

HYA

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT



District 54
May 7, 2026

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Dr. Karen Sullivan and Dr. Brian Harris, of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in February - April 2026 for the new superintendent of District 54. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews, focus group settings, community forums, and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, community forums and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews, community forums and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years and the immediate and future priorities that the new Superintendent will need to address.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

District 54 is the largest elementary school district in Illinois. It connects more than 15,500 students with 2,000 staff members with a commitment to ensuring the academic success and social-emotional well-being of each child. The district includes 28 schools – the Early Learning Center, 21 elementary schools, 5 junior high schools and one kindergarten-eighth grade community school – which serve families from the communities of Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates, Elk Grove Village, Hanover Park, Roselle, Streamwood and Rolling Meadows.

The diverse community is reflected in the student population. In addition to being racially diverse, more than 20% of students are English Learners who speak 92 languages; more than 19% are from financially struggling families; and more than 10% of students have Individualized Education Plans due to a disability.

At a staff level, District 54 promotes collaboration, innovation and continual growth through 19 years of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) implementation. This, coupled with the positive culture embraced across District 54, has contributed to a 92% retention rate and 87% of staff report that they are highly engaged and highly satisfied with their jobs. District 54 is an All Things PLC

district; one of only 17 in America. District 54 teachers have an average of 12 years teaching experience and 73% have advanced degrees.

More information about the district can be found at [District 54](#).

A data brief that includes an analysis of the 2023-24 and 2024-54 Illinois School Report Card Data for Schools is School District 54 included as an appendix to this report. It provides detailed information on student achievement, district finances, student demographics, general district characteristics, and 5Essentials survey data. Percentiles are used to indicate where School District 54 falls in the distribution of school districts across the state of Illinois on a wide variety of these metrics.

PROCESS

During February - April 2026, the HYA Associates conducted focus groups, interviews, and community forums. Nineteen (19) targeted focus groups were scheduled, Eight (8) individual interviews completed, and two open community forums were provided for the community. In all, we had over 241 stakeholders attend the focus group sessions and community forums. Additionally, 1,528 stakeholders responded to the online survey. The online survey was available to stakeholders from Wednesday, April 1, 2026 through Monday, April 13, 2026 and provided an additional avenue for stakeholders to participate in the process of determining key attributes of the district and the desired qualifications and characteristics for the next Superintendent.

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The District 54 Survey for Superintendent Search was completed by 1,528 stakeholders. The largest stakeholder group surveyed were parents who represented 47 percent of all respondents. Certified/licensed staff made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 36.7 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were classified/support staff at 7 percent of all respondents.

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision and Values (VV), Teaching and Learning (TL), Community Engagement (CE) and Management (M). The following statements

were perceived to be district strengths (based upon the percentage of respondents who selected either Agree or Strongly Agree) when responses were combined for all stakeholders responding to the online survey:

- District schools are safe. (TL)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators, and support staff in its schools. (M)
- Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs. (TL)
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural, and socio-economic groups. (CE)

Respondents were also asked to select leadership statements that are the most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to the same four categories as in the State of the District: Vision and Values (VV), Teaching and Learning (TL), Community Engagement (CE) and Management (M). The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population. (TL)
- Be an effective manager of the District's finances and operations. (M)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools. (M)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)

Percentages of respondents overall who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are presented in a separate document. The community survey report is provided under separate cover and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

Here is a summary of the key stakeholders who participated in the focus groups/interviews:

Interviews and Focus Groups

- Board members and Superintendent
- Executive Cabinet
- District Office Administrators
- Rafferty Administrative Center (RAC) Staff
- Principals
- Assistant Principals
- District Instructional Coaches
- EC/Jr. High Teachers
- Elementary Teachers
- Building Support Staff
- Employee Virtual Forum
- Schaumburg Education Association (SEA) Executive Board
- Schaumburg Educational Employees Organization (SEEO) Executive Board
- PTA Presidents
- Student Advisory Council
- District Citizens Advisory Committee
- Intergovernmental Partners - Managers
- Intergovernmental Partners - Elected
- D54 Education Foundation
- Business and Community Leaders
- Community Forum (Virtual/In-person)

The structure of the focus groups and community forums was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. A majority of the focus group sessions were conducted in person with a virtual option provided for target groups for convenience. Those involved in providing input into the selection of the Superintendent were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What are the strengths of the district and community?
- What are the challenges facing the district?
- What are the immediate and future priorities for the next Superintendent?
- What are the personal and professional qualifications and attributes that you desire in the next Superintendent?
- Do you know any candidates that you believe would be a great fit for this position?

It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

OVERVIEW

This Leadership Profile reflects extensive engagement with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, community members, and intergovernmental partners. Across all groups, there is strong alignment around the district's core strengths, increasing urgency around financial and structural challenges, and a clear call for leadership that balances stability with innovation.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

A summary of the strengths of the district and community, as identified in the engagement sessions, are:

Commitment to Whole Child Success and Specialized Programs

The district has a strong focus on "whole child success," which includes both academics and social/emotional learning (SEL). A major strength is the exceptional special education services for which families move to the district, along with established, high-quality programs like early childhood education (ELC), full-day kindergarten, and robust dual language and immersion programs.

High-Quality Staff and Leadership Culture

The district possesses talented, committed, and very stable staff. There is strong leadership at all levels, with great systems in place for growing leaders from within. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) concept is deeply embedded in the culture, and teachers feel supported through extensive professional development, large instructional coach staff, and mentoring programs for new hires.

Strong Community Support and Partnerships

The community is described as very supportive, with parents and families moving to the area specifically for the schools and education. There is a high level of coordination, cooperation, and partnership between the schools and community

organizations, including strong PTA organizations, the Education Foundation, and intergovernmental partners.

Diversity and Inclusivity

The community is widely recognized as amazingly diverse, and this multicultural diversity is consistently noted as a strength that is embraced and leveraged by the district. The district strives to build belonging within its diverse population.

Organizational Consistency and Reputation

The district is the largest elementary district in Illinois and is considered one of the top school districts in the state. It is viewed as a "destination district" for parents seeking outstanding education. Internally, there is cohesion, aligned systems, and consistency across schools for instruction, curriculum, and goals.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

A summary of the challenges facing the district and community as identified in the engagement sessions, are:

Financial Instability and Funding Uncertainty

The district faces significant financial challenges, including a budget crisis with a structural imbalance, spending down fund balances, and the difficulty of maintaining current programs without additional funding. They are Tier 2 under Evidence Based Funding (76% adequacy) and deal with the uncertainty of federal/state funding. Financial pressures require difficult decisions and the need for a long-term fiscal strategy. The need to move from historical financial stability to challenging decision-making represents a significant cultural shift.

