AGENDA (timeframes are estimated for planning purposes)

1. Roll Call

2. Board Member Participation by Other Means

3. Public Participation 2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

4. Minutes of the February Education Policy Planning Committee Meeting (pp. 2-4)

5. ICCB College and Career Readiness Project (Christopher Koch) 2:15 – 2:30 p.m. (pp. 5-9)
   (Elaine Johnson, V.P. for Academic Affairs & Workforce Development, ICCB)

6. Illinois College and Workforce Preparation: Longitudinal Data Update 2:30 – 2:50 p.m. (pp. 10-16)
   (Christopher Koch, Susan Morrison)
   Others Attending:
   - Jonathan Furr, Holland & Knight
   - George Vineyard, Illinois Shared Enrollment & Graduation Information Consortium
   - David Smalley, Illinois Board of Higher Education
   - Shangte Shen, ISBE Career and Technical Education Staff

*7. Future Assessments of ELL students for Accountability Purposes 2:50 – 3:35 p.m. (pp. 17-22)
   (Chris Koch, Connie Wise, Joyce Zurkowski, Rene Valenciano, Robin Lisboa)

8. Committee Agenda Planning/Additional Items

9. Adjourn

* Items listed with an asterisk (*) will be discussed in committee and Board action may be taken in the plenary session.
EDUCATION POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
9:30 a.m.
Board Room, 4th Floor
Springfield, Illinois

Committee Members Physically Present
Andrea Brown
Joyce Karon
Vinni Hall
Dr. David Fields, Chair

Other Board Members Physically Present
Dean Clark
Jesse Ruiz
Chris Ward
Brenda Holmes

Committee Members Participation Via Phone Conference
None

ISBE Staff
Superintendent Chris Koch
Darren Reisberg
Rene Valenciano

The Education Policy Planning Committee (EPPC) meeting convened at 9:30 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL: Committee Chair, Dr. David Fields, requested a roll call. See above.

2. BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION BY OTHER MEANS: There was no participation from Board members by any other means.

   Special Presentation: Mark Williams introduced Deb Hopper who was present to speak on a recent proclamation made for National Entrepreneurship Week. The week of February 23rd to March 1st has been declared National Entrepreneurship Week.

3. FUTURE ASSESSMENTS OF ELL STUDENTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY PURPOSES: (Dr. Charles Stansfield, Second Language Testing, Inc.; Dr. Margo Gottlieb, Director, Assessment and Evaluation, Illinois Resource Center; Dr. Gary Cook, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research)

   The following legislators joined the committee for this discussion:
   - Representative Paul Froehlich
   - Representative Linda Chapa LaVia
   - Representative Elizabeth Hernandez
   - Representative Cynthia Soto
   - Senator William Delgado
   - Senator Iris Martinez

   Superintendent Koch provided the group with an overview and update of the issues revolving around ELL assessment. He also informed the Board of the response from the United States Department of Education (USDE) regarding flexibility in accountability issues for our ELL population. Superintendent Koch read an excerpt from USDE's letter, which cited their rationale for not approving any flexibility at this time. Superintendent Koch stressed that non-compliance with NCLB requirements could result in sanctions impacting students beyond this sub-group. Dr. Koch clarified the misperception that IMAGE was a native language test. However, this year Illinois will:
   - Provide instructions translated into ten languages,
   - Disseminate a letter for parents and to the field explaining the changes for ELL students. The letter was made available in ten languages
   - Provide for the first time ever word to word glossaries also in ten languages
Dr. Charles Stansfield, Dr. Margot Gottlieb, and Dr. Gary Cook provided guidance and shared their expertise in the field of ELL assessment. The members of the panel discussed options and challenges faced in the development of an accurate assessment instrument for ELL students. Using the examples set by states faced with similar issues, the panel made recommendations toward achieving the goal of valid test results that are reflective of the student’s abilities. They recommended options include the following:

- A modified English version of the state achievement tests with appropriate accommodations;
- A translated version of the state achievement tests in the ten languages of highest frequency in Illinois; and
- The development of a Spanish academic achievement test aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and the Illinois Spanish Language Arts Standards.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** The Board heard testimony related to the assessment of ELL students from nine individuals, two of which were parents. Two individuals, Mariann Lemke, Director of Assessment, CPS and Diane Zendejas, Chief Officer of the office of Language and Culture at CPS, submitted written comments encouraging ISBE to consider appropriate accommodations for existing assessment of ELL students.

