

*EVALUATION OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS  
YEAR TWO REPORT*

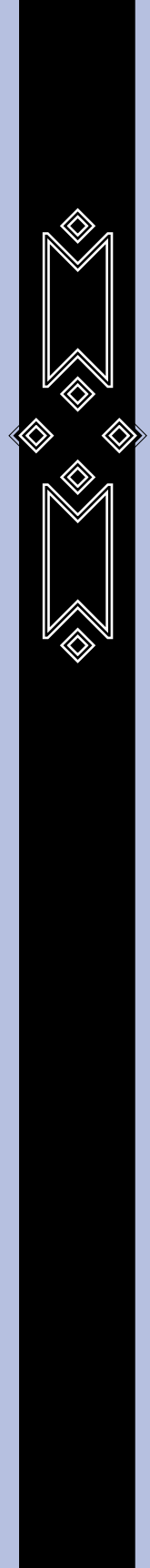
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University of Illinois  
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**Report to the  
Illinois State Board of Education**

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Summary of Findings and Recommendations

# **Evaluation of the Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards**

## **Year Two Report**

### **Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

The Evaluation of the Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards (Reissued) Project is a four-year endeavor funded by the Illinois State Board of Education to assess the extent to which local districts are implementing Illinois Learning Standards (ILS), to identify factors which enhance or inhibit implementation, and to investigate the relationship between ILS implementation and student achievement. The project began on January 18, 1999, and ended its second fiscal year of operation on June 30, 2000.

The study has two components:

1. Survey of Practitioners. During Year Two, a stratified random sample of approximately 1,996 teachers was surveyed to determine the extent to which they were implementing ILS in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Teacher survey data were used to place schools at various levels of implementation and assess ILS implementation at the state level. It was also used to examine the relationship between ISAT performance and ILS implementation. A parallel Administrator Survey was developed and sent to 118 building principals. The Administrator Survey was used to assess principals' perceptions of ILS implementation. A Superintendent Survey was developed and sent to all public school superintendents in the state to assess superintendents' perceptions and concerns regarding ILS implementation.

2. Qualitative component. In Year Two, four districts, with two schools from each district, were selected for intensive case study. Participation was completely voluntary at both the district and school levels. The districts selected for inclusion varied in size as measured by student enrollment, district organization pattern, community size, and geographic location. Specifically, one district was a unit district (K-12) that serves a largely urban population and is located in the southern part of the state. Current student enrollment is just over 11,000 students. A second is an elementary district (K-8) located in a mid-sized city in central Illinois and has a student enrollment of approximately 4,100 students. The third district is a high school district (9-12) located in a suburban community in the northern part of the state. Student enrollment is approximately 2,800 students. The fourth district is also a unit district (K-12) and is located in a small rural community in central Illinois. Student enrollment is just over 1,000 students. The 8 schools selected from the four districts that agreed to participate in this study included: three elementary schools, two middle/junior high schools, and three high schools. Over the past year, more than 30 site visits to district offices and individual schools were conducted for the purpose of data-gathering activities especially, intensive open-ended and focused interviews. Respondents included superintendents, associate superintendents, curriculum coordinators, building principals, deans, department chairs, grade-level chairs, and district curriculum committee members.

This report summarizes findings and offers recommendations based on the first two years of operation. Descriptions of procedures used and detailed findings are included in the two reports that follow this summary.

## Findings

In this section, findings from both the Qualitative Study and the Survey of Practitioners are summarized:

### Implementation Has Increased from a Year Ago and, as a State, Illinois is in Level Two Implementation.

A finding confirmed by both the qualitative and quantitative components was that there was an increase in implementation activities of districts and schools. From the survey data, it appears that approximately eighty-three percent of the responding schools were judged by their teachers to be in Level Two, the second stage of implementation as described by our five-stage model. This represents a 6% increase from 1999. Level Two is defined as Awareness and Expectation of an ILS-Led System. It is characterized by:

- ☞ A developing realization that change is necessary in the present system for improvement in learning to occur for all students;
- ☞ Initial distribution and exploration of ILS by teachers and administrators;
- ☞ Beginning discussions and development of implementation strategies at the district, school, and classroom levels;
- ☞ Formulation of rationale and procedures for introducing ILS to parents and community members;
- ☞ Minimal consideration of ILS in instruction, evaluation of student learning, and communication with parents; some consideration of ILS in professional development, curriculum development, and textbook choice;

- ¥ View of state standards as passing policy and possible intrusion into district standards or curriculum; and
- ¥ Establishment of parent and community group information sessions.

Approximately 19% of the schools (up 15% from 1999) we surveyed reported being in Level Three Implementation: Transition to an ILS-Led System. These schools were differentiated from the Level Two schools by higher levels of professional development surrounding ILS, the presence of specific timelines and policies for ILS implementation, and significant activities aimed at aligning district curriculum with ILS. No schools fell into Level One Implementation, as compared to 10% in 1999. Mean levels of implementation increased significantly ( $p < .05$ ) between 1999 and 2000 across all dimensions except District/School Infrastructure and Community/Stakeholder Involvement. These findings would seem to indicate that, statewide, schools have made some progress toward implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards during the past year.

While this is clearly encouraging, the qualitative data reveal that for the districts and schools examined, the changes made have tended to be rather modest and clustered largely at the district level. As noted in the case study report, three of our four districts appear to be approaching implementation with a caution and conservatism that has not allowed them to move beyond a basic alignment of existing curriculum with the state standards, which is a defining characteristic of Level Two Implementation. Aligning curriculum may be an important first step, but data from the case studies as well as other research (see Elmore, 1993; Elmore & Sykes, 1992) suggest that more than alignment will be necessary to fundamentally change teaching

practice and improve student learning, benchmarks of Implementation Levels Three, Four, and Five.

### Professional Development and Curriculum Development Are the Most Highly Implemented Dimensions

As evidenced by both survey findings and case study results, the predominant implementation activities are teacher professional development concerning ILS and curricular alignment. Teachers reported an increase in the availability of professional development on ILS from a number of sources, including ISBE, ROEs, districts, schools, outside consultants, and colleges and universities. More than 66% of teachers reported that curricular change was occurring in their schools as a result of ILS implementation. More than 20% associated the adoption of block scheduling, increased summer school options, and expansion of after-school tutoring with ILS implementation. Changes in instruction and student learning are not yet reported by a majority of teachers, and teacher effect toward standards remains cautious.

### Elementary Schools Exhibit Higher Implementation Than Other Levels

On average, elementary schools in our sample scored higher on all seven dimensions and on total implementation than middle or high schools. High schools were lower than elementary and middle schools on all seven dimensions. While the patterns of implementation were similar, high schools consistently lagged behind elementary and middle schools across the seven dimensions. This is not especially surprising, as few areas of the educational system have more consistently shown general resistance to substantive reform and change than American secondary schools (Coddling & Rothman, 1999; Muncey & McQuillan, 1996; Wilson & Rossman, 1993).

The qualitative component takes a slightly different perspective and is more cognizant of district influence on individual school s efforts, rather than aggregating data from individual schools by level. With such a small sample of schools in the qualitative component, such aggregation would be ill-advised. However, consistent with the findings from the survey, it is interesting to note that the elementary district is by far doing the most comprehensive work on standards implementation and has progressed much further than any of the other districts in the case study.

#### Community and Stakeholder Involvement Is Exceedingly Low at All Levels

Survey and qualitative data revealed that community and stakeholder involvement in ILS implementation was minimal at all levels (elementary, middle, high, and special). Respondents indicated that parents, school boards and the community had little awareness and understanding of the ILS and limited access to information and educational opportunities about them. We found only a handful of cases in which parents and the community were meaningfully involved in standards implementation at the local level.

An issue for further study may be investigating what meaningful involvement actually entails. One of the case study districts has an exceptional website that is permeated by information about the learning standards. Parents or community members even casually browsing the site would find a great deal of information. In Year Three, we plan to investigate community and stakeholder involvement and related influences as part of the qualitative component.

With Only One Year of ISAT Data Available, It is Not Possible to Determine the Relationship Between ISAT Performance and ILS Implementation At This Time

As previously noted, learning standards implementation is proceeding, albeit slowly, cautiously, and conservatively. From the qualitative data, it became readily apparent that the approaches termed as implementation vary widely across districts and even across schools within districts, running the gamut from next to nothing to massive, concerted efforts affecting all levels of the system. The meaning survey respondents attached to implementation is even less clear. It is apparent from both the survey and the case study data that the implementation of the learning standards will take a good deal of time, and such implementation is not likely to proceed in isolation from other school improvement efforts. Thus, disentangling the unique contribution of the learning standards to improving student learning will likely be a near impossibility.

Nevertheless, a strong systemic focus on curriculum and instruction issues would lead one to expect such efforts to show up first in changes in teacher behaviors and practices and, eventually, in student results. Data from both the survey and the case studies show that respondents from across the state are beginning to acknowledge that the state learning standards are bringing a new and sharper focus to their school improvement efforts and influencing their choices about professional development, curriculum selection, instructional approaches, and classroom assessment practices.

As 2000 ISAT data become available, we will begin an analysis of the relationship between school-level ISAT scores and school ILS implementation levels that will continue through Years Three and Four.

In Order for Standards Implementation to Occur, Administrators at Both the District and Building Levels Must Clearly Understand What This Means and Carefully Define Their Roles in the Process.

The survey results show that, in general, building administrators and superintendents rate learning standards implementation at higher levels than teachers. In addition, qualitative results show that there is a tremendous variability across administrators both at the district and building levels in their knowledge and understanding of what implementation of the state learning standards should entail. Limited understanding most frequently leads to a representation of the standards as simply curriculum content. In turn, such limited understanding leads to curriculum crosswalks that do little more than match up the state standards and benchmarks to the most rudimentary and superficial elements textbook chapters, curriculum kits, course description, or syllabi.

Unless administrators themselves have a clear understanding that standards are not just content but also hold instructional implications, it will be unlikely that the schools as a whole will move forward in implementing the learning standards in a meaningful way. This responsibility for understanding cannot be abdicated or passed down to the classroom level for teachers to figure out for themselves. Unless enlightened and knowledgeable administrators are leading and sharing in the standards implementation work, it is unlikely that the school or district will significantly change current practices.

ISAT Scores Remain the Primary Concern for Schools and Districts

In spite of increased public visibility and growing acceptance and approval, the ILS still do not command the attention or concern that is generated by the ISAT. For the administrators

we interviewed for the case studies, most were largely unconvinced that there is a direct relationship between implementing the learning standards and raising ISAT scores, or at least did not know how to go about putting the two together. Unless this link becomes more firmly established in the minds of teachers and administrators, the increased implementation activity witnessed this year may be little more than a superficial altering of curriculum with very limited impact upon instruction and student learning.

### Recommendations

There are several actions we recommend to the state agency based upon the findings from the first two years of data collection.

#### Capacity Building at the District Level is Essential for Effective Standards Implementation

The importance of district-level involvement in standards implementation cannot be underestimated. It seems imperative that state policymakers do not ignore or fail to appreciate the critical role the district level will and does play in implementation. While the school level may be the main focus of the state accountability measures, districts remain the legal and fiscal agents that oversee and guide schools and school personnel (Goertz, 2000; Massell & Goertz, 2000). Districts are also the major sources of capacity building for schools coordinating, channeling, and controlling access to professional development, curriculum materials, and new instructional ideas; making critical decisions regarding the quality as well as quantity of school staff; and maintaining and filtering relationships with various external agencies. From a variety of perspectives, districts have a powerful and immediate influence on what happens or does not happen in schools. The schools themselves are likely to need all the assistance they can get in

successfully implementing learning standards, and a strong, reciprocal alliance between the state and district levels seems a most providential means of providing this.

We believe that there is a strong argument for directing state policy attention and resources toward improving the capacity of districts to manage instructional improvements like standards implementation, because successful implementation of such policies at the school and classroom level will depend, in large measure, on district capabilities. One of the glaring deficiencies of the standards-based reform movement, in general, has been the neglect of systematic professional development for district and building level administrators.

There is a Pressing Need for the Development of the Specifics of Implementation at the District, School, and Classroom Levels

Illinois school districts have begun to focus on implementing the learning standards. However, at this time, many of their efforts appear to have little to do with instructional changes and improvements in the classroom and more to do with a paper exercise of aligning existing curriculum to the standards. While this may be a start, it will not be sufficient to bring about the kind of instructional change and student learning improvement envisioned in the state learning standards.

A good part of the problem seems to be that many districts and schools simply do not have a clear idea of how to go about effective implementation. Implementation of the learning standards is a highly complex and sophisticated activity that must encompass the district, school, and classroom levels. Right now, there is a pressing need to demystify the implementation process as much as possible to remove ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion that is currently evident. Research consistently reports that the most effective and successful reforms provide

some mechanisms that help each level define what it is they are supposed to do in fairly concrete terms (Hannaway, 1993; Spillane, 1994). One way to pursue this might be through the state-level development of a rubric for implementation that districts might then use to assess their efforts and, in turn, refine and adapt this model for use by their schools, which in turn could refine and adapt it for use by their classroom teachers. The Indicators of Implementation developed in Year One of this study could serve as a content rubric. A corresponding performance rubric for these indicators is now needed to assist districts and schools in their implementation efforts in a more concrete way. That could be a major product of this study during Years Three and Four.

#### Pay Attention to Teacher Talk and Student Work

While we have focused on administrators and external support in this early phase of ILS implementation, it is equally important to involve teachers and students. Our qualitative data and survey responses indicate that teachers are engaged in ILS implementation when they discuss the ILS among themselves and with parents, principals, and their students. Teachers who are actively implementing ILS in their classrooms use them as the basis for choosing textbooks and materials, designing lesson plans, evaluating student work, and giving feedback to students and parents. Administrators from high implementation districts/schools reported that the learning standards were posted in the classroom in kid language, were incorporated into district and school websites, served as the basis of progress reports and rubrics, and were regular topics at faculty meetings. It seems that an important mechanism for informing teachers and helping them to implement the learning standards would be to provide them with concrete examples of ways in which ILS can be prominently integrated into a classroom. A critical aspect of this is the use of

student work to illustrate the standards. The state should put examples of student work, benchmarked to the standards, in the hands of teachers as soon as possible.

#### Model Stakeholder and Community Involvement

Community and stakeholder involvement in ILS implementation was uniformly low in the districts we sampled, yet it is viewed as a critical element in standards-based reform at both the state and local levels. The state agency should model stakeholder and community involvement as a means of promoting it at the local level and leveraging public awareness and support statewide.

Activities might include:

- ¥ Supporting the creation of an active, visible education partnership or consortium that includes the Business Roundtable, corporate representative, community groups, etc., which operates independently to promote and monitor standards-based reform within the state.
- ¥ Conducting public events around the state that highlight ILS and their accompanying changes. These events can generate a tremendous amount of positive publicity for the initiative and raise awareness among the general public.
- ¥ Developing a prominent role for parent organizations such as the PTA in state level policymaking, dissemination, and training involving ILS.
- ¥ Identifying districts that have developed model websites and other dissemination mechanisms that thoroughly incorporate the learning standards and disseminate these to districts across the state for use.

Begin to Develop a Role for Higher Education in Standards Implementation.

The changes that accompany standards-based reform have implications for higher education in terms of undergraduate admissions, teacher and administrator preparation, and recertification. Though Illinois is early in its implementation, it is not too soon to begin to engage higher education in meaningful ways. With regard to admissions, engagement needs to be at two levels:

- ¥ Chief Academic Officers of the state universities and colleges need to be aware of the Illinois Learning Standards and work toward an agreement that will have them figure prominently in admissions decisions at their institutions; and
- ¥ Admissions Officers in those institutions must work to ensure that policies are put in place which incorporate the learning standards into admissions procedures and decision making.

With regard to preservice teacher education, colleges of education are greatly concerned with the extent to which their students pass the state certification exam and become employed. One way to infuse ILS-relevant information into teacher education curricula is to make sure that the state certification examination emphasizes that knowledge and holds universities accountable for the pass rate of their graduates. To some extent, this is beginning to happen in Illinois.

Standards implementation creates tremendous demands for continuing education and innovative models of professional development. The state universities are a potential resource to provide that training, although less than one-fourth of the teachers surveyed indicated colleges and universities as a source of professional development. ISBE should enter into cooperative agreements with more universities across the state to provide continuing education opportunities

on ILS for practicing professionals. The new continuing education requirements will provide powerful leverage for this kind of change to occur. This is not to diminish the role of other sources of professional development, but to strengthen the connection throughout P-16 institutions and thus strengthen the entire system.

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**Evaluation of the Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards  
Report of the Year Two Survey of Practitioners**

# **Evaluation of the Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards**

## **Report of the Year Two Survey of Practitioners**

### **Overview and Purpose**

The report describes the methodology and findings associated with the Year Two administration of the Survey for Evaluating the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards Teacher Edition, Administrator Edition, and Superintendent Edition. The Survey of Practitioners was designed to accomplish three purposes:

1. To assess the level of ILS implementation for a random sample of schools across the state, and as a means of estimating statewide implementation (Teacher Edition);
2. To present a profile of ILS implementation across the seven dimensions represented in the conceptual framework (Teacher, Administrator, and Superintendent Editions) and identify factors associated with implementation;
3. To examine the relationship between ILS implementation and ISAT performance (Teacher Edition).

### Methods

#### Instrumentation

In this section, we will briefly review the development of the conceptual framework that undergirds this study, describe the revisions associated with the current Teacher Survey, and report upon the development of the Administrator and Superintendent Editions.

#### Development of a Conceptual Framework

The development of the conceptual framework for the study was based initially on the Framework for Standards Implementation developed by the Education Commission of the States (1997). Basic components of this framework shaped the initial set of questions that served as the basis of a series of interviews and focus groups across the state (for a more detailed

description of this process, see the previous report, Report of Year One Evaluation Study of the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards: Qualitative Component ). During these focus groups and interviews, respondents were asked to react to the appropriateness of the combined framework for evaluation of the implementation of ILS and to add indicators of standards implementation that they thought were valuable.

In this process, we created a set of indicators of ILS implementation that we grouped into seven dimensions: District/School Infrastructure, Curriculum Development, Student Learning and Assessment, Professional Development, Instruction, Affective Response, and Community Awareness.

The final set of indicators was once again shown to several groups of Illinois school administrators for validation. The validated list of indicators is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Indicators of the Implementation of ILS Organized by Seven Dimensions and Will and Capacity**

- 
1. District/School Infrastructure
    - Formalized policies and goal-setting
    - Established procedures
    - Committee structure and assigned responsibilities
    - Job assignments of central office personnel
    - Clear consequences (both positive and negative) attached to implementation efforts
    - Budget development and allocation of resources
    - District/school timelines for implementation of learning standards
    - District/school improvement plans
    - District/school personnel evaluations
    - District/school adaptation and alignment of internal norms and systems to the requirements of the state learning standards
  2. Professional Development
    - School/district inservice programs
    - Extent of participation at both district and school levels
    - Meeting agendas and topics of discussion

**Table 1 (Continued)**

- 
- Continuing education units offered
  - Professional conferences and workshops offered and attended
  - Use of external consultants
3. Curriculum
- Locally developed curriculum guides
  - Evaluation and revision of curriculum
  - Curriculum crosswalks
  - Classroom lesson plans
  - Design of special academic programs, e.g., gifted/special education, and/or extra curricular activities
  - Adoption and purchase of curricular materials
4. Instruction
- Classroom context, e.g., posters, bulletin boards, verbal reinforcement, etc.
  - Selection of teaching strategies and instructional practices used
  - Teaching philosophy and beliefs
5. Student Learning and Assessment
- Development of new/alternative forms of classroom assessment
  - Planning and preparation for ISAT and other standardized tests
  - Use of multiple measures of student performance
  - Evaluation of student performance
  - Student awareness of expectations of the learning standards
  - Parent involvement in student learning
  - Feedback provided to students and parents
  - Use of information about student learning/performances
6. Affective Responses
- Engagement in standards work by the district and school leadership teams
  - Acceptance of and familiarity with the learning standards
  - Understanding of the applicability of the learning standards at the classroom level
  - Belief that implementation of learning standards will positively affect student learning outcomes
  - Staff involvement
  - Resolve to implement the learning standards
7. Community and Stakeholder Groups
- Awareness and understanding of the Illinois Learning Standards
  - Availability of information and/or educational experiences for external constituencies
    - Community participation
-

The second stage in the development of a conceptual framework was the organization of the indicators into a developmental model. Based on the review of literature and our qualitative data, we developed a five-level model as seen in Table 2. The letters following each indicator show the dimension(s) they represent.

