Pros and Cons of Various Actions

Board action on the recommended passing scores is needed so that individuals can take the tests and determine whether they meet the NCLB qualification. This will facilitate district employment decisions.

Since the AAS degree is not yet in place, delay in making a decision on passing scores for the two paraprofessional tests will limit (at least temporarily) the options available to paraprofessional candidates to those in the law.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The State Board should approve the use of the WorkKeys tests for assessment of paraprofessional educators, with the expectation that, to establish NCLB qualifications, it will be used in conjunction with either the ACT Instructional Support Inventory (pending Board review of that classroom observation instrument) or a locally-developed observation instrument that meets the State Board guidelines for local assessments.

The State Board should approve the following minimum score levels for the ACT WorkKeys tests for paraprofessional educators in Illinois:

- Applied Mathematics 4
- Reading for Information 4
- Writing 3 (Corrected)

The State Board should approve a minimum scaled score of 460 for the ETS ParaPro Assessment. This represents two standard errors of measurement from the minimum scaled score of 467 that was developed by the advisory panel.

Next Steps

The next steps will include, but not be limited to:
- Communication to the field;
- Provision of test preparation opportunities;
- Implementation of testing, test preparation, and the AAS program; and
- Board review of the ACT Instructional Support Inventory.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first step in conducting this occupational profile was to perform an analysis to develop a Final Task List showing the critical tasks of the Illinois Para Educator's occupation. To begin the task analysis for this occupation, the analyst first developed an Initial Task List using the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, other Para Educator's (SMEs) occupation descriptions, and information gathered from the Illinois Board of Education. The analyst then met with the SME group to tailor this Initial Task List to make sure that the resulting Final Task List would accurately and completely describe their occupation.

A skill analysis was conducted to identify the on-the-job behaviors associated with each WorkKeys skill. The analyst gave each SME a copy of the skill definitions, read the definitions aloud, and then answered any questions the SMEs had regarding the skills. Once the SMEs understood the definition of a WorkKeys skill and had determined its relevance to the occupation, they independently identified the tasks on the Final Task List that require that skill. Using their list of tasks that require the skill, the SMEs identified the work behaviors that specifically use that skill.

The analyst then presented detailed descriptions of the WorkKeys skill levels to the SMEs. These descriptions include examples of problems or situations employees deal with at each level. The occupation profiler sought to bring the group to a consensus regarding the skill levels required at occupation entry and for effective performance. Following the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978), WorkKeys defines occupation entry as an employee's first day on the occupation. Entry-level skill requirements are reported here as recommended cutoff scores on the WorkKeys assessments. Effective performance is when an employee can perform competently without continuous supervision and usually this level is reached after some job experience and training.
Next the analyst presented the definition of skill profiled along with specific examples of each level contained in the three skills profiled. After reviewing the examples and discussing them in relation to the Final Task List and specific skills required by Illinois Para Educators tasks, the SMEs came to a consensus on the skills levels required to perform their job.

### WorkKeys Skill Levels Needed for the Illinois Para Educator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applied Mathematics</th>
<th>Reading For Information</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adequate to Do the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Desirable With Experience &amp; Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final step in the process was to have the Para Educators rank these skills in importance. Reading was ranked number one, Math number two and Writing number three.

*For additional information and detail, please refer to the following profile report*

### PROFILE REPORT

**Illinois Para Educator Occupation Task Analysis**—The first step in conducting this occupational profile was to perform an analysis to develop a Final Task List showing the critical tasks of the Illinois Para Educator's occupation. To begin the task analysis for this occupation, the analyst first developed an Initial Task List using the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, other
Para Educator’s (SMEs) occupation descriptions, and information gathered from the Illinois Board of Education. The analyst then met with the SME group to tailor this Initial Task List to make sure that the resulting Final Task List would accurately and completely describe their occupation. The SMEs (Illinois Para Educators) deleted any task statements they did not consider critical, revised some tasks, and added others they considered critical to their occupation. Then they evaluated each task in terms of its Importance and the Time they spend on that task relative to the time they spend on other tasks (Relative Time Spent). The average Importance rating for each task was multiplied by the average Relative Time Spent rating for each task to produce the Criticality rating for each task. These ratings represent aggregate information rather than information reached through consensus of the SMEs. The criticality information is used to rank order the task statements, with the most critical tasks placed at the beginning of the list. Each SME group reviewed its list and confirmed that all of the tasks on it were critical to the performance of their occupation. The resulting Final Tasks List, with the tasks listed in order of Criticality, can be found in the Appendix – Exhibit B.

