Illinois English Language Learners Assessment
Advisory Committee (IELLAAC) Meeting
September 7, 2012

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions:

The minutes from the June meeting were read and approved with corrections.

Announcements

The Student Assessment Division of ISBE now has an acting Division Administrator, Mary O’Brian, who was in attendance, but is still seeking someone permanent for the position.

Illinois’ NCLB Waiver has not been completely approved by USDE. The point of disagreement between IL and USDE is the implementation of teacher evaluations. A temporary waiver is in effect while discussions continue. The AYP passing rate is frozen at 85%. The state is hoping to reach a final agreement soon. The waiver would relax the emphasis on standardized test scores and focus on other indicators of growth according to a value table (under development). There will be points awarded to schools and districts for student achievement and progress. Factors would include the learning environment, survey results, attendance, graduation rate, and possibly other things. The state assessment system would be expanded to include all grade levels.

ISBE has hired Dan Long from Tennessee as the PARCC director for Illinois. The development of the consortium’s assessment system has not been smooth and consistent. Many feel that is it behind schedule. The summative assessment is farthest along, but other pieces are also under development.

Illinois is planning to set new cut scores for ISAT. These scores are being mapped backward from performance levels on PSAE to create a more reasonable progression of achievement into high school that will, hopefully, help students better succeed academically. The cuts are significantly higher than the current performance levels and are intended to take effect at the same time as the multi-measure system laid out in the state’s NCLB waiver. If the new system does not take effect for 2013, the state’s AYP rate will move to 92.5%.

The ACCESS testing schedule is now posted online along with the application for modified testing dates. The window is a little later this cycle than in the past, but still allows two weeks between the end of ACCESS testing and the beginning of ISAT.

ACT offers a credential called the National Career Readiness Certificate. Earning it requires taking three tests - the Work Keys Reading for Information, the Work Keys Applied Mathematics, and the Work Keys Locating Information. The first two have been part of PSAE for a long time, but the state is making the third piece available to districts for the 2013 assessment. This will allow students to earn the NCR Certificate by their participation in state testing.
The ASSETS Consortium has begun meeting. So far, it is mostly organizing itself, establishing operating structures, and planning the steps needed to create the next generation of the ACCESS, currently being referred to as ACCESS 2.0. Illinois has a position on the Steering Committee and will keep it for the life of the grant.

Old Business

The committee had recommended, at an earlier meeting, that the state limit opportunities for reclassification out of LEP status to ACCESS administrations of Tier C only. At the June meeting, some concerns arose regarding the wording of the recommendation. It was re-drafted, with the assistance of Irma Snopek, to address those concerns, and then delivered to the state and IACBE. The current reclassification threshold is being re-examined for possible adjustment. If the Tier C requirement is adopted it would be implemented at the same time. The committee spent some time discussing the merits and ramifications of the recommendation, and maintained its support for the change.

A member mentioned that PARCC is forming Educator-Leader Cadres to develop expertise on the CCSS and PARCC and to help facilitate their adoption across the state. The committee was curious as to who is serving on the cadre from the Illinois ELL community.

The committee spent some time discussing the ELL service delivery typology in use by the state, its history, and the problems it presents for studying the effectiveness of the different models. It was felt that a subcommittee should work with DELL to revise the descriptors to establish more uniform understanding and reporting across the state.

A question was asked about access to screener scores in SIS. The committee spent some time discussing the poor availability of scores for transferring students and the inability to track the progress of former students in order to evaluate the program effectiveness. A motion was made that the committee draft some essential questions prior to the ELL Director’s Meeting to discuss with Howard, Josie, and Reyna with the intent that subcommittees be created to address the problems.

New Business

There was some discussion about information to be presented at the ELL Director’s Meeting. A few slides to be shown illustrated that the number of ELLs being tested is growing, the number of districts participating is increasing, and the percent of tested ELLs is decreasing in middle and high school while increasing in K-2.

Also, the Alternate ACCESS was to be announced with the new participation policy. The policy was reviewed by the committee for comment.

Data was presented related to past tier usage on ACCESS along with a flow chart intended to help local providers make better tier selection decisions. It was estimated that about five percent of ELLs are not being testing with the most appropriate tier. It was pointed out that this could
have consequences for AMAO results. The committee reviewed the information and provided feedback regarding the flowchart.

There was some discussion about early childhood data in SIS, WIDA growth targets, and future committee meetings.

The meeting then adjourned.

Attendees (in order of sign-in):
Barry Pedersen
Boon Lee
Mary O’Brien
Francela Lopez
Wilma Valero
Julie Colgrove
Beatrice Reyes-Childress
Rosemarie Meyer
Sandy Anderson
Maria Lozano
Eulalia Valdez
Judith Yturriago
Harriette Herrera
Margo Gottlieb

Thank you for serving.