**Table 2: The Five Levels of ILS Implementation and Their Corresponding Indicators**

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Indicators of Implementation</u>
Level One:  Maintenance of a non ILS-led system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present educational structure supported (AR)</li> <li>• Resistance to change to accommodate the ILS (AR)</li> <li>• Procedures for implementation ILS do not exist (DI)</li> <li>• Non standards-based district or school policies and practices drive teaching, evaluation of student learning, professional development, curriculum development, and textbook choice (SL,CD, PD, I)</li> <li>• Lack of awareness and understanding of ILS among educators (PD)</li> <li>• Resistance to the intent of ILS among educators (AR)</li> <li>• Few teachers involved in implementation (DI, AR)</li> <li>• Apprehension and anxiety surrounding standards based reform (AR)</li> <li>• No community awareness of ILS (CA)</li> </ul>
Level Two:  Awareness and exploration of a ILS-led system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realization developing that change is necessary to improve learning for all students (DI)</li> <li>• Initial distribution and exploration of ILS by educators (DI)</li> <li>• Initial cross walking between ILS and district curriculum (DI, CD)</li> <li>• Implementation strategies are developed at district, school, and classroom levels (DI)</li> <li>• Local rationale for the ILS formulated at the district level (DI)</li> <li>• ILS seldom considered in teaching, evaluation of student learning (SL, I)</li> <li>• ILS sometimes considered in professional development, curriculum development, and textbook choice (PD, CD)</li> <li>• ILS are viewed as passing policy and as intruding into current district curriculum (AR)</li> <li>• Information about ILS made available to parents (CA)</li> </ul>

**Table 2 (continued)**

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Indicators of Implementation</u>
<p>Level Three:</p> <p>Transition to a ILS-led system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans, policies, and timelines for implementation in place and well known at district, school, and classroom levels (DI)</li> <li>• Linkages made between district curriculum and ILS (DI, CD)</li> <li>• Educators are convinced by research and practice that ILS is the way to go to improve student learning (AR, SL)</li> <li>• ILS beginning to impact teaching, lesson planning, evaluation of student work, textbook selection, resource allocation, and professional development on a widespread basis (PD, TM, CD, SL)</li> <li>• University preservice and continuing education programs incorporate ILS (PD, CA)</li> <li>• Academic programs and personnel are evaluated in terms of the ILS (I, CD)</li> <li>• Most teachers involved in implementation (DI, AR)</li> <li>• Establishment of new academic programs and teaching practices in terms of ILS (I, CD)</li> <li>• Efforts made to adapt ILS to fit school (district) structure (AR)</li> <li>• Dissonance between ILS and district standards/curriculum subsidies (AR)</li> <li>• Beginning awareness of ILS among students (SL)</li> <li>• Beginning of a widespread community (school board, PTA, parent, business) awareness of a standards-based system (CA)</li> </ul>
<p>Level Four:</p> <p>Emerging new infrastructure to support an ILS-led system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance data used routinely to make instructional and curricular changes (DI, SL, CD)</li> <li>• Support structures and resources for ongoing support of ILS implementation are put into place, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Formalized policies and goal setting (DI)</li> <li>⇒ Committee structures and responsibilities (DI)</li> <li>⇒ Job assignments of central office and building administrators (DI)</li> <li>⇒ Consequences attached to implementation and student performance (DI)</li> <li>⇒ Consultation and continuing education (PD)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Central consideration of the ILS when teachers are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Choosing materials (CD)</li> <li>⇒ Developing local assessments (SL)</li> <li>⇒ Evaluating student work (SL)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2 (continued)**

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Indicators of Implementation</u>
Level Four (continued):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Choosing teacher inservice or board credit classes (PD)</li> <li>⇒ Lesson planning (I)</li> <li>⇒ Giving feedback (CA)</li> <li>⇒ Evaluated (PD)</li> <li>• Widespread reference to ILS when discussing academic issues among administrators, teachers, and school staff (CA)</li> <li>• Widespread awareness of ILS among students (SL)</li> <li>• Widespread reference to ILS when discussing academic issues with parents and in media (CA)</li> </ul>
Level Five:  Predominance of a ILS-led system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous review and improvement of policies, programs, and practices with regard to ILS (DI)</li> <li>• Initial implementation timeline accomplished, and district moves on to second generation of implementation (DI)</li> <li>• On-going curriculum revision based on ILS (CD)</li> <li>• All new program development considers ILS (CD)</li> <li>• Classroom context and practice aligned with ILS (I, CD)</li> <li>• High level of engagement of all staff in implementation of ILS (AR DI)</li> <li>• Students communicate about their learning in terms of ILS (SL)</li> <li>• ILS figures prominently in higher education admissions policies and procedures (SL)</li> <li>• ILS is the basis for teacher certification (PD)</li> <li>• Enthusiastic teacher and administrator commitment and support of ILS (AR)</li> <li>• Deliberate use of ILS in decision making by parents and community (CA)</li> </ul>

Note. AR = Affective Response, PD = Professional Development, SL = Student Learning and Assessment, DI = District Infrastructure, CA = Community Awareness, I = Instruction, CD = Curriculum Development

The conceptual model and the indicators were once again validated with a focus group of local administrators and approved by the Evaluation Advisory Committee in April 1999.

Revised Teacher Survey

Original survey development proceeded directly from the indicators and the five-level model. Individual survey items were developed to represent each of the indicators. The items

were designed on a five-point Likert scale, with each point representing a level in the model. Therefore, item scores of 1 were interpreted as indicating Level One implementation, and so on, up the scale. The original draft survey was piloted and revised in three iterations. The final version of the survey was approved by the Evaluation Advisory Committee in April, 1999. Internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for the Seven Dimensions of Implementation ranged from .86 to .95. Principal Components Analysis supported a seven factor structure. For a more complete description of the validation of the survey, refer to Evaluation of the Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards: Report on the Year One Survey of Practitioners.

In 2000, the original Teacher Survey was revised to improve the respondents understanding of the survey items and consequently result in an increase in the number of surveys completed at each school and a clearer interpretation of the resulting data. We clarified the wording of several items and placed the demographics questions at the beginning of the survey. We also grouped items generally according to the teachers perspectives of the seven dimensions as described by the 1999 Principal Component Analysis. This process is described below.

Arranged Items According to Seven Dimension as Perceived by Teachers. To aid in conceptual understanding, we grouped the 2000 Teacher Survey items into three parts. The 2000 Teacher Survey begins with Part 1, Teaching Method, Curriculum, Assessment, and Teacher Response to ILS. These items are similar in that they all begin with topics of which the teachers have direct knowledge, such as I have heard of the ILS, I believe . . . , and I have made changes in the way I . . . , and so forth. The teachers were not given the option to respond Don't Know for this section. The principal component analysis we conducted last year

showed that teachers respond to these items similarly, and they load on Principal Components One and Four. Part II, School Environment contains items grouped into two principal components: School Infrastructure and Professional Development (Principal Component Two), and Student Performance (Principal Component Seven). Teachers were given the option to respond with Don't Know for these items. The remaining items were placed in Part III, School/District Administrative Decisions and Community Awareness. These items grouped dimensions into the remaining three principal components: Community/Stakeholder Involvement (Principal Component Three), School Communications (Principal Component Five), and District Infrastructure (Principal Component Six).

The revised Teacher Survey was piloted in three schools during December, 1999. A copy of the revised Teacher Survey is included as Attachment A.

#### Development of Administrator and Superintendent Editions

Using the content and format of the Teacher Edition as a model, we constructed parallel forms of the survey for use with principals (Administrator Edition) and superintendents (Superintendent Edition). The purpose of the parallel forms was to compare perceptions of ILS implementation across the three groups. The Administrator Edition was piloted in Spring, 1999, revised, and piloted again in December, 2000. The Superintendent Edition was piloted in March, 2000. Copies of the surveys are included as Attachments B (Administrator) and C (Superintendent).

#### Sample

This year's survey included Teacher and Administrator Editions of the surveys in the same mailing. Consequently, both surveys utilized the same sample of schools. Sampling

procedures for Teacher and Administrator Editions are discussed below. The Superintendent Survey was mailed to all current superintendents in the state of Illinois.

### Procedure

Our teacher/principal sample was randomly selected to represent the population of all public schools in Illinois. The initial sample consisted of 123 schools. We included the 109 schools that participated in last year's study, of which 7 were case study schools. We selected 14 additional schools to ensure that the sample adequately represented the population in terms of level (elementary, middle, high, special) geographic distribution, percent low income, and ISAT performance.

During the first week of February, we contacted the principals of the schools by mail to solicit their participation in the survey. Superintendents of the districts were also notified of the study by mail at this time. Enclosed with the principals' letter was a consent form to be mailed or faxed back to us if they were willing to participate. We began mailing the surveys to the consenting schools in mid-February and continued through March as we obtained the consent forms. Each mailing contained Teacher Edition surveys for all teachers in the school and one Administrator Edition for each administrator in the school. We faxed up to 3 reminders to schools that had not responded and continued data collection through April 30.

During the first week in April, we mailed cover letters and copies of the Superintendent's Edition to 996 district superintendents in the state of Illinois. Data collection ended June 1, 2000.

### Response Rate

Teacher Survey. We received permission from 62 schools (50.4% of schools sampled) representing 1,996 teachers and 118 principals, including the 8 case study schools. A total of

910 Teacher Surveys (46% of teachers sampled) were analyzed. There were 456 surveys returned from high schools, 146 surveys from middle schools, 296 surveys from elementary schools, and 12 surveys from special schools. The demographics of the survey respondents was comparable to that of the initial sample. While the response rate was somewhat lower than that of the previous year, the average number of surveys returned from each school increased from an average of 10.8 in 1999 to an average of 15.4 in 2000 (42.3% increase), resulting in a much more precise measurement of implementation at the school level.

Administrator Survey. A total of 68 Administrator Surveys (58% of principals sampled) were returned and suitable for analysis. Twenty-five Administrator Surveys were analyzed from high schools, 16 surveys from middle schools, 24 surveys from elementary schools, and 3 surveys from special schools.

Superintendent Survey. A total of 383 Superintendent Surveys were returned and suitable for analysis (38.5% of all superintendents).

#### Analysis of Teacher Survey

This section describes the statistical methodology used to address the three purposes of inquiry (p. 1), using the responses on the Teacher Edition of the survey. Methods used to analyze the Superintendent and Administrator Survey are also discussed in this section.

#### Assessing ILS Implementation at the State Level

The extent to which the ILS were implemented in each school was assessed according to the responses on the Teacher Edition of the survey. Each school was assigned a level of implementation by first using a two-stage averaging procedure. Recall that the survey was written such that responses for each question were scaled from 1 (no ILS implementation) to 5 (predominance of an ILS led system). We used this scale to derive an implementation value

reported by each of the 910 teachers in our survey. To derive this value, we simply averaged all item responses for each teacher questionnaire. In the second stage of the averaging procedure, we averaged these teacher implementation values for each school.

The school average was then truncated to the ones place, providing a single value to represent the ILS implementation level for that school. Schools with a truncated mean of 1 were assigned to Level One implementation; those with a truncated mean of 2 were assigned Level Two implementation, and so on.

#### Presenting a Profile of ILS Implementation Across the Seven Dimensions Represented in the Conceptual Framework and Factors Associated with Implementation

Seven dimensions affecting level of ILS implementation are described in Table 1. Survey items were assigned to each of the seven dimensions on the basis of content and principal components analysis. The item responses provided information about the level of implementation the teachers and administrators perceived for the seven dimensions.

An average for each of the seven dimensions was derived for each school using a two-stage averaging procedure. We first derived a value for the seven dimensions for each of the 910 teachers in our survey. To derive this value, we simply averaged all item responses within each of the seven dimensions for each teacher survey. In the second stage of the averaging procedure, we averaged these teacher values for each school. This process resulted in an average value for each of the seven dimensions at each school.

The school dimension averages were used to derive a grand mean for each of the seven dimensions for the entire survey.

Determining the Effect of Will and Capacity on ILS Implementation. We also explored will and capacity issues regarding ILS implementation. The will to implement the ILS was

defined by the questions attributed to the Affective Response dimension and the additional survey question asking the extent to which the respondent had heard of the ILS. The capacity to implement was defined by all other survey questions.

Averages for will and capacity issues were derived for each school using the same two-stage averaging procedure used to analyze the seven dimensions. We first derived two values for each of the 910 teachers in our survey, one representing the will issue for each teacher and the other representing the capacity issue. To derive this value, we simply averaged all item responses within will issues and all the item responses within capacity issues for each teacher survey. In the second stage of the averaging procedure, we averaged the teacher will and capacity values for each school.

The averages for each school were used to derive grand means of will and capacity issues for the entire survey.

#### Examining the Relationship Between ILS Implementation and ISAT Performance

The method we have developed to derive the relationship between ISAT scores and ILS implementation levels includes only schools that participated in both the 1999 and the 2000 surveys.

The 1999-2000 sample included 44 schools (one of the 45 matched schools, a Special School, is not included on the Report Card data and therefore removed from this analysis), and represented 657 teachers. Table 3 shows the number of schools and the 1999 ILS implementation average for each school type for schools in the ILS/ISAT sample. The matched sample means by level do not differ significantly from those of the full sample (p. 16, Table 5). When the Report Card data becomes available for the year 2000, we will compare changes in ISAT scores to changes in levels of ILS implementation. This method controls for differences in

the rate of ILS implementation for schools with dissimilar characteristics, such as past academic performance.

It is necessary that some schools in our sample have a high level of ILS implementation in order to definitively determine the relationship between ISAT scores and ILS implementation. The increase in implementation levels between 1999 and 2000 may not be large enough to detect this relationship, so this process will be repeated in following years of the study as more schools move into Levels Four and Five.

**Table 3: Number of Schools and 1999-2000 Average ILS Implementation for ILS/ISAT sample by School Type (N = 44)**

	N	Implementation Score			
		1999		2000	
Level		Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
High School	12	2.09	(.24)	2.43	(.44)
Middle School	9	2.61	(.34)	2.79	(.31)
Elementary	23	2.68	(.34)	2.85	(.42)
Overall	44	2.51	(.41)	2.72	(.44)

Analysis of Administrator and Superintendent Survey

Procedures used to analyze data from the Administrator and Superintendent Surveys were the same used for the Teacher Survey (see preceding section). Comparisons were made across Teacher, Administrator, and Superintendent Survey results to assess similarities in perceptions of ILS implementation across the three groups and discuss the implications for technical assistance or other ISBE action.

Results of the Teacher Survey

Assessing Levels of ILS Implementation

As a State, Illinois is in Level Two Implementation, and Implementation Has Increased from a Year Ago

As shown in Table 4, 83.1% of the schools in the survey were judged by 800 teachers to be in Level Two, the second stage of implementation as described by our five-level model.

**Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Schools by Level of Implementation Teacher Survey (N = 59 schools), 2000**

Level of Implementation	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Level One	0	0
Level Two	49	83.1
Level Three	10	16.9
Level Four	0	0
Level Five	0	0
Total	59	100

Level Two is defined as Awareness and Expectation of an ILS-Led System. It is characterized by:

- A developing realization that change is necessary in the present system for improvement in learning to occur for all students;
- Initial distribution and exploration of ILS by teachers and administrators;
- Beginning discussions and development of implementation strategies at the district, school, and classroom levels;
- Formulation of rationale and procedures for introducing ILS to parents and community members;

- Minimal consideration of ILS in instruction, evaluation of student learning, and communication with parents;
- Some consideration of ILS in professional development, curriculum development, and textbook choice;
- View of state standards as passing policy and possible intrusion into district standards or curriculum; and
- Establishment of parent and community group information sessions.

Almost 17% of the schools we surveyed, representing 110 teachers, were in the Level Three Implementation: Transition to an ILS-Led System. These schools were characterized by:

- Established plans, policies, and timelines for ILS implementation that are well known at district, school, and classroom levels. School/District infrastructure adapts to ILS.
- Linkages between district curriculum and ILS. Dissonance subsides.
- Teachers and administrators that are convinced that ILS are the way to go to improve student learning.
- Widespread ILS impact on teaching lesson planning, evaluation of student work, textbook selection, resource allocation, and professional development.
- University preservice and continuing education programs that incorporate ILS.
- Program and personnel evaluation that reflect ILS.
- New academic programs and policies shaped by ILS.
- Beginning student awareness of ILS.
- Beginning community awareness of ILS.

Eight of the schools in Level Two were elementary schools; two were middle schools; and one was a high school.

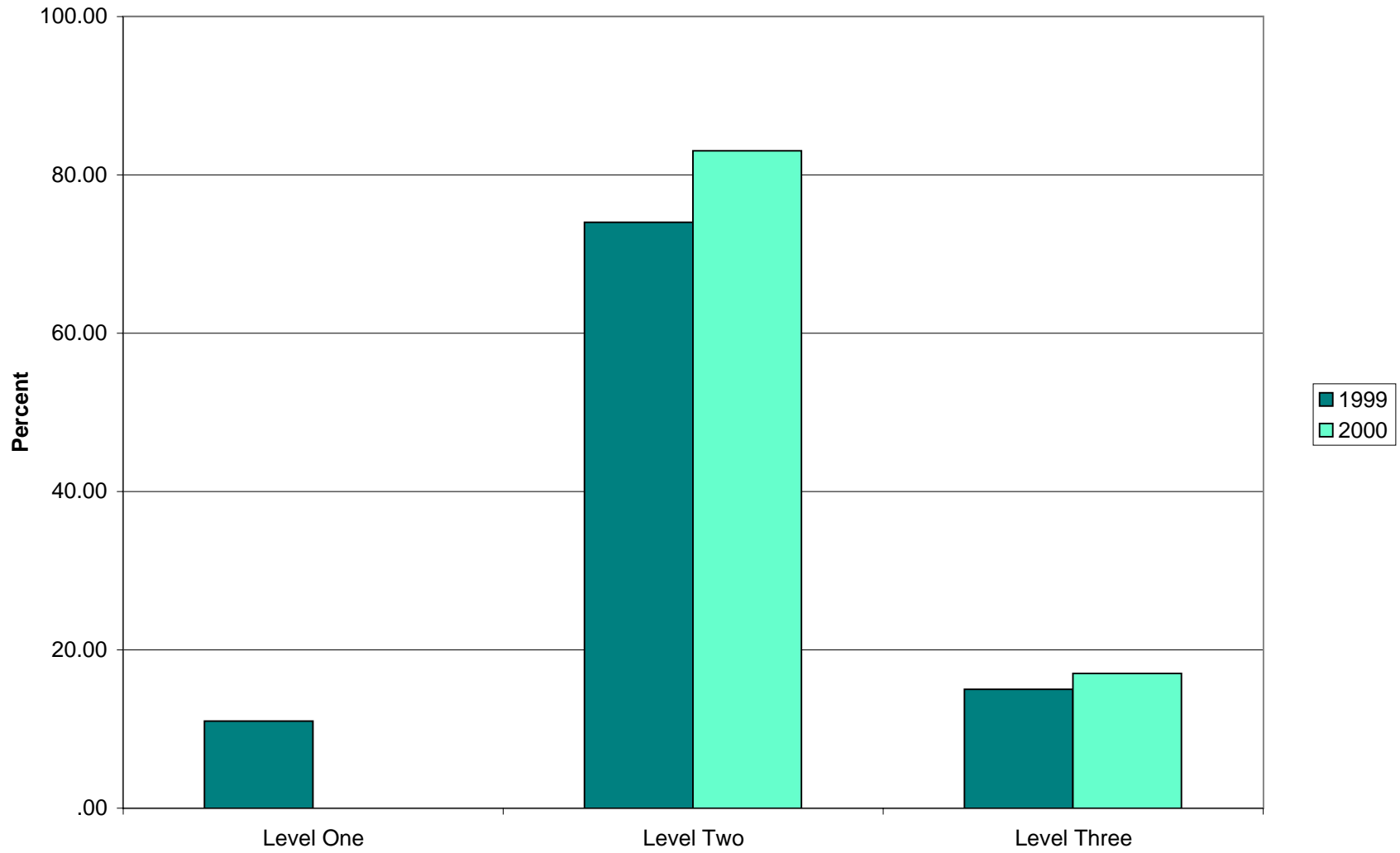
As shown in Figure 1 on page 17, whereas 11% of the schools fell into Level One Implementation last year, no schools were in Level One this year. No schools were in Level Four or Level Five implementation for either year. Figure 2 on page 18 compares mean implementation scores for 1999 and 2000 by school type as shown in Table 5. Elementary, middle, and high schools demonstrated a small increase in average ILS implementation from 1999 to 2000. Across the total sample of schools, there was a significant increase in ILS implementation over the past year.

