MEASURE 3: CANDIDATE COMPETENCY AT COMPLETION (R3.3, RA3.4)
Advanced Programs

ILLINOIS CONTENT TEST

BACKGROUND
Beginning in 1988, the Illinois school code has required individuals seeking licensure as teachers, school service personnel, or administrators to pass the Illinois Content Test (ICT) in their specified field. The purpose of the Content Test is to assess educators’ knowledge of the discipline and pedagogy. The ICT are criterion referenced, objective based, and aligned to state standards. The Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS) reports scores to higher education institutions and the Illinois State Board of Education.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS
Successful completion means meeting or exceeding the cut score of 240 to become eligible for a Professional Educator License in the state of Illinois.

QUALITY ASSURANCE
The constructs measured in the Content Area tests are aligned to the 2014 Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and national standards for individual specialty program areas. The Illinois Content Tests were developed by the Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson. Specific information about the validity of this instrument can be found on the Illinois Licensure Testing System website.

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT
At the Unit Accreditation Coordinating Council (UACC) meetings, trends over time and comparisons of data from candidates across programs are analyzed. Areas of strength and areas for improvement are identified. Recommendations are then brought to the appropriate stakeholders to be discussed and implemented. This assessment tool and its data are used by programs as a key assessment when reviewing their programs and their candidates’ progress. While the candidates may take their Content Test at the time of admission into the Teacher Education Program, most candidates take the test during their senior year. The Unit recently implemented a mandatory tutoring session for candidates that fail their Content Area Test two consecutive times before making further attempts.
ADVANCED PROGRAM RESULTS

2019-2021 COMPARISON

In Illinois, candidates are not considered completers until they pass the Illinois Content Test(s) in the field, so these results represent passing scores for SIUC Advanced Program Completers. The Illinois State Board of Education separates data for advanced programs into two groups: administrative and school support personnel. The administrative group includes Principal and Superintendent candidates. The school support personnel group includes School Counselor, School Social Work, and Speech Language Pathologists candidates.

Between 2019 and 2021, fifty advanced program candidates passed their respective Content Test. A comparison of the averages from 2019 to 2021 revealed the principal and school counselor candidates scored slightly higher in 2021 than candidates in 2019. The averages ranged from 12 to 32 points above the cut score.
2019 CYCLE
A comparison of SIUC advanced program candidates’ averages to the state averages revealed the school counseling, school social work, and principal candidates’ average scores were within 5 points of the state average. The speech, language, and pathology candidates’ averages were 10 points above the state average.

A closer review of the administrator candidates’ sub-area averages showed that areas of strength for the 2019 cohort were instructional improvement and school management and legal/ethical guidelines. The administrator candidates’ averages were 10 points and 15 points higher, respectively, than the state average. Whereas the 2019 cohort averages were 22 points lower than the state average on planning, change, and accountability.

The 2019 school support candidates’ sub-area averages were higher than the state averages on five of the eleven elements, with a 24-point differential on the foundations and characteristics element. It is difficult to know from the data
which program is responsible for this higher score. The 2019 school support candidates’ average scores were 13 points below the state average on the following element, *learning community and school social worker*. Candidate averages on the remaining sub-areas were within 6-points of the state average.
2020 CYCLE
ISBE did not provide data for the administrator group for the 2020 academic cycle. Seventeen candidates were represented in this cycle: eight speech, language, pathology candidates and nine school social work candidates. Both program cohorts’ averages were only one point below the state average.

The sub-area averages for the 2020 school support candidates were at or slightly below the state averages in five of the six sub-areas. All averages were within a five-point range of the state average.
2021 CYCLE

For the 2021 cycle, most SIUC advanced program candidates performed above the state average on their Content Tests. Notable differences were in the principal candidates’ averages and the school counselor candidates’ averages; both were 14-points above the state average.

The 2021 administrator candidates’ sub-area averages were 20-points or higher than the state averages in the following areas: a) visionary leader, manage change, contexts of education; b) school management and legal/ethical guidelines. The only area that fell below the state average was in instructional leadership.
The 2021 school support candidates’ averages exceeded state averages in seven of the eleven sub-areas. The greatest differentials were in the following sub-areas: a) *students with communication disorders*; b) *student development across domains*; c) *assessment, instruction, and services*; d) *maintain effective communication*. Similar to the 2019 results, the lowest average among the sub-areas was *learning community & school social worker*.