This particular profile was conducted in Springfield Illinois on February 20, 2003. Seven subject matter experts (SME’s) and one member of the State Board of Education attended the session. Originally, we had planned to have nine Para Educators as subject matter experts but we had two cancel their attendance, at the last minute. The attendees represented a broad range of geographies, school districts, experiences and grade levels. The attendees represented Para Educators who presently worked in or who have worked in Kindergarten, Special Education, Computer Labs, Office Support, Elementary School, Middle School and High School. In their present or past job functions, these SME’S had applied all three skills that were profiled. The attendees represented about ninety-nine years of experience and were diligent about contributing to the profile results. During the session, it became apparent that the attendees had worked at different job tasks and different grade levels within their district. They were asked if this was a common practice. They informed me that many Para Educators could be transferred to different assignments from one year to the next. In some cases, they may perform multiple tasks and grade assignments within the same year. Therefore, the attendees felt that the Illinois profile should reflect the reading, math and writing skills needed to work within the system as a Para Educator capable of working at different grade levels and with different curriculum.
During the profile, the Federal Standards of two-year equivalency continued to crop up and cause concern. The attendees worried about losing colleagues who could not afford the time or the resources to go back to college and take multiple programs to certify. They were anxious to know whether the WorkKeys assessment could be used to replace the need to attend college classes. They were especially interested in the back-end internet interventions offered at the Illinois ACT Centers and other Illinois locations that could be used to upgrade Para Educators who had a skill gap. These interventions would be far less time consuming and costly for the Para Educator to upgrade their skills.

**Skill Analysis.** A skill analysis was conducted to identify the on-the-occupation behaviors associated with each WorkKeys skill as it is used on the occupation. The analyst gave each SME a copy of the skill definitions, read the definitions aloud, and then answered any questions the SMEs had regarding the skills. Once the SMEs understood the definition of a WorkKeys skill and had determined its relevance to the occupation, they independently identified the tasks on the Final Task List that require that skill. Using their list of tasks that require the skill, the SMEs identified the work behaviors that specifically use that skill.

The analyst then presented detailed descriptions of the WorkKeys skill levels to the SMEs. These descriptions include examples of problems or situations employees deal with at each level. The occupation profiler sought to bring the group to a consensus regarding the skill levels required at occupation entry and for effective performance. Following the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* (1978), WorkKeys defines occupation entry as an employee’s first day on the occupation. Entry-level skill requirements are reported here as recommended cutoff scores on the WorkKeys assessments. Effective performance is when an employee can perform competently without continuous supervision and usually this level is reached after some job experience and training.

The purpose of this particular occupational profile was to assess the required skill levels in Reading, Math and Writing required to perform the job tasks in the Illinois Para Educator’s profession. Each skill was profiled individually and the following describe the results.
**READING** - was the first skill profiled. The Reading Skill definition was read, distributed and then discussed with the Para Educator. This was to make sure they understood the skill definition. Then, the final list and skill-rating sheet was given to each Para Educator. The attendees were asked to look at each skill on the final task list and indicated the ones that required the reading skill. The attendees identified many of the most critical skills as those that would require reading. In fact, the attendees agreed that the majority of the first ten critical tasks on the final task list would require a reading skill. For example, three attendees identified all of the top ten tasks as those that would require a reading skill. The other four attendees identified the majority of the top ten tasks as those that would require a reading skill.

Once the skills requiring reading had been identified, the analyst led a group discussion about the various kinds of materials that needed to be read to function as an Illinois Para Educator. The attendees mentioned the following as reading materials:

- Grade Instruction Booklets
- Textbooks ranging from Kindergarten – K12
- Study Guides with a wide range of reading levels
- Teacher’s Instruction Manuals
- School Handbooks
- Individual Education Plans – directions and documents about IEP
- Special Education materials containing jargon
- Curriculum Materials in various subjects and different grade levels
- Science Projects in Middle and High School**
- Instructions on administering tests – i.e. PSAT**
- Teacher’s emails**
- Instructions for food preparation**
- Laboratory Safety Instructions**
- Machine operating instructions**
- Software package instructions**
The attendees were then read the level three reading skill and were questioned to make sure they understood the level explanation. Once the analyst felt they understood, he showed the attendees examples of level #3 reading and discussed the level characteristics. The attendees were in complete agreement that this level was not high enough to read many of the materials required in the Illinois Para Educator's profession. Next, following the same process, we covered reading level #4. The analyst pointed out the differences of level #3 and showed examples of level four. After much discussion, the attendees agreed the level four reading would be adequate to read the majority of documents required in their occupation. Their decision was based on the fact that most of their reading materials matched the characteristics in level four – i.e.

- More information then required in level three
- Several steps may be included in their reading materials
- The vocabulary was intermediate
- Paragraphs were only slightly complex
- The materials were straightforward and they did not have to read between the lines to get an understanding
- They were not required to apply what they read to other situations

However, they were also adamant about the fact that level four was not a high enough reading level for some of the materials required by certain tasks required of the Para Educator. For example, they pointed out that working in middle or high school level science would require a higher reading level. The previous list of reading materials that has two stars (***) is the materials the attendees thought would require a higher reading level.

Therefore, following the same process outlined in covering skill level #3 and #4, we covered level #5 reading skill and discussed the examples. After much discussion the attendees agreed that level five was needed to read the above list with two stars (***) Their rationale was that these items often had compound sentences, technical jargon, moderately complex paragraphs, conditionals and applications to other similar situations.