**Table 5: Comparison of Average ILS Implementation Scores from Spring 1999 to Spring 2000 by School Type**

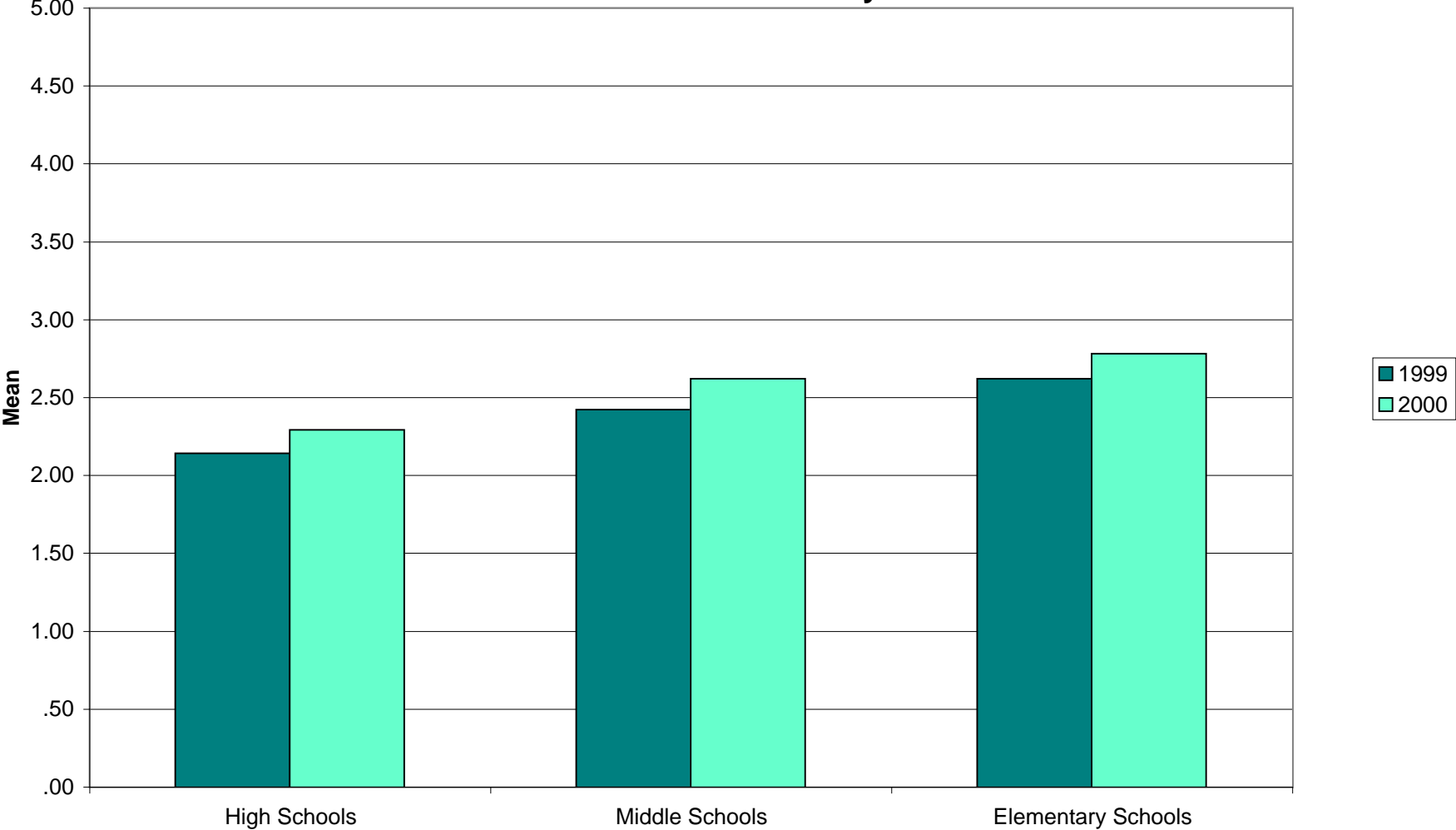
	Average ILS Implementation			
	1999 N = 1268		2000 N = 910	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
High Schools	2.16	.32	2.29	.26
Middle Schools	2.43	.41	2.62	.35
Elementary Schools	2.63	.40	2.77	.39
Total*	2.44	.43	2.61	.40

\*indicates significant increase from 1999 to 2000, @  $p \leq .05$

**Figure 1**  
**Percent of Schools by Level of Implementation, 1999-2000**  
**All Schools in Survey**



**Figure 2**  
**Average ILS Implementation Levels**  
**by School Type, 1999-2000**  
**All Schools in Survey**



Presenting Profiles of ILS Implementation Across Seven Dimensions and  
Factors Associated with Implementation

The Profile of ILS Implementation is Consistent with Level Two Implementation

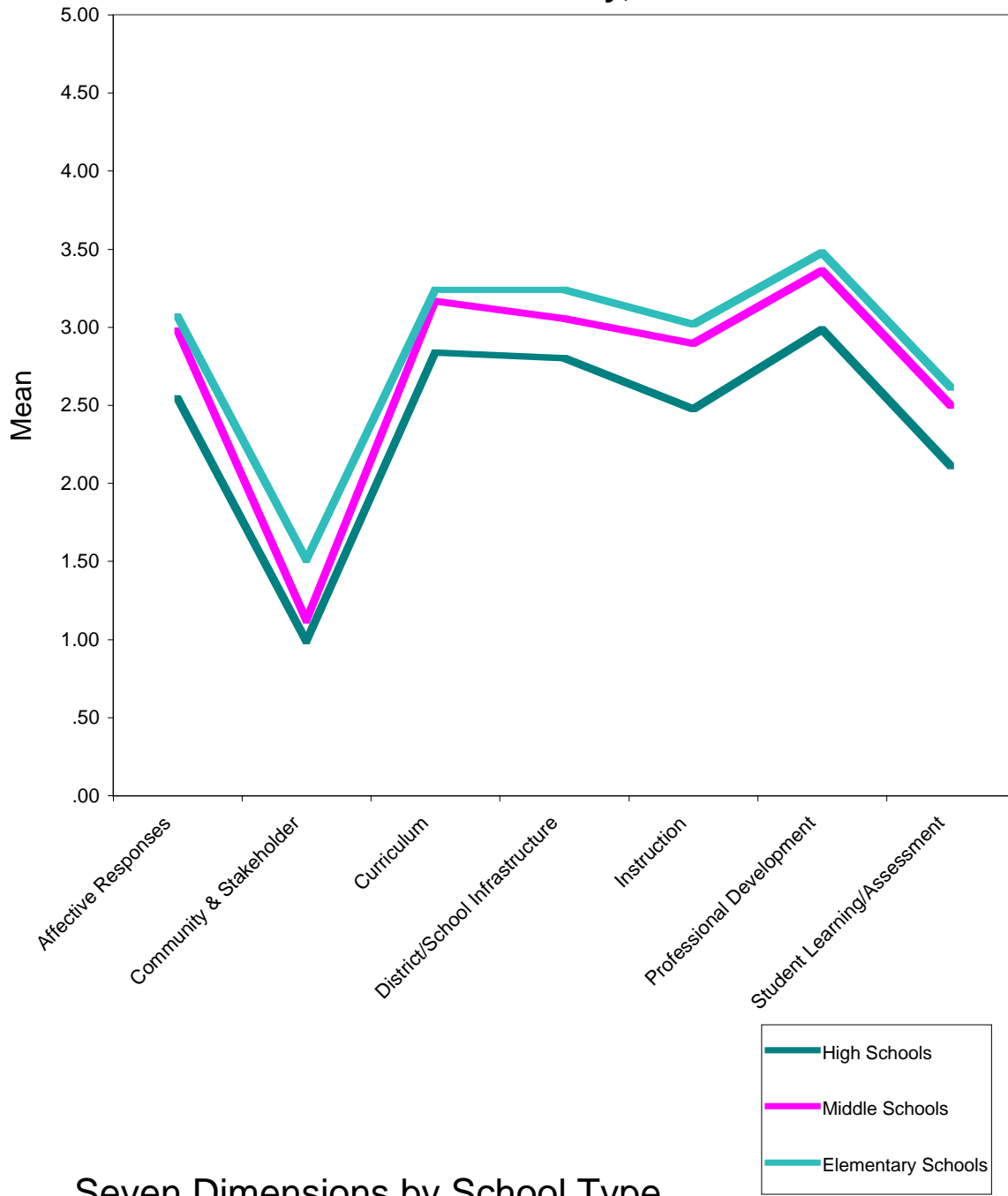
In order to conduct a more detailed analysis of patterns of ILS implementation across the state, we developed profiles of implementation using the seven dimensions of implementation: Affective Response, Community/Stakeholder Involvement, Curriculum Development, District Infrastructure, Instruction, Student Learning and Achievement, and Professional Development. In Table 6, these are further disaggregated by school level: Elementary, Middle, High, and Special Schools<sup>1</sup>. The results are presented graphically in Figure 3, page 20, omitting special schools because of limited data.

**Table 6: Summary of Mean Scores for the Seven Dimensions of Implementation by School Type Based on the Results of the Teacher Survey (N = 910), 2000**

Dimension	Elementary (N = 296)	Middle (N = 146)	High (N = 456)	Special (N = 12)	Total (N = 910)
Affective Response	3.07 (0.45)	2.98 (0.38)	2.54 (0.29)	3.38 (0.65)	2.92 (0.46)
Community/Stakeholder Involvement	1.51 (0.45)	1.12 (0.45)	0.99 (0.30)	0.60 (0.21)	1.25 (0.48)
Curriculum Development	3.24 (0.43)	3.16 (0.44)	2.84 (0.38)	3.06 (0.18)	3.11 (0.44)
District/School Infrastructure	3.24 (0.44)	3.05 (0.42)	2.80 (0.36)	2.17 (0.18)	3.05 (0.47)
Instruction	3.02 (0.51)	2.89 (0.39)	2.47 (0.27)	3.29 (0.49)	2.86 (0.49)
Professional Development	3.84 (0.53)	3.36 (0.34)	2.98 (0.37)	2.95 (0.39)	3.31 (0.49)
Student Learning and Achievement	2.61 (0.47)	2.50 (0.41)	2.11 (0.25)	2.69 (0.40)	2.46 (0.45)
Total Implementation	2.79 (0.40)	2.64 (0.34)	2.38 (0.41)	2.44 (0.18)	2.64 (0.41)

<sup>1</sup> In this study, the special schools category is made up of alternative secondary schools.

**Figure 3**  
**Profiles of Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards**  
**for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools**  
**Teacher Survey, 2000**



Seven Dimensions by School Type

Across levels, Professional Development and Curriculum Development were the most highly implemented dimensions. This is characteristic of Level Two, when teachers are learning more about ILS and working to strengthen the relationship between ILS and the current curriculum. Activity surrounding District/School Infrastructure was also high. This is also characteristic of Level Two, when implementation is characterized by the development of policies and procedures to support the change. Perceptions of implementation in the areas of Instruction and Student Learning and Assessment were lower than Professional Development, District School Infrastructure, and Curriculum Development. This is also characteristic of Level Two, as teachers are beginning to make concrete changes in infrastructure and curriculum. These changes, however, may not yet be manifested in their teaching or reflected in student learning.

Affective Response, i.e., teachers' motivation and enthusiasm for the standards, was also moderate. This finding supports what we learned in our qualitative inquiry, that teachers are moving ahead with implementation, but with a wait and see attitude. They want to be sure that the ILS are not just another fad that will be gone in a year or so. Community/Stakeholder involvement was uniformly low. This will be discussed in a later section.

#### Elementary Schools Exhibit Higher Implementation than Other School Types

On average, elementary schools in our sample scored higher on all seven dimensions and on total implementation than middle, high, or special schools (Table 5 and 6). High schools were lower than elementary and middle schools on all seven dimensions.

Though the general pattern of implementation was the same across dimensions for all types of schools, the finding that level of implementation varies by school level may be important for technical assistance. Given their lower levels of implementation, high schools may

require more intensive support to move ahead with ILS implementation than their elementary and middle counterparts. Immediate support may be most needed in the areas of curriculum, infrastructure, and professional development. These are the focal dimensions of Level Two Implementation, yet are areas in which high schools are falling far below elementary and middle schools.

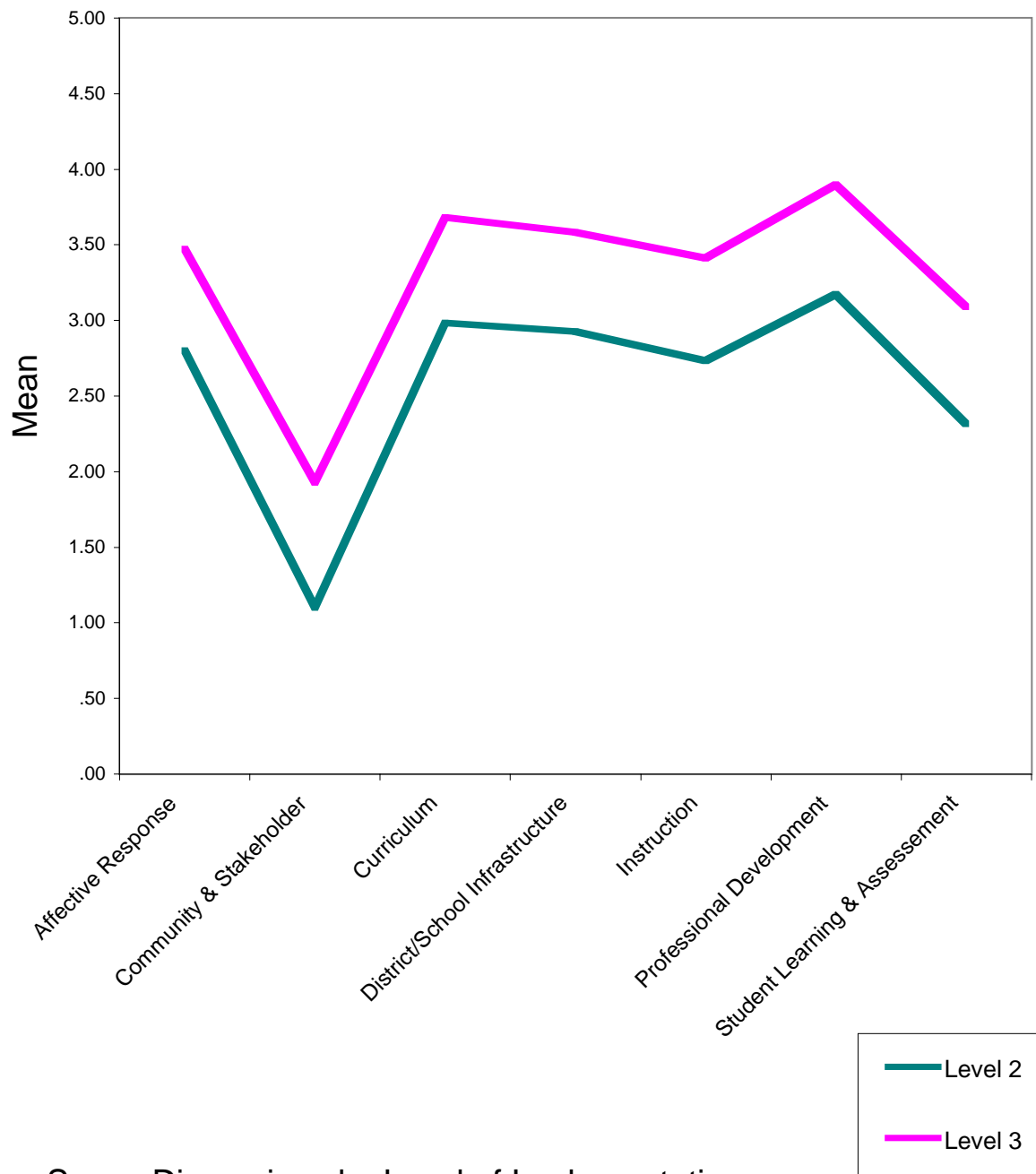
Profiles are Similar for Level Two and Three Schools

Table 7 presents profiles of schools at each level of implementation, using the seven dimensions. Figure 4 on page 23 presents the same findings graphically.

**Table 7: Summary of Mean Scores for the Seven Dimensions by Level of Implementation Based on the Results of the Teacher Survey (N = 910), 2000**

Dimension	Level One	Level Two N = 662	Level Three N = 248	Total Sample N = 910
Affective Response	-	2.80 (0.34)	3.47 (0.52)	2.92 (0.46)
Community/Stakeholder Involvement	-	1.10 (0.35)	1.93 (0.38)	1.25 (0.48)
Curriculum Development	-	2.98 (0.32)	3.68 (0.47)	3.11 (0.44)
District/School Infrastructure	-	2.92 (0.40)	3.58 (0.40)	3.05 (0.47)
Instruction	-	2.73 (0.35)	3.41 (0.60)	2.86 (0.49)
Professional Development	-	2.92 (0.40)	3.58 (0.40)	3.31 (0.49)
Student Learning and Achievement	-	2.32 (0.30)	3.09 (0.47)	2.46 (0.45)
Total Implementation	-	2.47 (0.24)	3.36 (0.16)	2.64 (0.41)

**Figure 4**  
**Profiles of Implementation of Illinois Learning Standards**  
**for All Schools**  
**Grouped by Level of Implementation - 2000**



In general, the profile of implementation is similar for Level Two and Level Three Schools, with higher activity in Professional Development, District/School Infrastructure, and Curriculum and moderate activity surrounding Instruction and Student Learning. Affective Response is also moderate.

