



Equity Journey Continuum

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated May 19, 2022

Data Review and Verification Tool

1. Where can I access the Data Review and Verification Tool (DRVT)?

To access the DRVT, go to www.illinoisreportcard.com. In the upper right corner, click Login. If you have an account, you may login here. If you do not have an account, you may create one. Once logged in to your MyIRC account click on the Data Review and Verification Tool. Click on the Equity Journey Continuum tile to access the data and resources, such as business rules.

2. Who can access the Data Review and Verification Tool?

Each district's data is available at the district level for users to review. Access to the DRVT is controlled by the District Superintendent. For further assistance please reach out to myirc@niu.edu.

3. Is the district preview available now?

Yes, the Equity Journey Continuum district preview became available to school districts in the DRVT on Tuesday, Feb. 22.

4. What does the data preview show?

In the DRVT, you can find your district's step for each data element in the Continuum and your district's overall step for each category. You can also find business rules and a glossary detailing the calculations for the Continuum.

5. Do school districts need to verify their data?

No, the Continuum only uses data that has already been verified by districts.

6. Is there a way to download or print the Continuum?

Yes, users can print the current screen in the DRVT using the print button in the top right corner of the DRVT screen (below the uppermost blue banner). Any areas that are expanded\dropdown in the Equity Continuum section will print out. Clicking the print button initially displays a print preview prior to printing.

Illinois Report Card

7. Do you have a preview of what the public facing display on the 2022 Illinois Report Card will look like?

Not at this time. The display is currently in development. The feedback we receive from districts will help inform the final public facing display. In general, the display will show a high-level view of the district's location on the Equity Journey Continuum in each of the three broad areas of student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators.

8. Will the Illinois Report Card include state-level performance?

Yes, the Illinois Report Card will include both a state and district-level Equity Journey

Continuum. However, the state-level Continuum does not include site-based expenditures and does include one additional data element, principal retention.

9. Is the state-level preview available?

The state-level data are not yet available.

10. When will the data from the 2021-22 school year appear on the Illinois Report Card?

ISBE publishes the Report Card in October of each year. SY 2022 data will appear on the Report Card in October 2022. The 2023 Equity Journey Continuum will use the data from SY 2022 and be published on the Report Card in October 2023.

11. Will the current preview of the data be made public?

No. Only the district's location along the Continuum in the three overall areas of student learning, learning conditions and elevating educators will be displayed on the Report Card.

12. Is the tool ready for districts to submit their narrative statement?

Not yet, but the opportunity to submit the district narrative will be available through the MyIRC portal. ISBE will provide more instructions once available.

13. Will there be a character/space limit for the district's narrative?

Yes. ISBE will provide more details as soon as possible.

14. Will school districts provide one narrative or one narrative per area?

Districts will provide one narrative, which can address all or any area of the Continuum or provide any other context and information the district would like to provide.

15. Is this equity information going to be embargoed similar to all other Illinois Report Card data, or can we begin conversations with our community prior to the release in October 2022?

The data is not embargoed. We encourage you to begin having conversations with your community! All of the data that contribute to the Equity Journey Continuum have been verified and published already.

16. How do I access the data sets used for the 2022 Continuum?

You can view the 2018-19 Report Card data set at

<https://www.isbe.net/layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=/Documents/2019-Report-Card-Public-Data-Set.xlsx>.

Steps

17. Will each school receive their own Continuum, or is it just at the district level?

The Equity Journey Continuum is only at the district level. No school level data will be available. The purpose of the district-level view is to promote system-wide inquiry, improvement and change.

18. Will districts receive a step for each data element?

Districts will receive a step for each broad area of the Continuum: Student Learning, Learning Conditions, and Elevating Educators. Each area contains multiple data elements, which may have different weights. While school districts have access to the calculations for each data element through the Data Review and Verification Tool, the Illinois Report Card will only display the overall step for each broad area.

19. Can the public access additional data from the Continuum via FOIA request, such as the calculations for each data element?

The public may be able to access further data than what is publicly reported by filing a FOIA request. It will depend on the specifics of the request.

20. Can you explain how different metrics are weighted?

For the student learning category, metrics that measure access are weighed at .55, and

metrics that measure performance are weighed at .45. For the learning conditions category, fact-based metrics are weighed at .55 and opinion-based metrics are weighed at .45. There are no weights applied to the elevating educators metrics. The composite business rules list the metric weights.