Based on this finding, we covered #6 reading level. After reading and explaining this level, the attendees were shown examples of level six reading. The level was discussed and there was
consensus that this was too high. Documentation of the participants skill level decisions were indicated on a skill-rating sheet that is on file.

Therefore, the final conclusion was that level #4 reading skill was adequate for the entry level Para Educator and would allow them to work in the majority of programs and read most required materials. However, for an Illinois Para Educator to be capable of working with multiple curriculums and at multiple grade levels, they should upgrade the reading skill to level #5. We discussed these levels at some length and it was determined that level #4 would be an entry level requirement and level #5 would be the effective level requirement.

The attendees also thought that a school district should be aware of these levels and plan on having a percentage of their Para Educator's with level #5 reading skill. This would allow them to have a population that was able to work from kindergarten through high school and assist with all curriculums.

**MATH** was the next skill profile. The analyst passed out read and discussed the Math Skill definition. After insuring that the attendees understood, the final task list and skill-rating sheet were handed out. The attendees again were asked to identify the tasks that would require the math skill. Here again there was a unanimous consensus that many of the critical tasks required this skill. Many of the top ten critical tasks could apply to multiple curriculums including math. The attendees indicated on their final task list which tasks required math. The analyst directed a discussion and identified examples of how the Illinois Para Educator use math in their daily job requirements. Here are some of those examples:

- Counting and handing out treats to students
- Figuring grades and averaging scores
- Keeping daily attendance and figuring the per cent of time a student missed
- Figuring actual enrollment - actual versus # of days
- Talley Marks - how many times a student performs a task within a given amount of time
• Documenting the percentage of goals a student accomplishes
• Breaking down periods into segments for different activities
• Assisting elementary students with graph assignments
• Figuring the percentage of times a student succeeds and fails at assigned tasks
• Measuring windows and bulletin boards for displays
• Using ratios in scheduling
• Putting together class materials and packages requires – per student, per period, per color, per page count
• Looking at percentage enlargement on copying machines
• Money exchange averages
• Math required for shopping and checking account exercises

In addition to these specific examples, the majority of the attendees chose the following tasks as requiring Math – #’s -3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18, 21 and 22.

Now that the attendees had chosen the tasks that required math, we turned to the various math skill levels. The math #3 skill level definition was handed out, read and discussed. Once the attendees assured the analyst that they understood the level, examples of level three were shown to the participants. After reviewing this level for a very short while, the participants were unanimous in their opinion that level three was not adequate for many of the tasks required in their profession. For example, they sited that many of their tasks required more then a single step operation, thus eliminating this level. In addition they sited the need to identify mistakes in student math problems and assist them in correcting them. Also, several of their tasks and correcting student problems often required them to calculate percentages and averages. They rated level three as too low on their skill-rating sheet.

Since level three was eliminated, the analyst handed out, read and discussed level #4 math. Once the analyst was certain the attendees had an understanding of the skill level, examples of level four were shown and discussed. The attendees were asked to view the level #4 math definition
and characteristics against the final tasks and the specific list of tasks they had previously identified requiring math.

After discussing this level and having a variety of disagreements, the attendees agreed that this level was appropriate for their profession and indicated this on their skill-rating sheet. They identified four characteristics in level four that had particular significance in many of their Illinois Para Educators tasks. One characteristic was that the information to solve problems was not always provided in the order needed and they had to reorder it. The second characteristic was that some of the problems they encountered required more than one-step of logic. The third was that they were required to calculate averages. The fourth they were required to calculate percentages. To make certain level #4 was appropriate and that no higher level of math was required level #5 math was handed out, read and discussed. Once there was an understanding of this level definition, the Para Educators discussed examples/characteristics they were shown. The attendees reached a consensus that this level was higher then required. They also suggested in the few extraordinary situations that required this level math, they could go to the teacher for assistance. They felt that these situations were so few that this would not place a burden on the teacher’s time. The use of formulas, algebra and calculating conversions were too few to warrant this level as being appropriate. Therefore, they indicted that this level was too high on their skill-rating sheet.

Therefore, the final consensus was that level #4 math skill was appropriate for their occupation.

WRITING - was the final skill profiled. Since ACT has a Writing Assessment and a Business Writing Assessment, we needed to decide which of these assessments should be profiled. Therefore, the analyst read and discussed both definitions.

The Writing Skill is a Para Educator’s skill in writing work related information. Often the Para Educator listens to a teacher, student or parent before writing down what they heard to pass on to a third party. In evaluating the level of this skill necessary to perform the tasks of their job, the attendees needed to consider:

- The importance of writing mechanics
The importance of writing style
The importance of the professional tone

In considering the appropriate level, the attendees had to keep in mind that the writing level chosen should reflect the actual writing before any use of a dictionary, spell checker, grammar checker or any other kind of assistance.

