TO: Illinois State Board of Education

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

Agenda Topic: Action Item: Assessment and Accountability Issues

Staff Contact(s): Don Full, Gail Lieberman, Connie Wise

Purpose of Agenda Item
- To keep the Board apprised of current activity regarding assessment and accountability.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
The Board will be apprised of the current activities regarding further work by the Superintendent's Assessment and Accountability Task Force, as well as action to implement the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

Background Information
NCLB requires that states submit their Title I accountability plans for federal approval by May 1, 2003. Required components of the plan were outlined in the Board materials for January 2003. The complete timetable for interaction between states and the USDOE is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 31, 2003</td>
<td>States submit progress report on accountability requirements to USDOE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. through April 2003</td>
<td>States participate in a peer review process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March through April 2003</td>
<td>States continue with policy work and revise USDOE application based on peer comments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1, 2003</td>
<td>States submit final report on accountability to USDOE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30, 2003</td>
<td>2003-04 federal grant awards to states.</td>
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</tbody>
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USDOE staff will conduct an on-site peer review in Springfield on March 27th. The team will include personnel from other state education agencies along with other knowledgeable personnel from outside of Illinois. Documentation supporting the current workbook will be shared. The review team will offer feedback that day, with information then forwarded to a USDOE Oversight Panel. The Panel will share comments with ISBE prior to the May 1 plan submission.
Additional Indicators related to AYP calculations

At its March 10th meeting, the Assessment and Accountability Task Force discussed specific thresholds for the two additional indicators adopted by Board action at the February meeting. The Board adopted "attendance" at the elementary/middle school level and "graduation" at the high school level (see definitions below). The task force reviewed current information on attendance rates as well as information from prior years and the numbers of schools that would not make AYP at various attendance thresholds (see table below). The Task Force recommended that 88% be the threshold for attendance rate for the purpose of AYP calculations.

**Definition:** The aggregate days of student attendance divided by the sum of the aggregate days of student attendance and aggregate days of student absence, multiplied by 100.

- **A:** Sum of the number of students in attendance each school day of the year.
- **B:** Sum of the number of students absent each school day of the year.

**Attendance Rate** = \( \frac{A}{A + B} \) \* 100

This rate is computed for each school, district, and the state. This algorithm has been used since 1986. The statewide rate has been very stable over the years, ranging from a low of 93.3% in 1989 to a high of 94.0% in 2002.

(Source: School Report Card Data Form ISBE 86-43)

An example is cited below:

- Reported attendance: 71,170 (students present each day of year)
- Reported absence: 2,792 (students absent each day of year)
- Attendance Rate = \( \frac{71,170}{(71,170 + 2,792)} \) x 100 = 96.2%

### Number/Percent Of Elementary/Middle Schools That Would Fail to Make AYP For The Minimum Attendance Rate Based On The Following Thresholds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Entire State</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Downstate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>38.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average state attendance rate in 2001-02 is 94.8%.

The task force also discussed possible thresholds for graduation rates but did not reach closure. They set another meeting for April 9th to discuss this issue and other remaining items.
Reports from Subcommittees

**IMAGE**

At its January 2003 meeting, the task force made a series of recommendations regarding modifications in the current IMAGE assessment and reporting. These recommendations addressed needs of students with limited English proficiency, also called English Language Learners (ELL). A primary issue was treating IMAGE similar to ISAT and PSAE in frequency, reporting, and the student identification system. Issues that were extremely technical in nature or concerned communications were delayed for additional dialogue.

Specific recommendations adopted were as follows:

- IMAGE should reflect the same requirements that are established for the ISAT/PSAE 2006.
- Ensure that the achievement categories on IMAGE are equivalent to ISAT/PSAE.
- Develop a statewide supported identification system that would allow school districts to collect data on mobile students.
- Develop a Grade 2 IMAGE assessment test as an option for school districts (pending appropriations).
- Determine a state definition of ELL/LEP students.
- Ensure use of accommodations: allow local districts to report data on listening and speaking using an approved standardized instrument. The state will provide a common reporting system.
- Use of a hybrid model (as presented at the February board meeting) to demonstrate growth.

These recommendations were reiterated during the February meetings of this subcommittee.