Increasing Student Behavioral and Mental Health Needs

There is a rise in social emotional (SEL) and mental health needs among students, which some feel are not being adequately met due to competing academic expectations. The complexity of student needs, coupled with increased special education enrollment, strains resources. There are also specific issues with managing student behavior and the lack of support for teachers dealing with unsafe behaviors in the classroom.

Staffing, Compensation, and Diversity Gaps

The district struggles with staffing issues, particularly in shortage areas and in maintaining competitive compensation for non-certified staff (paraprofessionals). A persistent challenge is that the leadership and staff demographics do not reflect the diversity of the community's student population. Furthermore, there is a sense of low staff morale due to budget cuts and a perceived lack of authentic input from staff.

Aging Facilities and Enrollment/Boundary Management

The district has issues with long-term facility needs, deferred maintenance backlogs, and renovation costs for older buildings. They are also beginning to see declining general education enrollment and population shifts, leading to imbalances (some schools under-enrolled, others over) that necessitate a plan to right-size schools and address boundaries.

Curriculum and Technology Balance/Innovation

Concerns exist that the district is not perceived as a place of innovation anymore. While systems are strong, some stakeholders perceive the district as becoming insular, less innovative, or overly reliant on past practices. There is a struggle to balance the significant use of technology (1:1 devices) with best instructional practices, with some stakeholders noting too much reliance on technology and less focus on foundational skills like K-2 literacy. There are also needs to refresh specific curricula, such as literacy and dual language programs, to ensure rigor and continuous improvement.

IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Financial Stability and Long-Term Fiscal Planning

The top priority is dealing with the district's significant financial challenges, which include a structural imbalance and funding uncertainty. The Superintendent must develop a transparent, long-term financial strategy and plan to maintain the financial health of the district. This includes budgeting, fiscal responsibility, and making necessary adjustments to achieve a balanced budget while sustaining high-quality programs.

Visibility, Communication, and Stakeholder Relationship Building

A critical immediate priority is establishing a strong presence and building trust across the district and community. The new Superintendent is expected to:

- Be visible and accessible to all stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the community, often starting with a listening tour.
- Establish themselves as a transparent leader, communicating clearly and often about the fiscal situation and other major decisions.
- Build strong relationships with the Board, as well as internal relationships with building leadership and staff.
- Enhance community engagement and partnerships and ensure alignment with feeder high school systems and external partners.

Staff Relations and Collective Bargaining

A major challenge linked to morale and operational stability is managing staff relationships and upcoming negotiations. Immediate priorities include:

- Managing the financial state and addressing low staff morale due to budget cuts.
- Negotiating new Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with the union, which is noted as both a priority and a challenge.
- Working hard to build and reinforce internal trust with staff along with elevating authentic stakeholder voice and supporting staff well-being.

Strategic Planning for Enrollment, Boundaries, and Facilities

The Superintendent must address long-term infrastructure and demographic shifts. This includes:

- Creating a long-term facility master plan to deal with aging buildings and deferred maintenance.
- Developing a plan to deal with declining general education enrollment and population shifts, which may require an enrollment and building usage study to right-size the district.
- Investigate changes to the current junior high model.

Curriculum Refresh and Technology/AI Strategy

- To ensure the district remains excellent and forward-thinking, the new leader needs to focus on curriculum and future innovation:
- Addressing long-term issues with technology and creating an AI strategy to implement in classrooms.
- Refreshing specific curricula, such as foundational K-2 literacy (reading) and dual language programs.
- Continuing to grow and build programs, while balancing technology use with foundational skills like spelling and writing.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Financial Acumen, Integrity, and Transparency

The new leader must be fiscally astute, with strong budget experience and financial management skills. This includes the integrity, honesty, and transparency necessary to build trust and clearly communicate the district's difficult financial situation to the staff, Board, and community.

Visibility, Approachability, and Relationship Building

The Superintendent is expected to be a highly visible and approachable "face of the district". They must be a relationship builder who can connect authentically with all stakeholders—students, staff (teachers and support staff), parents, and the Board.

Visionary and Innovative Leadership

Stakeholders seek a strong, confident, and dynamic leader who is a clear visionary. This person should be proactive, open to new ideas, innovative, and capable of creating energy and momentum around a forward-thinking vision, particularly regarding technology and AI implementation. Many stakeholders expressed a desire for a leader who can both honor the district's legacy and challenge it to evolve, bringing a "next chapter" mindset while maintaining what makes District 54 exceptional.

Extensive K-8 and Classroom Experience

A strong professional background in education is desired, with repeated emphasis on having classroom teaching experience. The candidate should have a variety of

experience in K-8 and understand the complexity of the elementary system, with background or experience in specialized areas like special education and Multilingual Learner programs.

Collaborative, Humble, and Decisive Temperament

The ideal candidate should possess humility, empathy, and be a servant leader who prioritizes the needs of students and staff. They must be a good listener and collaborative in their approach while still having the ability to make clear, decisive, and sometimes difficult decisions. The Superintendent needs to be politically and organizationally savvy, capable of navigating board dynamics and community expectations

CONCLUSION

HYA Associates would like to thank all the stakeholders, who participated in the interviews, focus groups and community forums or who completed the online survey, for their insights and thoughtful responses. A note of thanks to all staff members who assisted in facilitating our work in gathering this data, and for their extra efforts in handling the necessary arrangements for our focus group meetings, community forums, and follow-up on any issues of concern or clarification.

In closing, HYA is committed to support the Board of Education to identify candidates who fit the leadership profile and will provide District 54 the high quality of successful leadership it desires. The next Superintendent needs to sustain all that is successful about the schools, programs, and personnel and provide the vision, hard work, commitment and collaboration that will engage all stakeholders in moving District 54 forward to meet the expectations of long term success.

Appendix

Data Brief 2024-25 Illinois State Report Card Analysis

State Percentile Analysis

School District 54



2024-2025

Illinois

State Report Card Analysis

State Percentile Analysis

Schaumburg CCSD 54

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine how Schaumburg CCSD 54 compared to other Illinois districts on a range of metrics for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Percentiles are reported for context and indicate where Schaumburg CCSD 54 falls in the distribution of school districts across the state of Illinois on various indicators.

Methods

Data were collected across the areas listed below from the Illinois Report Card website <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com> :

<u>Student Achievement</u>	<u>Financial Information</u>	<u>Student Demographics</u>	<u>District Characteristics</u>	<u>5Essentials</u>
Proficiency - ELA, Math & Science (IL State Tests)	Teacher and Admin Salary	Ethnicity	Enrollment	Effective Leaders
Student Growth Percentile	Local Property Tax Rates	English Learners (EL)	Attendance	Collaborative Teachers
Completion of Algebra in Grade 8	EAV Per Pupil	Individualized Education Plans (IEP)	Mobility	Involved Families
	Instructional Spending	Low Income	Chronic Absenteeism	Supportive Environment
	Operational Spending	Homelessness	Truancy	Ambitious Instruction
			Class Size	Student Response Rate
			Teacher retention, education	Teacher Response Rate

Percentiles were calculated by ranking all Illinois districts who had data for a particular metric appearing on the ISBE report card. A percentile of 60 means the district has an indicator value that was the same or higher than 60% of districts across Illinois.