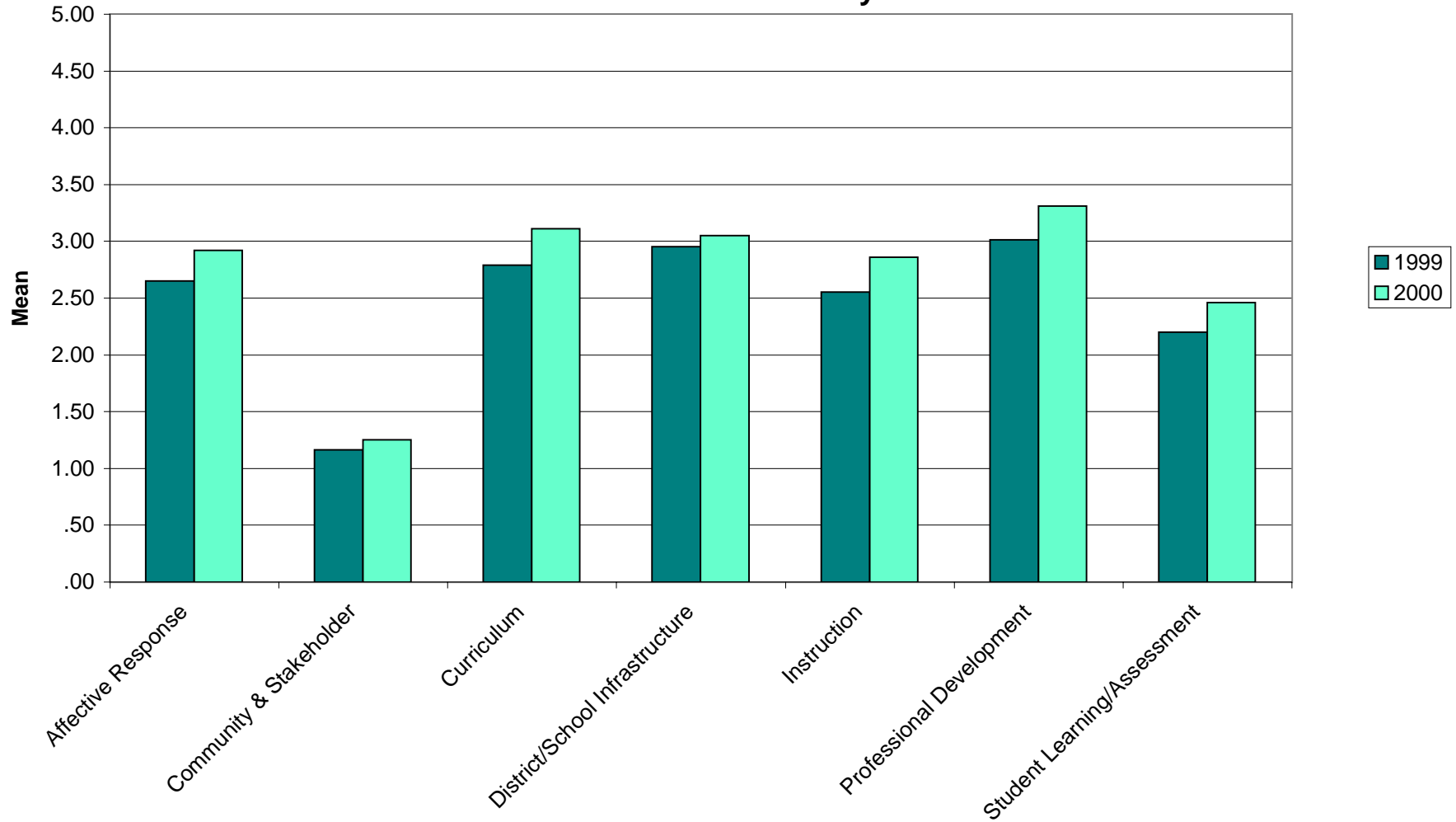
#### Community and Stakeholder Involvement Is Exceedingly Low

Survey and qualitative data revealed that community and stakeholder involvement in ILS implementation was minimal. Respondents indicated that parents, school boards and the community had little awareness and understanding of the ILS and limited access to information and educational opportunities about them. In both the Survey and Qualitative Component, we found only a handful of schools in which parents and the community were meaningfully involved in standards implementation at the local level. This finding indicates a strong need for action by the state agency to create and disseminate models for community and stakeholder involvement that can be used at the local level.

#### ILS Implementation has Increased Across Most Dimensions from 1999 to 2000

Figure 5 on page 25 compares the mean scores for each dimension for two time periods, Spring 1999 and Spring 2000. As shown in Table 8 on page 26, mean levels of implementation increased significantly ( $p < .05$ ) between 1999 and 2000, except in the dimensions of District/School Infrastructure and Community/Stakeholder Involvement). The largest differences were seen in the dimensions of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development. This is consistent with the transition from Level Two to level Three as linkages between district curriculum and ILS are strengthened, more teachers learn about ILS and become involved in implementation, and ILS begins to impact Professional Development and Instruction.

**Figure 5**  
**Average ILS Implementation Levels, 1999-2000**  
**by Seven Dimensions**  
**All Schools in Survey**



**Table 8: 1999-2000 Comparison of Average ILS Implementation by Dimension, Teacher Survey**

Dimension	ILS Implementation			
	1999 N = 1268		2000 N = 910	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Affective Response*	2.65	(.44)	2.92	(.46)
Community & Stakeholder	1.16	(.42)	1.25	(.48)
Curriculum*	2.79	(.50)	3.11	(.44)
District/School Infrastructure	2.95	(.53)	3.05	(.47)
Instruction*	2.55	(.48)	2.86	(.49)
Professional Development*	3.01	(.63)	3.31	(.49)
Student Learning /Assessment*	2.20	(.44)	2.46	(.45)
Overall*	2.44	(.43)	2.60	(.40)

\*Significant increase from 1999 to 2000, p † .05.

It is somewhat consistent with expectations that District/School Infrastructure did not increase significantly. Levels Two and Three of the model are characterized by the creation and maintenance of policies, processes for ILS implementation. Analysis of the responses to open-ended questions indicate that most schools/districts have established committees to align district curriculum with the ILS and created timelines for implementation. They may need advice and support from the state, however, to develop higher order procedures and policies to support ILS implementation. Some of these higher order policies and procedures might include:

- Development of standing committees to analyze student performance in relation to ILS and make curricular changes.

- Alignment of report cards, progress reports, and other feedback to students and parents with ILS.
- Incorporation of ILS into lesson planning and personnel evaluation.
- Articulation of policies and procedures across elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Community/Stakeholder Involvement also did not increase from 1999 to 2000. As noted in the previous section, local districts and schools must be encouraged to include parents, students, and community members in ILS implementation efforts.

Local Will and Capacity Affect Implementation

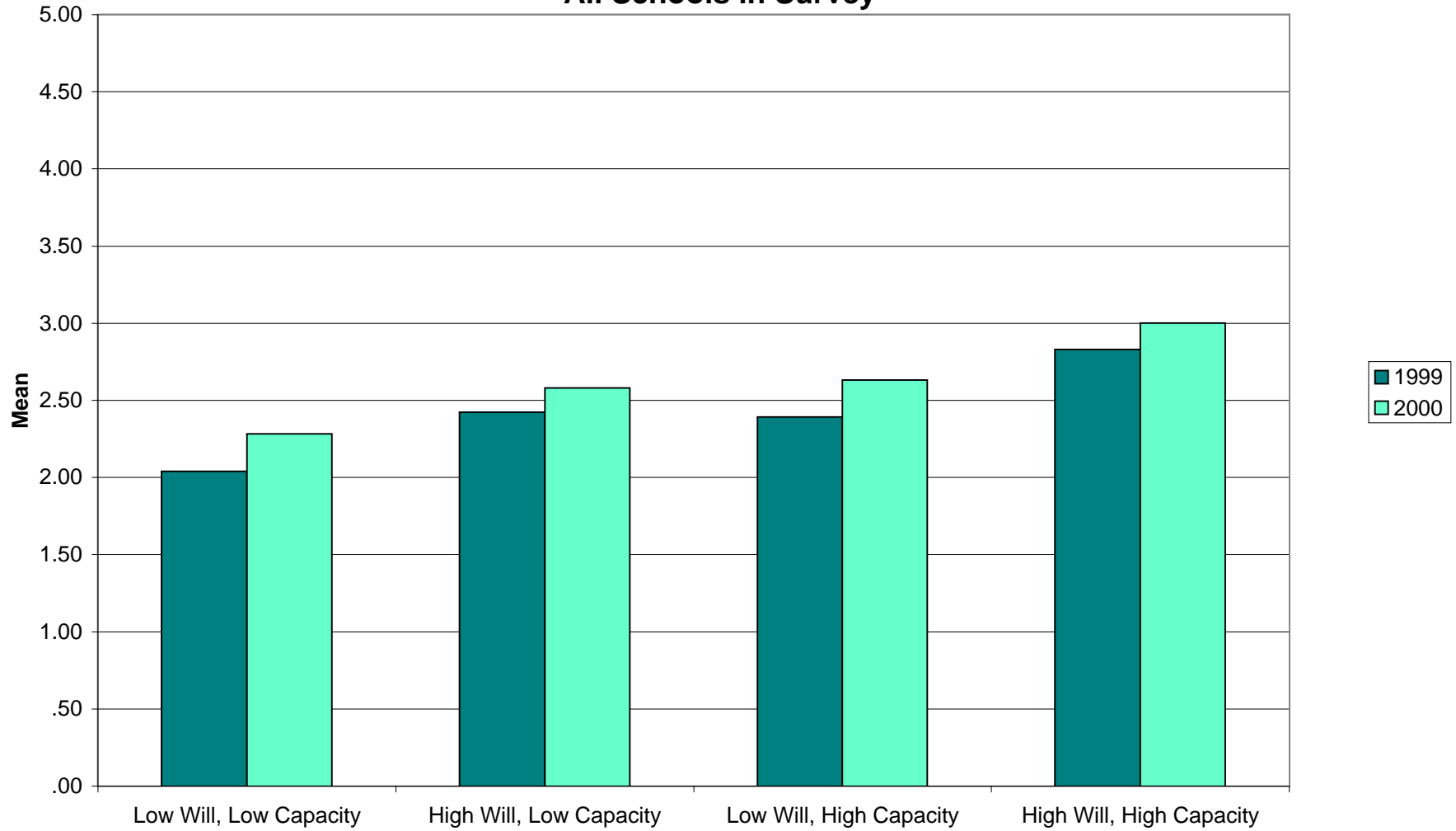
For this analysis, schools were grouped according to their scores on Will and Capacity Dimensions as described on page 11. For example, the 26 schools in the Low Will/Low Capacity category had below average scores for both will and capacity.

In Table 9, mean ILS implementation scores from spring 1999 are compared with those from Spring 2000 for schools grouped by will and capacity (based upon 1999 survey results). The same data are presented graphically in Figure 6 on page 28. Although teachers in Low

**Table 9: Comparison of Mean ILS Implementation Scores by Will and Capacity Designation and Frequency of Schools in Each Category**

Designation	n	Mean	ILS Implementation			
			1999	S.D.	2000	S.D.
Low Will/Low Capacity (N = 26)	46	2.04	.24	2.34	.17	
High Will/Low Capacity (N = 6)	7	2.40	.08	2.58	.01	
Low Will/High Capacity (N = 7)	7	2.42	.05	2.66	.11	
High Will/High Capacity (N = 22)	45	2.85	.21	3.00	.33	
Overall	105	2.44	.43	2.60	.40	

**Figure 6**  
**Average ILS Implementation Levels, 1999-2000**  
**by Will and Capacity Designation**  
**All Schools in Survey**



Will/Low Capacity schools reported the lowest implementation in both years, it should be noted that this group demonstrated the largest increase (.30) from 1999 to 2000. This indicates that the most resistant schools are responding to the ILS initiative and making measurable progress. At the other end of the continuum, teachers in High Will/High Capacity schools reported the highest levels of implementation for both years, but demonstrated the smallest change in implementation. These schools' average implementation was at Level Three in 2000. It may be that the institutionalization and incorporation of ILS characteristic of movement to Level Four take longer to achieve than some of the activities associated with Levels One through Three and result in smaller annual change. Given the small sample size, it is difficult to interpret the trends associated with the Low Will/High Capacity and High Will/Low Capacity groups.

#### Teachers Reported Changes in Practice Related to ILS Implementation

Teachers associated a variety of activities in their schools with the implementation of ILS. As seen in Table 10, in both years more than 60% of teachers reported that curriculum was being aligned to ILS in their schools. This activity also saw the largest increase in percentage of teachers reporting from 1999 to 2000. Other activities associated with ILS implementation reported by more than 20% of teachers included: adopting block scheduling, increasing summer school options, and expanding after-school tutoring. These findings are consistent with a predominance of Level Two implementation as districts begin to consider ILS in curriculum development and to realize that substantial change in the system is necessary if learning is to occur for all students. Results also indicate that few schools are changing in the ways in which student performance is reported or revising personnel responsibilities in response to ILS. These

**Table 10: Percentage of Teachers Indicating Changes in Activities at their Schools Related to ILS Implementation, 1999-2000**

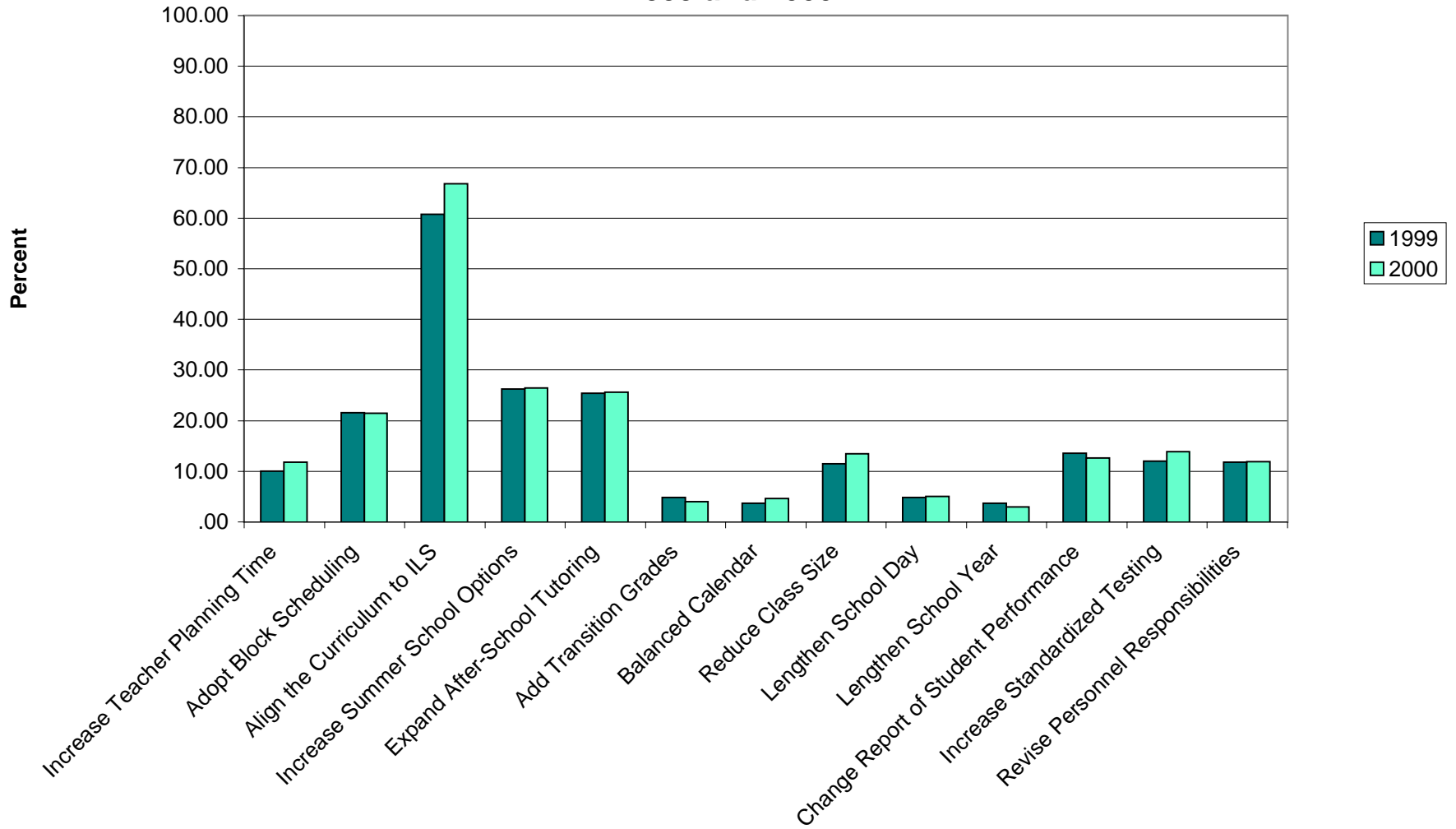
Activity	Percentage of Teachers Reporting	
	1999 N = 1268	2000 N = 910
Increase Teacher Planning Time	10.0	11.7
Adopt Block Scheduling	21.5	21.4
Align the Curriculum To ILS	60.7	66.7
Increase Summer School Options	26.2	26.4
Expand After-School Tutoring	25.4	25.6
Add Transition Grades	4.8	4.0
Adopt Balanced Calendar	3.6	4.6
Reduce Class size	11.4	13.4
Lengthen School Day	4.8	5.0
Change Report of Student Performance	13.5	12.6
Increase Standardized Testing	12.0	13.8
Revise Personnel Responsibilities	11.7	11.8

activities are associated with Levels Three and Four, as ILS become incorporated into local policies and practice. Figure 7 on page 31 reports the same information graphically.

Teachers Reported Increased Availability of Professional Development Regarding ILS from a Wide Variety of Sources

The percentage of teachers who reported that professional development on ILS was available to them increased from 69.2% in 1999 to 76.1% in 2000. Teachers noted a variety of professional development sources as shown in Table 11 on page 32.

**Figure 7**  
**Percent of Teachers Indicating Changes in Activities at Their Schools**  
**Related to ILS Implementation**  
**1999 and 2000**



**Table 11: Percentage of Teachers Reporting Availability of ILS Professional Development by Source, 1999-2000**

Activity	Percentage of Teachers Reporting	
	1999 N = 1268	2000 N = 910
State-Sponsored Workshops and Inservices	36.5	41.9
The Regional Offices of Education	46.5	46.8
District-Sponsored Inservices	47.9	54.2
School-Sponsored Inservices	46.5	57.1
Outside Consultants	25.2	28.6
Colleges and Universities	18.8	23.5
Professional Conferences	35.9	32.9

The most widely available source of professional development on ILS was school-sponsored inservices, with more than half (57.1%) of all teachers indicating its availability. This source also showed the greatest increase from 1999 to 2000. District- and state-sponsored workshops were also available to a significant percentage of teachers, and this percentage increased from 1999 to 2000. ROE workshops were available to 47% of all teachers reporting. This figure was consistent from year to year. Outside consultants, colleges, and universities were available to a smaller percentage of teachers, but this number increased from the previous year, while professional conferences declined.

It appears that professional development on ILS is widely available from a variety of sources, and that availability is increasing.

### Examining the Relationship Between ISAT Performance and ILS Implementation

In 2000, we began an analysis of the relationship between school-level ISAT scores and school ILS implementation levels. It is not possible to determine this relationship in the benchmark year, but, as described on page 12, we have established a procedure for deriving this information as we collect data over the following years.

The relationship between ISAT scores and ILS implementation levels cannot be derived in the first year of ISAT data availability for at least two reasons. First, ISAT scores at a given school depend on many variables, including the school's previous academic performance. Schools that have performed well academically in the past have not necessarily implemented the ILS at the same rate as lower performing schools. An inverse relationship between the rate at which different types of schools began to implement the ILS and their prior academic achievement can distort the relationship between ISAT scores and ILS implementation levels. For this reason, we are basing our analysis on changes in ISAT and ILS levels rather than a direct comparison of scores. Because 1999 was the first year of ISAT and 2000 scores are not yet available, we have only one data point for the analysis, and therefore no basis for measuring change in performance. We opted not to use IGAP as the initial point for measuring change because of the incomparability between ISAT and IGAP. As soon as 2000 ISAT results become available, we will proceed with the analysis.

A second reason why the relationship between ISAT scores and ILS implementation levels cannot be derived after only one year of ISAT data is because most schools have just begun to implement the ILS. The modal implementation level is a 2 on a 5-point scale for the benchmark year. This creates a severely truncated range for the ILS implementation variable, lowering correlations and reducing statistical power. As ILS implementation increases and more schools

enter Levels Three, Four, and Five, it will be more possible to detect any relationship between ILS implementation and ISAT performance. Therefore, we will repeat the analysis in years Three and Four.

