

# Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Students

## Secondary Super Strategies | INTRODUCTION

### Who are Economically Disadvantaged Students?

**T**he Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan for Illinois defines economically disadvantaged students, or low-income students, as “students from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.”<sup>4</sup>

Economically disadvantaged students are five times more likely to drop out of high school than their non-low-income peers and 13 times less likely to graduate from high school on time.<sup>3</sup> Support and meaningful relationships with teachers, counselors, and school staff can help build confidence within students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and play a key role in their success.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

In Illinois, the percentage of students in families receiving public aid, living in substitute care, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches for school year 2019 was 48.8% of the student body.<sup>1</sup>



# Economically Disadvantaged Students Super Strategies | RECOMMENDATIONS

- Utilize additional Super Strategy documents based on each individual students' circumstances.
- Have information readily available for support services within the community. These services could include:
  - √ food pantries
  - √ mental health agencies
  - √ public health departments
  - √ community action agencies
  - √ housing authorities
  - √ churches
- Offer counselor services several times throughout the semester to foster a meaningful counselor-student relationship and open lines of communication.
  - √ track student progress
  - √ provide opportunities for career assessments
  - √ assist in goal planning
  - √ offer resources on stress management and coping skills
  - √ provide academic intervention
- Promote available services for economically disadvantaged students and their families to the entire student body to avoid stigmatization.
- Assist students with researching available scholarships and FAFSA completion.
- Provide training to teachers and counselors on trauma-informed care to better equip staff with support strategies for economically disadvantaged students and possible barriers they face.
- Emphasize potential earnings and timelines for completion when marketing specific career and technical education (CTE) programs.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local community colleges.
  - √ Academic and guidance counselors can promote the benefits of CTE programs.
  - √ Students can be informed of support services available on campus prior to enrollment.
  - √ "CTE Days" held at local community colleges can provide students the opportunity to explore career options.

## SOURCES:

- <sup>1</sup> Illinois Report Card: Low Income Students. (2019). Retrieved April 7, 2020, from <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/state.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=lowincome&Stateid=IL>.
- <sup>2</sup> Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act H.R.2353, 115th Cong., (2018) (enacted). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2353/text?r=2>.
- <sup>3</sup> Taylor, K. (2019, July 25). Poverty's Long-Lasting Effects on Students' Education and Success. Retrieved from <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/povertys-long-lasting-effects-on-students-education-and-success/>.
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2019). Illinois State Board of Education State Template for the Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Retrieved May 29, 2020 from <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ESSA-Amendment1-redline.pdf>.
- <sup>5</sup> Williams, J., Ph.D., Steen, S., Ph.D., Albert, T., Dely, B., Jacobs, B., Nagel, C., & Irick, A. (2016). Academically Resilient Low-Income Students' Perspectives of How School Counselors Can Meet Their Academic Needs (Vol. 19, pp. 155-165, Rep.). Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ1100152)