**BUSINESS WRITING** is the skill used when the Para Educator writes an original response to work related situation. In considering the level of this skill necessary to perform the tasks of their job, the attendees needed to consider:

- The importance of writing mechanics
- The importance of writing style
- The importance of professional tone
- The importance of clarity
- The importance of organization
- The importance of focus

The attendees decided that while the occasionally wrote original responses to job situations, the majority of the writing came from listening to teachers, students or parents and then writing the information down to pass it on to a third party.

Therefore, writing skill definition was passed out, read and discussed. Once the analyst was convinced the attendees understood the definition, they were asked to identify tasks on the final task sheet that required a writing skill. The attendees did this and indicated that tasks #’s 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 17, 18, 21 and 23 required writing. They were then asked to make a partial list of some of the specific ways they used writing and they listed:

- Writing down teacher’s instructions for student assignments
- Writing word problems and number sentences
- Writing down teacher’s instructions to pass onto parents
- Writing in the school bulletin with reviews by teacher or principal
• Writing suggestions in the school improvement plan after listening to students, parents and teachers and attending meetings
• Writing a computer technician report after listening to the technician and then passing it on to a supervisor
• Writing referrals for a student after observing and listening to a student that is having difficulty
• Writing an accident report after listening to accident witnesses

With the above list and the final task list fresh in their minds, the analyst passed out, read and discussed writing level #1. There was immediate consensus that their profession required a higher writing level. They felt that what they wrote had to convey information adequately and they could not have many mechanical errors. Following the same process, level #2 was discussed and again there was unanimous consensus that this was still not an acceptable level. The attendees agreed that a Para Educator could not write a document to a teacher or parent that contained many mechanical errors even though the meaning may be adequately expressed. Next, level #3 was handed out, read, and discussed. This level generated more discussion and there was some initial disagreement over whether this level would be adequate for their profession. However, after looking at the final task list and the specific list they had generated, they decided that this level was adequate for most of their writing requirements. While they agreed writing level #3 was adequate for the majority of their writing requirements. They felt that if they had incomplete sentences and mechanical errors when writing to some teachers, supervisors or parents they did not know well, the receiving party would lose confidence in their ability to assist with the education of the student. Therefore, they decided that before passing on their writing in these circumstances, the Para Educator seek electronic assistance before passing on their document.

To make sure level #3 was adequate, the analyst handed out, read and discussed writing level #4. There was consensus that consistently writing complete sentences with minor mechanical errors would be ideal for some of their writing but did not reflect the requirements of most of their writing. They indicated this on their skill-rating sheet. Therefore, it was decided to identify skill level #3 as the entry level and level #4 as Effective Level. Like the reading skill the attendees
felt that level #3 writing skill would be adequate to perform their job and a level # four level writing skill would be something desirable for a Para Educator to strive for, once they were in the profession.

The following graph summarizes the profile finds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WorkKeys Skill Levels Needed for the Illinois 1A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ranking the WorkKeys Skills in Order of Criticality.** The SMEs then ranked the skills according to their criticality to performing the occupation. Each SME made an independent ranking of the skills. The analyst compiled the results of the rankings, and it is clear from that the SMEs considered the Reading as the most important skill, math as number two and writing as number three.

**Appendix**
EXHIBIT A - WorkKeys Skill Descriptions

Applied Mathematics Skill

The Applied Mathematics skill is an employee's skill in applying mathematical reasoning and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems. In evaluating the level of the Applied Mathematics skill required for the tasks of the job, consider

- The types of mathematical operations employees must perform (e.g., single-step or multiple-step mathematical operations, conversions either within or between systems of measurement);

- How the information in the problems is presented to employees (i.e., the information is presented in the order in which it is needed or if it must be reordered); and

- Whether all the information employees need to solve problems is provided (or if they must derive some necessary information).

Keep in mind that employees are in a workplace where they have calculators and conversion tables to assist them.

Five levels of difficulty are described ranging from Level 3, the least complex, to Level 7, the most complex. Examples of the kinds of work-related problems associated with the skill levels will be provided. Higher levels of difficulty include and build on the skills described in lower levels.

Applied Mathematics Level 3

Employees are required to

- Do one step of mathematical operation (i.e., addition or subtraction) on positive or negative numbers, and multiplication and division of only positive numbers (e.g., 20); and

- Change a number from one form to another, using whole numbers (e.g., 10), fractions (e.g., ½), decimals (e.g., .75), or percentages (e.g., 12%); for instance, employees may be required to convert ½ to its equivalent percentage.

For example, at this level employees may be required to add the prices of several products or to make the correct change for a customer.

Applied Mathematics Level 4

Employees are required to
- Do one or two mathematical operations, such as addition, subtraction, or multiplication, on several positive or negative numbers (e.g., 10, -2), as well as division of only positive numbers.

- Figure out averages (e.g., \( \frac{10+4+14+20}{5} \)), simple ratios (e.g., \( \frac{2}{5} \)), simple proportions (e.g., \( \frac{16}{100} \) cases), or rates (e.g., 10 mph) using whole numbers and decimals.