At This Time, No Relationship Can Be Detected Between ISAT Performance and ILS Implementation

As explained above, no relationship can be determined between ISAT scores and ILS implementation levels in this benchmark year. Table 12 illustrates that no relationship exists across all subjects and grade levels of the 1999 ISAT in a direct correlation of these two scores using a matched sample of schools.

**Table 12: ILS/ISAT Correlations by Grade and Content Area, 1999**

Grade/	Content Area	ILS/ISAT Correlation	p
3	Reading	-.07	.77
	Math	.03	.90
	Writing	.05	.84
5	Reading	-.17	.45
	Math	-.06	.80
	Writing	-.03	.96
8	Reading	-.33	.33
	Math	-.40	.22
	Writing	-.20	.57
10	Reading	.42	.18
	Math	.37	.24
	Writing	.04	.90

Results of Teacher, Administrator, Superintendent Comparisons

To gauge the extent to which principals and superintendents' perceptions of ILS implementation were consistent with those of teachers, we compared the results of the three groups in terms of level and profile of implementation.

Assessing Levels of ILS Implementation

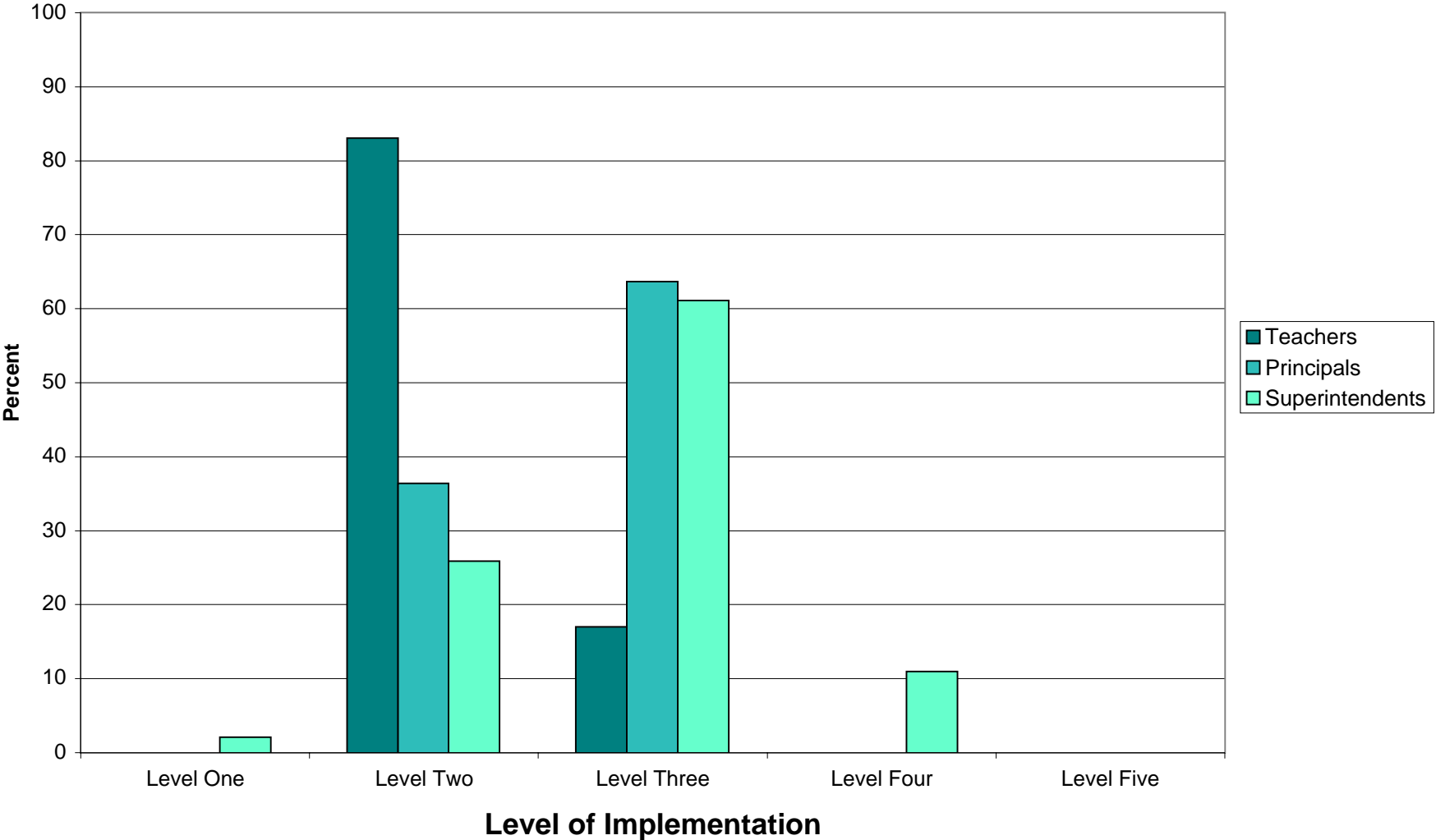
In General, Principals and Superintendents Reported Higher Levels of ILS Implementation Than Teachers

The modal level of implementation, as reported by principals, is shown in Table 13; 63.6% of the principals represented in the survey judged their schools to be in Level Three, the third stage of implementation as described by our five-level model; 36.4% of the schools were judged by their principals to be in the Level Two Implementation: Transition to an ILS-led System. For superintendents, most (61.1%) rated their districts as Level Three implementation; 11% reported them at Level Four. Both principals and superintendents reported substantially higher levels of implementation than teachers, for whom modal implementation was Level Two. Figure 8 on page 36 presents these findings graphically.

**Table 13: Percentage of Responses by Levels of Implementation—Teacher, Administrator, and Superintendent Surveys, 2000**

Level of Implementation	Teachers N = 910	Principals N = 68	Superintendents N = 383
Level One	0.0	0.0	2.1
Level Two	83.0	36.4	25.8
Level Three	17.0	63.6	61.1
Level Four	0.0	0.0	11.0
Level 5	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Figure 8**  
**Percent of Responses for Teacher, Principal and Superintendent Surveys by**  
**Level of Implementation,2000**



Presenting Profiles of ILS Implementation Across Seven Dimensions

The Profile of ILS Implementation is Similar Across Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents

Table 14 presents profiles of implementation for each school level, using the seven dimensions. Figures 9 and 10 present the same findings graphically.

**Table 14: Summary of Mean Scores for the Seven Dimensions of Implementation by School Level for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents**

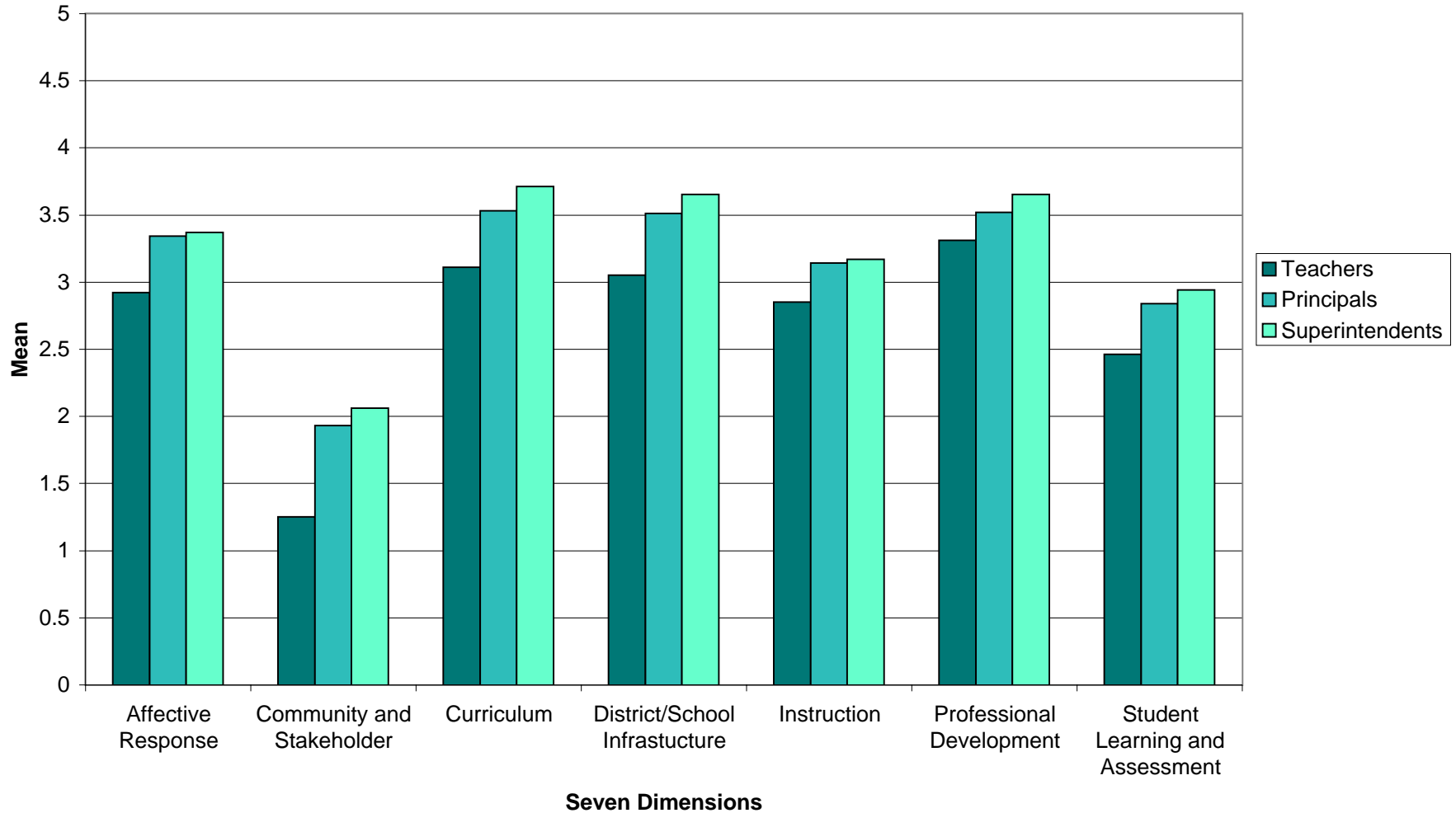
Dimension	Teachers N = 910		Principals N = 68		Superintendents N = 383	
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.
Affective Response	2.92	(.46)	3.34	(.47)	3.37	(.60)
Community & Stakeholder Involvement	1.25	(.48)	1.93	(.62)	2.06	(.72)
Curriculum Development	3.11	(.44)	3.53	(.52)	3.72	(.58)
District/School Infrastructure	3.05	(.47)	3.51	(.61)	3.65	(.64)
Instruction	2.86	(.49)	3.14	(.57)	3.17	(.66)
Professional Development	3.31	(.49)	3.52	(.66)	3.65	(.67)
Student Learning and Assessment	2.46	(.45)	2.84	(.52)	2.94	(.68)
Overall	2.64	(.41)	3.04	(.47)	3.16	(.56)

Despite differences in perception of level of implementation, the profile of implementation is similar across teachers, principals, and superintendents. For all three groups, Curriculum Development, Professional Development, and District/School Infrastructure were the most highly rated dimensions. All groups perceived Community and Stakeholder Involvement to be very low.

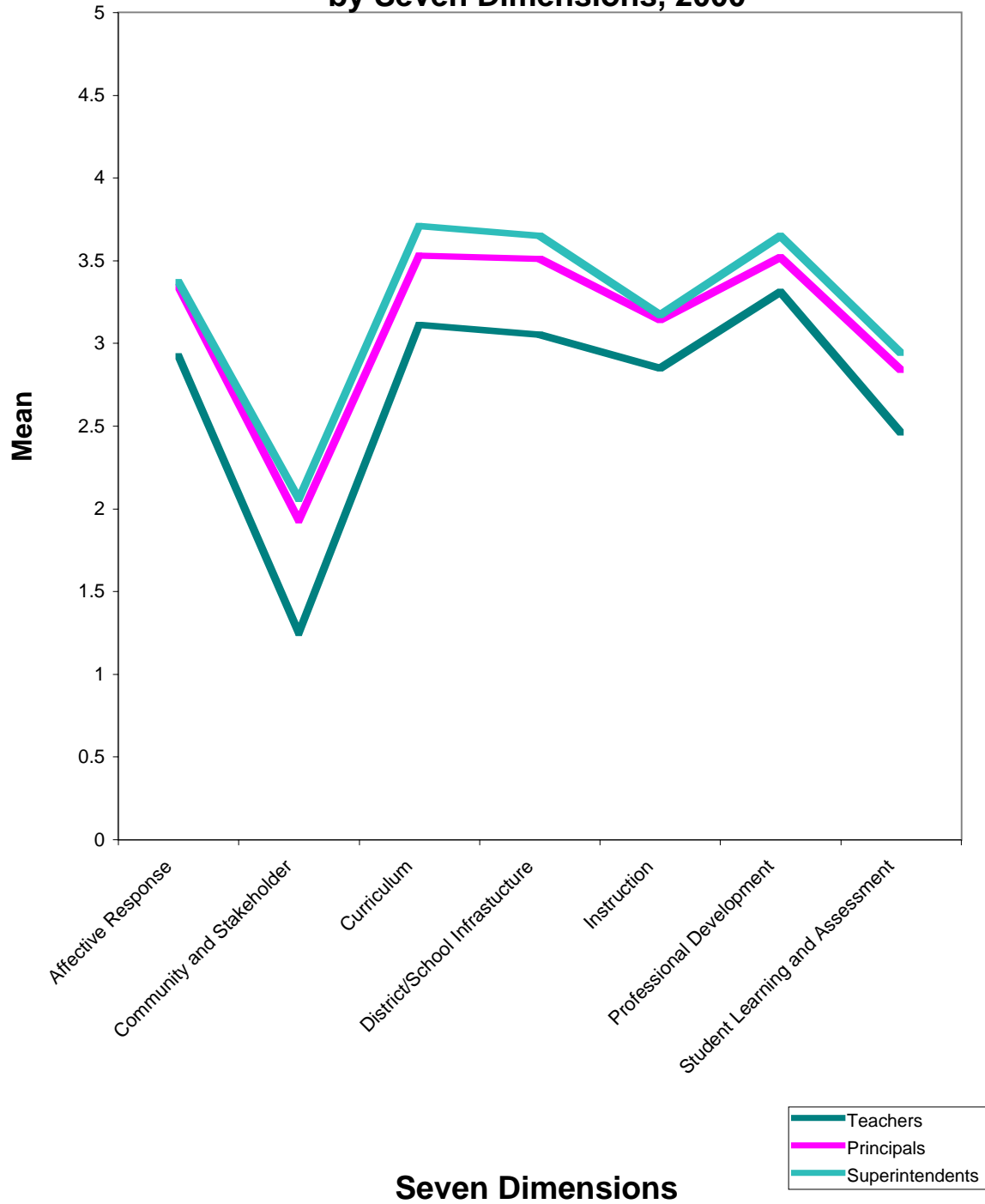
Summary

Findings from the administration of the 2000 Teacher, Administrator, and Superintendent Surveys indicate the following:

**Figure 9**  
**Average ILS Implementation Levels**  
**Teacher, Principal, and Superintendent Surveys**  
**by Seven Dimensions, 2000**



**Figure 10**  
**Average ILS Implementation Levels**  
**Teacher, Principal, and Superintendent Surveys**  
**by Seven Dimensions, 2000**



- As a state, Illinois is in Level Two implementation, and implementation has increased from a year ago.
- Elementary schools exhibit higher levels of implementation than other school types.
- Professional Development, Curriculum Development, and District/School Infrastructure are the most highly implemented dimensions.
- Community and Stakeholder Involvement in ILS implementation is exceedingly low.
- ILS implementation has increased across most dimensions from 1999 to 2000. Curriculum Development, Professional Development, and Instruction saw the greatest increases. District/School Infrastructure and Community and Stakeholder Involvement did not increase significantly during the past year.
- Teachers reported changes in practice related to ILS implementation, such as curriculum alignment, adopting block scheduling, increasing summer school options, and expanding after-school tutoring.
- Teachers reported increased availability of professional development regarding ILS from a wide variety of sources.
- With only one year of ISAT data available, it is too early to determine the relationship between ILS implementation and ISAT performance.
- In general, principals and superintendents reported higher levels of ILS implementation than teachers, although the profile of implementation is similar.

**Attachment A**  
**Survey for Evaluating the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards**  
**Teacher Edition**

## **SURVEY FOR EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS TEACHER EDITION (v2.2)**

The following questionnaire explores the extent to which teachers and administrators are implementing the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS). The Standards were adopted and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education during the 1997–98 school year.

They include:

1. State Goals for Learning in seven learning areas (English & Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Development & Health, Fine Arts and Foreign Languages)
2. Learning Standards for each of the State Goals
3. Learning Benchmarks, which define progress at five developmental levels (early elementary, late elementary, middle or junior high, early high, and late high school) for each Standard.

This survey will be used to derive: 1) the extent to which the Illinois Learning Standards are being implemented, 2) effective strategies for implementation, 3) factors that inhibit or facilitate implementation, and 4) the relationship between implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards and student achievement as measured by the ISAT.

You have been selected to participate in this survey, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. You may also decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. The results of the individual surveys will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will never be associated with the survey results. A general summary of the results will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education for use at the state level. A summary of school results that strictly maintains teacher confidentiality may be sent to principals upon request.

If you have questions, please contact Lizanne DeStefano ([destefan@uiuc.edu](mailto:destefan@uiuc.edu)) at the University of Illinois (888-843-3779). Thank you for your cooperation.

## Teacher Demographics

Your answers to the following questions will support our analysis of the ILS implementation process. Your responses are completely confidential.

TD0. How many years of teaching experience have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

TD1. What is the highest degree you have received? Please circle one answer.

- a. Bachelor Degree
- b. Bachelor Degree, plus \_\_\_\_\_ hours
- c. Masters Degree
- d. Masters Degree, plus \_\_\_\_\_ credits
- e. Ph.D.

TD2. What grade level(s) do you presently teach? \_\_\_\_\_

TD3. My primary teaching assignment(s) for this year is (are):

- a. general Elementary School class
- b. English/Language Arts
- c. Mathematics
- d. Science
- e. Social Studies
- f. Special Education
- g. Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

TD4. Is (are) your primary teaching assignment(s) in an area where you hold certification?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_\_ no

**Survey Questionnaire—Part I**  
**Teaching Method, Curriculum, and Assessment**  
**and Teacher Responses to ILS**

For each of the following statements, circle the number that best represents your answer.