Tables 1-5 display the indicator values corresponding to the state 50th percentile, the district values, and the district percentile rankings within the state of Illinois for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. The change in the value and percentile between these two school years is also reported.

Figures 1-3 visualize the shift in the state's distribution of proficiency from the Spring of 2024 to the Spring of 2025. Figures 4-6 show the percentage of students designated as low income against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency across the district in the spring of 2025.

An Important Note Related to Student Proficiency - Student proficiency rates on the 2025 state report card reflect the new ISBE standards for proficiency. This change will result in most districts showing an increase in proficiency rates from 2024 to 2025 that is unrelated to district performance. Furthermore, 2025 results for most districts will show large gaps in proficiency between ELA and Math as well as variation in proficiency across grade levels. Therefore, it is critical to interpret proficiency within the context of percentiles and to use percentiles when comparing proficiency across grades and subjects. For a detailed explanation of this issue, visit www.ecragroup.com/newbenchmarks.

Table 1. Student Achievement

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
ELA Proficiency	39.8%	57.1%	84	54.4%	68.7%	81	11.6%	-3
Math Proficiency	25.7%	44.5%	84	36.8%	54.2%	80	9.7%	-4
Science Proficiency	56.9%	62.8%	65	45.6%	48.9%	60	-13.9%	-5
IAR ELA Growth Percentile	49.3	56.0	81	49.1	57.4	88	+1.4	+7
IAR Math Growth Percentile	49.0	53.3	75	49.0	56.1	87	+2.8	+12
8th Grade Students Passing Algebra I	29.8%	96.3%	98	29.9%	97.1%	98	0.8%	0

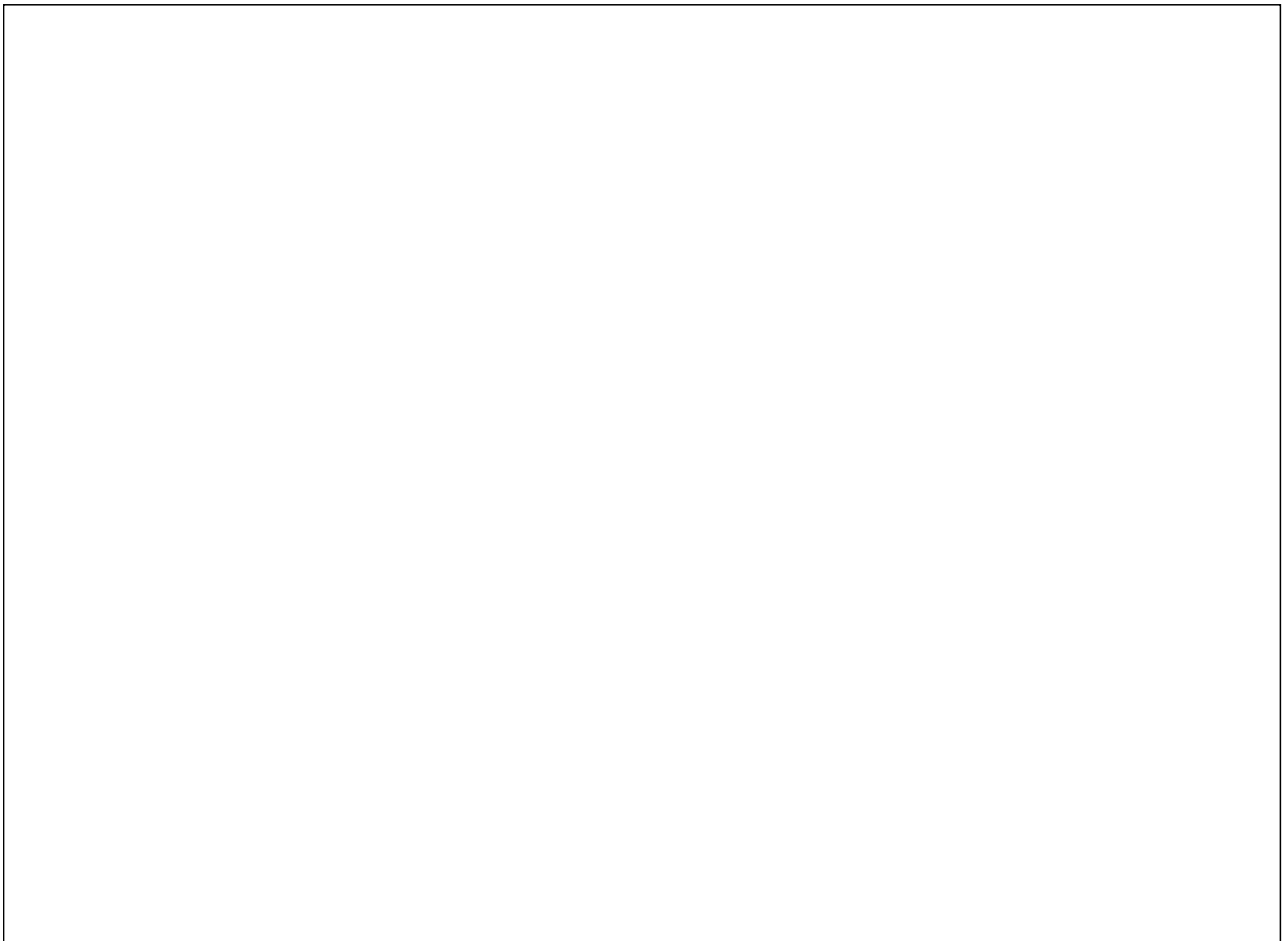


Table 2. Financial Information

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Average Teacher Salary	\$ 60,079	\$ 79,156	85	\$ 62,381	\$ 82,732	86	+\$ 3,576	+1
Average Administrator Salary	\$ 109,501	\$ 139,495	88	\$ 112,258	\$ 140,883	87	+\$ 1,388	-1
Local Property Tax	55.9%	79.5%	85	55.8%	81.9%	92	2.4%	+7
EAV Per Pupil	\$ 219.9 K	\$ 357.6 K	71	\$ 240.2 K	\$ 404.2 K	73	+\$ 46.6 K	+2
Instructional Spending Per Pupil	\$ 8,840	\$ 10,774	78	\$ 9,421	\$ 10,915	73	+\$ 141	-5
Operational Spending Per Pupil	\$ 15,463	\$ 16,633	59	\$ 16,576	\$ 17,897	61	+\$ 1,264	+2