Peg Agnos, Executive Director for the Legislative Network of DuPage (LEND), shared her concerns about ELL assessment. Ms. Agnos stated that Illinois has an opportunity to establish new parameters for the assessment system. She stated that the new system should be designed to be computer-adaptive and provide educators with data to guide instructional decision making.

Phyllis Weaver, CUSD 200, was also present to discuss ELL assessment. Ms. Weaver applauded the State Board for considering research and best practices. She commented that developing an effective assessment instrument is a complex issue.

Josie Yanguas, Illinois Advisory Council for Bilingual Education, shared her thoughts on ELL assessment as well as the recommendations made by the advisory council, stressing the need for a comprehensive system of assessment. She indicated that this is an opportunity for Illinois to become a leader and set an example for other states to follow.

Diep Nguyen, representing the Illinois Advisory Council for Bilingual Education and School District 62, argued that ISAT is an invalid testing instrument that contains systemic problems and using current accommodations does not resolve these issues. She further stated that this is an opportunity for Illinois to set an example and to “do what’s right.”

Ricardo Meza of MALDEF urged the Board to listen to the Bilingual Advisory Council’s recommendations and to commit to designing a new assessment instrument.

Roger Thornton, Superintendent, HSD 211, shared his belief that we must work within the law but urged Illinois to unite with other states opposed to the USDE’s unyielding stance on NCLB requirements.

Carmen Acevedo, Assistant Superintendent for Plainfield Dist. # 202, argued that “one size does not fit all” in accommodations made for ELL students. Ms. Acevedo stated that it is important to take into consideration the students’ many different levels of English proficiency. She concluded by stating that using the current system will not result in a true measure of ELL students’ abilities.

**The EPPC Committee recessed at 12:10 p.m.** to allow members to attend the State of the State and Budget Address that was scheduled to begin at noon.

**The EPPC Committee resumed at 2:00 p.m.**
5. **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2008 EPPC MEETING:** The EPPC Committee approved the minutes from the January 2008 EPPC Meeting.

6. **ILLINOIS EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSET MAP (IECAM):** (Kay Henderson) Kay Henderson gave the Board an update on IECAM, which is a geographic information system that supplies demographic data compiled from ISBE, DHS, and Head Start data among other early childhood resources. On behalf of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and the University of Illinois Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative, Ms. Emily Harris thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide the presentation. Ms. Harris gave an interactive demonstration showing how the data can be manipulated to illustrate relevant demographic aspects of early childhood data and service providers around the state. Ms. Henderson indicated that this program has been useful in identifying underserved areas of the state and determining future service delivery levels.

7. **COMMITTEE AGENDA PLANNING (for March):**
   - Update on System of Support and Great Lakes West (can be a written update)
   - Discussion of proactive steps to avoid instances of school violence and ensure the safety of students (Dr. Hall will discuss with Rene Valenciano.)

8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Dr. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Karon seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.
TO: Illinois State Board of Education
FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education

Agenda Topic: ICCB College and Career Readiness Project

Materials: Project Description

Staff Contact(s): Elaine Johnson, Vice President for Academic Affairs & Workforce Development, Illinois Community College Board

Purpose of Agenda Item
The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the State Board of Education with an update regarding the ICCB College and Career Readiness Project (SB 858). The update will include the partnership schools, current activities being undertaken by the partnerships, ACT course analysis, and course alignment activities.