21. What does the range of the horizontal line mean for the three categories?

The composite step in the Data Review and Verification Tool is shown as a number to the second decimal (for example, 2.73) demarcated by a dot along the Continuum with two dashes on either side to account for .5 margin of error.

22. Are the steps calculated by comparing districts to each other? Is there a standard districts are measured against?

Each district's step is based on the individual district's data. The step scores for each step level are based on distribution analysis and standard setting. Find the business rules for the step scores in the Data Review and Verification Tool.

23. Is the district able to see the step for each data element that result in the district's overall step along the Continuum?

Yes, each district can see their step at the Data Element level and can find this information in the Data Review and Verification Tool.

24. What is the range, the highest and the lowest for the step levels?

The range is from Step 1 that begins at 1.0 and Step 4 that ends at 4.5. See the business rules in the DRVT for specific step and sub-step information.

25. What kind of progress should districts aim for?

The objectives for growth for each district will be different, depending on the district's own data, areas of focus, community input, resources, and other factors.

Data and Data Elements

26. What year of data will the 2022 Continuum use? In the future will the continuum always use data that is two years old?

The 2022 Equity Journey Continuum uses data from the 2018-19 school year (with the exception of using 2020-21 site-based expenditures) due to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting data during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. In the future, the Equity Journey Continuum will use the data from the previous school year so that the Continuum always uses data that school districts have already reported and verified. For example, the 2023 Equity Journey Continuum data will use data from school year 2021-22.

27. Is disability/IEP status included in ISBE's consideration of equity?

Yes, a district's step along the Continuum is based on the equity gap between special population (Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program, Individualized Education Plan, or English Learner) and non-special population, as well as between white students and students of all other races/ethnicities.

28. Our district uses an approved alternate climate survey does that affect our Continuum data?

ISBE is currently making an update to the Continuum to include the participation rates for alternate surveys. Districts that use an alternate survey currently see a 1.0, but that will be updated by the end of April (and definitely before the public release) to reflect participation rates for alternate surveys. For the "ratings" metrics, districts that use an alternate survey will see in the "N/A" column, "No Data". ISBE expects to add alternate surveys to the ratings data elements in future years.

29. What is the target for participation in the 5Essentials?

The target is 50 percent or better for teacher and student participation and 20 percent or

better for parent participation rates. See the business rules in the DRVT for full details on the step levels.

30. How can students and families without Internet access complete the 5Essentials?

Schools have found success boosting parent participation in the 5Essentials by scheduling school events to coincide with the dates for parent participation in the survey and having iPads/Chromebooks at events for parents to participate. Some schools print out the survey and have students and families fill it out on paper then have staffers upload the responses electronically. Check out this tip sheet for other ideas: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/5E-Tips-Parent-Participation-January-2022.pdf>

31. Why is KIDS included in the Continuum?

Research has shown that learning gaps begin very early in life, and that early intervention efforts yield the highest return on investment. KIDS provides a snapshot of student development as soon as children begin their K-12 journey and key opportunities exist for districts to implement equity efforts that could positively impact kindergarten readiness. Examples include supports and services for local families, increased early learning opportunities for children aged 0 to 5 years, and/or collaborations with preschool programs.

32. Can you explain the "Teacher out-of-field and student" data element? How is that information collected?

An Out-of-field teacher is a teacher with an active and registered license through the designated school year who is teaching a course class and student for which they do not have the correct subject area endorsement/designation and/or the correct grade span endorsement/designation for the subject area (course) they are teaching for that student. The "teacher out of field and student" data element reflects the percentage of students who are enrolled in at least 50% of their courses taught by an Out-of-field teacher for the subject area/course/grade span that student is enrolled in. This information is reported by school districts in the Employment Information System and the Student Information System, as well as by teachers in the Educator License Information System.

33. What about teacher evaluations will be visible to the public?

The teacher evaluation metric compares student demographic data and students' access to teachers with excellent and proficient ratings. The Equity Journey Continuum will not make any additional information about teacher evaluations available to the public. The Illinois Report Card already includes the percentage of teachers who earned an excellent or proficient. Only the composite step for the broad category of Elevating Educators will be visible to the public on the Equity Journey Continuum.

34. How is site-based expenditure reporting used in the equity continuum?

The site-based expenditure reporting data element analyzes whether funds are distributed equitably amongst similar school types by concentration of special population students (students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, students with IEPs, and English Learners).