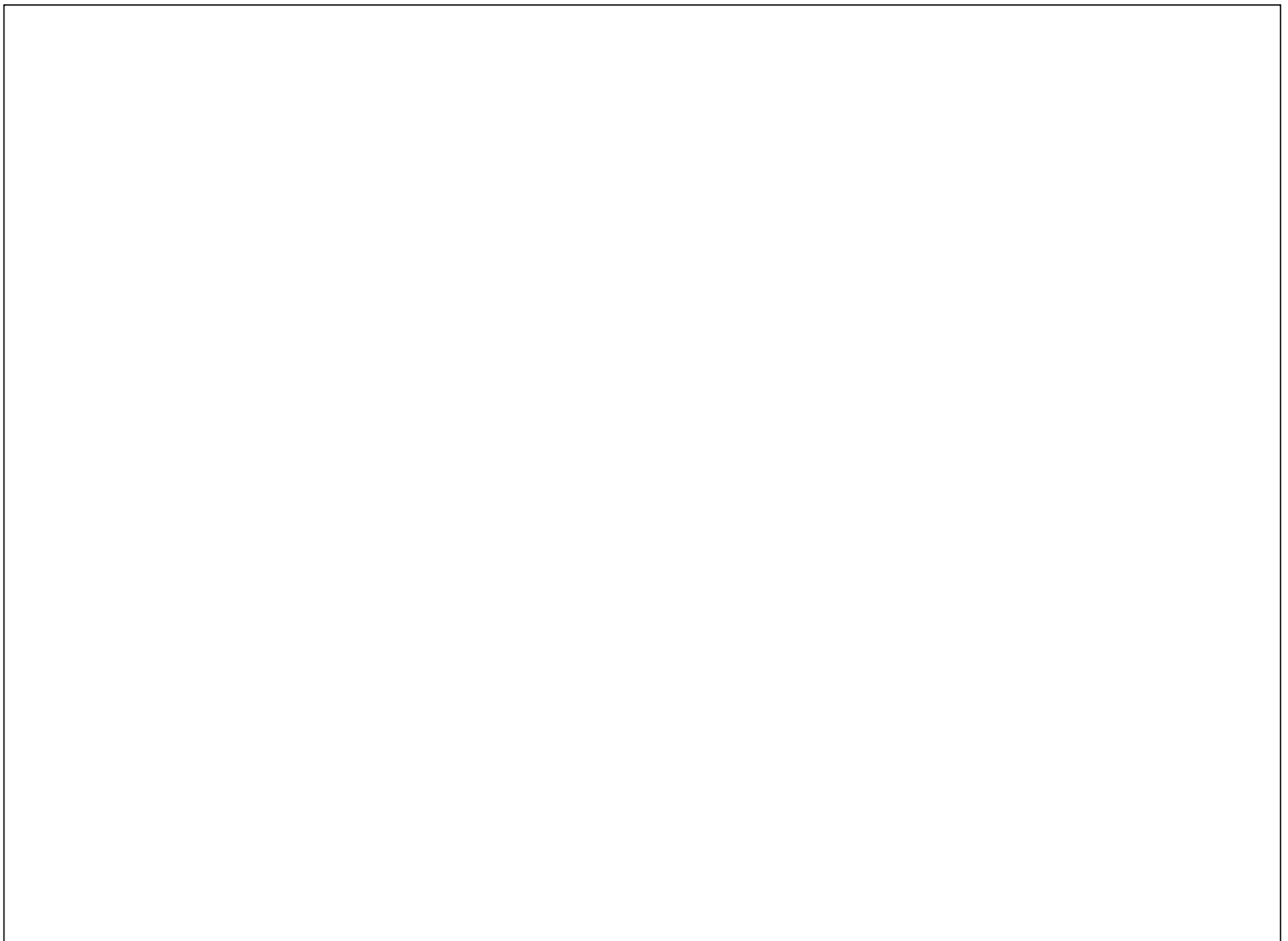


Table 3. Student Demographics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
White	81.1%	38.6%	17	79.5%	37.6%	18	-1.0%	+1
Black	4.8%	5.7%	55	5.4%	5.3%	49	-0.4%	-6
Hispanic	11.5%	25.1%	75	12.3%	25.5%	75	0.4%	0
Asian	3.1%	26.0%	94	3.6%	26.5%	93	0.5%	-1
English Learner (EL)	8.9%	24.2%	82	12.5%	26.1%	78	1.9%	-4
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	15.7%	11.9%	16	15.9%	12.1%	15	0.2%	-1
Low Income	47.0%	20.2%	13	46.4%	20.2%	12	0.0%	-1
Homelessness	2.7%	1.0%	17	2.7%	0.8%	10	-0.2%	-7