Relationship to/Implications for the State Board’s Strategic Plan
These projects reinforce and support these goals: 1 - Enhancing Literacy; and 3 - Expanding Data-Informed School Management & Support Practices

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
The Illinois State Board of Education will continue to support the Illinois Community College Board on the College and Career Readiness Project.

Background Information
See Attachment

Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications
Policy Implications: The project will provide an opportunity for the Board to consider the possible impact of strong ACT data driven connections between secondary and post-secondary programs in existing Agency initiatives. This project has strong implications to the high school restructuring initiatives of the Agency.

Budget Implications: None

Legislative Action: None

Communication: None
Pros and Cons of Various Actions
Pro: Support of the initiative will enhance the Board's knowledge of strategies for school improvement at the secondary level and positive connections that may be formed with post-secondary.

Superintendent's Recommendation
No recommendation is needed.

Next Steps
Provide ICCB with support and assistance as needed for implementation.
Findings and Purpose:
There is a direct and significant link between students being academically prepared for college and success in postsecondary education.

Many students enter college unprepared for the academic rigors of college and require noncredit remedial courses to attain skills and knowledge needed for regular, credit coursework. Remediation lengthens time-to-degree, imposes additional costs on students and colleges, and uses student financial aid for courses that will not count toward a degree.

All high school juniors take the Prairie State Achievement Exam, which contains the ACT college assessment exam. ACT test elements and scores can be correlated to specific course placements in community colleges. Customized ACT test results can be used in collaboration with high schools to assist high school students identify areas for improvement and help them close skills gaps during their senior year. Greater college and career readiness (CCR) will reduce the need for remediation, lower educational costs, shorten time-to-degree, and increase the overall success rate of Illinois college students.

Goals:
1. Diagnose college readiness. Develop a system to align ACT scores to specific community college courses in developmental and freshman curriculum.

2. Reduce remediation. Decrease the need for remedial coursework in math, reading, and writing at the college level through:
   a. Increasing the number of students enrolled in college-prep core curriculum.
   b. Assisting students to improve college readiness skills.
   c. Increase successful student transitions into postsecondary education.

3. Align high school and college curriculum.

4. Provide resources and academic support to students to enrich the senior year of high school through remedial or advanced coursework and other interventions.

5. Develop an appropriate evaluation process to measure effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.
Program:

1. Three-year pilot project
   a. Budget: $750,000 per year, appropriated to ICCB for the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Pilot Program.
   b. Four community college sites in first year
   c. Expansion in years two and three

2. First year: high school Class of 2008
   a. ICCB selects four community colleges to participate in the CCR program based on:
      i. Percent of students in developmental coursework
      ii. Demographics of student enrollment, including socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and enrollments of first-generation college students
      iii. Geographic diversity
      iv. Willingness of college to submit developmental and introductory courses to ACT for analysis of college placement
      v. Ability of community college to partner with local high schools to develop CCR readiness strategies and college readiness teams.
   b. ICCB will work with ACT to analyze up to 10 courses at each participating community college for purposes of determining student placement and college readiness.
   c. Each participating community college will establish an agreement with high school(s) to:
      i. Create a data-sharing agreement
      ii. Create a Readiness Prescription (Readiness Rx) for each student, showing:
          • Readiness status for college-level work
          • Course recommendations for remediation or for advanced coursework in AP classes or dual credit/dual enrollment programs
          • Additional academic support services, including tutoring, mentoring, college application assistance
      iii. Create CCR teams
          • Comprised of faculty and counselors/advisers from the community college and high school, a CCR Coordinator from the community college, and other members as determined by the high school and college. The teams may include, for example, local business or civic leaders.
          • CCR teams will develop intervention strategies:
            ➢ Use Readiness Rx to develop contract with each student for remedial or advanced coursework to be taken during the senior year.
            ➢ Monitor student progress
            ➢ Provide readiness support services
      iv. Retest students in spring 2008 to assess progress and college readiness.
d. ICCB will work with participating community colleges and high schools to develop an appropriate evaluation process to measure effectiveness of intervention strategies, including:
   i. Baseline data for each participating school
   ii. Baseline data for the Illinois system
   iii. Comparison of ACT scores from March 2007 to March 2008
   iv. Student enrollment in college in fall 2008
   vi. Retention of CCR students in spring semester 2009

