



As Illinois educators and Teach Plus Policy Fellows who are committed to improving student learning and equitable access to high-quality mathematics instruction, we appreciate ISBE's ongoing work to develop a Comprehensive Numeracy Plan for the state of Illinois. We are uniquely positioned as "on-the-ground" educators who understand the policy-making process, and we hope our feedback will contribute meaningfully to the final refinement of the plan. Please find our detailed, section-by-section comments attached, but this letter summarized our key observations.

After reviewing the second draft, we would like to acknowledge several areas of strength:

- **Strong and explicit focus on equity** Centering equity is essential to closing systemic gaps in mathematical understanding, and we appreciate that the plan recognizes this directly.
- **Shifts toward authentic, culturally relevant teaching** We support the emphasis on meaningful tasks, authentic assessment, and student growth over correctness alone.
- **Emphasis on teacher leadership** We are encouraged by the recognition that teacher leadership plays a crucial role in successful numeracy reform.

While we applaud these strengths, we have identified several areas where they plan could be further strengthened:

- **The language in the Comprehensive Numeracy Draft is too dense to be applicable.** The instructional framework section, in particular, must be accessible to all classroom educators and administrators hoping to lead numeracy growth without a math background. Making it accessible means simple, concise, clear language. It's fine to add more depth and detail separately, but start clear and concise. In addition, the plan must explain the connections between concepts, even if they might be obvious to math experts, in order to bring it to life for more educators and school leaders.
- **Make the plan actionable for practitioners.** Each section should include more concrete, ready-to-use examples, classroom vignettes, and plain-language descriptions of what high-quality numeracy instruction looks like in practice. Teachers will be the ones truly implementing the plan in front of students; any tools and resources that educators can use directly will support teachers and increase positive outcomes.
- **PreK–2 must be addressed more explicitly.** This age group matters enormously—research tells us that early numeracy skills assessed before school entry are strong predictors of later math achievement, and that children who start kindergarten below the 10th percentile in math are *more likely* to still be there in 5th grade. These grade levels need more explicit attention and detailed instructional guidance.
- **Elevate teacher leadership throughout implementation.** The plan too often assumes that administrators drive professional learning and decision-making. Teachers should be explicitly named as members of numeracy teams, facilitators of PLCs, and long-term owners of this work, as they will be in their buildings long after other roles change. In addition, the plan should include specific, actionable ways that building leaders can empower their strongest math teachers to lead peers in implementing the plan.



- **Continue to address time, capacity, and existing constraints.** The plan assumes districts have the staffing and structures to adopt new practices, but many do not. ISBE should acknowledge these barriers directly and advocate for protecting teacher collaboration time, which is essential to the plan's success.
- **Include a dedicated section for families and communities.** A toolkit for families and community members that encourages math talk at home would be a great addition. This Numeracy Plan is almost exclusively focused for educators and districts, and rightfully so—but not all learning takes place at school. Including a section with more resources for families and communities will continue to strengthen collaboration between schools and communities. This could be a high-impact, low-cost addition.
- **Provide measurable milestones and accountability structures.** The plan describes a destination, but does not outline how progress will be monitored. Short- and mid-term indicators, review cycles, and sample implementation tools would help schools and districts move from aspiration to action.

In summary, we believe that the ISBE Numeracy Plan can be strengthened by:

- Streamlining the language to be accessible to all stakeholders
- Adding ready-to-use instructional resources that connect research to implementable classroom practices
- Explicitly including more context for K-2, as this is a critical time in a student's numeracy journey
- Leaning into teacher leadership to make the numeracy plan a reality in classrooms
- Encouraging districts to protect and expand collaboration time for teachers during the school day
- Incorporating a parent and community engagement section to build partnerships for numeracy
- Refining milestones and accountability structures during implementation of the numeracy plan. drive

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this important work and would welcome further opportunities to help shape and engage with the Illinois Comprehensive Numeracy Plan. We have also attached detailed, section-by-section feedback to aid the drafting team in identifying specific edits that will help embed these principles into the plan. Thank you for your commitment to improving numeracy outcomes for all Illinois students.

Sincerely,

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