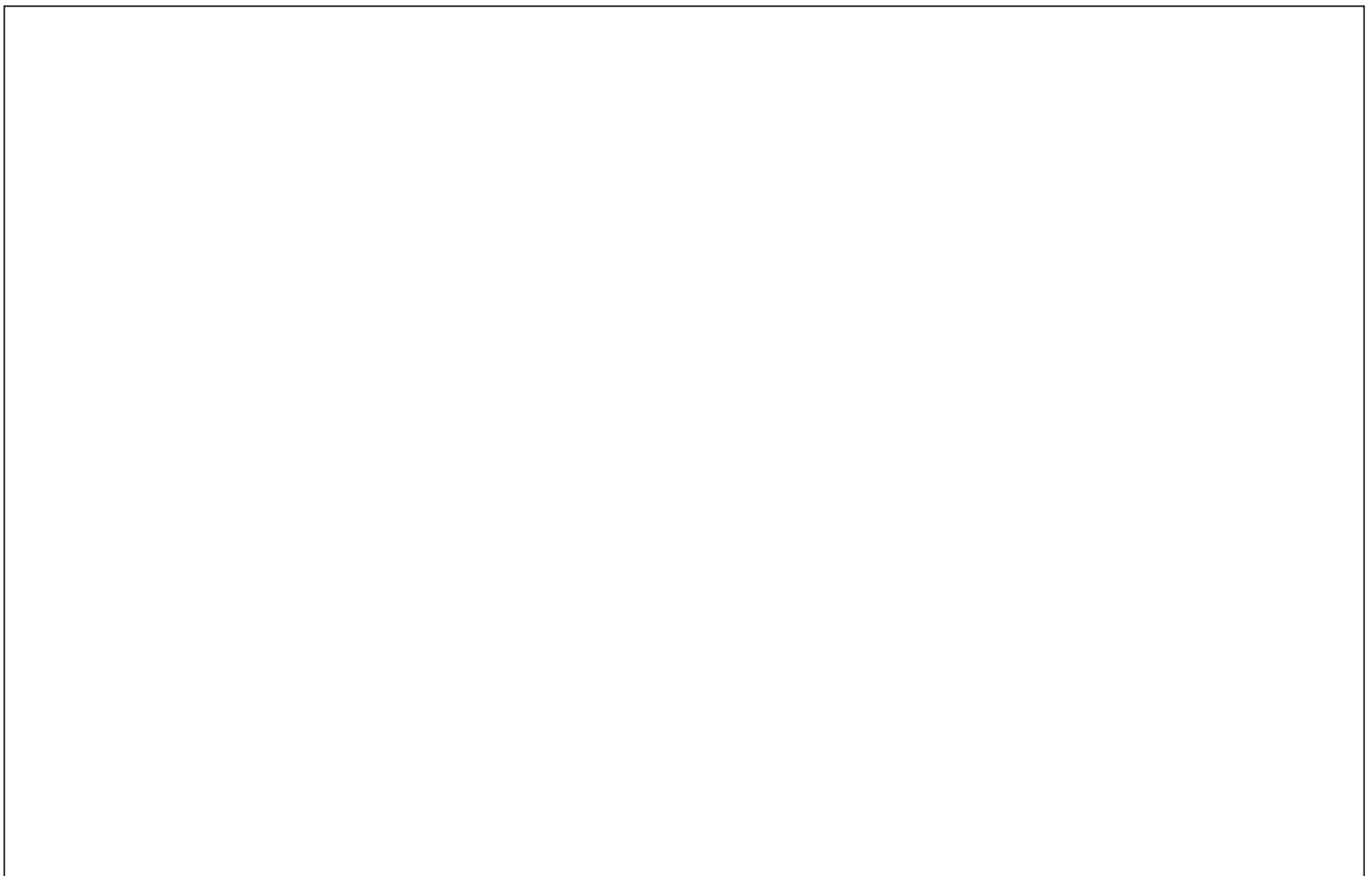


Table 4. District Characteristics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Enrollment	844	15,038	99	837	15,266	99	+228	0
Attendance	93.4%	93.4%	49	93.6%	93.3%	44	-0.1%	-5
Mobility	7.5%	9.1%	63	7.2%	6.8%	46	-2.3%	-17
Chronic Absenteeism	19.5%	20.0%	53	18.8%	20.1%	57	0.1%	+4