e. ICCB will work with participating community colleges and high schools to establish operational processes and budget for CCR pilot programs, including:
   i. Employment of CCR Coordinator at each community college site
   ii. Budget
   iii. Creation of CCR teams, resources, and partnership agreements

3. Second Year: high school Class of 2009
   a. Analyze courses at three new community college sites
   b. Undertake intervention strategies through CCR teams with students in Class of 2009
   c. Monitor/assist 2008 CCR graduates in college

4. Third year: high school Class of 2010
   a. Analyze courses at five new community college sites
   b. Add CCR teams at three new sites (from year two)
   c. Undertake intervention strategies through CCR teams with students of Class of 2010 at seven sites
   d. Monitor/assist students from classes of 2008 and 2009 in college.
TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education
Susie Morrison, Special Assistant to the Superintendent

Agenda Topic: Illinois College and Workforce Readiness Partnership Phase II: Longitudinal Data System

**Purpose of Agenda Item**
The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a brief update on the data-related activities under the Illinois College and Work Readiness Partnership.

Information will include:

- An analysis of FERPA Implications for linking ISBE and postsecondary systems.
- Status report of the high school to postsecondary and Employment Data Pilot Project.
- An update with regard to state data efforts.
Memorandum

Date: March 10, 2008

To: Members of the Education Policy and Planning Committee

From: Jonathan E. Furr

Re: Update on Illinois College and Work Readiness Partnership Data Activities

This memorandum provides a brief update on the data-related activities under the Illinois College and Work Readiness Partnership.

I. Addressing Privacy Protection Laws

Holland & Knight prepared a detailed analysis of privacy protection (FERPA) implications for linking ISBE and postsecondary systems. This analysis was then reviewed and discussed among representatives from ISBE, IBHE, ICCB, ISAC, and the Shared Enrollment & Graduation File (ISEG).

Outcomes:

1. Common understanding among the various state education data stakeholders regarding FERPA limitations, and strategies for moving forward.

2. Specific strategies:
   a) Amend ISBE's Administrative Rules on Student Records (Part 375) to include the unique student identifier on student transcripts. If a rulemaking is initiated in the coming months, it could be completed in time to add the unique student identifier to 2009 transcripts.
   b) Use ACT PSAE records to link Unique Student Identifier records with postsecondary data elements commencing with the 2006 PSAE administration.

II. High School to Postsecondary and Employment Data Pilot Project
Holland & Knight has helped to frame and coordinate the data pilot analysis project described on the attachment to this memorandum.

**III. Coordination of State Data Efforts**

Throughout the process to date, there has been a high level of coordination among all of the state agencies involved with state education data. Holland & Knight has also made outreach to constituent groups and advocacy organizations to emphasize the need for their support for a high quality state education data system. Moving forward, we will seek to coordinate our work under the Illinois College and Work Readiness Partnership with the following initiatives:

A. High School Feedback Report Planning Committee;

B. Illinois Interactive Report Card upgrades; and

C. P-20 Council data system focus.
Illinois High School to Postsecondary and Employment

Data Analysis Pilot Project Overview

Objectives:

1. Provide school districts and state agencies with actionable data to inform policies and programs.
2. Demonstrate to policy-makers, legislators, and advocacy organizations the need for a linked P-12 and higher education data system.
3. Create a data and research framework that can be based upon data readily available to state agencies, once a linkage is created between ISBE and postsecondary data systems.
4. Create a data and research framework that can be used for industry sector analysis, in coordination with the work of the Governor's Economic Development Sub-Cabinet.
5. Develop strategies to address the legal and technical challenges associated with creating a linked P-12 and higher education data system.


