Agenda Topic: Standards Implementation

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Purpose of Agenda Item:

- To update members of the State Board on the progress of implementing the Illinois Learning Standards.
- To inform members of the State Board of alignment efforts within the Education Center in implementing the Illinois Learning Standards.

Expected Outcomes:

Board members will understand how ISBE priorities are connected to implement the Illinois Learning Standards.

Background Information:

Since the adoption of the Illinois Learning Standards in 1997, ISBE staff and external partners have initiated a variety of activities to assist local school districts with the implementation of the Standards. The implementation projects focus on aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Illinois Learning Standards. This process of alignment takes considerable amounts of time and energy.

DeStephano and Pristine conducted an external evaluation focusing on the extent to which the Illinois Learning Standards are implemented. They presented an interim report to the State Board of Education at its September 2000 meeting. The findings from this report are based on a Qualitative Study of four schools districts and a Survey of Practitioners completed by approximately 2000 teachers, 120 building principals, and superintendents. The second year findings indicate the following:

- Administrators at both the district and school levels must clearly understand how standards implementation occurs.
• Evidence suggests that implementation efforts have increased during the second year of the study.

• Professional and curriculum development are the most implemented dimensions of the Illinois Learning Standards.

• Elementary schools exhibit more consistent levels of implementation than high schools.

• Community and stakeholder involvement in standards implementation is exceedingly low at both elementary and high school levels.

• With only one year of ISAT data available, it is not possible to determine the relationship between ISAT performance and the Illinois Learning Standards.

Based on the report of DeStephano and Pristine, the need for additional information and consistent support to local school districts becomes evident. The Education Center began to identify a process to unify the fiscal and human resources of the agency dedicated to assist local districts in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to the Illinois Learning Standards. In addition, the products and staff development activities of the early childhood, reading and mathematics initiatives all focus on the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Illinois Learning Standards. Listed below are examples of implementation efforts:

1. **Standards Aligned Classroom Project.**

The Illinois State Board of Education and the ROEs designed the Standards Aligned Classroom Project, a statewide professional development system. This project began with the 2001 school year. The purpose of this project was to provide districts with a process of aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment with the Illinois Learning Standards. This process provides multiple opportunities for teachers to discuss, practice and model standards implementation. In the first year of the project, 254 school-based teams representing 1,400 teachers and administrators and all 48 ROEs participated in the initiative. Preliminary information suggests that the initiative is having impact on the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices of the participating districts.

Following this first year implementation phase of the project, independent researchers will conduct an extensive evaluation. The results of the evaluation will identify the effects of the Standards Aligned Classroom Project. The Illinois State Board of Education will receive findings of the research study.
2. **Development of Classroom Videos**

Many administrators and teachers need to see first hand how standards are aligned with curriculum and instruction. For this purpose, the LAQA school districts are developing a series of demonstration videotapes. The tapes will highlight classroom teachers working with students in reading and writing showing how instruction is aligned to the standards. They also discuss their experiences in moving toward a standards based classroom. The videotapes will be ready for distribution to districts during the next school year.

3. **Interactive CD Project: Standards Aligned Performance Assessment**

Staff members of the Assessment Division are working to develop a series of interactive CDs based on the scoring rubrics used in writing, reading and mathematics for the ISAT. The CDs will provide lessons by instructors from across the state, as well as student work samples for use in teacher training. The CDs will be available the summer of 2001 and the ROEs will provide training.

4. **Standards Implementation through Performance Descriptors/Assessments**

The Division of Learning Standards is on schedule with the development of the performance standards, classroom assessments and student work examples for first through eighth grade, as well as two levels of high school work. Approximately 280 teachers, representative of all regions of the state, are field-testing classroom assessments for half of the performance standards in all seven learning areas. After the teachers test these 550 assessments, they will submit student-work samples. In June 2001, these teachers will evaluate all the submitted student-work samples and identify a performance exemplar at the “meets” and “exceeds” levels for each classroom assessment tested. These performance standards, classroom assessments and student work samples will be available to all schools in August 2001. This development cycle will repeat in the fall of 2001 to complete the second half of the performance standards, classroom assessments and student work samples.

5. **System of Support for Standards Implementation**

When districts and schools do not have alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment with the standards their students are less likely to perform well on state assessments. The results of low test scores propel schools into the system of support. In turn, the districts require assistance in aligning their curriculum and instruction with the standards. Our effort to more broadly conceptualize the system of support has served as a model for the work being done to promote standards implementation.
In December, staff presented to the State Board a broader conceptualization of the system of support. Under this expanded definition, work being done to provide support to low performing schools is coordinated to:

1. Ensure that support is tailored to the needs of districts and schools; and
2. Reach the largest number of schools possible by leveraging state and federal dollars to minimize duplication and remove gaps in the system.

Among our accomplishments in the system of support are:

- Bringing to the attention of identified districts specific improvement targets for eligible schools based on the numbers of students meeting standards;
- Requiring all districts eligible for the system of support to devote the equivalent of 10% of their Title I allocation for eligible schools to professional development activities that align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to standards implementation;
- Promoting and making available to districts a series of interventions tied to the Illinois Learning Standards such as Comprehensive School Reform and Reading Excellence; and
- Developing performance agreements with districts that have schools identified as Title I School Improvement eligible for four years.

6. Standards Implementation across the system via Education to Careers

The Illinois Learning Standards provide the foundation for the Education-to-Careers initiative. Through this initiative teachers are afforded the opportunity to develop lesson plans that are aligned to the standards and based on real world applications and problem solving. The real world applications come from experience teachers have in the private sector. Teachers report that students exposed to this type of instruction are more engaged learners.

7. Performance Descriptors for PSAE Standards Implementation

Over the past four months, staff from ISBE and ACT, as well as Illinois teachers, have worked individually and in groups to produce definitions of the four performance levels in each of the PSAE academic subjects. Currently, the ACT Assessment and the ACT Work Keys comprise most of the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) tests. ACT has conducted the standard setting for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Personnel at ACT have agreed, as part of the PSAE contract, to design and facilitate the PSAE standard setting process with the cooperation and assistance of ISBE and Illinois teachers. ACT has designed a plan for the PSAE standard setting process.
Superintendent’s Recommendations:

- To endorse and support the work and direction of the Education Center in implementing the Illinois Learning Standards in a manner that is aligned to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- To continue to provide ISBE with resources to support the implementation of Illinois Learning Standards in all districts in the state.

- To integrate all agency curriculum projects with the implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards.

- To support the PSAE descriptors and the standards setting process.

Next Steps:

- Coordination of the implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards across the agency and the alignment of the Illinois Learning Standards with the School Designation System, Quality Assurance, and System of Support.

- Evaluation of the Standards Aligned Classroom Project for its effectiveness in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Illinois Learning Standards.

- Implementation of a staff development program for the materials from the LAQA videotapes and the CD project from the Assessment and Standards Divisions.

- Identification of additional financial support for the Standards Aligned Classroom Project by the ROEs and other implementation projects.