- Add commonly known fractions, decimals, or percentages (e.g., \( \frac{1}{2}, .75, 25\% \)), or add three fractions that share a common denominator (e.g., \( \frac{1}{4} + \frac{2}{6} + \frac{3}{8} \)).

- Reorder information before performing calculations, and

- Read a simple diagram or graph to get the information needed to solve a problem.

For example, employees may be required to calculate sales tax or a sales commission, or to figure rates of use or business flow.

**Applied Mathematics Level 5**

Employees are required to

- Look up a formula and change from one unit of measurement to another within a system of measurement (e.g., from ounces to pounds) or between systems of measurement (e.g., from centimeters to inches).

- Calculate using mixed units (e.g., 3.50 hours and 4 hours 30 minutes),

- Do several steps of logic and calculations, including division of negative numbers,

- Decide what information, calculations, or unit conversions are needed to find a solution, and

- Determine the best deal using one- and two-step calculations and then comparing costs.

For example, employees may be required to calculate perimeters and areas of basic shapes (e.g., rectangles and circles), to calculate percent discounts or markups, to compare costs to determine which is the best deal, or to complete a balance sheet or order form that requires several math operations (e.g., total an order, and then calculate tax and shipping costs).

**Applied Mathematics Level 6**

Employees are required to

- Set up problems and do several steps of calculations or conversions,
- Calculate using negative numbers, fractions, ratios, percentages, or mixed numbers (e.g., $12\frac{1}{3}$).

- Transpose a formula before calculating (e.g., $8X = 20 \Rightarrow X = \frac{20}{8}$).

- Look up and use two formulas to change from one unit to another unit within the same system of measurement (e.g., 1 cup = 8 fl oz, 1 quart = 4 cups).

- Find and correct mistakes in calculations and solutions to basic problems, and

- Determine the best deal and perform a further calculation with the result.

For example, employees may be required to calculate multiple rates, to find areas of rectangles or circles and volumes of rectangular solids, or to solve problems that compare production rates and pricing schemes.

**Applied Mathematics Level 7**

Employees are required to

- Do several steps of reasoning and calculations,

- Solve problems involving more than one unknown, and nonlinear functions (e.g., rate of change),

- Find mistakes in multiple-step calculations, and

- Figure out the information needed to solve a problem when the information presented is incomplete or implicit.

For example, employees may be required to convert between systems of measurement that involve fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, or percentages: to calculate multiple areas and volumes of spheres, cylinders, or cones; to set up and manipulate complex ratios or proportions; or determine the better economic value of several alternatives.
Reading for Information Skill

The Reading for Information skill is an employee's skill in reading and understanding work-related reading materials. In evaluating the level of the Reading for Information skill required for the tasks of the job, consider

- The difficulty of the materials employees must read (e.g., straightforward announcements using simple vocabulary or complex legal documents which describe complicated procedures and include technical language or specialized language), and

- How hard it is for employees to find and make use of the information they need in the reading materials (e.g., employees are required simply to use information stated directly or they must generalize and draw conclusions from the information).

Keep in mind that this skill does not include the skill of reading charts, graphs, tables, forms, blueprints, maps, or instrument gauges.

Five levels of difficulty are described, ranging from Level 3, the least complex, to Level 7, the most complex. Examples of reading materials associated with the skill levels will be provided. Higher levels of difficulty include the skills described in lower levels.

Reading for Information Level 3

Employees must read basic company policies, procedures, and announcements. These workplace-reading materials are short, simple, and use elementary vocabulary. All information employees need in order to choose an appropriate course of action is stated clearly in the materials; employees do not need to read between the lines.

Employees are required to

- Understand the meaning of words that are defined in these workplace reading materials,

- Figure out the meaning of elementary words that are not defined in these reading materials,

- Understand the main ideas and straightforward details from these reading materials,

- Understand when to perform each step in a series from reading directions, and

- Be able to apply instructions outlined in these reading materials to situations described in these reading materials.
Reading for Information Level 4

Employees must read straightforward company policies, procedures, and announcements that contain a number of details and describe procedures that involve several steps. Many of the reading materials describe policies and procedures that require employees to take changing circumstances into account and to identify the course of action that will best accomplish their goals.

Employees are required to

- Notice important details in these reading materials,
- Figure out the meaning of words that are not defined in these reading materials,
- Apply instructions, some of which involve several steps, to situations described in these reading materials, and
- Take changing circumstances into account in order to decide what to do.

Reading for Information Level 5

Employees must read moderately detailed and complicated company policies, procedures, and announcements. These reading materials contain words and phrases that may be specialized (jargon and technical language) or words that have several meanings. All of the information employees need is stated clearly in the reading materials, but the employees must consider several factors in order to identify the course of action that will accomplish their goals.

Employees are required to

- Understand the paraphrased definition of specialized words or phrases (jargon or technical terms) defined in these reading materials,
- Use jargon or technical terms appropriately in describing situations stated in these reading materials,
- Understand the meaning of acronyms defined in these reading materials (an acronym is a word or collection of letters which stands for a longer phrase, such as HMO to mean Health Maintenance Organization),
- Figure out which definition of a word with multiple meanings is appropriate in the context of these reading materials,
• Apply information given in these reading materials to situations that are not directly described, but are similar, and

• Apply instructions or procedures with a number of steps to described situations; these instructions may include conditionals (if X happens, then you should do Y).

