

Illinois State Board of Education

**A Regional Service Provider
System of Support**

Posted
March, 2006

Overview

Illinois and federal law require that ISBE provide technical assistance to schools and districts in academic early warning status (AEWS) and academic watch status (AWS). Beginning in 2003, to help schools and districts improve their academic performance, especially in reading and mathematics, ISBE established a regional system of support. Each regional service provider (RESPRO) offers its services to the schools and districts in its region that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), especially those in AEWS and AWS.

With respect to federal sanctions, RESPRO priorities are to provide support and assistance to districts with schools subject to 1) restructuring and corrective action (AWS) and 2) school improvement (AEWS). As resources allow, RESPROs also serve Title I schools whose academic performance is marginal.

A map of RESPRO regions in Illinois, the location of the ten RESPRO offices, and a list of RESPRO contacts are given below. Also, an appendix gives a brief history of the number of schools and districts in AEWS and AWS from 1997 to 2005. Two tables at the end, one for schools and one for districts in AEWS and AWS, show the schedule of state and federal sanctions.

RESPRO Approach

The RESPRO system of support includes specific activities that:

- focus on the school improvement plan (SIP) and district improvement plan (DIP);
- target proven approaches and standardized processes to specific improvement components;
- customize services to differences among regions, districts, and schools;
- coordinate programs, services, and funding;
- deploy state, regional, and local staff and resources efficiently and effectively; and
- use AYP, defined by state and federal law, as the “bottom line” measure of effectiveness in helping schools and districts.

Focus on SIPs and DIPs. Beginning in 1986, Illinois has required districts to write a SIP for all public schools. To improve student performance, Illinois law requires each district with schools in AEWS or AWS to revise its SIPs every two or three years. As well, each district in AEWS and AWS is required to develop or revise its DIP, setting forth strategies for improving student performance district-wide. In 2005, ISBE designed a SIP template to help schools meet state and federal SIP requirements; in 2006, it designed a DIP template.

RESPROs assist schools and districts in their SIP and DIP efforts to ensure they are data-driven, complete, approvable, timely, and effective. For districts and schools in AEWS, final approval of SIPs and DIPs rests with the local school board. Under Illinois law, for districts and schools in AWS the final approval of SIPs and DIPs rests with ISBE.

For schools and districts in AWS that must write and submit a SIP or DIP to ISBE for approval, ISBE templates and guides are available electronically. Known as e-Plan, the templates and guides may be found on the Internet at www.iirc.niu.edu.

Proven approaches and standardized processes for specific improvement components. The RESPRO system of support emphasizes school improvement programs and processes that have a record of success. RESPROs select those that are most likely to improve the academic achievement of students when tailored to the districts and schools they serve.

Broadly, RESPROs provide districts and schools in their regions with programs and processes representing best practices in four improvement components:

1. data analysis and SIP and DIP development;
2. standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment;
3. teacher and administrator enhancement; and
4. student, family, and community support services.

These components are described later.

Customization for regional and local differences among schools and districts.

The RESPRO system of support is not a “one-size-fits-all” service approach for academically poor performing schools or districts. Rather, in addition to standard offerings or best practices, RESPROs offer interventions based on a data analysis and review of currently successful practices in each school or district. The analysis seeks to determine which, if any, of the four improvement components in a district or school (outlined above) are adequate and at what level of effectiveness.

For those schools and districts with adequate improvement initiatives in place, a RESPRO customizes its offerings to supplement and strengthen those programs and activities. To address weaknesses, RESPROs offer interventions tailored to specific

needs. In some instances, a RESPRO may partner with other educational service providers or agents (e.g., universities) to provide needed services to districts or schools.

Coordination across programs, services, and funding. Many intervention programs and services are currently available to districts with high concentrations of low-income and/or low-performing students. For most of these programs, state and federal funds flow via ISBE to a district, then to schools. In their DIPs or SIPs, districts must describe an efficient and effective coordination of their resources-especially time, people, and money. RESPROs assist districts and schools in this analysis and coordination.

Preventive actions designed to improve academic performance in marginal schools. To help marginal schools improve, RESPROs offer fee-for-service programs, open enrollment at workshops, planning sessions, and shared resources.