Participating School Districts:

- Participating districts must provide basic identifying information for all graduating students in years 2000, 2001, and 2002. This information will be provided in accordance with a data sharing agreement that complies with all federal and state privacy protection laws.
- Any Illinois school district serving high school students may participate. However, the State is focusing on obtaining maximum possible participation for school districts in the Southern and Northeast Regions, as defined by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (see http://www.opportunityreturns.com/main.html). This reason for this focus is that data from the pilot will be used by the State to inform aspects of the State's healthcare pipeline initiative, which is currently focused on these two regions.

Research Questions: The pilot will provide data in an understandable, actionable format addressing the following questions:

1. Where did students in the graduating class cohorts enroll for postsecondary education? What were the overall postsecondary enrollment rates?

- Enrollment in postsecondary:
  - The district's enrollment count and percentages will be aggregated for 2-year and 4-year institutions, and compared to statewide and region-wide percentages.
  - The district's enrollment count and percentages will be shown for each 2-year and 4-year institution receiving students from the district.

Postsecondary Data Sources: Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Shared Enrollment & Graduation File, National Student Clearinghouse
2. **What were the year-to-year educational retention rates at Illinois educational institutions?**

   - Educational retention rate in postsecondary:
     - The year-to-year postsecondary retention rates for district graduates will be aggregated for 2-year and 4-year institutions, and compared to statewide and region-wide retention rates.
     - The year-to-year postsecondary retention rates for district graduates will be shown for each 2-year and 4-year institution in Illinois (public and private), and compared to each institution's overall retention rate.

   *Postsecondary Data Sources: Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Shared Enrollment & Graduation File, National Student Clearinghouse*

3. **What were the academic achievement levels for students entering Illinois community colleges?**

   - Cumulative GPA:
     - The cumulative GPA for district graduates will be aggregated for all Illinois community colleges, and compared to statewide and region-wide means.
     - The cumulative GPA for district graduates will be shown for each Illinois community college, and compared to each institution's overall mean.

   - Remedial Math and Remedial Language (ICCB):
     - The count and percentage of district graduates enrolled in both remedial math and remedial language classes will be aggregated for all Illinois community colleges, and compared to statewide and region-wide community college percentages.
     - The count and percentage of district graduates enrolled in both remedial math and remedial language will be shown for each Illinois community college, and compared to each institution's overall percentages.

   *Postsecondary Data Source: Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)*

4. **What were the graduation, transfer, or retention rates at Illinois public educational institutions (plus DePaul and Bradley)?**

   - Each district will be provided with year-to-year data indicating:
     - Transfer to another postsecondary institution;
     - Completion of a 2-year degree or certificate program; or
     - Or completion of a baccalaureate degree program.

   - This data will be aggregated for all Illinois public 2-year and 4-year institutions, and also shown for each institution with data in the Illinois Shared Enrollment and Graduation File (which all includes all public 2-year and 4-year institutions in Illinois, as well as DePaul and Bradley).

   *Postsecondary Data Source: Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Shared Enrollment & Graduation File*
5. **What were the employment fields and employment locations chosen by students in the graduating class cohorts?**

- **Field of Employment:** The employment status and ultimate fields of employment for district graduates will be shown by major NAICS Code Category, and compared to statewide and region-wide percentages.
- **Location of Employment:** The ultimate location of employment for district graduates will be identified by region.
- **Earnings Information:** Earnings information will be used to better assess the employment outcomes within particular fields.