**Reading for Information Level 6**

Employees must read difficult company policies, procedures, and announcements. These reading materials present complicated information. For example, they may include excerpts from regulatory and legal documents. These reading materials use advanced vocabulary, jargon, and technical terms to describe elaborate procedures and concepts. Most of the information employees need in order to identify an appropriate course of action is not clearly stated in the reading material. Thus, employees may need to determine the principles underlying the described situation and apply those principles to new situations not depicted in the reading material.

Employees are required to

• Understand specialized words or phrases (jargon or technical terms) when used in an unfamiliar context,

• Apply complicated information to new situations,

• Figure out from context the less common meaning of a word with multiple meanings,

• Figure out the general principles underlying situations described in these reading materials and apply those principles to related situations,

• Understand implied details, and

• Figure out the reasoning behind a procedure, policy, or communication.

**Reading for Information Level 7**

Employees must read materials that are very difficult: the information is detailed, the concepts are complicated, and the vocabulary is difficult. The jargon and technical terms used are not defined in the reading materials. Employees must generalize beyond stated situations, understand implied details, and figure out the reasoning behind stated policies and procedures.

Employees are required to

• Figure out the definitions of difficult, uncommon jargon or technical terms from the context of the reading materials, and
- Figure out the general principles underlying described situations and apply them to situations neither described in nor completely similar to those in the reading materials.

Writing Skill

The Writing skill is an employee's skill in writing work-related information. In evaluating the level of the Writing skill necessary for the tasks of the job, consider

- The importance of writing mechanics (including grammar, punctuation, and spelling),
- Writing style (smooth and flowing rather than choppy), and
- Professional tone (appropriate to a business setting, lacking such things as slurs, obscenities, and discriminatory terms) in an employee's written message.

Keep in mind that in performing this skill employees must write without using a dictionary, spelling checker, grammar checker, the assistance of others, or any other aids.

Five levels of difficulty are described, ranging from Level 1, the least complex, to Level 5, the most complex. Examples of the kinds of work-related messages associated with the skill levels will be provided. Higher levels of difficulty include the skills described in lower levels.

Writing Level 1

Employees' writing does not convey information adequately because of an overall lack of proper sentence structure.

Writing Level 2

Employees' writing conveys information adequately. However, there are many mechanical errors that interfere with understanding the meaning. Writing may also contain word choices that are inappropriate for a business setting, and may have weak sentence structure.

Writing Level 3

Employees' writing must convey information clearly. Most of the sentences in the messages are complete, and the wording used is appropriate to a business setting. There are some mechanical errors that do not interfere with understanding the meaning.

Writing Level 4

Employees' writing conveys information clearly. All of the sentences in the writing are complete, although they may not be smooth and polished. There may be a few minor mechanical errors, but these errors do not interfere with understanding the meaning.
Writing Level 5

Employees' writing conveys information clearly, and does not contain any mechanical errors. Writing has good sentence structure, a smooth, polished, and logical style; and precise language. In addition, messages represent the company in a professional manner.

**FINAL TASK LIST**

1. Demonstrates appropriate verbal and written mechanics when demonstrating reading math or writing to the students
2. Exhibits patience and respect for students, co-workers and the supervisor
3. Reinforces subject matter to students by utilizing a variety of methods and techniques such as lecture, discussion, and supervised role playing
4. Administers tests and verbal examinations to individuals or groups of students by providing
5. Assists students, individually or in groups, complete and reinforce the learning assignments/homework by answering questions, providing feedback, monitoring progress and recording results
6. Communicates verbally and in writing with the supervisor to trouble shoot work related problems and to suggest improvements in work methods and procedures
7. Demonstrates an understanding of the study guide the teacher uses for course content materials
8. Demonstrates curriculum and subject matter knowledge in math, reading or writing, based on appropriate job specifications, in order to promote student progress
9. Learns and performs tasks of a specialized nature to assist individuals/groups of students with assignments or specific projects
10. Provides prompt and efficient service to students to meet goals and objectives by following schedules of the school, IEP, and special activities
11. Maintains confidentiality regarding all aspects of students, co-workers and duties
12. Assists the teachers in structuring the environment to provide lessons, personal hygiene assistance, supervision, therapy and behavior controlling techniques
13. Coordinates instructional efforts in assigned teaching areas through discussions with the teacher.

14. Demonstrates appropriate discipline and reinforcement techniques in order to promote and maintain order in the classroom, school grounds, and community-based activity.

15. Demonstrates knowledge and follows the guidelines of special education, school district, and student regulatory procedures.

16. Documents and reports student progress and needs to special and regular education teachers.

17. Listens to teachers' instructions and writes down the instructions to pass onto the students or parents.

18. Records and files accurate information to track student attendance, participation, behavior, preparation, and progress.

