadership at the Pre-K-elementary, middle school, and high school levels. If the ISBE cannot create a certificate with multiple endorsement levels, then the State Board should adopt a P-12 principal endorsement (rather than a K-12 endorsement).	14	4	0
Goal Two - Recommendation Five: Principal preparation programs should hire at least one faculty member or instructor with teaching and/or leadership experience in early childhood settings.	14	4	0
Goal Two - Recommendation Eight: The Illinois State Board of Education should phase in requiring Type 04 early childhood certification for teachers in Pre-K-3 rd grade classrooms.	13	3	2
Goal Four - Recommendation Two: The data should be stored and accessed on a user-friendly network to share data on line, encouraging data use with a minimal expenditure of additional time.	11	1	3
Goal Two - Recommendation Seven: The Department of Children and Family Services should require that all early childhood center directors hold at least the Level I Illinois Directors Credential.	11	1	5
Goal Six - Recommendation Four: The state should fund full-day pre-school and kindergarten classes.	10	2	4
Goal Four - Recommendation Three: The State should adopt and use a universal test of school readiness that addresses all domains of development, including cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical.	8	8	2
Goal Three - Recommendation One: Illinois Administrator Academy courses should offer school leaders practice-based opportunities to observe and participate in early care and education programs. Professional development opportunities for early childhood leaders and teachers should also include practice-based K-12 learning opportunities.	6	12	0
Goal Three - Recommendation Two: The Illinois State Board of Education (for school leaders) and the Department of Children and Family Services (for early childhood directors) should be more directive in the types of courses that school leaders and early childhood directors are required to take in order to maintain their certifications. At least one of these courses should be on teaching and learning concepts of lifespan learning.	5	6	3

Recommendation	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Goal Three - Recommendation Three: Regional or local professional development providers (e.g., Regional Offices of Education, INCCRRA, school districts, professional organizations) should offer more opportunities to educational stakeholders and providers in the community to participate in the team-based professional development offered to educational leaders and teachers across the continuum (e.g., a community in-service day).	3	13	2