



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**9th Annual College Changes Everything[®] (CCE) Conference:
Supporting Student Success from Education to Employment**
July 18, 2019 Tinley Park Convention Center

CHICAGO – When we engage students early in their education and support them through each transition with knowledge, skill development and opportunities, we give them the tools they need to aspire and achieve. That work takes a village—including families, educators, employers, and communities. On Thursday, July 18, 2019, education leaders and administrators, counselors, non-profit and community-based organizations, elected officials and other public sector leaders, students and other professionals will convene at the [9th Annual College Changes Everything[®] \(CCE\) Conference](#) in Tinley Park from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm to discuss best practices, and share ideas and resources to expand student success for each student.

“Developing a diverse, educated and productive workforce here in Illinois is a community responsibility,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission \(ISAC\)](#), the state’s college access and financial aid agency and host of the CCE Conference. “It requires not only budget and resources but true partnerships among K-12, postsecondary institutions, trade schools and employers, and community organizations to engage students and families to define and ultimately achieve success for the individual student.”

“I’m proud that the CCE conference is among the venues where these partnerships are born and nurtured,” said Zarnikow.

The conference keynote address will be delivered by Merita Irby, co-founder and executive vice president of The Forum for Youth Investment and chief architect of The Forum’s signature initiative, Ready by 21[®]. Irby is managing partner of Big Picture Approach Training & Consulting and a coach to state and local partnerships. She has extensive experience conducting studies on community-based urban youth organizations, including directing a multi-site study on school collaboration with youth organizations. Irby is the co-author of *Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth*.

This year’s conference, themed *Expanding Success for All Students—Every Community’s Responsibility*, will include breakout sessions presented by state and national experts and practitioners on topics such as supporting low-income students who face food insecurity and housing instability; reducing remediation and accelerating college success; leveraging community-based partnerships to support career readiness; supporting Illinois’ immigrant populations; addressing the state’s teacher shortage;

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middle-school career exploration; and much more. The preliminary agenda can be viewed at collegechangeseverything.org/2019Agenda.

This year the conference will also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the [Illinois Student Assistance Corps \(ISACorps\)](#), which is among the largest statewide outreach and near-peer mentoring programs in the country, annually serving more than 150,000 students and parents in communities throughout Illinois. For the past decade, the talented and professionally-trained recent college graduates in the ISACorps have been helping students and families navigate the complex process of planning and preparing for postsecondary success—including helping students with college and career exploration, admissions and financial aid.

The CCE conference, which is expected to draw nearly 500 attendees, will be held at the Tinley Park Convention Center in Tinley Park, Illinois on July 18th. The registration fee is \$40. To register or for more information, visit collegechangeseverything.org. Join the conversation on social media by using #CCE4me.

The College Changes Everything Conference is sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission in collaboration with partners: Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois College Access Network, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Advance Illinois, Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University, Generations Serving Generations, ACT Now and Women Employed.

About College Changes Everything

College Changes Everything® (CCE) is a college access movement that recognizes that college can be a life changing experience not only for students, but also for families and communities. In Illinois and across the nation, those who obtain education beyond high school not only see a significant impact on their potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime and obesity rates in their communities. CCE is an essential part of helping Illinois reach its goal of increasing the proportion of adults in the state with high quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025. Find out more and join the conversation at collegechangeseverything.org.

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at isac.org or on [Facebook](#) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](#) and on Instagram @ISACfinaid.

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