19. Understands how one's work contributes to the success of the student in academic and social settings.

20. Works in teams with special education and regular teachers to provide students with instructions and supervision for inclusion, pull-out services, and resource services.

21. Administers and grades tests using answer sheets and records results for teacher's review.

22. Assists teachers in preparing and developing various teaching aids, such as bibliographies, study guides, charts, graphs, and worksheets, in order to facilitate student learning.

23. Displays interpersonal and telephone skills to obtain and relay appropriate information about students and activities approved by the supervisor.

24. Distributes teaching materials such as textbooks and workbooks, paper, and pencils to students.

25. Pre-plans activities and use of materials to facilitate lessons and objectives.

26. Prepares for student activities by procuring and assimilating classroom project materials and equipment.

27. Utilizes classroom, adaptive, and office machines such as computers, word processors, typewriters, copiers, laminators, television or VCRs to provide and/or develop classroom project materials.

28. Attends required emergency training sessions and understands what to do in case of chemical, biological or any kind of terrorist attack.

29. Participates in training or in service sessions provided by the school or district in order to increase their professional skills.
30. Provides a safe environment by following written safety procedures regarding the use of building equipment, and substance
31. Provides adult intervention and/or acquires appropriate assistance in emergency situations
32. Provides CPR and First Aid Care by following certified procedures
33. Assists students verbally and/or physically prepare for and participate in field trips, playground activity, bus loading/unloading, various weather conditions and other activities
34. Assists with program support by copying, collating packets, and completing requisition forms
35. Attends school improvement meetings and offers suggestions in written form
36. Dresses suitably and appropriately for required activities and assignments
37. Escorts students, visitors and parents, when appropriate, to promote an organized environment in the classroom, school and outside school related activities
38. Figures students grades by utilizing percentages, charts, graphs and averages daily assignments
39. Maintains orderliness in the classroom by cleaning and organizing area, materials and equipment
40. Moves objects weighing twenty five pounds or less by lifting and carrying them to the desired location
41. Prepares bulletin boards to emphasize seasonal and/or learning objectives
System of Support
Moving to a Systemic Improvement Approach

Core Principles/Beliefs

- School performance can improve with a systemic and sustainable approach
- All improvement is local
History of AEWL Lists

Number of Schools on AEWL or Watch List By Year (with 2003 and 2004 Projections)

Frequency

Past SOS structure
- ISBE-centered, with labor-intensive SIP review for all schools
- Variable local buy-in for SIPS once completed
- Multiple approaches (apples, oranges and kumquats)
  - Some research-based
  - Some home-grown
- Non-standard grant structure
- Little or no systematic evaluation
- Mixed success rate based on anecdotal evidence
Changing Conditions

- NCLB creates new hurdles for schools
- NCLB creates ever-higher targets for performance through 2014
- AEWL placements will rise
- Resources are scarce
- Schools need systematic and reliable assistance sustainable over time

ISBE Performance Management

- Requires streamlining and efficiency
- Requires measurable objectives
- Requires data-driven processes
- Demands that staff be deployed wisely
- Recognizes that existing external networks and providers are viable and valuable resources
Enhanced System of Support

- Regionalize AEWL oversight and monitoring
- Establish proven and standardized approaches and processes as a core
- Allow customization for regional and local differences among schools and districts
- Coordinate across programs and services
- Maximize the efficient deployment of staff and resources

Basic Structure
Research-Based Content & Methods

- Standards-aligned curriculum, instruction & classroom assessment, with special focus on reading and mathematics
- Mentoring & induction for all new teachers
- Specialized training for administrators
- Data analysis training and toolkits
- Behavioral interventions and supports for students
- Family/community involvement and coordinated support services
Features of Hybrid Value-Added/Absolute (VAA) Adequate Yearly Progress model for the English Language Learners (ELL) Subgroup

- Two measures used to determine whether a school/district is making adequate progress for this subgroup:
  - Did absolute percent of ELL students that Meet Standards/Expanding equal/exceed statewide goal?
  - Do average ELL learning gains achieved by the school/district ELL students meet targeted gains?
  - Absolute component only used to trigger NCLB non-discretionary consequences (i.e., public school choice, supplemental services); results reported only as required.

Value-added component used to determine the nature of all other NCLB discretionary consequences (e.g., technical assistance, severe corrective action, restructuring), results widely promoted (incl. individual results to parents).

Calculating Gains and Gain Targets

- All true VAA models are student-centric (year-to-year gains measured at individual student level, aggregated to school, district, state levels, either by subject or across subjects).
- Gains set and measured using IMAGE developmental/vertical scale.
- Individual student gain targets set each year based on the average score achieved the previous year by students and calculating the size of the gain necessary to make steady progress toward achieving "Meets/Expanding" category within 3 years in an ELL program.
- 3 year student target based on federal requirements and typical number of years ELL students in Illinois require to achieve "Expanding/Meets" category.
- School/district ELL gain targets simply the average of individual ELL student gain targets.
- Aggregated actual school/district gains compared to annual school/district gain target(s) in order to determine whether gains are "adequate" for VAA component.