Truancy	8.4%	3.7%	14	8.3%	3.8%	17	0.1%	+3
Average Class Size	18.4	22.7	90	18.3	22.0	85	-0.7	-5
Teachers with Advanced Degrees	46.5%	58.5%	74	46.1%	58.6%	74	0.1%	0
Teacher Retention	89.3%	91.1%	69	89.1%	90.4%	61	-0.7%	-8

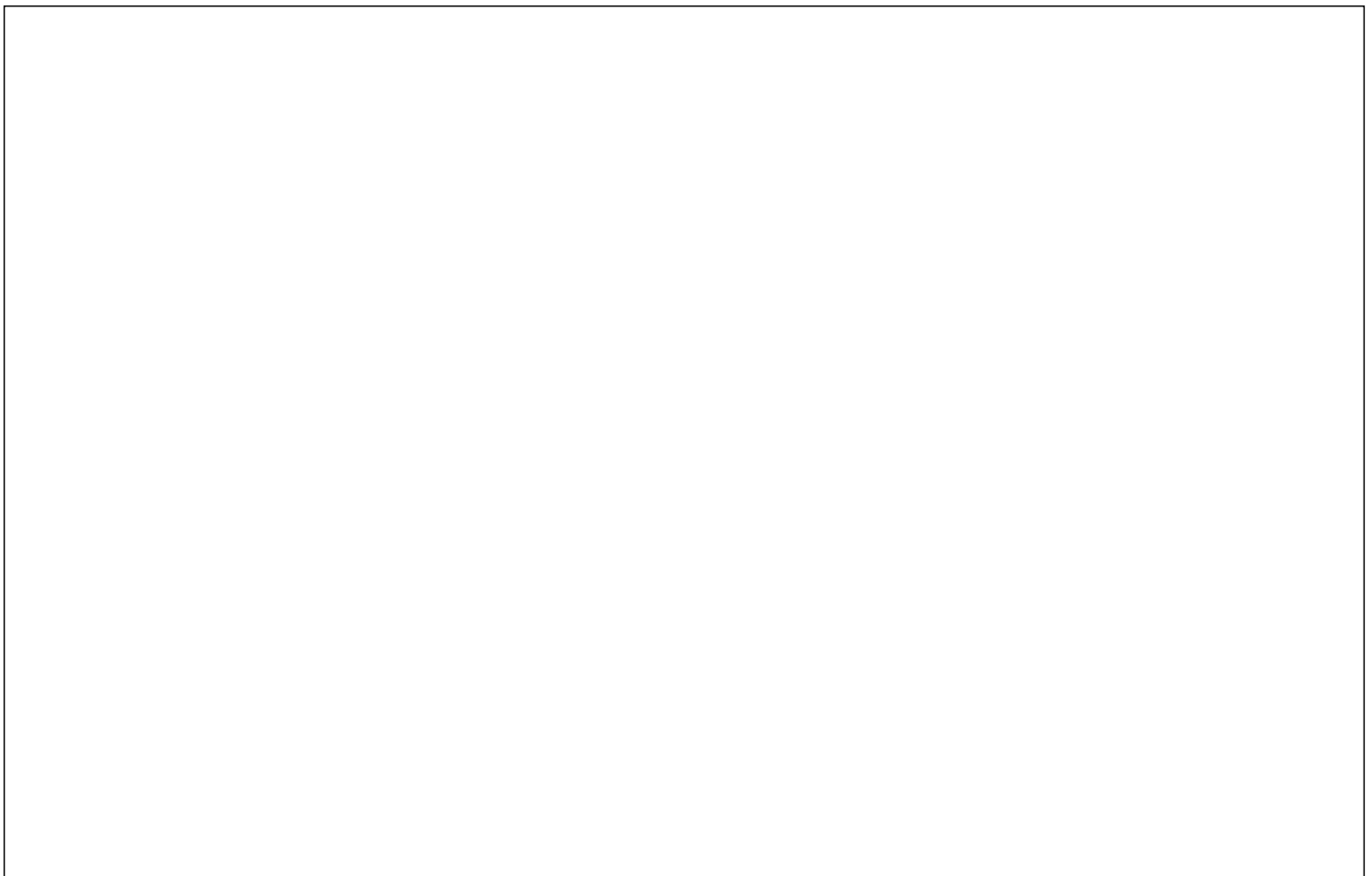
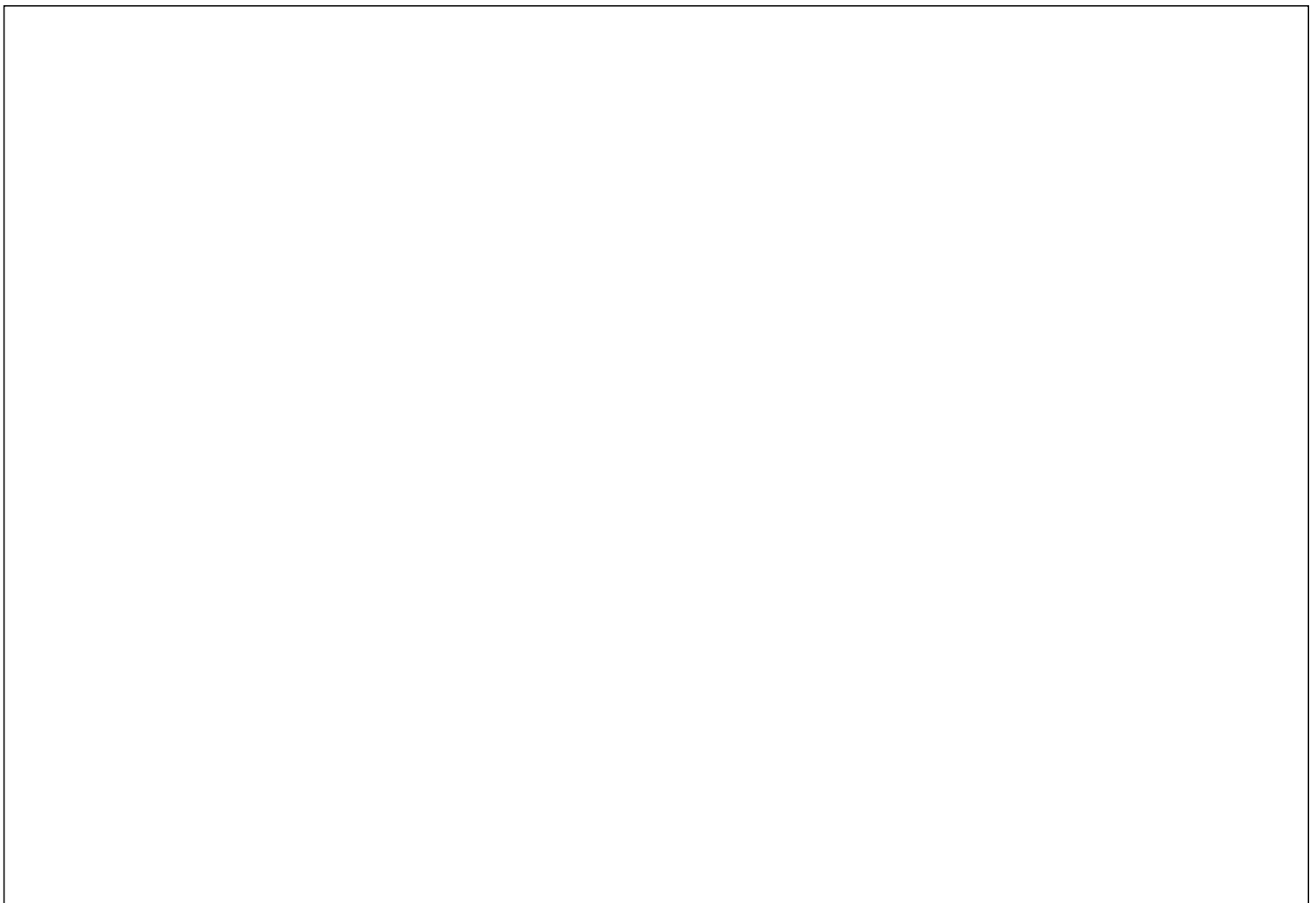


