



Subject: Curriculum Update
Date: November 18, 2025

SUBJECT: Curriculum Update

Ms. Chris Arado, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, will present the District Goals Update.

BACKGROUND:

New Employee Orientation and After-School Sessions Update: New employees participated in the final two after-school sessions, Every Choice Counts: Supporting Student Behavior with Care and Consistency, and From Burnout to Brilliance: AI Tools for New Teachers.

The Every Choice Counts: Supporting Student Behavior with Care and Consistency session, led by the Student Services Department, provided new staff with practical, research-based strategies for promoting positive student behavior and addressing challenges proactively. The session aligned with the district's Responsive Classroom approach and emphasized collaboration between teachers, families, and Behavior Specialists (BCBAs).

Key components of the session included Interactive Modeling for teaching expectations, Problem-Solving Conferences and Class Meetings for addressing issues collaboratively, and the use of logical consequences paired with strong family communication. Teachers learned about the four functions of behavior (SEAT: sensory, escape, attention, tangible) to better understand student needs and implement both proactive and reactive strategies. The district's BCBAs emphasized data-driven supports, collaboration, and a focus on gradual, sustainable change through teamwork and consistency.

From Burnout to Brilliance: AI Tools for New Teachers was presented by Beth Slusher and introduced new staff to MagicSchool AI as a supportive tool for enhancing instruction and managing workload. The session began with staff reflecting on their first 60 days, celebrating successes and capturing positive classroom moments, as well as sharing challenges in small groups to foster a sense of community and promote problem-solving. The presentation emphasized that AI tools are designed to empower educators, reduce burnout, and spark creativity—helping staff sustain excellence and well-being throughout the school year.

Professional Development Day: On October 14, 2025, the Professional Development Day featured a mix of required and elective sessions for all District 45 staff. Our goal for the day was to balance system-wide required learning, centered on equity, literacy, and behavior, with teacher-choice sessions that emphasized complementary instructional practices, technology integration, and support for all students.

The Required Sessions were as follows:

- *Cathleen Beachboard – Hope and Empowerment*: A continuation of the August keynote, focusing on how educators can foster hope, confidence, and potential in all learners.
- *SASED Handwriting Instruction (K–5)*: Practical strategies for addressing handwriting within universal instruction to reduce the district’s reliance on occupational therapy services.
- *Michele Yanong – Supporting Multilingual Learners*: A session providing instructional strategies for educators working with multilingual learners across grade levels and programs.
- *Rebecca Elias – Connect to Literacy*: Training for EL teachers on using Connect to Literacy to link student data with instruction.
- *Mike Pinney & Diana Brown – Early Childhood Behavior Documentation*: Early Childhood staff learned to use the new D45-developed behavior documentation platform.
- *Defined Learning – Differentiated Math and Career Connections*: Required for math and STEM teachers, this session explored using the platform to challenge advanced learners and meet ISBE career education standards.

The Choice Sessions were as follows:

- *MagicSchool AI*: Using AI responsibly to save time, enhance lessons, and boost engagement.
- *Freckle & Zearn*: “Nuts and bolts” for implementing these math platforms.
- *Thrively*: Using student strengths assessments for family engagement, special education, and general education settings.
- *Comprehension Playbook*: Applying a structured 4-step mini-lesson to improve reading comprehension.
- *The Writing Revolution*: Integrating writing instruction with ARC and My Perspectives for stronger analytical writing.
- *Building Thinking Classrooms in Math*: Hands-on strategies to create collaborative, problem-solving-oriented math environments.
- *Art, Music, PE, Library, PESI, and Axiom Training*: Specialized sessions for related arts and support staff.

Evaluation responses to the question: What was the highlight of your day?

Staff overwhelmingly valued sessions that offered new, practical strategies, inspiration, and hands-on application time. The most frequently mentioned highlights centered around MagicSchool AI, Cathleen Beachboard’s Hope presentation, and Michele Yanong’s multilingual learner (EL/MLL) sessions.

Key Highlights

- *New Strategies & Resources*: Many participants appreciated learning concrete, ready-to-use strategies—especially those from sessions such as The Writing Revolution, Comprehension Playbook, and Building Thinking Classrooms. Staff noted “easy takeaways,” “ideas to use tomorrow,” and new tools to improve classroom instruction and student engagement.

- MagicSchool AI: The MagicSchool AI sessions were repeatedly cited as engaging and practical. Teachers valued the chance to explore AI tools, test applications for their own classrooms, and learn how technology can save time and enhance creativity.
- Hope Presentation (Cathleen Beachboard): The “Hope” keynote and follow-up session were described as inspiring, uplifting, and highly relevant. Staff appreciated the focus on fostering student goal-setting, motivation, and resilience, calling it “very resourceful and inspiring.”
- EL/MLL Sessions (Michele Yanong): These sessions were among the most popular highlights. Educators found them informative and directly applicable to their work with English learners, praising the interactive simulations, useful protocols (like QSSSA), and practical strategies for immediate implementation.
- Collaborative Time: Participants valued time to collaborate with peers across schools and departments. Many mentioned appreciating the flexibility to choose sessions and the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues they rarely see.
- Specialized Sessions: Teachers in related arts, PE, and special education noted that their sessions were “very informative,” with “specific ideas and structures” tailored to their content areas.

In short, educators left the October 14 PD day feeling inspired, equipped, and connected. The combination of motivational learning (Hope), practical classroom strategies (EL, Writing Revolution, Comprehension Playbook), and innovative tools (MagicSchool AI) made the day both energizing and directly impactful on teaching practice.

Evaluation responses to the question: What would have improved the day for you and why?

While staff appreciated the quality, organization, and relevance of most October 14 sessions, they consistently suggested shorter, more interactive sessions, longer or improved lunch logistics, better parking, and more time for collaboration or hands-on application.

School Report Card

The Illinois School Report Card provides families, educators, and communities with a clear, transparent snapshot of each school’s performance and progress. Published annually by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), it includes key information such as academic achievement, student growth, school environment, and college and career readiness. The report card’s purpose is to promote accountability, highlight areas of success, and identify opportunities for improvement—helping schools make data-informed decisions to ensure all students are supported and prepared for future success.

[School Report Card Presentation](#)