TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
       Gail Lieberman, Acting Director

Agenda Topic: DISCUSSION ITEM: Adequate Yearly Progress from 2003 through 2014

Purpose of Agenda Item
- To inform the Board of federal dialogue regarding accountability plans.
- To discuss options.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
The Board will be informed of recent dialogue with staff of the U S Department of Education regarding the May 1st submission of the Accountability Workbook. Options on subsequent action will be discussed.

Background Information
The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that states submit their 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>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 31, 2003</td>
<td>States submit progress report on accountability to USDOE.</td>
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<td>March 27, 2003</td>
<td>States participate in a peer review process.</td>
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<td>April 2003</td>
<td>States continue with policy work and revise application.</td>
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<td>May 1, 2003</td>
<td>States submit final report on accountability to USDOE.</td>
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<td>June 30, 2003</td>
<td>2003-04 federal grant awards to states.</td>
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Definition of AYP
Under both NCLB and state law, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the basic mechanism for determining school performance from year to year.

To “make AYP,” schools and districts must meet three criteria: 1) participation; 2) annual targets for reading and mathematics; and 3) an additional indicator (attendance at the elementary and middle grades and graduation at the high school level).

Annual Measurable Objectives
Illinois acknowledges that the Congressional intent was to ensure that no State waited until near the end of the timeline and then expected enormous, unrealistic growth in the
last few years. As requested by the State Board in December 2002, the Task Force reconsidered its initial recommendation.

The table below demonstrates the Task Force's and the Superintendent's agreement that growth at the beginning of the timeline will be slow (as schools develop improved curriculum and instruction). It will also be statistically difficult to make huge achievement increases at the end (as schools approach very high levels of achievement). However, steady growth can be anticipated and will occur in the middle years. In order to follow such a scientifically-based approach, planning must occur; staff must be of high quality and serve in their fields of expertise, and also be prepared for focused work in reading and mathematics with students of all ages; the curriculum must be consistent with the Illinois Learning Standards and focused. The proposal outlined below meets that intent as well as the requirement for "continuous and substantial" growth within the context of a research-based approach.

### Illini Plan for Implementing Annual Measurable Objectives

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### Communication

The area of greatest controversy during the peer review process in March and as the Accountability Workbook was reviewed by USDE staff was annual measurable objectives because the trajectory shows uneven increments rather than the required equal increments.

The rationale as stated in the workbook was:
Illinois acknowledges that the federal requirement in NCLB is for equal increments so that by 2013-14 all students meet or exceed the Illinois Learning Standards. The Congressional intention using that language was to ensure that no State waited until near the end of the timeline and then expected enormous, unrealistic growth in the last two or three years. Illinois concurs with that intent and indeed echoes what is stated in Principle 3 “…expectations for growth in student achievement that is continuous and substantial…”

The Illini Plan (see Attachment B) demonstrates the task force’s, Superintendent’s and Board’s belief that annual measurable objectives or a trajectory of student achievement does not necessarily occur in equal increments. Following a more reasoned approach, it is believed that growth at the beginning will be slow, that it will be difficult to make any huge achievement increases at the end, steady growth can be anticipated, and this must occur over a sufficient amount of time. In order to follow such a scientifically-based approach, planning must occur; alignment with the state standards must occur; and staff must be of high quality, serve in-field, and be prepared for focused work in reading and mathematics with students of all ages. The local curriculum must not only be initiated, but implemented fully and then institutionalized consistent with the Illinois Learning Standards. It must be focused on “what works,” and students and families must be ready for that focus. Illinois believes that the Illini Plan makes sense, within the given years, and meets the Congressional intent of neither being stagnant or waiting until the very end to increase dramatically in a couple years before 2014. The proposal meets that intent as well as the requirement for “continuous and substantial” growth within the context of a research-based approach.

There has been informal feedback on several occasions. The latest dialogue was with Undersecretary of Education Gene Hickok on Thursday. He and his staff raised questions about the Illini Plan. They understood the Illinois intent and the rationale for the uneven increments. They were also quite cognizant of the legal requirement for even increments. They requested, strongly, that Illinois revisit the Illini Plan, considering placing our uneven increments into two equal halves or equal increments.

I have looked at this option with my staff. To have two equal halves we’d have to have more growth in the first half, from 40% in 2003 to 70% (up about 3%) and then from 70% to 100% in the second half. That would mean more growth in the earlier years than planned, and less in the latter years. The midpoint is between 2008 and 2009, so try and visualize an imaginary line between them and not a 70% figure on the graph below.

We have plotted out this alternate path (see figure below) for your consideration.
The lower line in the graph (pink or rectangular points) is the current Illini Plan. The blue/diamond point line is one suggested revision. The difference line is obvious, with the major differences being in years 2007-2010. In sum, this trajectory moves 3% into the first half from the second half. 2008 would need to be at about 66 and 2009 would need to be at 73, crossing an imaginary line of 70% between 2008 and 2009, therefore equal halves with unequal increments therein. This does mean a steeper growth in 2005 (up 1% more), 2006 (up 1% more), and 2007 (up 1% more). While this would diminish by the same three points in the second half, that timeframe would be in 2012-2014. We all wanted to be reasonable, and increasing 3% in the first half or next five years may or may not be reasonable.

To accomplish this change would mean the following changes (bold print) in the trajectory.
Options
Two options are outlined for your consideration.

#1. One option is to acquiesce to the request of the U S Department of Education. That would combine the wording of the law with reality, by moving from 40% to 70% to 100% as equal increments.

#2. The other option is to be steadfast in maintaining what the task force has recommended and the Board adopted. The task force would have preferred if the end point was not 2014 and the trajectory could have been even more gradual, but the given end point was 2014. Even with the original trajectory it was acknowledged that the middle years would be difficult and the out years near to impossible to attain.

Superintendent’s Recommendation
1. Share this information with Assessment and Accountability Task Force members. A memo went to them on May 9th, asking for comments. To date seven members of the task force have responded, with most of them saying "hold fast" on the original decision. A couple of individuals are saying they could live with the change but would rather not. One said it is OK to change.

2. Communicate back to the U S Department of Education.

The Superintendent will continue to meet with the Task Force on a periodic basis.