

# Evaluation of the Illinois High School to College Success Report

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## Rationale:

The newly designed Illinois High School to College Success Report is one of the first collaborative endeavors among the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to combine their fairly disparate data systems. It fulfills the requirement of Illinois Senate Joint Resolution No. 59 (October 2007) to develop a new report to further inform schools and districts about their graduates' postsecondary outcomes. As Illinois continues to develop its longitudinal data system using a federated data model, it is critical to evaluate the dissemination and usefulness of the High School to College Success Report, as well as solicit suggestions for improvement, in order to guide development of future reports.

## Purpose:

The evaluation study examined the following areas: 1) perceptions of the dissemination of the report; 2) how the HS2CSR is being utilized and how useful state educators perceive the report; 3) how users are engaging in collaborative efforts utilizing the HS2CSR and in other college readiness activities; and, 4) suggestions for improving the report.

## Methods:

The evaluation included a mixed-method approach with an online survey, focus groups (face-to-face, online, telephone conference call), and focused conversations at three Illinois education meetings. All data were collected in Spring 2013.

- Online survey garnered usable responses from 373 (23% response rate) from high school principals,

superintendents, regional superintendents, 2-year and 4-year senior administrators, and individuals from high schools, community colleges, and 4-year institutions who participated in workshops hosted by IBHE, ICCB, and ISBE.

- Detailed, rich qualitative data were gathered from eight focus groups with a total of 20 individuals including high school principals, superintendents, regional superintendents, and 2-year administrators.
- Qualitative feedback was obtained during two Illinois education meetings with postsecondary senior administrators (e.g., 2-year and 4-year Chief Academic Officers) and a meeting with the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council.
- The survey data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and the qualitative data were analyzed for overall themes.

## Findings:

Results from the survey analysis and qualitative data affirmed the usefulness of the HS2CSR to facilitate improved student achievement by fostering communication and collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary educators and policymakers. The HS2CSR was typically used to monitor student success. More collaborative activity utilizing the report occurred within the K-12 sector and occurred within institutions, rather than cross-institutions. Results also identified limited report dissemination and concerns about the comprehensiveness of the data. Suggestions from study participants to improve the report included increasing the ease of use, increasing the representativeness of the data, and providing additional data elements.

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The full report is available at [www.siu.edu/ierc](http://www.siu.edu/ierc)

For further information, contact the IERC at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville  
toll-free at 1-866-799-IERC (4372) or by email at [ierc@siue.edu](mailto:ierc@siue.edu)

## Recommendations:

- Improve dissemination by utilizing email notification, targeting specific subgroups invested in successful secondary to postsecondary transitions (e.g., regional superintendents, high school and postsecondary counselors, and secondary and postsecondary faculty advisory councils) and using multiple distribution methods (e.g., IBHE memo, ISBE superintendent weekly message, Regional Offices of Education).
- Increase the use of the report by enhancing its value by improving the representativeness of the data (e.g., private institutions, out-of-state institutions), relying less on self-report data, and including additional data elements (e.g., trend data, comparison data).
- Increase ease of use of the report by providing an executive summary, adding data definitions and data sources, supporting users' data technical needs through training and data coaches, and offering an online relational database for users to access the data and create custom reports.
- Increase collaboration within and across institutions by convening workshops and webinars on interpretation and use of the report and engaging current high-end users to share their strategies for collaboration and experiences utilizing the report, particularly around alignment of the new Common Core State Standards.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Applied Research Consultants (ARC) is an organization composed of graduate students and faculty members, housed within the Psychology Department at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale. ARC offers research and consulting services for a variety of local, regional, and national organizations.

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