35. Does the Equity Journey Continuum include Preschool for All programs?

The Continuum metrics were gathered from K-12 school districts. However, we know that equity gaps begin very early in life, so districts could choose to focus some equity efforts on Preschool for All Programs and include early childhood programs, staff, and advocates in their district conversations and efforts.

36. Have you considered including the cultural competency of school staff as a criterion for elevating educators?

ISBE chose to base the Continuum on data already collected, reported, and verified by

districts. A district could highlight its efforts to support the cultural competency of staff in its narrative.

37. Will this process make more of this information available, informally, in real time?

No, going forward, the Continuum will use data from one year prior that has already been reported, verified, and published.

38. Will the discipline practices data be broken down beyond the special populations group?

The student groups listed in the business rules for each metric will be the only ones analyzed in the Continuum.

39. Will the Continuum include any qualitative data?

No, ISBE chose to only include data that districts already collect, report, and verify. Districts will have the opportunity to include a narrative to provide additional context to the Continuum display on the Report Card.

40. Where does the 5Essentials data come from?

The 5Essentials data comes directly from the University of Chicago, which administers the 5Essentials survey.

41. What is the purpose of including 8th grade students enrolled in Algebra I as a metric when Algebra I is not in the state standards for 8th grade?

The goal of including 8th grade students enrolled in Algebra I, in addition to the percentage of students passing Algebra I, is to look at gaps and inequities in access, as well as supports. The Continuum can help districts see whether there are student groups that have more or less access to rigorous courses and curriculum before and during high school.

42. Will the state provide the 5Essentials in more languages in addition to English and Spanish?

Yes, ISBE is working with UChicago to provide additional translations of the 5Essentials into Spanish, Arabic, Polish, Urdu, Russian, Gujarati, Tagalog, French, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. These translations will be available for the next 5Essentials response window in the 2022-23 school year.

43. Does the IAR data element look at proficiency toward standards or growth?

The Continuum looks at both proficiency and growth on the IAR.

44. Does there need to be a minimum in a subgroup to receive a step for that data element?

The minimum student group size is 10. Student groups with fewer than 10 students will show “Redacted Data” in the N/A column. The business rules have more details for each metric.

45. Why are students of color grouped together and students in special populations (eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch, Individualized Education Plan, or English Learner) grouped together?

Many Illinois school districts are small: 26 percent of school districts have one school and about 50 percent of districts have one or two schools. Due to the minimum n-size of 10 for reporting purposes as required by student privacy laws, the data for many racial/ethnic groups and special populations are too small to be displayed on their own on the Report Card at the district level. To include as many students as possible in the Equity Journey Continuum, students of color are combined into one group and students in special populations are combined into one group, so that the data for those students can be displayed and analyzed through an equity lens.

46. Did ISBE consider including ninth-graders on track to graduate in the Continuum?

Ninth-graders on track to graduate is not a metric included in the Continuum at this

time, but ISBE will take this feedback into consideration! To represent pre-high school and high school academics, the Continuum includes Algebra I in 8th grade and advanced coursework in high school.

47. Will ISBE consider adjusting the graduation rate to include students with IEPs who continue to receive services through age 21?

We are investigating ways to adjust the Equity Journey Continuum graduation rate metric in order to include students with IEPs in alternative ways.

48. Can you explain the metric for KIDS Readiness?

The metric for KIDS Readiness is comprised of two elements: the participation rate and readiness gaps. The participation rate is included in the calculation for each group or step. Districts are automatically placed in Step 1 of the Continuum if they have less than 95% participation. Districts must have at least 95% participation to achieve a step higher than Step 1. All districts in Step 2 through Step 4 have met the required 95% participation rate. Once the minimum participation rate of 95% is met, the readiness gap between student groups is used to determine the step for the district.

The KIDS Readiness participation percentage data is available in the District Review and Verification Tool.

49. What is meant by Special Population versus Non-Special Population?

Special Population refers to groups of students who experience one or more barriers to educational achievement, including those who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL), English learners (EL), and students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Non-Special Population in this context refers to groups of students not in the Special Populations group as defined here. The gaps between special population and non-special population and between students of different races or ethnicities are among the factors used in determining a district's steps along the Continuum.

50. What alternate climate surveys can be used in lieu of the 5Essentials?

The approved alternate climate surveys are Cognia (formerly AdvancEd) and Comprehensive School Climate Inventory. You can also learn more at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>. Please see question #28 in this FAQ document for more information about how alternate climate surveys factor into the Equity Journey Continuum.

