Illinois State Board of Education Participants:
- Susie Morrison
- Mary O’Brian
- Angela Chamness
- Dan Brown

STRC Members in Attendance:
- Kyle Cole
- Laurie Miller
- Steve Cordogan
- Gene Olsen
- Christy Hild
- Paul Zavitkovsky
- Ciara Mentzer
- Jim Shriner
- Kurt Humphries
- Melissa Taylor
- Dan Cox
- Diane Wolf
- Rebecca Vonderlack- Navarro
- Steve Murphy
- Laurie Miller
- Jean Korder

Meeting commenced at 10:00 AM

Mary O’Brian and Susie Morrison welcomed committee members and thanked them for accepting the invitation to join the group. The importance of the work of the committee was emphasized in light of the rapidly changing landscape of assessment and accountability. Participants were encouraged to communicate around the benefits and challenges of the new assessment systems currently being field tested and scheduled for implementation in the upcoming school year. As well, the group was invited to reflect upon the currently existing assessment systems.

Minutes from the meeting held on December 6, 2012 were reviewed. Jim Shriner was in attendance at the previous meeting and offered some additional insight into the topics...
discussed, including the transition from ISAT to PARCC. The group moved to accept the minutes from the last meeting.

Mary O'Brian described the reconstitution of the current committee to better reflect representation from the entire state. Angela Chamness outlined the charges for the committee including:

- Looking at the content and design of state tests;
- Examining the time and money expended to prepare for and administer tests;
- Considering the collective results of the tests as measured against the stated purposes of those exams;
- Identifying other issues for considerations;
- Making recommendations to the State Superintendent and the General Assembly.

A short discussion of the proposed Senate Bill 3412 was held. This pending assessment bill would update language related to specific assessments and replace it with more generic references consistent with the federal requirements for accountability. The proposed language also clarifies an existing LEP exemption for students new to the country to specify the intent as less than 12 months enrolled in school.

There was discussion around the federal requirements related to ESEA. The law is prescriptive in that we must test every grade level 3-8 in reading in math and at least once in high school in the content areas of ELA and mathematics. Science is outlined by specific grade bands in the federal law resulting in three times over the course of grades 3-12. Since the grade bands do not align with the notion of a dual district, the proposed SB 3412 has been written to comply with federal mandate while preserving grade bands for science testing that do not compromise dual and unit district structures.

The committee discussed the issue of measuring growth in the high school and the need for additional high school assessments to accommodate the measurement of growth. The issue of time and potential issues with a new assessment system were verbalized as concerns related to the implementation of additional assessments in the high school.

Mary O'Brian presented slides outlining PARCC and DLM. Angela and Mary addressed the differences in the design of the assessment systems and the content that they are both designed to measure. Questions were raised about how the performance based and end-of-year PARCC components would be combined to render a final summative rating. This is part of the work that the consortium is engaging around currently.

Mary explained that DLM stands for Dynamic Learning Map, the assessment for the 1% population that is scheduled for implementation next year. She asked for feedback around the implementation and the use of technology in the administration of this assessment.
Members were asked to identify additional items for the agenda. Items for consideration included an update on the PARCC field test, benefits to the new assessment systems, reliability and validity related to performance-based assessment components and comparability between pencil and paper and computer-based assessments, and accommodations.

PARCC Field Test Update:

Mary explained there is an administrator survey and that students are doing a survey. ISBE is developing a plan with a small group to find out about implementation of the field testing. Fourteen states are in the consortium. Of the 14, 12 are field testing. 600 districts in Illinois are participating in field testing. New York is a member of the consortium, but has delayed. There are many states that are undergoing tremendous pressure related to Common Core criticism and issues related to teacher evaluation.

Reliability/Validity and Comparability:

PARCC is using the field test as an opportunity to look not only at reliability and validity of the individual items and the way in which they function across student populations throughout the consortium, but they are also conducting deliberate studies into the comparability of the paper/pencil and computer-based forms. For that reason, classrooms were randomly selected to administer the field test using a paper/pencil form or a computer-based form rather than self-selecting or indicating readiness for one or the other. The results of the field test will help to inform operational administration and will also inform future research.

The committee engaged in a brief exercise where they completed a gallery walk looking at the attributes of content, design, time, money and resources in relation to the following assessments: Illinois Alternate Assessment, PSAE and ISAT, and NAEP, Access and Alternate Access. Participants were asked to think about folks in their situations and how that assessment data is used from that test. One purpose of the activity is to set the stage for learning how we use data in the future. Responses were collected on posters displayed around the room.

Discussions about the usefulness of each of the assessments followed the activity. Participants were most familiar with the ISAT and PSAE and wrote less about NAEP, ACCESS and IAA. Participants responded that these assessments were only administered to a sub-set of their students typically and so many were not as familiar unless they worked directly with these populations or (in the case of NAEP) had been involved with administration or data analysis.
Generally, the member expressed that the ISAT and PSAE were most useful for accountability purposes, but didn’t provide much information to guide instruction. The ACCESS test was identified as providing useful information for the population of students for whom it was intended to measure. Others commented that administrators do not often have a heavy investment in tests like the ACCESS or IAA because they may or may not have the background knowledge related to these student populations or an understanding of the assessment instrument.