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
1. I have heard of the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS).	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have read the ILS subject content for my primary teaching assignment(s).	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am involved in our curriculum alignment efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I consider the ILS when selecting curriculum materials for my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have made changes in the way I teach as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have made changes in the way I test students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have made changes in the way I evaluate student overall performance as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have made changes in the materials I use as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have made changes in the way I give feedback to students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have made changes in the way I give feedback to parents as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
11. I have eliminated activities and units previously taught in the classroom because they are not aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
12. All grade level/content area curriculums are aligned with ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have materials that help me implement the ILS in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Aligning the curriculum to the ILS has changed the instructional materials I use in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My students are aware of the expectations of the ILS for the subjects and classes I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have reduced the redundancy within the curriculum as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I consider the ILS when grading the students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I consider the ILS when developing classroom assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
19. ILS have caused me to change teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I believe the ILS promote a higher level of student learning than previous State Goals for Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I consider the ILS when choosing teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I use a greater variety of teaching methods as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I align my class lessons with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
24. I am in agreement with the content of the ILS for my primary teaching assignment(s).	1	2	3	4	5
25. I discuss the ILS at parent-teacher meetings and conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I am more confident in teaching as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am eager to implement the ILS in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I take every advantage to learn more about the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I have personal goals for implementing the ILS in my school/district.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I have been involved in implementing the ILS in my school/district.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I believe that implementing the ILS has had a positive effect on the teaching and learning at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I am satisfied with the content of the ILS for the grade levels and subjects I teach.	1	2	3	4	5

**Survey Questionnaire—Part II**  
**School Environment**

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
33. At my school, the ILS influence decision making about how we teach.	1	2	3	4	5		8
34. Our school improvement plan is aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
35. ILS are discussed at faculty meetings.	1	2	3	4	5		8
36. ILS are used as one dimension of our teacher evaluation plan.	1	2	3	4	5		8
37. Our district curriculum is aligned to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
38. The teachers at my school have been directed to align their curriculum content area to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
39. My students are more prepared for the ISAT as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
40. Student report cards reference the ILS when reporting performance information to parents.	1	2	3	4	5		8
41. Parents are aware of the expectations of the ILS for their child's performance.	1	2	3	4	5		8
42. There are inservice opportunities on the content and use of the ILS at my school.	1	2	3	4	5		8
43. Faculty meetings are used to discuss implementation of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8

**Survey Questionnaire—Part III**  
**School/District Environment and Community Awareness**

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
44. My school/district has a timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
45. Faculty at my school/district knows the timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7 (or N/A)
46. My school/district has a committee for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
47. The implementation of the ILS affects funding for curricular materials in my school.	1	2	3	4	5		7
48. Our locally selected standardized testing instruments are consistent with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
49. My school/district requires all teachers to receive training in the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
50. Parents have been involved in aligning the curriculum to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
51. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the school/district level.	1	2	3	4	5		7
52. Training sessions are provided for parents and community members about the ILS in my school.	1	2	3	4	5		7
53. Our school/district newsletter to parents contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
54. Our school/district web site contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
55. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the district level.	1	2	3	4	5		7
56. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5		7
57. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of student learning.	1	2	3	4	5		7
58. Our school board is involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
59. Our school board makes decisions for educational policy based on the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
60. Our school board has allocated resources to implement the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
61. Members of the business community are involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
62. Implementation of the ILS has changed the community's expectations of student performance.	1	2	3	4	5		7

	Yes	No		Don't know
	1	2		6
63. Illinois Learning Standards inservice and technical assistance programs and courses are available in my area through:				
a. State-sponsored workshops & inservices	1	2		6
b. The Regional Office of Education	1	2		6
c. District-sponsored inservice	1	2		6
d. School-sponsored inservice	1	2		6
e. Outside consultants	1	2		6
f. Colleges or Universities	1	2		6
g. Professional conferences (i.e. ASCD, AIMS)	1	2		6
h. Content area professional organizations (i.e.NCTM, NCTE, NSTA, ACS, AAPT, AABT)	1	2		6

64. List any other sources of available inservice and technical assistance programs.

	Not considering this change 1	Considering this change 2	Currently making this change 3	Already made this change 4	Don't know 6
For following question, please indicate whether or not these activities are a part of the proposed changes at your school and in your district:					
65. My school/ district is considering the following changes to implement the ILS:					
a. Increasing teacher planning time	1	2	3	4	6
b. Adopting block scheduling	1	2	3	4	6
c. Aligning the curriculum	1	2	3	4	6
d. Increasing summer school options	1	2	3	4	6
e. Adopting/expanding after-school tutoring	1	2	3	4	6
f. Adding transition grades	1	2	3	4	6
g. Changing to a balanced calendar (year round school)	1	2	3	4	6
h. Reducing class sizes	1	2	3	4	6
i. Lengthening the school day	1	2	3	4	6
j. Lengthening the school year	1	2	3	4	6
k. Changing the way we report school performance	1	2	3	4	6
l. Increasing standardized testing	1	2	3	4	6
m. Revising personnel responsibilities	1	2	3	4	6

66. List any other changes that you have made in response to implementation of ILS.

67. What are some of the barriers to implementing the ILS in your school/district?

68. What are some of the supports for implementing the ILS in your school/district?

69. Please use the space below to discuss other issues and additional information about the Illinois Learning Standards within your school or your district:

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

**Attachment B**  
**Survey for Evaluating the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards**  
**Administrator Edition**

**SURVEY FOR EVALUATING THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS  
ADMINISTRATOR EDITION (v2.2)**

The following questionnaire explores the extent to which teachers and administrators are implementing the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS). The Standards were adopted and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education during the 1997–98 school year. They include:

1. State Goals for Learning in seven learning areas (English & Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Development & Health, Fine Arts and Foreign Languages)
2. Learning Standards for each of the State Goals
3. Learning Benchmarks, which define progress at five developmental levels (early elementary, late elementary, middle or junior high, early high, and late high school) for each Standard.

This survey will be used to derive: 1) the extent to which the Illinois Learning Standards are being implemented, 2) effective strategies for implementation, 3) factors that inhibit or facilitate implementation, and 4) the relationship between implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards and student achievement as measured by the ISAT.

You have been selected to participate in this survey, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. You may also decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. The results of the individual surveys will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will never be associated with the survey results. A general summary of the results will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education for use at the state level. A summary of school results that strictly maintains teacher confidentiality may be sent to principals upon request.

If you have questions, please contact Lizanne DeStefano ([destefan@uiuc.edu](mailto:destefan@uiuc.edu)) at the University of Illinois (888-843-3779). Thank you for your cooperation.

## Administrator Demographics

Your answers to the following questions will support our analysis of the ILS implementation process. Your responses are completely confidential.

AD0. How many years of administrative experience have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

AD1. What is the highest degree you have received? Please circle one answer.

- a. Masters Degree
- b. Advanced Certificate
- c. Ph.D. or Ed.D.

**Survey Questionnaire—Part I**  
**Teaching Method, Curriculum, and Assessment**  
**and Teacher/Administrator Responses to ILS**

For each of the following statements, circle the number that best represents your answer.

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
1. I have heard of the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS).	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have read the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am involved in our curriculum alignment efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
4. ILS are considered when selecting curriculum materials for the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers have made changes in the way they teach as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers have made changes in the way they test students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers have made changes in the way they evaluate student overall performance as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teachers have made changes in the materials they use as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers have made changes in the way they give feedback to students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers have made changes in the way they give feedback to parents as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
11. Teachers have eliminated activities and units previously taught in the classroom because they are not aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
12. All grade level/content area curriculums are aligned with ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Teachers have materials that help them implement the ILS in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Aligning the curriculum to the ILS has changed the instructional materials that teachers use in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Students are aware of the expectations of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Teachers have reduced the redundancy within the curriculum as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teachers consider the ILS when grading the students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Teachers consider the ILS when developing classroom assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
19. ILS have caused teachers to change teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I believe the ILS promote a higher level of student learning than previous State Goals for Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teachers consider the ILS when choosing teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Teachers use a greater variety of teaching methods as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Teachers align their class lessons with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
24. I am in agreement with the content of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
25. ILS are discussed at parent-teacher meetings and conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teachers are more confident in teaching as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teachers are eager to implement the ILS in their classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I take every advantage to learn more about the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I have personal goals for implementing the ILS in my school/district.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I have been involved in implementing the ILS in my school/district.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I believe that implementing the ILS has had a positive effect on the teaching and learning at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Teachers are satisfied with the content of the ILS for the grade levels and subjects they teach.	1	2	3	4	5

**Survey Questionnaire—Part II**  
**School Environment**

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
33. At my school/district, the ILS influence decision making about how teachers teach.	1	2	3	4	5		8
34. Our school improvement plan is aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
35. ILS are discussed at faculty meetings.	1	2	3	4	5		8
36. ILS are used as one dimension of our teacher evaluation plan.	1	2	3	4	5		8
37. Our district curriculum is aligned to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
38. The teachers at my school have been directed to align their curriculum content area to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
39. Students are more prepared for the ISAT as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
40. Student report cards reference the ILS when reporting performance information to parents.	1	2	3	4	5		8
41. Parents are aware of the expectations of the ILS for their child's performance.	1	2	3	4	5		8
42. There are inservice opportunities on the content and use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8
43. Faculty meetings are used to discuss implementation of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		8

**Survey Questionnaire—Part III**  
**School/District Environment and Community Awareness**

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
44. My school/district has a timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
45. Faculty at my school/district knows the timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7 (or N/A)
46. My school/district has a committee for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
47. The implementation of the ILS affects funding for curricular materials in my school/district.	1	2	3	4	5		7
48. Our locally selected standardized testing instruments are consistent with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
49. My school/district requires all teachers to receive training in the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
50. Parents have been involved in aligning the curriculum to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
51. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the school/district level.	1	2	3	4	5		7
52. Training sessions are provided for parents and community members about the ILS in my school.	1	2	3	4	5		7
53. Our school/district newsletter to parents contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
54. Our school/district web site contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal		Don't know
55. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the district level.	1	2	3	4	5		7
56. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5		7
57. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of student learning.	1	2	3	4	5		7
58. Our school board is involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
59. Our school board makes decisions for educational policy based on the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
60. Our school board has allocated resources to implement the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
61. Members of the business community are involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5		7
62. Implementation of the ILS has changed the community's expectations of student performance.	1	2	3	4	5		7

	Yes	No		Don't know
	1	2		6
63. Illinois Learning Standards inservice and technical assistance programs and courses are available in my area through:				
a. State-sponsored workshops & inservices	1	2		6
b. The Regional Office of Education	1	2		6
c. District-sponsored inservice	1	2		6
d. School-sponsored inservice	1	2		6
e. Outside consultants	1	2		6
f. Colleges or Universities	1	2		6
g. Professional conferences (i.e., ASCD, AIMS)	1	2		6
h. Content area professional organizations (i.e.NCTM, NCTE, NSTA, ACS, AAPT, AABT)	1	2		6

64. List any other sources of available inservice and technical assistance programs.

	Not considering this change 1	Considering this change 2	Currently making this change 3	Already made this change 4		Don't know 6
For following question, please indicate whether or not these activities are a part of the proposed changes at your school and in your district:						
65. My school/ district is considering the following changes to implement the ILS:						
a. Increasing teacher planning time	1	2	3	4		6
b. Adopting block scheduling	1	2	3	4		6
c. Aligning the curriculum	1	2	3	4		6
d. Increasing summer school options	1	2	3	4		6
e. Adopting/expanding after-school tutoring	1	2	3	4		6
f. Adding transition grades	1	2	3	4		6
g. Changing to a balanced calendar (year round school)	1	2	3	4		6
h. Reducing class sizes	1	2	3	4		6
i. Lengthening the school day	1	2	3	4		6
j. Lengthening the school year	1	2	3	4		6
k. Changing the way we report school performance	1	2	3	4		6
l. Increasing standardized testing	1	2	3	4		6
m. Revising personnel responsibilities	1	2	3	4		6

66. List any other changes that you have made in response to implementation of ILS.

67. What are some of the barriers to implementing the ILS in your school/district?

68. What are some of the supports for implementing the ILS in your school/district?

69. Please use the space below to discuss other issues and additional information about the Illinois Learning Standards within your school or your district:

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

**Attachment C**  
**Survey for Evaluating the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards**  
**Superintendent Edition**

## **SURVEY FOR EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS SUPERINTENDENT EDITION (v2.2)**

The following questionnaire explores the extent to which teachers and administrators are implementing the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS). The Standards were adopted and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education during the 1997–98 school year. They include:

1. State Goals for Learning in seven learning areas (English & Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Development & Health, Fine Arts and Foreign Languages)
2. Learning Standards for each of the State Goals
3. Learning Benchmarks, which define progress at five developmental levels (early elementary, late elementary, middle or junior high, early high, and late high school) for each Standard.

This survey will be used to derive: 1) the extent to which the Illinois Learning Standards are being implemented, 2) effective strategies for implementation, 3) factors that inhibit or facilitate implementation, and 4) the relationship between implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards and student achievement as measured by the ISAT.

You have been selected to participate in this survey, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. You may also decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. The results of the individual surveys will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will never be associated with the survey results. A general summary of the results will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education for use at the state level. A summary of school results that strictly maintains confidentiality may be sent to principals upon request.

If you have questions, please contact Lizanne DeStefano ([destefan@uiuc.edu](mailto:destefan@uiuc.edu)) at the University of Illinois (888-843-3779). Thank you for your cooperation.

## Superintendent Demographics

Your answers to the following questions will support our analysis of the ILS implementation process. Your responses are completely confidential.

SD0. How many years of administrative experience have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

SD1. What is the highest degree you have received? Please circle one answer.

- a. Masters Degree
- b. Advanced Certificate
- c. Ph.D. or Ed.D.

**Survey Questionnaire—Part I**  
**Teaching Method, Curriculum, and Assessment,**  
**and Teacher/Administrator Responses to ILS**

For each of the following statements, circle the number that best represents your answer.

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
1. I have heard of the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS).	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have read the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The district is involved in curriculum alignment efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
4. ILS are considered when selecting curriculum materials for the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers have made changes in the way they teach as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers have made changes in the way they test students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers have made changes in the way they evaluate student overall performance as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teachers have made changes in the materials they use as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers have made changes in the way they give feedback to students as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers have made changes in the way they give feedback to parents as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
11. Teachers have eliminated activities and units previously taught in the classroom because they are not aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
12. All grade level/content area curriculums are aligned with ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Teachers have materials that help them implement the ILS in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Aligning the curriculum to the ILS has changed the instructional materials that teachers use in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Students are aware of the expectations of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Teachers have reduced the redundancy within the curriculum as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teachers consider the ILS when grading the students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Teachers consider the ILS when developing classroom assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
19. ILS have caused teachers to change teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I believe the ILS promote a higher level of student learning than previous State Goals for Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teachers consider the ILS when choosing teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Teachers use a greater variety of teaching methods as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Teachers align their class lessons with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal
24. I am in agreement with the content of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
25. ILS are discussed at parent-teacher meetings and conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teachers are more confident in teaching as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teachers are eager to implement the ILS in their classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I take every advantage to learn more about the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I have personal goals for implementing the ILS in my district.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I have been involved in implementing the ILS in my district.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I believe that implementing the ILS has had a positive effect on the teaching and learning in my district.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Teachers are satisfied with the content of the ILS for the grade levels and subjects they teach.	1	2	3	4	5

**Survey Questionnaire—Part II**  
**District Environment and Community Awareness**

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal	Don't know
33. In my district, the ILS influence decision making about how teachers teach.	1	2	3	4	5	8
34. Our school improvement plan is aligned with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
35. ILS are discussed at faculty meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	8
36. ILS are used as one dimension of our teacher evaluation plan.	1	2	3	4	5	8
37. Our district curriculum is aligned to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
38. The teachers in my district have been directed to align their curriculum content area to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
39. Students are more prepared for the ISAT as a result of implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
40. Student report cards reference the ILS when reporting performance information to parents.	1	2	3	4	5	8
41. Parents are aware of the expectations of the ILS for their child's performance.	1	2	3	4	5	8
42. There are inservice opportunities on the content and use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
43. Faculty meetings are used to discuss implementation of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	8
44. My district has a timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
45. Faculty in my district knows the timeline for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7 (or N/A)
46. My district has a committee for implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal	Don't know
47. The implementation of the ILS affects funding for curricular materials in my district.	1	2	3	4	5	7
48. Our locally selected standardized testing instruments are consistent with the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
49. My district requires all teachers to receive training in the use of the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
50. Parents have been involved in aligning the curriculum to the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
51. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the district level.	1	2	3	4	5	7
52. Training sessions are provided for parents and community members about the ILS in my district.	1	2	3	4	5	7
53. Our district newsletter to parents contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7 (or NA)
54. Our district web site contains details about the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7 (or NA)
55. Information sessions on the ILS have been offered to parents and community members at the district level.	1	2	3	4	5	7
56. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5	7
57. The ILS have changed parents' expectations of student learning.	1	2	3	4	5	7
58. Our school board is involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
59. Our school board makes decisions for educational policy based on the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
60. Our school board has allocated resources to implement the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7

	Not at all		To some extent		A great deal	Don't know
61. Members of the business community are involved in implementing the ILS.	1	2	3	4	5	7
62. Implementation of the ILS has changed the community's expectations of student performance.	1	2	3	4	5	7

	Yes	No	Don't know
	1	2	6
63. Illinois Learning Standards inservice and technical assistance programs and courses are available in my area through:			
a. State-sponsored workshops & inservices	1	2	6
b. The Regional Office of Education	1	2	6
c. District-sponsored inservice	1	2	6
d. School-sponsored inservice	1	2	6
e. Outside consultants	1	2	6
f. Colleges or Universities	1	2	6
g. Professional conferences (i.e. ASCD, AIMS)	1	2	6
h. Content area professional organizations (i.e., NCTM, NCTE, NSTA, ACS, AAPT, AABT)	1	2	6

64. List any other sources of available inservice and technical assistance programs.

	Not considering this change 1	Considering this change 2	Currently making this change 3	Already made this change 4	Don't know 6
For following question, please indicate whether or not these activities are a part of the proposed changes in your district:					
65. My district is considering the following changes to implement the ILS:					
a. Increasing teacher planning time	1	2	3	4	6
b. Adopting block scheduling	1	2	3	4	6
c. Aligning the curriculum	1	2	3	4	6
d. Increasing summer school options	1	2	3	4	6
e. Adopting/expanding after-school tutoring	1	2	3	4	6
f. Adding transition grades	1	2	3	4	6
g. Changing to a balanced calendar (year round school)	1	2	3	4	6
h. Reducing class sizes	1	2	3	4	6
i. Lengthening the school day	1	2	3	4	6
j. Lengthening the school year	1	2	3	4	6
k. Changing the way we report school performance	1	2	3	4	6
l. Increasing standardized testing	1	2	3	4	6
m. Revising personnel responsibilities	1	2	3	4	6
n. Providing more release time for teachers.	1	2	3	4	6
o. Creating more professional development opportunities.	1	2	3	4	6
p. Implementing the Professional Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS).	1	2	3	4	6

66. List any other changes that you have made in response to implementation of ILS.

67. What are some of the barriers to implementing the ILS in your district?

68. What are some of the supports for implementing the ILS in your district?

69. Please use the space below to discuss other issues and additional information about the Illinois Learning Standards within your school or your district:

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

**Evaluation of the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards  
Report of Year Two Qualitative Component**

# **Evaluation of the Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards**

## **Report of the Year Two Qualitative Component**

Large-scale improvement doesn't just happen as a consequence of getting standards and implementing them. . . . Most districts dealing with student performance standards face the issue of whether they will develop serious instructional improvement strategies or simply lay the standards down on schools and expect the principals and teachers to cope.

(Elmore & Burney, 1997, October)

### Overview and Purpose

Overall, the qualitative component of this second year evaluation identified and examined the implementation efforts of eight schools in four districts in order to address three major questions: (1) What are specific districts and schools doing to implement the state learning standards and benchmarks? (2) How are they proceeding with these efforts? That is, what processes and strategies are they employing? (3) What appears (at least at this point in time) to be the results of these implementation efforts?

Underlying these research questions are several important assumptions about learning standards and efforts to implement those standards that guide our efforts and work. First, the promulgation of learning standards and benchmarks carry the very explicit and public message that students should receive instruction and master certain knowledge and skills in identified subject areas. Second, there is a collective responsibility/accountability for student learning. No one is exempt nor does anyone bear all the responsibility. Third, if student learning is to improve, then implementation of the learning standards must involve more than minor alterations and modifications in current curriculum content. And fourth, the outcomes achieved will depend to a large extent on the implementation process used. If there is any point on which there seems near unanimity of agreement in the research literature, it is that the outcomes of a change effort depend critically on how it is implemented (for example, see Berman, 1980, 1981; Massell &

Goertz, 2000; McLaughlin, 1987, 1991; Porter, Smithson, & Osthoff, 1994; Spillane, 1994).