Other

51. How is the Equity Journey Continuum different from an Equity Audit? Are they the same?

The Equity Journey Continuum is an informational tool districts use to view their data through a lens of equity. It identifies gaps in student achievement, opportunities, and supports by analyzing data that districts already collect and report to ISBE. An equity audit is a comprehensive internal stakeholder collection of data specific to the district and community and conducted in alignment with local curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the needs of the district's students.

52. Given where we are at this school year and all we have been through, why is ISBE launching the Continuum now?

The Equity Journey Continuum timeline was established in ISBE's Strategic Plan, adopted in November 2020. The pandemic exacerbated existing equity gaps and disproportionately impacted already disadvantaged students. Equity is more important now than ever as we help

students recover from the pandemic.

53. What will the Continuum be used for? Will anything “happen” to a district based on their equity step?

A district’s placement along the Continuum helps to identify gaps in student achievement, opportunities, and supports. The tool is informational only and designed to support districts in taking locally determined action to advance along their individual equity journey. We encourage districts to take action to improve equity, however no action is *required*. View ISBE’s [How to Use the Equity Journey Continuum](#) fact sheet for examples of how the Continuum can support a district’s local equity journey.

54. Does the Equity Journey Continuum have any connection to accountability and summative designations?

No.

55. Will the Continuum be used as part of administrative evaluations?

ISBE does not have a role in administrator evaluations. Using the continuum as part of administrator evaluations would be a local decision.

56. Will districts receive additional funding to address equity?

We understand that resources make a big difference in a district’s capacity to meet students’ needs and address equity gaps. School districts will not receive additional funding based on the Continuum. However, school districts could consider shifting or blending and braiding state and federal funding, such as increases in Evidence-Based Funding and federal pandemic relief funding, to prioritize equity. The gaps and opportunities illuminated by the Continuum can help inform a district’s local budgeting and strategic planning. Pending appropriations, ISBE also offers specific grants to address equity gaps – such as the Advanced Placement Implementation Grant, the Bilingual Educator Grant, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, Freedom Schools Grant, High-Impact Tutoring, and more.

57. How can other stakeholders, such as the Illinois School Boards Association and the Regional Offices of Education, support school districts in equity work? How can districts engage teachers in equity work?

ISBE has presented the Equity Journey Continuum to many stakeholder audiences. ISBE absolutely encourages stakeholder groups to provide additional support to school districts in how the tool could inform planning and budgeting. ISBE also encourages school districts to engage diverse audiences, including teachers, in viewing, discussing, and deciding action steps based on the Continuum.

Additional Resources

58. Will the Continuum be available in multiple languages?

Yes, the Equity Journey Continuum will be published on the Illinois Report Card, which is available at www.illinoisreportcard.com in both English and Spanish.

59. Where can I learn about the research that supported the conceptual framework of the Continuum?

The business rules, available in the Data Review and Verification Tool, contain a literature review of equity journey tools from other states.

60. Who should a school district contact if they believe there is a mistake in one of their data indicators or to send other questions or feedback?

Please email any feedback or questions to equity@isbe.net and provide as much detailed information as you can.

61. What is the deadline for submitting feedback about the Equity Journey Continuum?

ISBE would appreciate any and all feedback on the Continuum by early April.

62. What guidebook resource helped inform the Equity Journey Continuum?

Building Educational Equity Indicator Systems: A Guidebook for States and School Districts, available online [here](#).

63. What additional resources are available to help school districts understand and utilize the Continuum to improve outcomes for all students?

Find additional resources on the [ISBE equity webpage](#), including:

- Feb. 28 overview webinar:
 - [Recording](#)
 - [Slides](#)
- Fact sheets:
 - [Introducing the Equity Journey Continuum](#)
 - [Data Elements on the Equity Journey Continuum](#)
 - [Four Steps Along the Equity Journey Continuum](#)
 - [How to Use the Equity Journey Continuum](#)
 - [How to Craft Your Equity Journey Narrative](#)

Find additional resources in the Data Review and Verification Tool, including a glossary, rubric, and business rules, which provide additional descriptions and details on each of the Continuum metrics and how the steps and step levels are calculated.

Additionally, ISBE has partnered with the Institute for Racial Justice at Loyola University Chicago to provide five professional development sessions, as well as office hours for districts to receive individualized assistance. Register for the sessions or view the recordings at www.isbe.net/equity.