

# The Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative



When was the last time you saw kids get this excited about learning?



It's not just about elevating scores.  
It's about elevating students.

# Introducing the Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative

The success story that's transforming teachers  
and students throughout Illinois.

No matter how many years you've been teaching, the Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative (SAC) can fundamentally change your entire classroom experience. And it can do so no matter what the grade, the school, or the aptitude of your students. When you enroll in the SAC program, you'll be joining one of the fastest growing and highest performing movements in education today.

**"I have witnessed drastic improvements in my students' overall approach to the learning process as well as in their overall performance."**

– Robert Mason, Principal, Lincoln Elementary School

At this very moment, thousands of teachers in Illinois are embracing SAC methodologies, and experiencing its unique ability to:

- Instill educators with a greater sense of confidence in the classroom
- Accelerate student achievement and motivation
- Create a more powerful overall learning experience for everyone involved

Even the most seasoned professional educators are employing SAC's innovative strategies, tools, and insights to create their own SAC success stories within their schools.



Find out what teachers, principals, and superintendents are saying about SAC by visiting: [www.sac-success.org](http://www.sac-success.org) or by calling your local ROE/ISC office.

## SAC works by empowering teachers and students.

“SAC has helped our teachers become so much more motivated and excited about teaching again.”

– Michael Rux, Teacher, Silas Willard School

“SAC’s student-led conferencing, for example, has simply been better for the kids. They have more confidence and they feel more empowered.”

– Jeremy Ricken, Principal, East View Elementary School

## SAC has proven successful in raising student achievement.

“We have seen student achievement improve in targeted areas. Our initial focus area was mathematics. After curriculum mapping and developing standards-aligned units of study we had 100% of our 3rd grade students meet or exceed standards on the I.S.A.T.”

– Anne Gengenbacher, Principal, Silas Willard School

“With SAC, teachers have become more effective, and I.S.A.T. scores have gone up. It really took our curriculum to the next level.”

– Neil Sappington, Superintendent, Galesburg Unit School District #205



Every year, literally hundreds of new programs flood the market proclaiming revolutionary new teaching methods. They guarantee a quick fix that can transform you into a better teacher with more successful students. Sadly, every year, many of these quick fixes fail.

SAC, however, is anything but a quick fix. SAC offers a rigorously tested, research-based teaching program featuring proven strategies for aligning classroom instruction and assessment to the Illinois Learning Standards.

The program’s inherent strength lies in its ability to involve both teachers and students in the standards process by empowering them to create high-quality classroom assessments together. Research has shown when teachers partner with students to develop clear learning targets, then follow up with classroom lessons structured to achieve these targets, students are more engaged and do better overall.

## SAC earns high marks from principals and teachers.



After adopting SAC, the once-skeptical team at Silas Willard, an elementary school in Galesburg, found themselves really connecting with the principles behind SAC – especially assessment.

In fact, they were so convinced that each and every school program was reevaluated based on their new assessment criteria, and the principles of SAC were adopted district-wide.

The teachers at Silas Willard strongly believe what they learned from SAC made a powerful difference in student learning and helped them align their work to the state standards.

And they were right. In the Spring of 2003, Silas Willard won the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Award for three straight years of student performance in the top 10%.

Make no mistake. Participating in the SAC initiative requires hard work, dedication, and a real commitment of time. But these efforts are repaid in rewards that will last the rest of your career.

“I was able to focus my lesson plans on what was really important, and get rid of those things that weren't really moving my class forward.”

– Susan Crock, Teacher, Silas Willard School

“Usually, once a teacher uses a SAC unit, the kids will ask for it again because they like learning that way.”

– Linda Brissenden, SAC Coach & Trainer

“The learning team model provides a format and structure for productive, insightful discussion among colleagues. This ensures the goals of the SAC initiative are constantly met, while giving the teachers an opportunity for intellectual dialogue and constructive school improvement.”

– Diane Stempinski, Teacher, Bloomington High School



## Here's how the SAC program works.



During their SAC training, educators work together in Learning Teams, studying and implementing the best practices of a standards-led classroom. SAC training helps teachers learn to determine clear and appropriate learning targets based on the state educational standards.

Another unique aspect of SAC is its coaching component. Educational consultants provided by local offices of education meet with the Learning Teams on an ongoing basis to provide support and guidance.

Teachers are also able to enhance their learning through action research in the classroom, where students are deeply involved in the assessment process.

CPDU's, Graduate level credit, and Administrators' Academy Credit are available for educators who take advantage of the SAC program.



“Networking and peer advisory was a tremendous benefit. The team model was highly praised because it afforded teachers the opportunity to learn from each other, which is an opportunity they rarely get.”

– Vince Hughes, Principal, Highland Middle School

## A better approach to assessment.

Admittedly, it takes some getting used to: Teachers involving students in the assessment process. Then, teachers using the results to give students feedback and to adjust classroom instruction. However, in classrooms where this is practiced, students invariably become more engaged in learning, their performance improves, and their confidence grows.

“The assessment piece really changed attitudes. The students became more confident, and felt empowered. They felt they were making progress.”

– Cheryl Lewis, Teacher, Calvin Coolidge Middle School - Peoria Public Schools

“I was very passionate about assessment as a means to improve teaching and learning...

Through a number of staff development activities it naturally became our school improvement work. The teachers embraced it. And the benefits became clear.”

– Rebecca McCabe, Principal, Leal Elementary School



For more information, visit [www.sac-success.org](http://www.sac-success.org)  
or contact your SAC representative



“SAC changed everything!”

– Mary Eyre-Cerkez, Teacher, Silas Willard School



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