These guiding assumptions served as the underpinnings for data collection and analysis, and will be evident in all aspects of this report.

The past decade has witnessed an amazing proliferation of standards-based or systemic reform, with virtually all states having adopted some form of content and/or performance standards. Yet, in spite of the pervasiveness of standards, little is known about specific implementation strategies and techniques and even less about the outcomes generated by these efforts. This may be due, in part, to the relatively short time most of standards have been around, the relatively long period of time implementation takes, and a lack of consensus about the most appropriate means of evaluation. Because of these factors, much of the dialogue about standards-based or systemic reform has remained either at a relatively esoteric level (see, for example, Fuhrman, 1993; Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993; Smith & O Day, 1991) or has focused on specific organizational roles (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 1994; Payzant, 1994) or organizational functions, like professional development (Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Lieberman, 1986; Maeroff, 1993). This has left a paucity of field-based empirical data that describe or document context-specific implementation efforts at and interactions among the district, school, and classroom levels. Consequently, the thick descriptions necessary for understanding the complex and interactive nature of the implementation process and the hard data needed for informed decision making at the state, district, school, and classroom levels are noticeably lacking.

This report examines the efforts of four districts and eight schools to implement the Illinois Learning Standards. Efforts of the schools and districts were examined looking for evidence of the substance, content, and process of implementation by using the Indicators of

Implementation criteria developed in the previous year (see Table 1 on page 2 of the Report of the Year Two Survey of Practitioners). Conclusions, implications, and recommendations about implementation efforts and processes are then discussed in terms of criteria established by the research literature of implementation.

## Methodology

### Problem

This second-year study of the implementation of the state learning standards was bounded by the parameters of implementation and, therefore, is not inclusive of the end intent of the learning standards—significant improvement in student achievement. This narrowness is justified by the assumption that a school must first implement the learning standards (or at least must be well along in the process) before significant changes in student learning will be evident. Although the learning standards have been around since 1997, serious efforts at implementation have only recently begun. Nonetheless, there is a pressing need for understanding more clearly what is happening in schools and district attempting to implement the standards. In general, during this nascent period of implementation, the strategies taken and tactics used may be most usefully assessed by utilizing the indicators of implementation to which I referred earlier as a criterion measure of the viability of the implementation efforts.

This study seeks to assess the implementation process by focusing on schools and districts on-going efforts. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the question, What are districts and schools doing to implement the state learning standards? by addressing the following questions: What is currently being done as far as learning standard implementation is concerned? Why this approach? How will progress be gauged? How will you know when have implemented the standards? What evidence will there be? In what ways will your district/school

be different after implementation of the standards? What will you be doing differently? What do you see right now as the major roadblocks to implementation?

#### Site Selections

Four districts with two schools from each district were selected for intensive study. Participation was completely voluntary at both the district and school levels. Since the focus of this study was on developing an understanding of implementation efforts, several organizational variables were thought to be of importance and were considered in site selection. The districts selected for inclusion varied in size as measured by student enrollment, district organization pattern, community size, and geographic location. Specifically one district was a unit district (K-12) that serves a largely urban population and is located in the southern part of the state. Current student enrollment is just over 11,000 students. A second is an elementary district (K-8) located in a mid-sized city in central Illinois and has a student enrollment of approximately 4,100 students. The third is a high school district (9-12) located in a suburban community in the northern part of the state. Student enrollment is approximately 2800 students. The fourth district is also a unit district (K12) and is located in a small rural community in central Illinois. Student enrollment is just over 1,000 students. The 8 schools from the four districts that agreed to participate in this study included: three elementary schools, two middle/junior high schools, and three high schools.

#### Data Collection

Investigation of the implementation of the state learning standards in these districts and schools was based primarily on documents gathered and interviews conducted with district and school level administrators. Data collection was limited to these particular areas for this first year of qualitative study in order to gain a necessary sense of perspective on and understanding

of the particular districts and schools before engaging in more intrusive methods at the classroom level. As well, most recent data (see DeStefano & Prestine, 1999) indicate that the majority of standards implementation work thus far has taken place at the district and school levels.

Several forms of documentary and archival evidence were requested from each participating district and/or school site: professional development plans and budget for 1998-99 and 1999-2000; district committee assignments and committee responsibilities/charges; school committee assignments and committee responsibilities/charges; IGAP scores from 1997 and 1998; school report cards from 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99; district and school improvement plans from 1997, 1998, and 1999; curriculum guides by subject and/or grade level; teacher evaluation instrument; principal evaluation instrument; district assessment plans (other than ISAT/IGAP); curriculum crosswalks; and any external review reports from 1997 through 1999.

Over the past year, more than 30 site visits to district offices and individual schools were conducted. Intensive, open-ended interviews and follow-up focused interviews were a primary means of data collection. A varied number of key respondents at each site were identified and interviewed. These included superintendents, associate superintendents, curriculum coordinators, building principals, deans, department chairs, grade-level chairs, and district curriculum committee members. In all cases, the interviews were completely voluntary and completed on-site at the convenience of the respondent.

#### Data Analysis

Overall, a qualitative, thematic strategy of data analysis was employed to organize the data, to make judgments about the meaning and importance of the lines of inquiry, and to allow the focus of inquiry to be a cross-case perspective (Merriam, 1998; Rist, 1982). Preliminary data analysis was first completed at the individual school level. In essence, single case studies of the

districts and schools emerged from this process. These analyses were then shared with respondents from each of the individual districts and schools to reconcile any differences in understandings, incorporate clarifications or insights, and develop a consensus agreement of interpretation. Because of confidentiality agreements with the districts and schools, the singular case profiles of each are not included in this study. It is acknowledged that this in no small way detracts from the sense of immediacy and vibrancy contributed by the single cases. A cross-case analysis was employed to preclude this preliminary analysis as being seen as a preemptive and summative judgment of any of the individual districts or schools efforts in what remains an ongoing implementation effort. At this time, the individual districts and schools themselves must remain the primary beneficiaries of the single-case analyses.

From the single cases then, data were aggregated across all districts and schools for assessing the implementation process and in searching for commonalties and shared themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through triangulation of data, potential problems of construct validity were addressed as multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomena (Rist, 1982).

### Findings

Unless there are strategies for convincing principals and teachers that change is desirable that more of the same will not be good enough for students to meet the high expectations that we have for them old knowledge and belief systems will prevail; and practitioners will fall short in fulfilling the promises that policymakers envisioned in their carefully crafted policies

(Payzant, 1994).

Before examining the themes that emerged from data analysis, one caveat seems necessary. It is important to keep in mind that these are broad themes that emerged across all the districts and schools. Individual variations in implementation efforts are notable and may be, in many respects, more significant than the commonalties found. Nevertheless, for the first year of

the case studies only larger themes and trends are reported, although some digressions into individual district/school discrepancies or exceptions are noted as deemed necessary and appropriate. One must, however, be struck by the fact that a state policy designed to bring more uniformity and coherence to curriculum appears to have elicited a tremendously wide range of implementation responses at the district and school levels.

Overall, There Has Been a Response to the State Learning Standards, as Evidenced in Both District- and School-Level Activity.

It seems clear that the state learning standards, which represent a new thrust into curricular matters previously left to the discretion of local districts and schools, have not decreased local district activity in the areas of either curriculum or instruction. In fact, with the publication of the state learning standards, district offices, in particular, have increased the number of their activities and these have become more focused on curriculum-related concerns. As one superintendent noted, We have only one goal this year to align the curriculum to the state standards. Overall, at both the district- and school- levels there has been increased activity and attention focused on curriculum and instruction issues. Clearly, any concerns about the state usurping or replacing local discretion and decisions cannot be sustained by the data gathered thus far. If anything, increased state-level activity (as evidenced by the publication of the learning standards) has served to stimulate activity at both the district and school levels.

However, and similar to what Porter, Smithson, & Osthoff (1994) reported, there is compelling evidence that across districts administrators have vastly different perceptions of what is intended by the learning standards and of how far along the path to implementation they are. The specific activities and responses of the districts to the learning standards varied enormously and ranged from one district's almost cavalier, we'll-get-to-that-when-we-have-time attitude to

another s very serious and systemic effort to redesign their entire school improvement efforts around the standards. Thus, while there is undoubtedly increased activity at the district and school levels, whether all of this activity will prove to be fruitful and lead to successful implementation of the learning standards remains questionable. The confidence and optimism about standards implementation espoused by administrators, as evidenced both in the state-wide surveys and in the interviews, may or may not be borne out in reality. As a whole, administrators seem especially gifted at painting a promising picture, especially for outside researchers looking at their school or district.

Thus Far, Implementation of the State Learning Standards Has Generally Led to Modest Adjustments That Have Focused Almost Exclusively on Curricular Content.

Across districts and schools, most of the activity occurring in standards implementation has been relatively conservative and limited in impact. This is evidenced most clearly by the completion of curriculum crosswalks or other forms of activities designed to align current curriculum with the state standards. Most often this work was completed by district -level committees specifically charged with the task. All evidence would suggest that these groups are moving cautiously and following very conservative, traditional paths. As one principal noted, Our goal this year will be on aligning our curriculum with the Illinois learning standards. It s just a start but there has been a lot of talk about the learning standards and our need to get this together. I hope that this will be a catalyst for getting things moving in this district. Another added, All this furor probably seems silly to people on the outside. It s like, Why can t you just get it together? But everyone is in their own little castle. We don t have a common ground to talk over and we hope that eventually the standards will be part of that common ground. But it s going to be tricky. Obviously some people are concerned about a state-dictated curriculum,

and you're going to have to sit through all those types of concerns and meetings. Some of our people are having a real hard time with it.

This caution and conservatism is illustrated by the fact that only one of the four districts in this study has proceeded beyond minor tweaks to existing curriculum. This is problematic in that aligning existing curriculum so that it supports the state learning standards and benchmarks seems to be mainly effective in producing surface-level changes materials may change, grouping arrangements may be reshuffled, paragraph writing may be moved from one grade level to another, fractions may be introduced earlier. However, such limited activities appear to be less successful in attaining more difficult-to-reach changes in pedagogy. Aligning curriculum may be an important first step, but data from this study and other research (Elmore, 1993; Elmore & Sykes, 1992) suggest that more than alignment will be necessary to fundamentally change teaching practice and improve student learning. This conservative approach appears to be due to a number of factors — most prominently, political considerations as they relate to administrator/teacher relations in the district and a lack of knowledge about and understanding of the implications of implementing learning standards.

At the time of this study, three of the four the districts, to greater or lesser extents, appeared to have vague, though largely unarticulated intentions to direct instructional content, but lacked any considered plan or strategy for accomplishing this. While the districts were not leaving their principals and teachers entirely to their devices, neither were they making systemic use of the tools available to persuade schools to adopt patterns that incorporate the standards into classroom teaching and learning activities. The other district has moved most aggressively in this direction. Though still in early implementation stages, preliminary results of their systematic planning for and moving to implement standards in classrooms system-wide appears

to be quite promising. Still, this has not been a particularly smooth or easy path. This has been (and continues to be) an extremely labor-intensive effort and everyone in the district has been pushed to his/her limits by the extra work involved. The assistant superintendent, who was largely responsible for planning and implementing this effort, commented on this. Just the other day, I no more than pulled into my driveway at home when [a district teacher], who lives across the street, came over and chewed me out for 20 minutes about all this. Why are we doing all this? Who says this is going to work? It's really, really hard because everyone is learning new ways of doing old things and that is hard. The only thing that saved me is that everyone knows I am working twice as hard as everyone else. Still, I'm the bad guy, the target of all the complaints and grumbling. That's fine, I can take it. One of the elementary school principals in the district added, I had a lot of belly-aching and complaining about this, especially when we first got started. Not all of the schools were taking this as seriously as we did here. So I had a steady stream of teachers in my office moaning about, how come we have to do thus-and-so when [another elementary school] doesn't have to. But what the district has forced us to do has actually made teachers go back to their classrooms and make changes in what they're doing instructionally. And what we were never [*emphasis in original*] able to do in the past was to force those kind of changes into the classroom.

A critical finding to emerge from the data is that how districts and schools construe the relationship between curriculum and instruction will be critical to what implementation of the learning standards will look like. The more modest (and more prevalent) view sees the learning standards as a means to incrementally influence and modify the content of the existing curriculum through minor additions or deletions. The more ambitious approach views pedagogy

as encompassed within and inseparable from curriculum and seeks to change both (Elmore & Sykes, 1992).

The more modest approach of focusing only on content represents a kind of bare-bones implementation that does have the distinct advantages of being both feasible and expedient in that it represents a relatively simple, low-cost solution that produces a visible product (the crosswalk) and represents minimal compliance with state policy. However, this separation of content (curriculum) from process (instruction) is also more likely to result in superficial, symbolic measures and changes. For the districts that took this approach, this did not necessarily suggest a deliberate skirting of the intent of the learning standards. In fact, this may well have represented a best response of a system (district) lacking the will or capacity or both to muster a more enlightened response. For a district already in a troubled environment or beset by other pressing concerns (due to whatever factors financial, administrator turnover, labor/management difficulties, etc), this may seem like the clearest and easiest route. This implementation has the attractiveness of presenting itself as at least one problem that can be solved and give the district some sense of accomplishment when little else may.

This last scenario is especially troubling from a state policy perspective and should sound cautionary warnings. This kind of implementation can be dangerous in that it affords districts an out — throwing up their hands when other things (in particular, student achievement levels) do not improve and they are held accountable for these results. After all, the argument will go, they complied, they implemented the standards and, see, they (the standards) did not work. They will likely claim that the poor results are not their fault, that if student achievement did not improve then, clearly, the fault lies with the standards themselves and/or the accountability

measure. If enough districts take this path, it could toss the learning standards into troubled political waters and destroy any growing consensus about them.

In Order for Standards Implementation to Occur, Administrators Both at the District and Building Level Must Clearly Understand What This Means and Carefully Define Their Roles in the Process.

Data show that there is tremendous variability across administrators at both district and building levels in their knowledge and understanding of what implementation of the state learning standards should look like. Directly related to the previous finding, the knowledge, beliefs, and understandings of administrators hold serious consequences for what the implementation of the standards will look like. Limited understanding most frequently leads to a representation of the standards as simple curriculum content. In turn, such understanding leads to curriculum crosswalks that do little more than match up the state standards and benchmarks to the most rudimentary and superficial elements textbook chapters, curriculum kits, course descriptions in handbooks, and even course syllabi as one district did. This was well illustrated in a telling conversation with a high school principal from that district.

If you look at our course description guide, that is what is being taught in that course. And if it s not being taught in that course, we, as evaluators And I m going to tell you the truth, we don t do it all the time [chuckle]. You know what I mean? But when we go into an English class, when we see the long-range plans that each teacher gives us, this is what we re looking for so it s meeting the outline set up by the curriculum committee for this subject area. Also, at this point in time, we—just for awareness sake this year, we were asking the people we evaluate, How is this meeting the state standards? so that they can explain to us a lesson where they tie the state standards into that lesson. [Researcher: How well are they able to articulate the ties between what they re doing and the state standards?] Well, they do a lot of articulating [chuckle], but I m not sure it ties into the state standards. And we talk about it at faculty meetings, too. And I did use you during a faculty meeting. I said, You know, when Dr. Prestine comes up and says, What s the state standard? , I don t want you to say, I don t know. I said, If you do that, I m going to get your name. I said, We re not doing this! There are state standards. There are, you know, benchmarks that we re working

towards. But I want to tell you, the level of awareness is not particularly high for teachers.

In contrast, administrators in the case-site district that was proceeding fairly well in its efforts evidenced more sophisticated understandings of the content of the standards and process of implementation. In referring to the implementation process, one administrator in the district noted:

In order for this process to work, you need some centralization and some decentralization. We [in the district office] are going to be able to do some things but it cannot all be dictated from here or from the principals' offices. But there are certain edits that will need to come out. We are going to do this but schools and principals have to have the latitude as to how we get there. It's like, We are going to Madison, Wisconsin. I don't care how you get there, but we're all going to end up in Madison, folks because right now what we've got is We're all going to Wisconsin. And that is not good enough anymore because some are going to LaCrosse, some are going to Madison, some are only going across the line to Racine. And that's as far as they want to go and they can say, But I made it to Wisconsin. So we need to provide some centralization and focus; something that says, This is it. Here are the standards and benchmarks and this is what they mean for this district. How you decide to approach these is totally up to you, as long as you do it.

An assistant superintendent in the district commented:

Schools, and I mean individual schools, need help understanding what the words of the standards mean and how they impact instruction. I hear it over and over. School principals tell me when they have sat down and tried to look at the standards, identify what they mean, that it is hard nearly impossible, to translate the meaning to instruction. Coupled with this is the inability of the average school to look at the ISAT results and be able to identify how instruction needs to change based on those results. I'm talking about reading a state standards and understanding the kinds of instructional experiences I need to plan in order to achieve that standard and being able to understand the test results in terms of specific instructional adjustment that have to be made to improve understanding in specific areas where students appear to be systematically failing. Something is missing, something about the ability to translate these standards into instructional practice and to translate test scores into diagnostic tools instructionally is missing. That's what we are working on here.

Unless administrators themselves have a clear understanding that standards are not just content but also have instructional implications, it will be unlikely that the schools as a whole

will move forward in implementing the learning standards in any meaningful way. This responsibility for understanding cannot be abdicated to the classroom level for teachers to figure out for themselves. It must be a fundamental requirement and responsibility of the district and school level administration.

#### ISAT Scores Remain the Primary Concern for Schools and Districts.

In spite of increased public visibility and growing acceptance and approval, the learning standards still do not command the attention or concern that is generated by the accountability tests. One of the suburban high school principals in the study puzzled over this. We talk so much about the ISAT and the ACT, and we accept the fact of their existence. We go nuts over the ACT and all the schools in this area do from study sessions to some schools paying students to take the test or paying for their test. Some schools tell kids not to put their ACT school number on the form if they [are] going to [the local community college]. We all play that game. This test must be important, so we do all this stuff. What bothers me is why aren't the standards seen as important? An administrator from a different district added, The fact is that nobody talks about the standards, and nobody sees the connection to planning or testing, and until the state drops the hammer and whole districts find they are out of compliance and in danger of loss of funds, I don't see the discussion ever taking place. People are damned worried about the sliding scores; the newspaper accounts recently have been very scary, but I don't see action. I understand [the superintendent's] frustration with inaction. We talk and talk, but none of the talk leads to action; none of the talk centers on the main issue. When it comes to making the standards a living part of teachers' lesson design in the classroom, we flee like we were being forced to learn Chinese!

Most districts and/or schools remain largely unconvinced that there is a direct relationship between implementing learning standards and raising ISAT scores. As one superintendent noted, You can have the State putting out standards from now until tomorrow, but they mean nothing by themselves. They just float out there, unconnected to anything else. A school or a district has to take the standards and say, This is what they mean for instruction. This is what they look like here. This is how they will help us do a better job with our kids. Either that happens or teachers will ignore them and continue doing exactly what they have always done.

The principal of one elementary school serving a predominantly minority student population saw the learning standards as one more example of how her students and their particular needs are largely marginalized by a state bureaucracy that shows little understanding of their difficult circumstances. Yes, the standards are out there. My issue is, how do you reach the kids that the standards are too difficult for? We know the students coming in are so low, yet they are making a lot of progress here. But that is not reflected anywhere certainly not in our ISAT results or in the fact that a lot of our kids cannot meet the standards. Does this mean we are ineffectual? That we aren't doing a good job? No staff works harder than the one here does. No staff is more dedicated to serving these children well and yet we will never look good on these kinds of measures. We have kids at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level, who have tested for special ed and are in that slow learner range. We look at where they should be and they're achieving above what their potential is, but they are still not at that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade benchmark standard. Even if you do now know what's expected of kids and what the standards are, how they are tested doesn't seem to match up.

