# Redefining the High School to College Transition in Illinois:
## Framework for Local Action and State Supports

**Advance ILLINOIS**
EVERY STUDENT WORLD READY

**ilhstocollege.org**

**Education Systems Center**
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Since March 2015, Advance Illinois and Education Systems Center at NIU, with support from the Joyce Foundation and College Board, have led a planning process with representatives from nine regional teams, state education agencies, and national experts to better align the high school to postsecondary education transition in Illinois. This process has included information sharing on the best practices across these nine regions, a desk analysis of national best practices and models, presentations by involved State agencies, a statewide survey to high schools and postsecondary institutions, and presentations by leading national organizations working in this field.

As the result of this input and engagement, this document includes a proposed framework for local system alignment to **improve the college and career readiness** of all Illinois high school students, **ensure all high school graduates are on a path toward a postsecondary credential or degree with value, and position students to accelerate toward postsecondary credential or degree completion.** This framework is intended to serve as a guide for local action, potential philanthropic investments, and state policy alignment. Advance Illinois and Education Systems Center propose that **all** of the elements of the framework should be addressed in successful high school to postsecondary transition systems that lead students towards well-articulated paths for high-quality credential and degree attainment, although the depth and focus will vary from community to community based on local resources and context.

**A. High School and Postsecondary System Alignment**
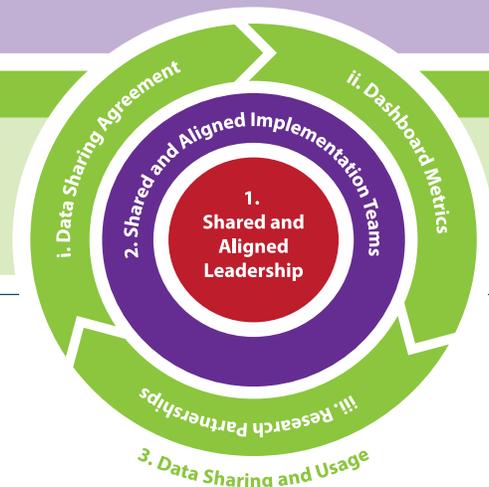
### 1. Shared and Aligned Leadership

a. *Intergovernmental agreement defining sharing objectives* for high school and postsecondary education leadership that addresses regular meetings, planning processes, and alignment with local collective impact processes
b. *Local accountability systems* incorporating college and career metrics
c. *Career ladder incentives for staff engagement* in alignment activities
d. Systems to address *access and equity* in alignment efforts

### 2. Shared and Aligned Implementation Teams

a. Joint high school and postsecondary education teams addressing *alignment in core academic subjects* (co-design, co-delivery, and co-validation); aligned assessment systems and use of assessments
b. *Expanded articulation of credit,* including AP and dual credit; integration of competency-based learning systems
c. High school, postsecondary education, and business teams addressing *alignment of career education for career pathway systems*
d. Joint high school and postsecondary education teams addressing *counseling, planning, financial aid, and mentoring* systems, including:
i. Comprehensive college and career counseling supports; ii. College and career navigation skills; iii. Mentoring systems; iv. Financial literacy; and v. Employability & interpersonal skills

### 3. Data Sharing and Usage

a. *Data sharing agreement* including transcript data, assessment performance data, postsecondary enrollment, postsecondary retention and completion, labor market information, industry certifications
b. *Dashboard metrics* for assessing progress
c. *Research partnerships* for data analysis and recommendations

| | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th | 13th + |
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**B. 9th through 13+ Student-Facing Systems**

## 1. Core Academic Systems

**a. Foundational academic systems**

i. *Curriculum and assessment systems in core academic areas* aligned to Illinois learning standards and preparing students for a full array of postsecondary education and career opportunities
ii. *Response to Intervention systems* with on-track monitoring and tiers of targeted interventions
iii. *Integration of college and career awareness and navigation into academics*

**b. Aligned 11–13 developmental ed models**

| ★ *Milestone:* i. Multiple measures readiness determination for senior year courses | ii. Targeted Senior year remedial instruction co-developed by HS & CC; informed by readiness determination data | ii. Multiple-measures placement & co-requisite remediation |
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**c. Summer bridge programs** with primary postsecondary education partners

## 2. Planning and Transition Supports

**a. Individualized plan for postsecondary education, careers, and financial aid** updated annually

**b. Outreach, exposure, and near-peer mentoring systems** for students who may not otherwise pursue higher education, or have been historically underrepresented in higher education — *Continue near-peer mentoring systems*

**c. Aligned scholarship and financial aid monitoring and supports:** Systems to support identification of scholarship opportunities, completion of scholarship applications, completion of FAFSA, and Promise Programs

**d. Match and fit, proactive advising systems, and progress monitoring**

| i. Identify and explore colleges utilizing "match and fit" advising system | ii. Application tracking, proactive advising | iii. Continue proactive advising; additional retention support strategies |
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## 3. Accelerated Learning ("Speed-up")

**a. Accelerated learning goal and opportunities for all students**

i. Comprehensive focus and systems that expand early college credit for all students, particularly those in mid- to low- performance quartiles, and career-oriented education for all students
ii. Grade weighting/GPA polices do not incentivize particular types of accelerated learning

**b. Continuum of professional learning for all students**

| i. Career exposure: Job shadows, real-world problems, "micro" internships | ii. Career preparation: Capstone projects, school-based enterprises, internships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships |
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**c. Career-focused instruction and assessments for all students**

| i. Career interest inventory & orientation on career cluster framework | ii. Orientation to a particular career cluster or related grouping of career clusters (e.g., Information Technology) ★ *Milestone: Selection of career pathway focus by end of 10th grade* | iii. Articulated sequence of instruction in a career pathway area (e.g, Network Systems, Programming & Software Development) iv. Sequenced, stackable industry certifications ★ *Milestone: By end of senior year, completion of at least one gateway college course and receipt of an employer-validated certification of career readiness* |
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**d. Expansive early college credit opportunities for all students**

| i. AP potential review to expand access; AP and community college outreach | ii. Expansive credit by examination offerings (AP, IB, PLTW) iii. Expansive dual credit offerings that leverage available funds to minimize student costs iv. Structured programs with outcomes ranging from a semester's worth of credit up to an Associate Degree (e.g., Power of 15, Early College, Running Start models) | vi. Articulation of early college credit to degree requirements |
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| | v. Opportunities for earning college credit on-campus | |