Efficient and effective deployment of state, regional, and local staff and resources. RESPROs align and coordinate their efforts with technical assistance efforts currently provided by other state, regional, and local agencies. ISBE assists with these coordination efforts. As well, to coordinate efforts among RESPROs, ISBE hosts RESPRO meetings in Springfield approximately nine times each year.

Specific Performance Measures

Under state and federal law, failure to make AYP is the sole criterion used to place schools and districts in AEWS or AWS. Placing schools and districts in status automatically identifies them for sanctions and qualifies them for RESPRO assistance. The primary indicator of the success of a RESPRO, as well the RESPRO system overall, is whether districts and schools make AYP.

RESPROs log their activities, number of contacts, contact time, and number of persons served in a common, on-going data base. RESPROs use these data, among others, to conduct an annual evaluation and to plan future needs and activities. These annual RESPRO evaluations may include: the approval of SIPs and DIPs; the degree to which curriculum, instruction, and assessment is aligned to the Illinois learning standards (ILS); positive effects on educator knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes; increases in the number of staff meeting federal criteria as highly qualified educators; positive effects on student behavior and school environment; positive increases in family and community support; and cost-effectiveness.

These performance indicators and data collection methods enable ISBE to assess the overall success of the RESPRO system in helping schools and districts improve. In addition, ISBE may use these performance and achievement indicators to judge the effectiveness of each RESPRO.

Four District and School Improvement Components

As noted above, each RESPRO analyzes the current status of the districts and schools in its region, then offers services appropriate to the need. The services and activities it provides have a record of success and address one or more of the following four components of school and district improvement.

Component 1: Data Analysis and School Improvement Plan Development

In order for districts and schools to understand their strengths and deficiencies, they must establish a comprehensive data-gathering system and methods of data analysis that inform and drive their improvement strategies. This information guides the development and implementation of SIPs and DIPs, the allocation of district resources, professional development, curricular focus, etc.

ISBE and its partners have developed various tools for analyzing student performance and other data about schools and districts. ISBE is working with university partners, such as Northern Illinois University, to provide a suite of web-based applications that aid school and district faculty with their data analyses. These electronic tools help districts and schools to identify those needs that, if addressed, have the greatest likelihood of improving student academic performance.

RESPROs train school and district personnel to access, analyze, and interpret district, school, and student performance data from a variety of sources, to use those data to develop and drive improvement planning, and to monitor and measure progress. This training is designed to build the capacity of district and school personnel to continue their data analyses and planning on their own.

Component 2: Standards-Aligned Curriculum, Instruction, and Classroom Assessment

Successful schools teach to ILS each day. (See www.isbe.net/ils/Default.htm.) Teachers in standards-based classrooms accept that the academic goal is that students in their classrooms meet or exceed ILS. In addition to standards-aligned curriculum and instruction in all fundamental learning areas, DIPs and SIPs of districts and schools receiving RESPRO support must emphasize reading and/or mathematics.

At the classroom level, RESPROs offer training, methods, and materials to support full adoption and implementation of standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessments in the districts and schools they serve. RESPROs supply trainers and consultants who provide standards-aligned staff development, especially with respect to reading and mathematics. Wherever possible, each RESPRO documents the implementation and effectiveness of the trainers, training, methods, and materials.

Component 3: Teacher and Administrator Enhancement

With the exception of waivers for some rural and special education staff, federal law requires that all teachers meet state criteria as “highly qualified” educators by 2006. New teachers, especially those in academically low-performing schools, often benefit from mentoring and induction support. Teachers who receive such support continue to improve their teaching practices and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. As well, students of National Board-certified teachers often perform better academically. ISBE supports all teachers, especially those in AEWS districts and schools, who want to pursue National Board certification. Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) provide awareness and support programs for teachers interested in national certification.

Specifically designed Administrator Academies address the specialized role of school and district leadership in challenging settings. The Illinois Principals Association, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and ROEs collaborate in the design and regional delivery of this training. The process often incorporates a mentoring and support network among school and district administrators.