The subcommittee also discussed students with limited English proficiency being able to take IMAGE and then ISAT, for a period of time, and continuing to be counted in the LEP subgroup until they had been scored at the proficient level at least twice consecutively. Without such a provision, the LEP subgroup would have difficulty showing positive progress, as high-scoring students transition out of the subgroup.

Additionally, the IMAGE subcommittee recommended that the task force ask the Advisory Council on Bilingual Education, in consultation with the IMAGE subcommittee, to study and make recommendations regarding the issues submitted to the task force. This group will report directly on these issues to the State Superintendent or his designee. The task force approved this motion and asked the Superintendent to proceed.

**Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA)**

From the meetings of the IAA subcommittee on February 3rd and 27th, several recommendations were offered and shared with the task force on Monday. Those recommendations were as follows:
• Modify the Illinois Alternate Assessment and its reporting procedures to ensure that, no later than 2006, the Illinois Alternate Assessment mirrors the ISAT and PSAE grade levels in all required content areas.

• Modify the Illinois Alternate Assessment, continuing to explore the "events based" model [to be aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and linked to No Child Left Behind and IDEA requirements] as an option.

• Provide item analysis of Illinois Alternate Assessment results and distribute at the same time as ISAT and PSAE results.

• Ensure that the Illinois Alternate Assessment reporting system is understandable to all parents.

• Training on the Illinois Alternate Assessment should be provided to LEAs, teachers and parents.

• A new (ongoing) advisory committee should be established to provide direction and consultation to the Illinois State Board of Education and the selected contractor in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the new IAA. The makeup of the new committee shall consist primarily of
  o administrators, teachers, and parents of students with special needs and shall also reflect the ethnic and geographic diversity of the state.
  o An Illinois higher education person with a research background, preferably in assessment/universal design; and
  o A private school provider.

Further, the subcommittee recommended on February 27, 2003 that an ongoing group be appointed, once ISBE adopts a long-range model to replace the current portfolio system, to oversee implementation and monitor the new process.

**Writing**

The subcommittee met in February. The recommendations offered were posed, and then slightly modified during discussion on March 10, 2003. There was no closure on the recommendations to date so these will be discussed again on April 9, 2003.

• Develop and fund a systemic "trainer of trainers" model using ISBE-approved master trainers for all districts in Illinois, specific to reading, math, science, and writing, in order to improve teaching and learning.

• Expand the current practice of defining terms within writing prompts at the 3rd grade level to include grades 3-8, beginning with the 2003-04 school year.

• The primary responsibility for dissemination of information on ISAT/PSAE to teachers rests with the local administration and is available on the ISBE assessment web site.

• Review the cut scores through the standard-setting process for the 2003-04 test administration.

**Status on Legislation**

The Superintendent discussed February Board action as well as the bill co-sponsored by Representatives Mitchell, Kosel, Giles and Flynn Curry regarding necessary student
assessment revisions. HB 2352 was passed by the House Education Committee in early March and now moves to the full House.

The Superintendent also reviewed draft legislation on aligning the federal and state accountability systems into one. Suggestions were offered to improve the draft language.

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

There is ongoing dialogue with the task force until closure on unresolved issues. After that there will be periodic dialogue with the Superintendent.

**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.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Superintendent recommends that the Board adopt the following:

- Adopt 88% as the threshold for the attendance rate at the elementary/middle school level (part of the AYP factors and a part of the safe harbor factors).
- Use of a hybrid model (as presented at the February board meeting) to demonstrate growth on the IMAGE assessment.

Further, the Superintendent will proceed with asking the Advisory Council on Bilingual Education, in consultation with the IMAGE subcommittee, to study and make recommendations regarding the remaining IMAGE issues before the task force. This group will report directly on these issues to the State Superintendent or his designee.

**Next Steps**

The Superintendent will continue meetings with the Task Force.

Next steps include the necessary statutory and regulatory changes to implement these suggested actions and prior Board actions. Concurrent with statutory change will be the peer review process by USDE and final action with the Accountability Workbook. Also concurrent with statutory change will be a new Request for Sealed Proposals (RFSP) for assessment contractor(s) in order to work toward implementing changes in 2006 if not sooner.