**Student Groups and Data Analysis:**

- **Student Groups:** Where data is available, and subject to all state and federal privacy laws and small cell size restrictions, data will be disaggregated to show student group performance for the following categories:

  1. **Gender**

  2. **Special populations:**

     a. Students with disabilities
     b. Students with limited English proficiency
     c. Low income

  3. **Federal racial/ethnic codes:**

     a. Alaskan Native/American Indian
     b. Asian American/Pacific Islander
     c. Black, not of Hispanic origin
     d. Hispanic
     e. White, not of Hispanic origin
     f. Multiracial

  4. **College and work readiness indicators:**

     a. ACT composite score of 20
     b. Successfully complete, as a high school student, courses that award postsecondary credit at the secondary level
     c. Concentrator or non-concentrator in career and technical education program

  5. **PELL Grant Recipient**
• **Industry Sector Analysis:** With the linkage to employment data, student characteristics and outcomes within various industry sectors will be analyzed and reported.

• **Small cell size restrictions:** Except for enrollment information, no data will be presented for a cell sizes smaller than 10.
TO: Illinois State Board of Education
FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education, Connie J. Wise, PhD, Assistant Superintendent, Rene Valenciano, Assistant Superintendent

Agenda Topic: English Language Learners Assessment Recommendation

Staff Contact(s): Joyce Zurkowski, Robin Lisboa

Purpose of Agenda Item:
To provide the State Board with a plan for assessing English Language Learners (ELLs) for Title I accountability purposes.

Relationship to/Implications for the State Board’s Strategic Plan:
This agenda item is directly linked to Goal 1 and Goal 3.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
The Board will have an understanding of agency staffs’ recommendation for proceeding in relation to assessing ELLs for Title I accountability purposes

Background Information
The Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) was first administered to English Language Learners (ELLs) as an English language proficiency assessment in spring 1997, prior to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Starting with the passage of NCLB, all states were required to have the same high expectations and academic standards apply to all public school students. Further, all state assessments had to align to those reading and mathematics standards. In an attempt to meet those requirements, Illinois began using IMAGE as the content-based assessment for ELLs who had been identified as being eligible to receive services through transitional bilingual education programs/transitional programs of instruction (TBE/TPI). IMAGE was given to those ELLs instead of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), which is given in grades 3 through 8, and the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), which is taken in grade 11. Furthermore, it is important to note that simultaneously IMAGE was used to fulfill the NCLB requirement that ELLs’ English language proficiency also be assessed.

NCLB requires every state’s assessment system to be approved for use for accountability purposes through a Peer Review process. During Illinois’ first Peer Review process in June 2006, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) noted problems with IMAGE’s alignment with the Illinois Learning Standards and its comparability to ISAT and PSAE. The ED did not, at that time, indicate that IMAGE was not remediable, nor direct us to stop using the test. Over the next year and a half, ISBE attempted to work with the ED on resolving the issues that had been identified by the Peer Review process. However, despite our efforts, we were unsuccessful at meeting these alignment requirements. In October 2007, the ED notified Illinois that it could no longer use IMAGE for NCLB accountability purposes. If IMAGE continued to be used, Illinois risked sanctions by the federal government, including limiting the state’s flexibility under NCLB and the withholding of federal funding. Neither of these were acceptable consequences.
Given the timing of the final decision by the ED, Illinois did not have an opportunity to develop a new ELL content-based assessment prior to the 2008 testing cycle. Since all students must be tested, after consultation with the ED, individuals familiar with educating ELLs, and individuals with experience in test development and the Peer Review process, ISBE determined that the only feasible option Illinois had for testing in 2008, and probably extending into 2009, was to assess ELLs through the ISAT and PSAE with accommodations. This practice of having ELLs participate in the accountability system through the “general” assessment is widely followed across the country. Approximately 60,000 students, roughly 5% of the total number of students assessed, would no longer take IMAGE. This decision was communicated to school districts and the public.