RESPROs offer staff development programs and other related services to support teachers, especially those new to the profession and those in the process of changing or adapting their pedagogy to meet the needs of students in or entering their classrooms. In addition, all teachers in the service region are made aware of and supported to pursue National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification. RESPROs propose methods to assist the districts in their regions to meet the criteria for “highly qualified” teachers. RESPROs also ensure that credit is awarded for professional development and continuing education units that comply with statutes and regulations governing recertification of teachers and administrators.

Component 4: Student, Family, and Community Support Services

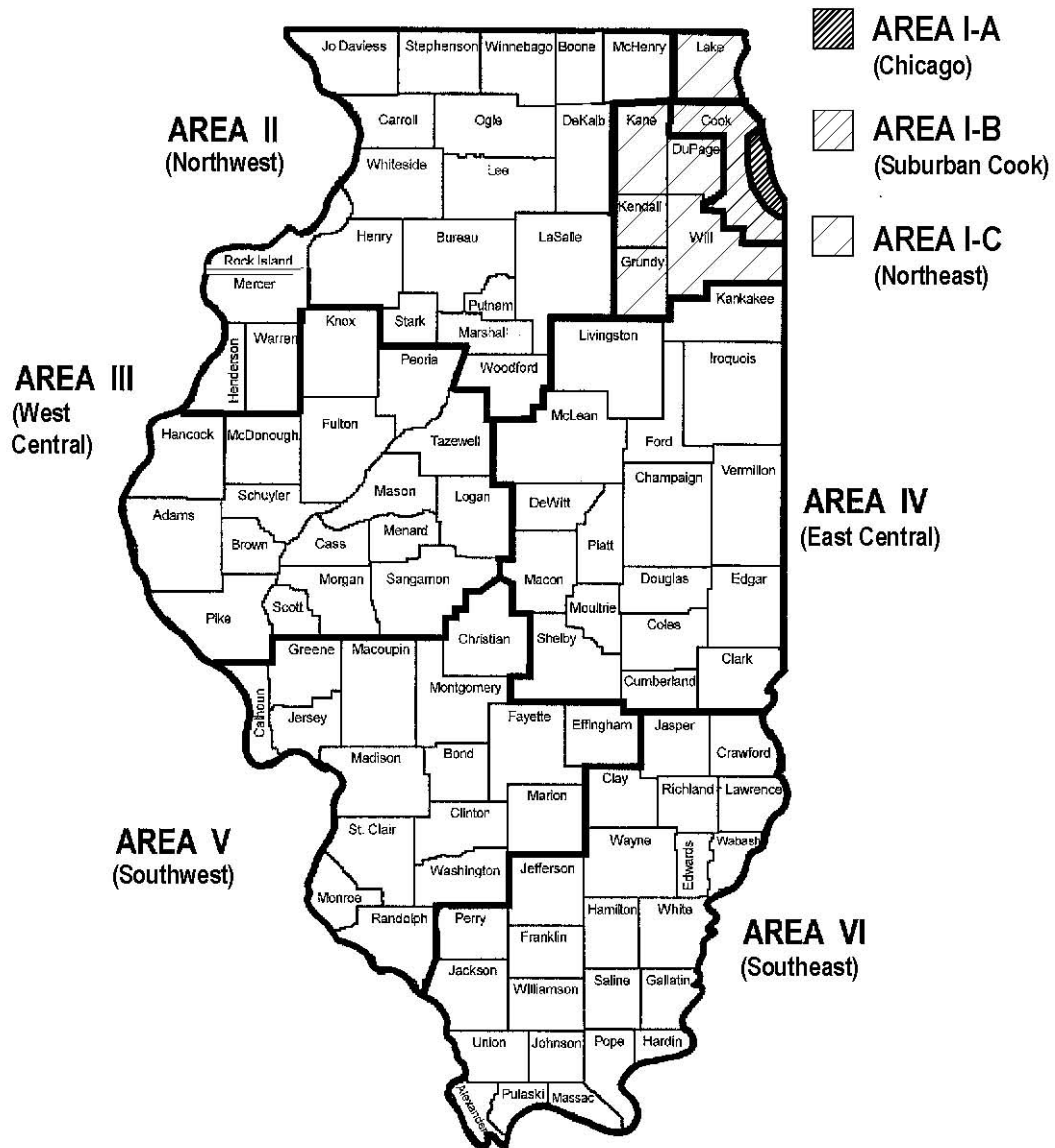
This component comprises basic student support systems such as health, nutrition, family involvement, before- and after-school programs, and other social services. For those districts and schools that experience difficulty with student attendance, tardiness, discipline, or truancy or that have other behavioral and environmental challenges, RESPROs offer training in and support for programs that improve student behavior and school climate. These services may include health services; expanded community use of school sites; community service by students and school personnel; or other services that improve the school environment and the interaction among schools, families, and communities.