Table 5. Five Essentials Survey

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Effective Leaders	47.0	56.6	77	50.8	56.1	69	-0.4	-8
Collaborative Teachers	43.0	64.7	93	49.1	62.1	92	-2.6	-1
Involved Families	49.0	64.8	84	48.0	60.3	82	-4.5	-2
Supportive Environment	52.0	63.1	81	51.0	63.4	88	+0.3	+7
Ambitious Instruction	53.0	58.5	69	48.0	51.6	69	-6.9	0
Student Response Rate %	93.4%	92.8%	47	94.7%	93.0%	41	0.2%	-6
Teacher Response Rate %	78.6%	86.8%	73	77.5%	84.1%	70	-2.7%	-3



The graphs below illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards for all subjects in each school district across Illinois. The distributions of these percentages in 2024 and 2025 are captured under the grey and purple curves respectively. The state median is noted for each year as well. The vertical lines illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency each year in your district.

Figure 1. Proficiency Distribution of Illinois Districts - ELA

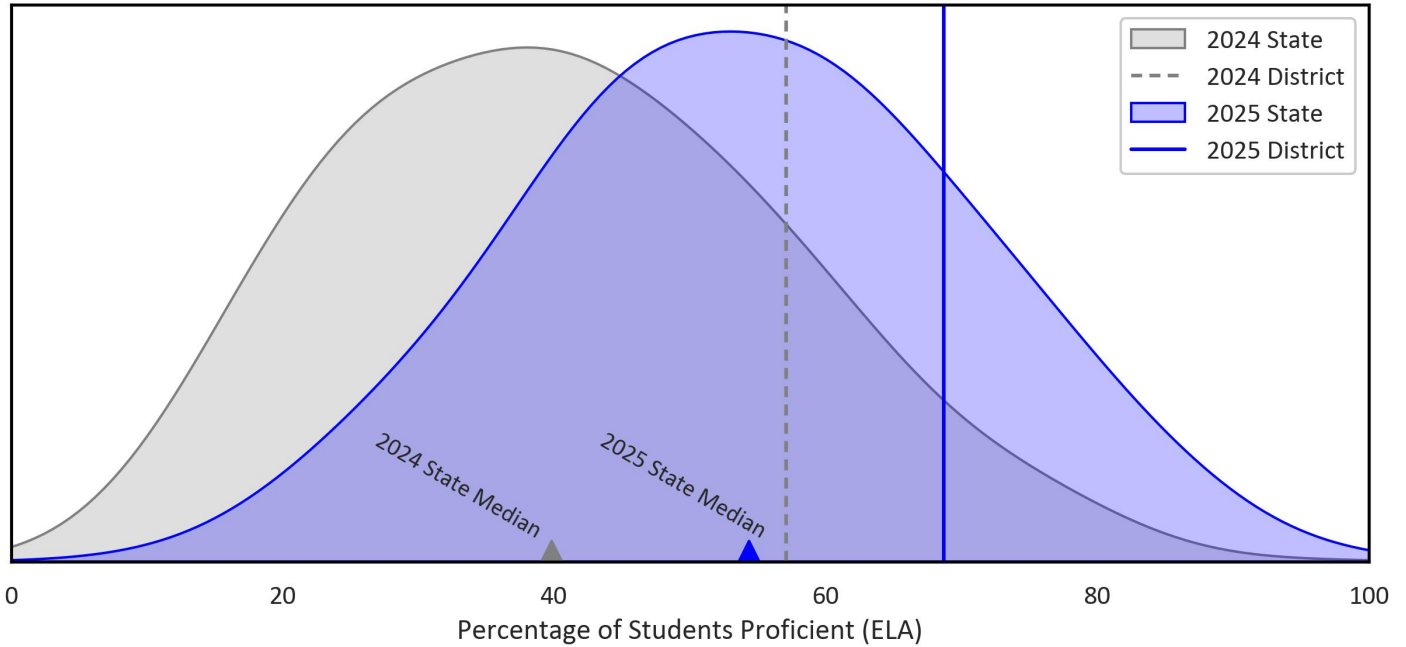


Figure 2. Proficiency Distribution of Illinois Districts - Math

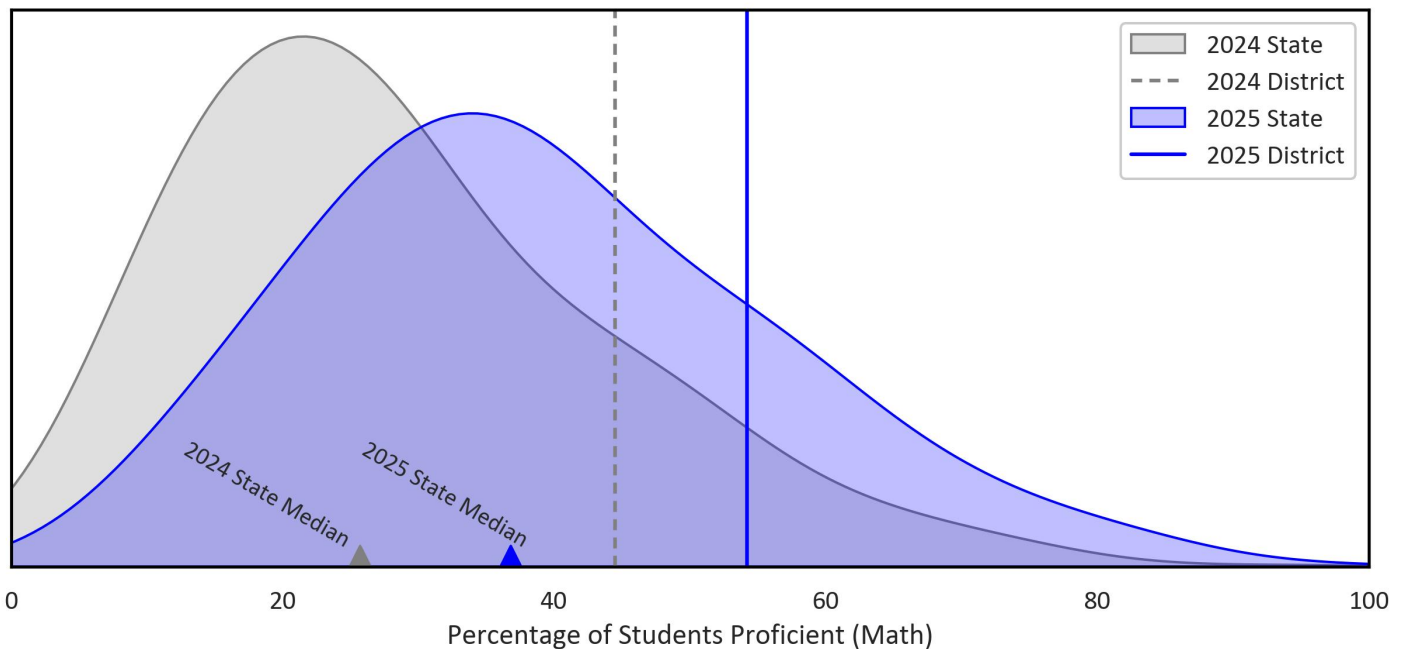
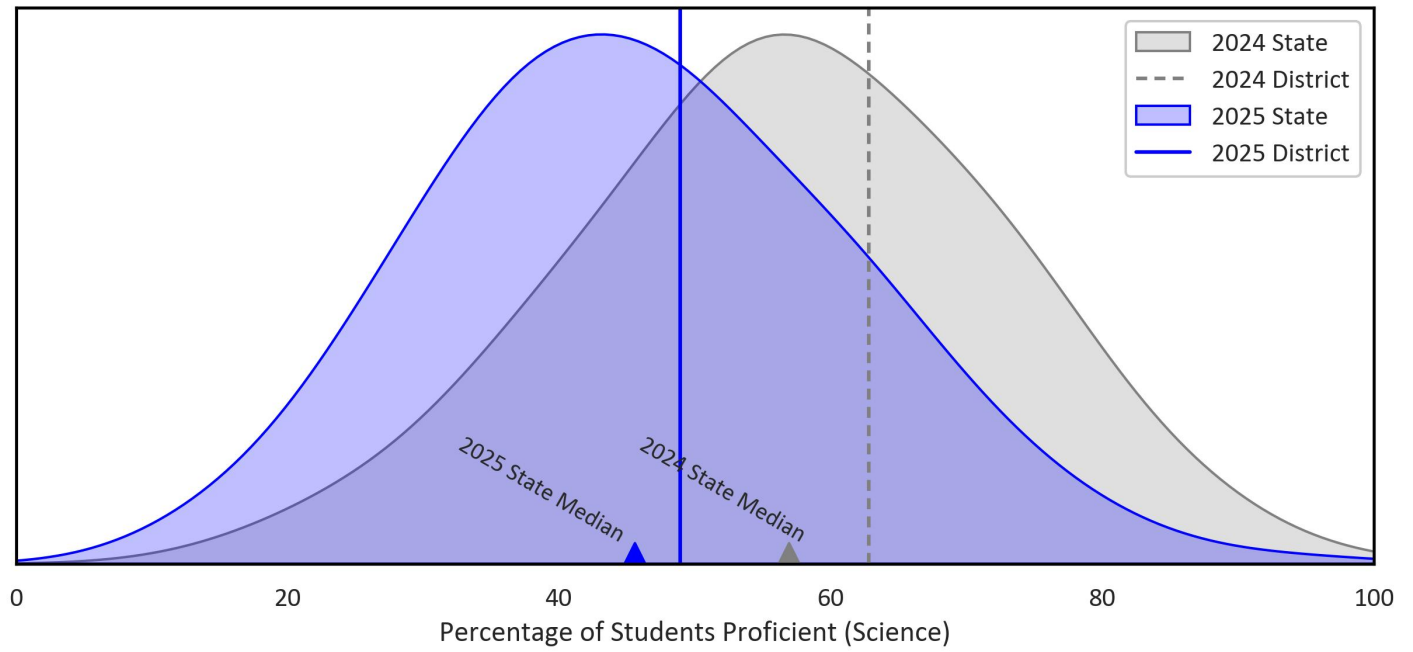


Figure 3. Proficiency Distribution of Illinois Districts - Science



The graphs below depict the percentage of students designated as Low Income against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency in the Spring of 2025 across the district. The proficiency grey dots represent all other school districts in the state, with a trend line included through the center of the distribution meeting proficiency.

