TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
Lynne Haefele Curry, Director

Agenda Topic: Action Item: 
No Child Left Behind
Assessment and Accountability Task Force
Recommendations: Illinois Alternative Assessment

Materials: Task Force Motion approved December 10, 2002

Staff Contact(s): Gail Lieberman
Carmen Chapman Pfeiffer

Purpose of Agenda Item

To present the recommendations of the Assessment and Accountability Task Force regarding improvements to the Illinois Alternative Assessment for Board approval.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item

The Board will adopt the Task Force recommendation.

Background Information

Both the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) require that students with disabilities be assessed in an appropriate manner. For students in Illinois who are unable to take ISAT or PSAE, even with accommodations, the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) provides a measurement tool. Begun in 2001, the IAA has come under heavy criticism from educators, largely because of the many hours required to complete the documentation. A second concern is that some components of the portfolio were viewed both as assessing the student’s instructional programs and not the student, and evaluating the teacher rather than the student.

An IAA subcommittee of the Task Force met on December 6, 2002 to review the range of concerns submitted through the five public hearings, emails/letters, and feedback on the draft assessment proposal of November 6, 2002. Their deliberations resulted in a
motion to modify the IAA for the 2002-03 school year and beyond, pending the
development of a long-range plan for assessing students with disabilities.

The motion is attached to this item. It seeks to moderate the labor intensity of the IAA
while maintaining the critical student-related assessment data over time.

**Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and
Communications**

**Policy Implications**
The proposed modifications to the IAA will maintain compliance with IDEA and with
NCLB.

**Budget Implications**
The proposal will require modifications to the current contract with Measured Progress,
Inc. However, these changes will not increase the contract costs. Locally, many hours
of teacher time will be saved if the proposed changes are adopted.

**Legislative Action**
None required.

**Communication**
The agency will post the changes on the website and specifically contact
superintendents and special education directors. Task Force members will
communicate the changes to their constituent groups.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Board should adopt the Task Force recommendations regarding modifications to
the Illinois Alternative Assessment.

**Next Steps**

- notify districts and special educators
- modify relevant contracts
MOTION ADOPTED BY THE ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE
December 10, 2002

... that the IAA be modified for 2002-03 and used in the modified version until a long-
term strategy for an alternative assessment can be put into place.

- Use only “student progress” and “link to standards” areas of the current rubric
  (and not the “multiple settings,” etc.). These are the only two areas of the rubric
  that will be “counted” in the scoring process as of 2003.

- Inform teachers again that the introduction portion of the IAA doesn’t count in the
  scoring, to be succinct in its preparation, and most assuredly don’t include
  information on program or eligibility.

- Use two reporting periods rather than three for 2002-03, i.e., beginning of the
  school year through November 15, 2002, and from December 2002 forward until
  April 5, 2003. This will show growth in terms of the student and require two
  rather than the three currently required reporting periods.

- Use only certified teachers in the scoring period at the end of 2002-03.

- In the scoring process, emphasize to the contractor to score the portfolios as
  they come in, and do not relate a given portfolio to program or eligibility.

Further, these recommendations need to be communicated to the field, carefully,
thoughtfully and quickly. The rationale for change, the needs expressed from the field
during the hearing and meeting process, and the improvement aspect all need to be
expressed appropriately.