Since the announcement, ISBE and the Board have heard from individuals, districts and organizations regarding administering ISAT and PSAE to the ELL population. The concern was expressed that even with accommodations, ISAT and PSAE results would be unreliable and invalid, yielding little usable information as to how ELLs were performing. ISBE has consulted with other states and nationally recognized assessment experts on approaches to assessing ELLs. In fact, the Board heard from three assessment experts at the February meeting. Most recently, staff participated in a Research to Action Forum sponsored by REL Midwest and its partners. The focus for the Illinois team, which was comprised of practitioners, policy makers and researchers, was on ELL assessment for accountability purposes. The facilitator for the session was Dr. Edynn Sato who is the director of special populations for the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center, a federally funded national center that is collaboration between WestEd and the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST). She is also the director of research and English language learner assessment for the Assessment and Standards Development Services division at WestEd.

A common theme throughout all of these discussions was that ISBE should proceed in a methodical and systematic process in relation to the assessment of ELLs. Developing another “band-aid” approach would be unacceptable. Rather ISBE was encouraged to engage in thoughtful, data-based decision-making. The recognition of its obligation to develop the best assessment system possible is balanced by another equally important need to demonstrate ISBE’s continued commitment to the education of its ELL students. Relying on all that we have heard and learned, we have developed a plan that honors both of these needs. Providing options for students, so that assessment can mirror instructional practice as much as possible, is recognized as a key component of the Illinois assessment system. The proposed plan involves the ongoing development of a triad of options: accommodations, linguistic modification and translated/transadapted forms of the assessments. It is important to note, however, that the intent is to implement these options thoughtfully and methodically through a graduated process.

Although initially it was thought that the 2009 assessment options for ELLs would be identical to those provided in 2008, we are pleased to present a plan that will allow for implementation of some components as early as spring 2009.

For the PSAE 2009 administration, ISBE recommends the following:

1. Continue with the 2008 accommodations which will be available to all ELLs in program years 1-5 and at any English proficiency level. ISBE will conduct a survey to gather information on teachers’ perception of the usefulness and recommendations for improvement of the 2008 accommodations and make adjustments accordingly.

2. Translate the 2009 PSAE math and science sections into Spanish, which will be appropriate at least for students with an English proficiency level ranging from 0 to 3.9 and who have been in the TBE/TPI program for 1 to 3 years. Students in districts which
have established higher English proficiency levels for exiting, ranging from 4 to 5.9, and who have an additional two years of program eligibility may also benefit from a translated test. To accomplish this, ISBE needs to determine the delivery method (reader script/audio, unilingual, side-by-side) with vendor and field input. Additionally, ISBE will need to determine the translation process and which dialect it will use.

As ISBE initiates the process of the translation/transadaptation of its assessments, we recognize the need to develop our capacity, both internally and across the state. Building and fostering a network of bilingual individuals who have experience in item development, item review, and the content areas will be critical during this first step in including translated/transadapted forms of ISBE’s assessments in its system. This network will serve as the foundation as ISBE moves forward in the extension of this process.

Along with increasing capacity, the actual process for developing the translated form of the assessment will need to be determined. As Illinois has committed to providing quality assessments to its students and, fundamentally, this is to serve as one of its means of satisfying the requirements of NCLB, meeting technical requirements is a must. Practices will need to be put into place and studies will need to be conducted to ensure the translated form of the PSAE is valid. ISBE must be able to demonstrate that the translated form of the assessment has construct maintenance, content alignment, and score comparability to the English form of the PSAE. The skills and knowledge being measured must remain the same and the scores have to be able to be interpreted in the same manner.

By the end of the 2008-2009 school year and the completion of one PSAE testing cycle, ISBE should have built enough capacity, established appropriate processes and procedures, and developed adequate validity plans to evaluate its ability to utilize the translation/transadaptation process confidently in future years.

For the ISAT 2009 administration, ISBE recommends the following:

1. Continue with the 2008 accommodations which will be available to all ELLs in program years 1-5 and at any proficiency level. ISBE will conduct a survey to gather information on teachers’ perception of the usefulness and recommendations for improvement of the 2008 accommodations and make adjustments accordingly.