As adduced from the previous finding, expectations about the use of data to improve and guide decision making have generally not been realized yet. Getting from here is how our students are performing on these items to here is what we have to do about it is an enormous task. Tied directly to this, most of the schools and districts in this study were still struggling with understanding how the ISAT data relate to the learning standards and benchmarks. Clearly, the relationship is not clear to most. Until it is, it is unlikely that learning standards will be viewed with as much concern as the accountability test is.

There Is as of Yet No Data to Assess the Effects of Standards Implementation on Changes in Instruction in the Classroom.

It has long been acknowledged in the literature that assessing even an implied causal relationship in education is a notoriously difficult and hazardous task, for many reasons. As previously noted, standards implementation is proceeding, albeit slowly and cautiously. The approaches termed as implementation vary widely across districts and even across schools within districts, running the gamut from next to nothing to massive, concerted efforts affecting all levels of the system. Standards implementations will take a good deal of time, and such implementation is not likely to proceed in isolation from other school improvement efforts. Disentangling the unique contributions of learning standards implementation would be impossible. Elmore (1996) and others would argue that such separation is not even desirable, that either an initiative is seamlessly integrated into the larger pattern and context of the school, or it is not likely to be sustained over time. Nevertheless, a strong systemic focus on curriculum and instruction issues (which are directly related to classroom practice) would lead one to expect such effects to show up in changes first in teacher beliefs, behaviors, and practices and,

eventually, in student results. The trick is in identifying those models of implementation that represent what we would call real implementation of the learning standards.

While a direct assessment of the effect the implementation of the learning standards might have on improving student learning may not be possible, there are other positive indicators. Most respondents across all the districts and schools acknowledged (some begrudgingly) that the state standards are bringing a new and sharper focus to their school improvement efforts and influencing their choices about professional development, curriculum selection, instructional approaches, and classroom assessment practices. As one administrator explained:

What we have needed for so long around here was a common language whereby we could begin to talk to each other about instruction and learning. You know when you don't have that, it's real easy for management and maintenance kinds of things to take up all our time. It was easier for us as a staff to talk about the issues surrounding bus supervision or the overnight janitorial service than it was to engage our colleagues, our professional colleagues, in a serious dialogue about instructional issues. Well, the learning standards have opened the door to those kinds of conversations. We can't sweep these issues under the rug anymore — they are squarely facing us. The standards have given us, along with *Understanding by Design* [a book by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe] a focus and a common language. We're not very good at this yet and I'm really struggling trying to lead these discussions. I want so much for this to succeed. I've tried to read as much as I can to prepare the way. I only hope that I can model what we all need to learn (me included) in this process, and that the worst thing we can do is be afraid to speak of these issues. How can you change instruction if you can't talk about it?

Another commented, Tying together the learning standards, school improvement, and instruction is a critical goal one that will require patience, thoughtful discourse, careful listening, and a spirit of optimism. It will take time; it's not going to be easy, and when it gets tough, we need to remember to stay with it and not give up. Finally, from an assistant superintendent, I believe with all my heart that the success or failure of this depends upon the

local school district's ability to promote, support, require whatever is needed to make the school improvement process meaningful and connected to the standards.

### Conclusions

At all levels, the big ideas of policy are vulnerable to the capacities of the people and institutions that implement them  
(Elmore & Fuhrman, 1994).

### The Importance of Administrator Involvement in Standards Implementation Cannot Be Underestimated.

Data clearly show that administrator involvement at both the district and school level, but especially at the district level, appears to be imperative for successful implementation. One consistent characteristic identified in the research that distinguishes successful projects as measured by whether they reached their goals and whether they persisted over time was whether some district-level administrator took an active interest in the project (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Elmore, 1993; Payzant, 1994; Spillane, 1994). Snyder, Bolin, and Zumwalt (1992) put it as well as anyone: Administrators at both the central office and building levels have to go to center stage and stay there if school improvement efforts are to succeed [my emphasis]. Administration must provide the initial impetus and continuing assistance necessary for teachers to be able to succeed at the new practice so that they will eventually be committed to the new program (p. 409). Quite simply, these individuals have the position (power) and control the resources to either amplify the importance and centrality of the learning standards or to diminish them.

At the district level, the beliefs, understandings, and knowledge of individual administrators appear to interact with contextual features of the district and influence how and to what degree the districts responds to implementation of the state learning standards.

Undoubtedly, there is a complex mix of organizational and individual factors that shape and mold the district's response to the learning standards. The knowledge and beliefs of district administrators appear to interact with a host of organizational factors (e.g., financial resources and instructional guidance mechanisms) that vary from district to district in influencing how the learning standards were received and what steps (if any) were taken. This combination of individual and organizational factors, in a sense, parallels will and capacity issues. The importance of organizational factors depends on how central administrators perceive and use them (Spillane, 1994). In other words, capacity use depends on will and will depends (largely) on the beliefs and understandings of individuals.

It seems imperative that state policymakers do not ignore or fail to appreciate the critical role the district level will and does play in implementation. While the school level may be the main focus of the state accountability measures, districts remain the legal and fiscal agents that oversee and guide schools and school personnel (Goertz, 2000; Massell & Goertz, 2000). Districts remain the major sources of capacity-building for schools coordinating, channeling, and controlling access to professional development, curriculum materials, and new instructional ideas; making critical decisions regarding the quality as well as quantity of school staff; and maintaining and filtering relationships with various external agencies. From a variety of perspectives, district personnel will likely have the most powerful, immediate, and direct influence on what happens or does not happen in schools. As Fullan (1994) aptly noted, It is possible for a given school to become highly innovative, despite the district it is in. . . However, it is not possible for such a school stay innovative despite the district. District action or inaction . . . inevitably take their toll (p. 191). Schools will likely need all the assistance they can get in successfully implementing learning standards and a strong, reciprocal alliance between the state

and district levels seems a most providential means of providing this. Thus, it is critical that we look at how districts are approaching the problem of implementing state learning standards, and not to treat them as somehow ancillary to the implementation process.

Currently, Many Administrators Lack the Capacity, Knowledge, and, in Some Cases, the Will to Effectively Lead Standards Implementation.

There is compelling evidence that many administrators at both the district and school levels lack the knowledge and understanding of what a curriculum actually looks like. Nor can they recognize the attending instructional practices that place a premium on deep conceptual understanding and that facilitate problem solving and reasoning. Richard Elmore, in fact, makes a compelling argument that this is indeed the case: Public schools and school systems, as they are presently constituted, are simply not led in ways that enable them to respond to the increasing demands they face under standards-based reform . . . . Schools are being asked by elected officials to do things they are largely unequipped to do. School leaders are being asked to assume responsibilities they are largely unequipped to assume. . . . Relying on leaders to solve the problem of systemic reform in schools is, to put it bluntly, asking people to do something they don't know how to do and have had no occasion to learn in the course of their careers (2000, p. 2).

One of the glaring deficiencies of the standards-based reform movement, in general, has been the neglect of systematic professional development for district and building level administrators. There appears to be an assumption that these individuals, by virtue of their position, already know what they need to know to proceed successfully with standards implementation. Yet, the evidence would indicate otherwise. Scattered and occasional meetings sponsored by ROEs or the State Board, while well intentioned, simply are proving inadequate to

the task at hand. Coordinated, coherent, and on-going professional development activities carefully designed and focused on the implementation of the learning standards will likely be needed. In order for administrators to lead learning standards implementation, they must have a deep understanding of curriculum and instructional practice issues and how these intersect. As Spillane (1994) noted, Central office administrators knowledge and beliefs about instruction and teacher change are critical to an understanding of how the central office responds to and enacts state policy (p. 184). While professional development for teachers is certainly critical, administrators also need such assistance.

Unless administrators come to a firm understanding of the connection between the learning standards and the teaching/learning processes in classrooms, it is unlikely that they will be of much assistance in designing, coordinating, and promoting the implementation of the learning standards. Hallinger, Murphy, and Hausman (1991) conducted a study of schools that struggled with the implementation of reform. They found that although principals and teachers were highly in favor of the reforms, they had difficulty making the connection between the reforms and the teaching/learning process; thus, the reforms did not last. Much the same fate is highly likely for standards implementation if such understandings and connections are not developed by the administrators responsible for their implementation.

There Is a Pressing Need for the Development of Specifics of Implementation at All Levels and for Learning at All Levels.

In many instances, districts have begun to focus on implementation of the learning standards but, as of yet, anyway, these efforts appear to have little to do with instructional changes and improvements in the classroom and more to do with a paper exercise of aligning existing curriculum to the standards. The state learning standards, by themselves, are neither

very prescriptive nor a strong influence on practice. What data show are basically three groups of district/school reactions to the implementation of the learning standards. A relatively few districts and schools appear to be able to figure it out for themselves; however, these are a distinct minority. It appears that many districts and schools, if left to their own devices, will likely interpret the standards as justification for their current practices and engage only in superficial, minimal compliance types of activities. A third group of districts and schools do wish to seriously implement the standards but are unsure of how to proceed in changing their curriculum and instructional practices to make them consistent with the standards. This latter group has the will but lacks the capacity and/or the organizational structures and processes to successfully engage in constructive approaches to implementation.

Obviously, it is the latter two groups that are of greatest concern. Neither of these groups is likely to meet expectations for implementation unless there is some external intervention and assistance. Part of the difficulty may lie in the fact that if one does not know what to do, one is not likely to do it. Implementation of the learning standards is a highly complex and sophisticated activity that must encompass district, school, and classroom levels. Using a cognitive learning analogy may be helpful. Not all districts and schools are comprised of independent learners who, given a body of knowledge or a skill to master, can go off on their own and figure things out for themselves. Some are eager to learn but need greater or lesser amounts of guidance, assistance, and regular feedback to help them through to mastery. If you will, they need a scaffold to support their learning. Then there are the learners who would just as soon avoid doing anything if at all possible. They are not incapable of learning, only reluctant. They will likely require more structured form of guidance and assistance and frequent monitoring with the provision of clear rewards and sanctions. The important point is that

districts and schools simply cannot be told that they must implement the learning standards and then be sanctioned if they do not.

Right now, there is a pressing need to demystify the implementation process as much as possible, to remove the ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion that is currently evident. As Hannaway (1993) noted, There is no natural limit to work on curriculum . . . Wheel spinning is a real danger in the absence of some authority to set a deadline or a standard, or in the absence of some feedback mechanism to mark progress (p. 158). Because the learning standards reach so deeply into the core processes of schooling, they are more vulnerable to implementation problems. As Fuhrman and Elmore (1994) cautioned, There is a danger that, as the implementation problems of current reforms begin to surface, policymakers and practitioners will conclude that the reforms are simply too complex and ambitious for existing schools to absorb (p. 9). The banner headline of the July 12<sup>th</sup> issue of *Education Week* read, Union Heads Issue Standards Warnings. The article chronicled the concerns of both NEA and AFT s presidents about the difficulties that teachers and schools are encountering in trying to implement standards in classrooms. While both leaders backed away from calling for an outright abandonment of standards, this is clearly a troubling indicator.

#### Implications

There are many ways to fail, but few to succeed

(Berman, 1981).

This section ventures beyond the data findings and conclusions into a more speculative arena. It is difficult to watch the frustrations of districts and administrators who clearly want to do the right thing in implementing the learning standards but simply do not have a clue as to where or how to begin. It is equally difficult to watch districts engage in superficial

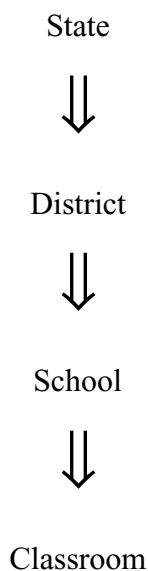
implementation (e.g., aligning the standards and benchmarks with textbook chapters), all the while convinced that this is exactly what was intended by state policy. Because of the uncertainty and ambiguity of exactly what is involved in implementing the learning standards, administrators may believe that the learning standards have been successfully implemented, when in fact they have not.

As noted previously in the conclusions, specifics of implementation are desperately needed at all levels the district, school, and classroom. What follows is a preliminary and tentative conceptualization of learning standards implementation. It is presented only as one possible perspective on what it might take to implement learning standards and benchmarks in schools.

There appear to be several implicit assumptions that undergird effective standards implementation. These assumptions must apply to each of the levels of the system: state, district, school, and classroom. First, each level must clearly articulate where they are going. What this means is that the vision or goals developed need to be actionable; they must suggest a relatively clear means for addressing them. Research consistently reports that the most effective and successful reforms provide some mechanisms that help each level define what it is they are supposed to do in fairly concrete terms (Hannaway, 1993; Spillane, 1994). As Porter, Smithson, and Osthoff (1994) noted, Simply put, the most influential policy initiatives are the ones . . . that clearly describe the goal and specify how it is to be obtained (p. 160). As clarity and focus fade, so does the likelihood of successful implementation. Second, each level must decide what must be done and by whom; in other words, set responsibilities for achieving the goals. Third, each must state consequences for achieving or failing to meet those responsibilities. Fourth, each must provide the necessary resources and support needed to reach the goals. Finally, each level

must establish clear and unambiguous means assessing progress toward and achievement of the vision.

The flow of this process, crudely illustrated below, starts at the state level and then proceeds through the district level, to the school level, to the classroom level.



Discretion is afforded at each hand-off point (between levels) for interpretation based on knowledge and beliefs and for fit with the local context and relevant organizational factors.

Each level will face tough *how* questions given the *what* statement(s) they are handed from the preceding level. The answers to these *how* questions will be the *what* that gets handed to the next level. In turn, this becomes the *how* questions for that level. As Elmore (1993) noted, the issue is not *whether* one level should influence or control the next but rather *how much* and *what kind* of control or influence any level should exert over *what factors*. In fact, this model is a particular blend of centralization and decentralization each level must centralize policy on certain facets but then allow discretion in how the next level implements these policies.

To try to illustrate this more clearly, the state (ISBE) hands the *what* of the content/learning standards to districts. For the districts, these then must become *how*

questions How do we do this? How do we translate and integrate these into our district context? How do we assist, guide, and support schools in implementing these standards? The answer to these *how* questions become the *what* as the district generates goals, vision statements, guidelines, curriculum frameworks, instructional models, evaluations, assessments, etc based on the standards. The district developed *what* is then handed to schools. The schools then must take this and again transform it into *how* questions How do we assist classroom teachers in implementing this?

Figure 1 portrays a more comprehensive summary of this process with the first row under each level representing the *what* needs to be accomplished at each level (centralized), and the second row representing the discretion handed off to the level below (decentralized). As noted, each level then sets structures and policies (the *what*) in place and allows variability in the process (the *how*) to the next lower level.

Some generic *what* statements that each level should have developed and be able to identify might include: (1) These are the standards our districts/schools/classrooms expect all students to meet. (2) These are the goals in teaching and learning that the districts/schools/classrooms should work to achieve. (3) This is the district s/school s/classroom s vision for reform and change. (4) This is the belief system that is shared by the districts/schools/classrooms in order to provide equal access to educational opportunity for all students and quality results.

Some generic *how* questions to be addressed at each level might include the following: (1) How will we reach the state/district/school/ classroom goals? (2) How will the district/

**Figure 1:  
Implicit Assumptions of Effective Standards-Based Reforms**

For standards-based reform to work, each level for the next lower level must:

- (1) Articulate where we are going (vision, goals)
- (2) Decide what must be done and by whom; set responsibilities for achieving goals
- (3) State consequences of achieving/failing to meet responsibilities
- (4) Provide necessary resources and support to reach the goals
- (5) Establish clear and unambiguous means of assessing progress/achievement (accountability)

<b>State</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Classroom</b>
Establishes and centralizes policies for school improvement (learning standards, accountability measures, Quality Assurance, certification/re-certification, professional development)	Establishes and centralizes district policies concerning vision and goals (consistent with state vision but reinterpreted to fit the district context); designs and makes known accountability/evaluation mechanisms; designs and provides professional development strategies and resources	Establishes and centralizes policies and procedures concerning school vision (consistent with district vision but reinterpreted to fit the local context); designs or adapts appropriate accountability/evaluation mechanisms; designs and monitors professional development strategies/resources	Establishes and makes known the common goals and clear learning outcomes for all students; sets high expectations for student learning; clearly articulates multiple means of assessment and evaluation; provides the necessary learning resources to meet these expectations
Sets the above requirements/structures but allows individual districts to address these in ways they see fit (discretion in process) as monitored by state-sanctioned accountability measures	Sets the above requirements/structures but allows individual schools to address these in ways they see fit (discretion) as monitored by state and district accountability measures	Set the above parameters/structures but allows individual classroom teachers to tailor the ways they pursue these (discretion) as monitored by state/district accountability mechanisms	Sets clear learning goals and expectations (structure) but allows/provides for individual learning approaches (discretion) to reach these goals

*Each level: (1) Sets structures/policies in place and then (2) allows variability in process (how this is addressed) to the next lower level.*

school/classroom develop its own strategies, based on the needs of the students, to ensure that each child will be taught and will learn? (3) How should each district/school/classroom allocate the resources most immediately under its control to achieve the best results? (4) How should each district/school/classroom demonstrate that progress is being made and results achieved?<sup>1</sup>

In essence, then, what each level does is to set (through the *what*) parameters of action for the next lower level. This kind of bracketing process for each successive level allows discretion as to *how* each will proceed but this will always be within the brackets or parameters established by the *what* statements from the level above. The answers to the *how* questions will vary at each level by context, knowledge, belief systems, will, and capacity. This will encourage local, grassroots participation and ownership of the effort. Districts will inevitably vary in their answers to the *how* questions posed by the ISBE; schools within districts will vary in their responses to *how* questions posed by districts; individual classrooms within schools will vary in their response to the *how* questions posed by schools. Nonetheless, the parameters of the responses are set and simply ignoring the questions is not an option.

Because of this inescapable variability, the next higher level must be ready to respond differentially to the different needs of the level below. For example, some schools may require more assistance than others in implementation, different types or amounts of professional development assistance, etc. District offices must be prepared to respond to these variations. As Elmore (1993) noted, Any time a policy is implemented by more than one actor, we can expect some variability (p. 118).

None of this is simple or uncomplicated, nor is the model fully developed. But in light of the struggles of schools in implementing the standards and the uneven results evidenced thus far, it is clear that some further direction and guidance will be required for successful standards

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<sup>1</sup> The *what* statements and *how* questions are loosely adapted from Payzant (1994) and others.

implementation. The stakes are simply too high to let things drift. As Elmore (2000) cautions, If schools, school systems, and their leaders respond to standards-based reforms the way they have responded to other attempts at broad-scale reform of public education over the past century, they will fail massively and visibly, with an attendant loss of public confidence and serious consequences for public education (p. 2).

All this seems to point to three concluding considerations: First, the district role in implementation and instructional improvement seems critical. State policy may need to focus attention and resources on deliberately improving the capacity of districts to manage standards implementation because the ultimate success of implementation depends, in many respects, on that capacity. Second, while there can be no one model for implementation, it does seem clear that there is a need for the establishment of some benchmarks through which districts might gauge progress. One way to pursue this might be through the state-level development of a rubric for implementation that districts might use to assess their own efforts and then, in turn, refine and adapt this model for use by their schools, which in turn could refine and adapt it for use by their classroom teachers. In this way, implementation implies a progression toward a goal most loosely defined at the state level, then by the district, then the school, and finally in the classroom. Third, a caution needs to be sounded about the bottomless morass of professional development, whether for teachers or administrators. Paraphrasing Elmore and McLaughlin (1988), professional development, like reform, seems to be steady work. Reform or change can successfully be put off for years because of the professional development needs of one group or another. In these cases it becomes an excuse for why we aren't rather than a means to achieve. The long-term results of such capacity-building efforts are, at best, uncertain and, as Elmore and Burney (1997) indicated, professional development appears to be a relatively weak

treatment without strong building leadership and a clear vision for instructional improvement.

Like other aspects of the standards implementation process, professional development needs to be clearly defined within the vision of the district/school, have clear responsibilities set, and certain means for assessment.

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