Some individual students may require an additional 4th or even 5th year if they fail to achieve "Meets/Expanding" status in 3 years.
Additional Motion from the March 10, 2003
Assessment and Accountability Task Force Meeting

One element of the discussion at the March 10, 2003 task force meeting was how to address reviewing the assessment data from the limited English proficiency (LEP) subgroup because the members of the subgroup keep changing. Other than "low income" or "special education" as a subgroup, the other ones remain stable. For the LEP subgroup, there are continually new members who are not English speakers joining in; once three years is reached, generally despite the level of language proficiency, and they leave TBE/TPI programming, they no longer take IMAGE and would not be included in the subgroup for purposes of adequate yearly progress. The task force discussed options in addressing this situation. One possibility reviewed was a system such as Indiana had proposed to USDE in the process of having their accountability system reviewed and approved.

In addition to what was presented in the March 2003 Board packet, the following motion was made at the last task force meeting:

It was moved and seconded that "...LEP students will be included in the AYP subgroup calculations until they score at the Proficient level ('meets standards' on ISAT or 'expanding' on IMAGE) for 3 consecutive years". The motion was adopted unanimously.

This language was modeled on that of Indiana, although it does not include the explanatory material that was in Indiana's Accountability Workbook. The Indiana plan was one of the five early proposals that received approval by USDE. The discussion of the motion made clear that what Illinois proposes to the USDE needs to mirror Indiana's explanatory language as closely as possible, since their proposal has already been approved.
KeY BILLS

HB 13/ SB 533 would establish a statewide induction and mentoring program. The bill calls for a 2 year program with districts receiving a $1200 stipend each year. ISBE is working with the sponsors of the legislation on some technical amendments dealing with the transitioning of currently established programs.

HB 205 requires districts to present to parents at the time of suspension a list of organizations that have education programs that a suspended student can attend during the time of suspension. Such organizations are available in the community.

HB 210 attempts to circumvent the Corey II decision to require regular education teachers to have 20% of the CPDU’s in special education by stating that those who completed their 120 CPDU’s as of July 1, 2002 shall be deemed to have a renewed and valid certificate and not have to complete any other additional credits.

HB 337 allows school boards to provide free transportation for pupils residing within ½ miles of school if walking constitutes a hazard. Now the hazard is limited to vehicular traffic or railroad crossings.

HB 371 removes the 260 person cap on the number of new participants in the alternative certification program. The bill places the cap at the number of unfilled positions as reported by the ISBE.

HB 430 adopts the EFAB recommendation with regards to adopting poverty levels established through the use of DHS data. As written the bill does not change the current poverty formula.

HB 470 establishes that only the scores of students enrolled as of the last school day in September can be used in determining whether or not a school can be placed on the academic watch or warning list.

HB 751 eliminates the Suburban Cook ROE and transfers its powers and duties to the ISBE effective 2007.

HB 1180 makes substantial changes to the way districts are reimbursed for special education. Moves to a per pupil reimbursement basis rather than per pupil claiming. Eliminates the need of districts to submit individual claims for each student. As amended does not consolidate private tuition into the extraordinary line item.

HB 1244 / SB 317 allows teachers to gain tenure after 2 years (now 4 years). An amendment is expected which would allow for tenure after 3 years except if the teacher is under a corrective action plan.
HB 2235 amends the early childhood block grant program to allow for 11% of the block grant shall be used for children ages 0 to 3.

HB 2584 increases the compulsory school age from 16 to 18.

HB 3587 eliminates the citizenship requirement for receiving a teachers certificate.

SB 1 re-establishes the continuing appropriation for GSA. The bill is to be amended to cover FY 03 which would cover the anticipated $22M shortfall this fiscal year.

SB 19 increases the number of charter schools in the city of Chicago from 15 to 30. makes other changes related to CPS and CTU as they relate to collective bargaining of such things as class size reduction and other provisions which were removed in the Chicago School reform of 1995.

SB 22 removes Health Life Safety repairs out from the property tax caps.

SB 191 allows schools district to continue to receive orphanage reimbursement even after a child has been adopted.

SB 381 establishes a grades 7-12 Reading Improvement Block as a component of the current program.

SB 634 authorizes $1,000,000,000 in General Obligation Bonds for school for purposes of school construction.

SB 1074 would establish an independent certification board. Per Superintendent Schiller's conversations with Senator Demuzio the bill was stripped of its contents to allow for more discussion.

SB 1333 reinstates the ability, with regards to the special ed orphanage appropriation, that if the appropriation is insufficient to cover current fiscal year reimbursements than rather than pro rating reimbursements the funds to cover full reimbursement shall be taken out of the next fiscal years appropriation.

HJRCA 7 would place on the ballot at the next general election a constitutional amendment to decide if Illinois should establish an elected State Superintendent of Education.

* ISBE initiated legislation is not included here as it was included in the Board Packet.