Figure 4: Low Income vs. ELA Proficiency 2025

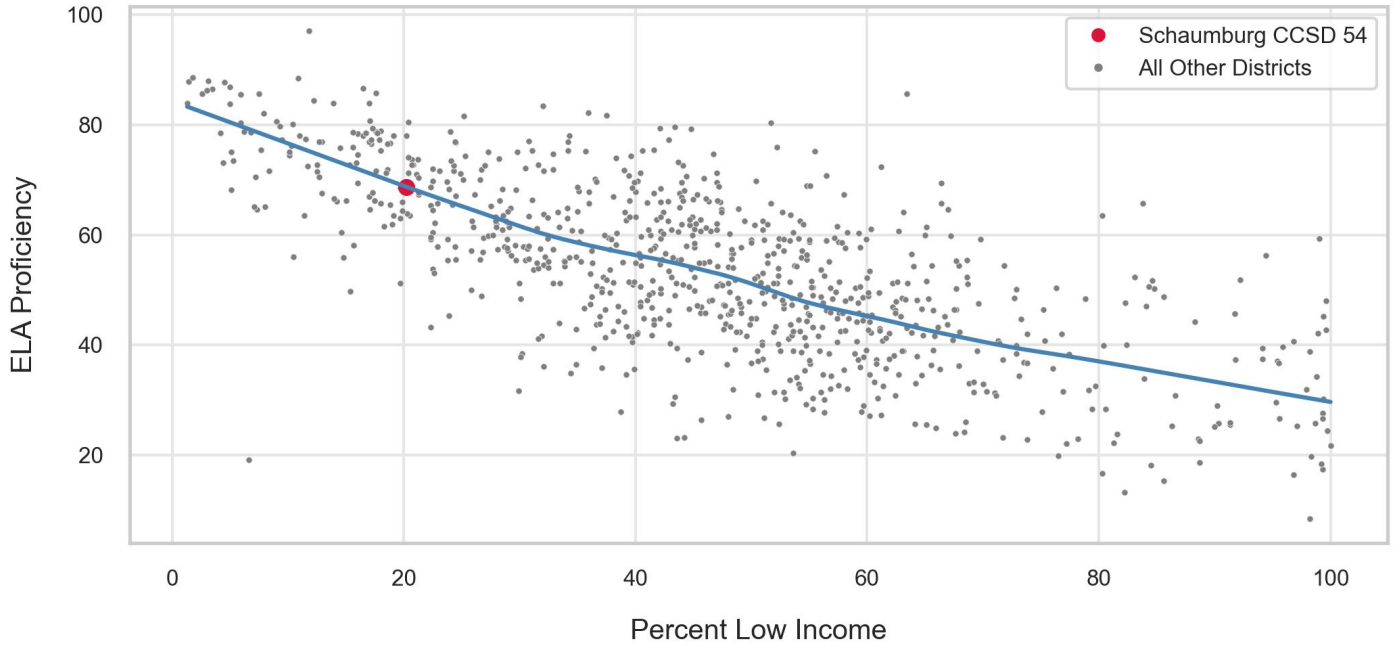


Figure 5: Low Income vs. Math Proficiency 2025

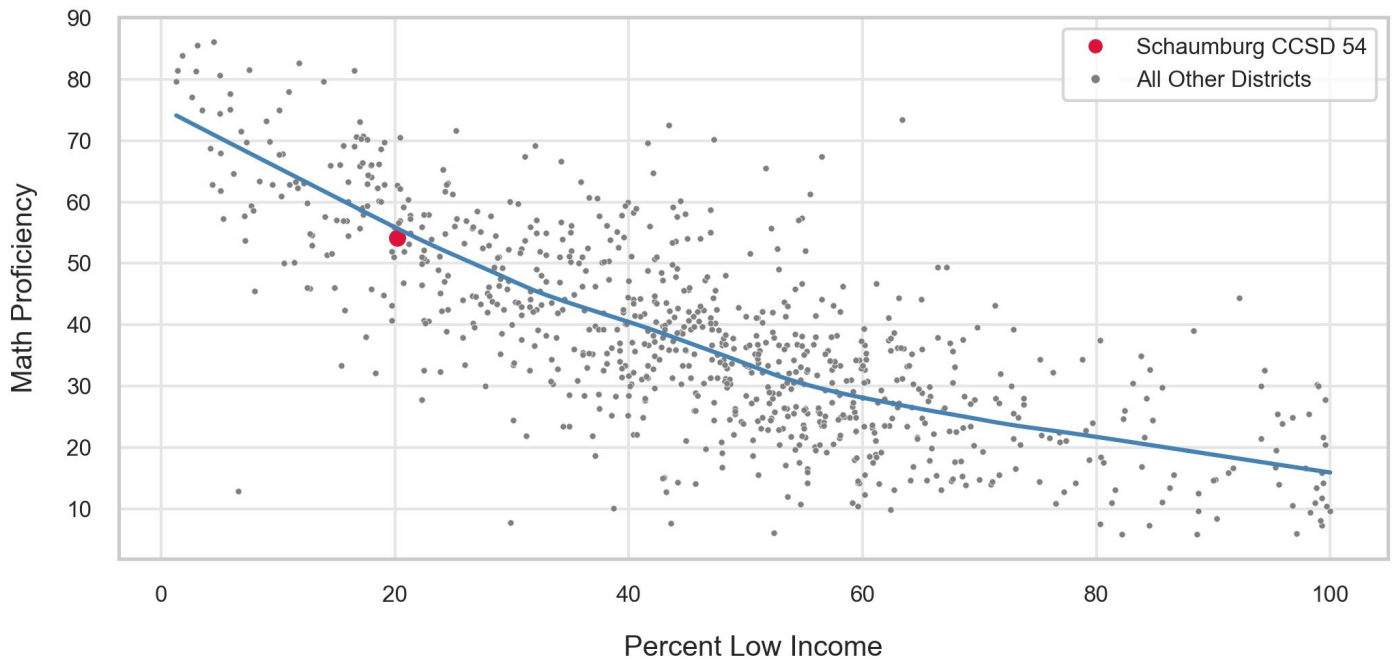


Figure 6: Low Income vs. Science Proficiency 2025

