



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Rod Blagojevich
Governor

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

February 11, 2008

Dear Parents and Community Members:

The Illinois State Board of Education would like to thank you for all the support you provide your local schools. We would also like to inform you of recent changes to the Illinois State Assessment System that will impact your child.

Each spring, Illinois requires that every 3rd – 8th grade student take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). All students in grade 11 are required to take the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). In previous years, your child may not have taken these tests because he or she is an English Language Learner (ELL) and participated in alternative testing approved for ELLs. However, in order for Illinois to be in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act, all students, including ELL students, must take the ISAT or PSAE. ELL students who have been in the United States for less than one year may be exempted from the reading portion of the test. This change in testing policy will not affect your district's policy regarding promoting students to the next grade in school.

If your child is an ELL who must take the ISAT or the PSAE this spring, he or she might be provided with testing accommodations to be determined by your local district. The accommodations selected should already be used in classroom instruction. These accommodations may include some of the following: extended time, more frequent breaks, taking the test in small groups, reader scripts and audio recordings, scripted test directions written in the native language and use of bilingual glossaries, among others.

We hope you will work closely with your school and principal to help your children do the best that they can do on these tests. Please contact your child's teacher or your school's principal if you would like more information about these tests and the new available accommodations.

The Illinois State Board of Education has long supported Illinois' excellent Bilingual/ESL education programs and we remain committed to them. We currently are working closely with many organizations across the state to make sure that, in the future, we offer the most appropriate tests for all of our students, including those who are learning the English language.

We thank you again for all that you do to support your children and your local school district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Koch".

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education