State of Illinois
Illinois Budgeting for Results Commission

# Pathways to Prosperity: Advancing Education, Workforce Training, and Economic Mobility

## July 29, 2026
## 1:30 – 3:30 pm

## Budgeting for Results Commission 2026 Annual Public Hearing

Join the Illinois Budgeting for Results Commission for an in-depth discussion of how Illinois supports students from lower-income backgrounds in achieving greater economic mobility after high school. The Commission will hear from a two-person panel from the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative with extensive knowledge on this topic. This public hearing will focus on economic mobility, best pathways for students leading to self-sustaining wages, and potential impacts to State of Illinois programs. We hope you will join us.

BFR
ILLINOIS BUDGETING FOR RESULTS

**WebEx Link:**
https://bit.ly/452ht1z

**Password:**
uiEVrEmd653

**Join from a mobile device (attendees only):**
+1-312-535-8110,,28630573927##

**Join by phone:**
+1-312-535-8110
United States Toll (Chicago)

**Meeting Number/Access code:**
2863 057 3927

### Dr. Meg Bates

Dr. Meg Bates is the Director of the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC) at the University of Illinois. IWERC is a research-practice partnership with the State of Illinois that focuses on emergent education issues of interest to policymakers and practitioners.

Since joining IWERC in September 2020, Bates has cultivated close relationships with state government, overseen the production of over 65 research reports, and raised over $8.5 million in grants, contracts, and gifts (in addition to IWERC initial operating gifts of $4.3 million). Bates is an educational psychologist with expertise in STEM education, Ph.D. 2009, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Before coming to IWERC, she spent over a decade at University of Chicago working with schools and teachers on STEM education research, technology, and pedagogy.

### Dr. Sarah Cashdollar

Dr. Sarah Cashdollar is the Associate Director of Research and a Research Scientist at the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC). Her work on identifying factors that predict positive postsecondary education, training, and work outcomes for all youth has been funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, foundations, and private grants. She regularly publishes in scholarly journals on education and adolescent development. As a former elementary teacher, she is dedicated to conducting research that meets the needs of educational practitioners.

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