ILLOINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
June 16-17, 2003

TO: Illinois State Board of Education  
FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent  
       Gail Lieberman, Acting Director  

Agenda Topic: INFORMATION and ACTION ITEMS:  
Accountability Issues  

Staff Contact(s): Don Full and Connie Wise  

Purpose of Agenda Item  
• To keep the Board apprised of current actions regarding assessment and accountability.  
• To take action on one item recommended by the Assessment and Accountability Task Force.  

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item  
The Board will be apprised of the status of the Accountability Plan submitted to USDE and two further recommendations by the Superintendent’s Assessment and Accountability Task Force concerning the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).  

Background Information  
Task Force Action  
The Task Force met on June 4, 2003. They congratulated Representative Jerry Mitchell and Senator Miguel del Valle regarding the successful passage of House Bill 2352 and Senate Bill 878 regarding assessment and accountability issues respectively. They also discussed some unfinished issues and looked at wrapping up their work for the year. They also discussed at length both the "Illini Plan," the trajectory for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and additional time on reading and mathematics state tests.  

Untimed Tests  
The Task Force members discussed on June 4th the number of hours for ISAT testing reflected in House Bill 2352 and Board action in May concerning adding 5 additional minutes to each section of the current/proposed state assessment tests. They felt that 5 minutes was insufficient to assess how much students know, not how fast they can complete the test. There was also discussion that about 1-2% of the students in any given class do not seem to have sufficient time to complete the test in the allotted minutes, and therefore schools are unable to demonstrate truly what students know and are able to do.
All agreed the test should be what students know and are able to do rather than how well they perform within a given timeframe. There were discussions on how this could be done even-handedly across Illinois.

The Task Force adopted the following motion in April 2003: "The AATF believes that students should have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the Illinois Learning Standards. Therefore, we recommend that students who are continuously, productively engaged in completing the test be allowed to complete the test uninterrupted, in the same setting, beyond the recommended time. We recommend that test administrative guidelines be established by ISBE for the teachers. This should go into effect for ISAT 2004."

The Task Force members discussed uniformity of application, research from Harcourt with the Stanford 10, need to have information within the upcoming test specifications, and need to pilot test with an extended period of time offered. After lengthy discussion on June 4th, the Task Force recommended: "…that it be requested (based on research and what other states do) of the test publishers, given that 98% of students will complete all state assessments in a set time frame and, given that 1-2% of students, do not do so, that the new test design allow for a brief extended time in reading and math…"

**Illini Plan**

Dr. Schiller shared information about recent dialogue with Under Secretary Hickok of USDE and the status of the Illini Plan or the trajectory on achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP). As is, USDE won't approve the Accountability Plan due to this caveat. While USDE staff has said they like Illinois' rationale behind the Illini Plan, the law binds them to approving only that which is in equal increments.

The Task Force reviewed several options at length. The revised Illinois Plan still offers some of the best elements of the original one -- no back-loading of expected achievement onto the last couple of years; truly more aggressive overall than the Indiana or Ohio plan as considered last winter; modest growth in student achievement in the beginning years of the plan, more rapid growth in the middle years, and a slight increase in the latter years where growth is exceedingly difficult to achieve; and so on. The Task Force recommended use of the Illini Plan with equal increments (see attached).

Illinois can always reconsider the Illinois Plan in its final version once the new tests are on line in 2005-06.

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

**Communication**

Accountability is the most high-stakes component of state and federal education law. Changes will require clear and specific information for school boards, school district
staff, parents and the public. The new bills as passed plus the Accountability Plan components need to be communicated.

Superintendent’s Recommendation
The Superintendent recommends that the Board adopt the following two motions:

- That the Task Force’s recommendation on untimed tests be included in the information or test specifications that will be used later this summer for new test development.
- That the Task Force's recommendation on the revised Illini Plan be accepted and then submitted as accepted to USDE for consideration as part of the overall Accountability Plan.

Attachment
Illini vs. Equal Steps Model

Annual Target

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