For example, where appropriate, RESPROs assist districts and schools in establishing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and/or in establishing community support and wrap-around services for districts, schools, students, families and communities. (For full-service community schools, see the Coalition for Community Schools at www.communityschools.org).

Coordination of RESPRO Support

In conjunction with priorities set by ISBE, each RESPRO coordinates its training and services to support the four components outlined above. This coordination among projects, programs, and mandates includes, for example, Bridges Extended Learning, Reading First, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and helping districts constitute school support teams and meet other sanctions and mandates of state or federal law. The goal is to minimize redundant or overlapping programs and maximize the value of these programs to districts and schools in their efforts to make AYP.

System of Support Service Areas



Appendix

History of AEWS and AWS Lists 1997-2005

Schools

ISBE approved the first list of schools in AEWS in 1997. Identification of status was based on state-wide test results in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social sciences from the Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP). In 1998-99 and 1999-2000, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) replaced IGAP. The following table gives the sequence of AEWS lists and their data sources.

List	School Year	ISBE Board Action	Most Recent Spring Test	Data Sources
1	1997-1998	List approved fall 1997.	1997	IGAP scores in five learning areas in 1996 and 1997 used.
2	1998-1999	List approved fall 1998.	1998	IGAP scores in five learning areas used.
	1999-2000	Additions to list suspended fall 1999.	1999	Change from IGAP to ISAT end trend data; ISAT baseline established.
	2000-2001	Additions to list suspended fall, 2000.	2000	ISAT data collected but not used for establishing AEWL placement.
3	2001-2002	List approved fall, 2001.	2001	ISAT data (elementary and middle schools only); PSAE (high school) administered for the first time.
4	2002-2003	List approved December, 2002.	2002	ISAT data (elementary and middle schools); PSAE data (high schools); IMAGE (bilingual), Illinois Alternate Assessment (special education) data.
5	2003-2004	List approved December, 2003.	2003	Per NCLB, only reading and math academic data used; percent tested by subgroup added to the calculation of AYP.
6	2004-2005	List approved December, 2004.	2004	same
7	2005-2006	List approved December, 2005.	2005	Calculation of confidence intervals for subgroups used.

In December, 2002, ISBE approved the first AWS list, placing 49 schools in that status. Academic status information for schools first appeared in Illinois School Report Cards in November, 2003, and continued annually thereafter.

After President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in early 2002, ISBE merged state AEWS and AWS criteria with federal school improvement criteria. Under NCLB, ISBE uses only mathematics and reading scores to calculate school and district AYP and status.

ISBE created the RESPRO system of support during 2002-03 in response to the large number of schools-more than 700-designated as AEWS and AWS in 2002 and in response to an ISBE projection that, other things being equal, the total number would soon exceed 1500.

The following table shows the number of schools in AEWS or AWS from 1997 to 2005.

Schools	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
AEWS	109	66	66	66	594	664	363	399	435
AWS	0	0	0	0	0	49	305	540	516
Total	109	66	66	66	594	713	668	939	951

Districts

Federal and state laws classify districts as AEWS and AWS. ISBE first classified districts as AEWS based on results from assessments administered in spring, 2003, and spring, 2004. The following table shows the number of districts in AEWS in 1997-2005.

Districts	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
AEWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	279	279
AWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	279	279

The number of districts remained the same in 2005 as 2004 due to changes in the method of determining the eligibility for improvement status using grade spans. Since federal rules did not allow a district to be removed from AEWS and since 2005 was the first year under the new method, ISBE began the calculation of district AYP anew in 2005.