Introduction

Meeting Materials for June 17, 2014

Post-secondary institutions and school districts in the northern Illinois region are engaged in an impressive level of college and career readiness activity. The strong partnerships between the community colleges and their sender schools are achieving encouraging results – increases in the number of students ready for college math courses, alignment of expectations in math and writing, and expanded support systems for students’ academic success.

The northern Illinois region is home to some of the nation’s finest community colleges and high schools, as you will see when you browse the college profiles (two pages) and the school district snapshots (one page). This data was gathered from ICCB and ISBE sources and is presented in common formats for easy comparisons. You will also observe that this region hosts a wide variety of programs and performance in its urban, suburban, and rural locations.

The College and Career Readiness Summaries for each institution - also in a brief, common format – offer many opportunities for sharing successful practices and for regional collaboration. One of the tasks for June 17 is to identify potential areas for regional action. Some of those can be drawn from comparison of the summaries, both what’s being done and what’s not being done. For instance -

- Currently, no institution appears to be tracking progress toward the Illinois P-20 Council goal to increase the proportion of adults in the Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025.
- Two of 15 institutions are beginning to prepare customized learning plans for their students.
- Career exploration and planning starting in the elementary grades is occasional rather than part of a pathways system.
- Encouragement of students for STEM (or STEAM) careers, especially underserved populations, is growing but not always coordinated with employers or academic offerings.
- Engagement in Illinois Pathways (STEM learning exchanges) is strong but limited to two districts.
- Progress is being made across the region in reconceptualizing developmental education.
- Joint efforts by higher education and P-12 faculty to align curricula with the new Illinois Learning Standards are happening everywhere but with greater impact on P-12 than higher education.

One outcome for this meeting is agreement on two to three, innovative, regional-level projects that will be launched this summer and implemented over the next school year. NIU is committed to facilitating the projects that emerge from this meeting with willing partners from participating institutions.

The list of materials may be long, but the documents are brief and most are full of easy to read graphics. The goal of these pre-meeting materials is to provide each participant with an overview of activities to improve student success and an introduction to the work of other participants. Print copies of all materials will be available for you on June 17.