The lack of local feedback with NAEP was cited as a reason why students may not engage and why schools may not view the data as relevant. The resources associated with NAEP were mentioned as a good source of assessment literacy, however. The suggestion was made that NAEP resources may be useful for professional development and to drive instruction, but others felt that the lack of individual results and a widespread understanding of the test made the results feel too distant and unusable.

The discussion moved into a discussion related to the many purposes of assessment. Mary O’Brien presented slides related to ISBE’s visioning around a balanced assessment system. The state’s role in this system is limited to the summative portion in terms of the mandated piece. The only other role that the state can play is to provide professional development and support around balanced assessment.

Members discussed the desire to move toward a more balanced approach and also identified critical challenges including an overemphasis on summative assessments interfering with the other two tiers, the trend toward outsourcing formative assessment rather than building internal capacity to assess, lack of resources, appropriate use of assessments and the data, assessing low-level vs. high-level skills, and emphasizing the standards.

**ACT/PARCC**

The committee engaged in discussion regarding ACT and PARCC. Challenges related to ACT focused on the fact that ACT is currently integrated into the state required high school accountability exam and it is a college-entrance exam. There were comments related to the whether or not this practice was providing equity of access to college and whether a discussion of equity should also contemplate whether students entering college had a need for remedial coursework.

Historical discussions were referenced, including the initial introduction of ACT into the current system as a point of reference related to the resistance currently being voiced around the notion of removing the test from the state system. The issue of student motivation for PARCC vs. ACT was raised with members considering whether students would feel motivated to take an assessment unrelated to their personal gain.

Issues related to the quality of ACT vs. the unknown quality of PARCC were debated. There is a sentiment by many high schools that ACT is a known product and PARCC is
a yet-to-be known product. They are hesitant to abandon what they have relied upon for a number of years, especially because it is a product with which their community is familiar. There is a fear that PARCC may under-deliver. Several members rejected this notion describing the quality of ACT as “good-enough” and arguing that students deserve something better than “good-enough”.

Testing time

One committee member outlined his local testing schedule which included a total of 23 testing days between local and state testing. This prompted discussion about the need to help districts carefully audit and determine which assessments are most fruitful. Members reiterated how difficult the transition period is and how the climate of over-testing in some places and the perception in others was causing a heightened sense of anxiety. Mary reminded the committee that in relation to PARCC that a testing window, while 4 weeks in length, was not meant to imply that a student would engage in four weeks of testing rather that students could be tested any time during a period of four weeks to allow for maximum flexibility.

Messaging/Communication

The issues related to timing of assessments, multiple assessments, and Common Core standards as they relate to the assessments were identified by members as hot-button issues that need to be addressed with better communication. Outreach to specific stakeholder groups including ELs was suggested. Susie Morrison addressed several specific questions related to the waiver and how growth may be calculated moving forward. While there are still a number of unknowns, the 2014-2015 assessments will provide baseline data.

The group also discussed how assessments relate to teacher evaluation and what steps districts are taking to create systems for measuring student growth in teacher evaluation. Members suggested that all of this happening at once was too much and that something needed to be taken off of the plates of teachers and administrators. A slowed timeline in approaching student growth in teacher evaluation for stakes was suggested by several committee members.

PARCC Educator Leadership Cadre and PARCC Optional Assessments

Gene, Jean and Christy shared their experiences as members of the PARCC ELC and also provided additional information about the design of PARCC and various resources available to support the understanding of the assessment and the implementation of instruction aligned to the standards and the frameworks related to the assessment. They referenced the evidence tables and explained the concept of evidence-based design with caveats about over-reliance on the evidence tables. They also described some of the upcoming work that is intended around a suite of assessments to serve as
through-course measures (diagnostic, formative, interim) across a span of grade levels including K-2.

Transition Planning:

Draft transition plan was passed out.

There was a discussion of ACT and whether or not any optional administration should be at the discretion of a district or an individual student. Issues related to school-based versus National testing site administration were discussed.

A question was posed regarding 8th grade math options and PARCC testing. A brief discussion was held, but no decisions have been made at this time. More information will be shared as it is made available.

Reimbursement and substitute teacher forms were passed out.

The committee moved to elect co-chairs. The current legislation requires a parent as a chair. The parent was not present for this meeting.

Jim Shriner was elected co-chair. The parent co-chair will be elected (appointed?) in a future meeting.

Focus and feedback on technology for future assessments is needed. Costs related to that issue were brought up – especially infrastructure. A handout was provided and technology was placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

June 19 was chosen as the next meeting date starting at 10:30 to around 3.

Springfield will be the next meeting site. The following meeting will be in Bloomington.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40.