2. Linguistically modify the math and science portions of the ISAT, making them accessible to students with English language proficiency levels ranging from 0 to 3.9 and who have been eligible for ELL programming for 1 to 3 years. Students in districts which have established higher English proficiency levels for exiting, ranging from 4 to 5.9, and who have an additional two years of eligibility for programming, may also benefit. Linguistically modified assessments are not easier than their counterparts. Rather, they are simply more accurate in their measurement of the content being assessed. Linguistic modification reduces or eliminates unnecessary complex language that interferes with students’ abilities to demonstrate content knowledge. In addition to language changes, visual and/or graphic support may be incorporated. This process will create an assessment with items similar to what had previously been used in IMAGE. The significant difference with this assessment is that alignment will be enhanced. How to incorporate the SAT 10 items in this modified assessment will need to be determined with field input and the vendor. This linguistically modified and visually/graphically enhanced form of the assessment will also require validity studies to ensure construct maintenance, content alignment and score comparability.

3. Allow for translation of students’ native language responses for short answer and extended response items for both math and reading, which will benefit those students with an appropriate level of native language proficiency. With field input, establishing a
protocol and translator qualifications to ensure standard implementation of this process will need to be developed.

In preparation for making decisions regarding future ELL assessment options, ISBE should complete the following activities during the 2008-2009 school year:

- Develop a means of collecting information on native language proficiency, especially in content area language, and develop a means to compare that to students’ English language proficiency
- Review the ongoing inclusion of math and reading short answer and extended responses as part of the assessment system for all students
- Examine the initial data from the Intended and Unintended Consequences Research Project, a 5 year project examining several different aspects of the Illinois assessment system, including its consequences at the student, school and district level
- Evaluate the PSAE translation process and technical requirements
- Participate in the ON-PAR Math grant, a project developing an on-line math assessment for ELL students

Possible additional ISBE activities starting in 2008-2009 could include the development of: content-based translated glossaries to be used for instructional purposes throughout the school year, professional development materials for the use of assessment results, and guidance on the appropriate use of formative assessment techniques at the classroom level to gather additional student-specific data.

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

**Policy Implications:** Illinois is committed to providing quality assessments for its ELLs that meet the requirements of NCLB. By engaging in thoughtful, data-based decision-making in choosing how to proceed beyond the 2009 assessment, while also providing additional accommodations that include translation and linguistically modified assessment forms, the Board best demonstrates its commitment to the education of Illinois’ ELL population.

**Budget Implications:** We do not have bids on the suggested activities and products at this time. Informal conversations have provided inconsistent projections. However, we do know that development costs are expected to increase, as are materials and production costs. The data capturing, capacity building and validity activities will also require significant additional funding.

As a starting point, we estimate a cost of $67,000 for translation and development of the PSAE in Spanish. Should we decide to follow the example set by the only other state translating ACT and WorkKeys items, additional production costs of $7.00/DVD (estimated need of 2200 = $15,400) or $15/VHS (estimated need of 2200 = $33,000) should be expected. Other materials, scoring, reporting and shipping would be at additional costs. For the linguistic modification of the ISAT, a projected estimate of $50,000 per grade level can be used as an initial reference point; but should be interpreted extremely cautiously. Again, additional materials, scoring, reporting and shipping would be at additional cost.

There will also be costs associated with the following:

- Development of other accommodated materials, such as glossaries
- Capacity building
- Validation studies
- Survey development
The proposed plan is intended to fall within the total increase allocation for ELL assessment proposed in ISBE’s 2009 budget.

The recommendations included in this proposal require one additional FTE in assessment.

**Legislative Action:** None expected at this time.

**Communication:** One of the concerns we have heard over the course of the last few months is the desire of the field to be better informed and to have more input into directions the agency may choose to take. We have attempted to be more responsive to that request in recent months with the active encouragement to the Illinois English Language Learner Assessment Advisory Committee (IELLAAC), the Illinois Advisory Council for Bilingual Education (BAC) and other community-based and professional organizations to provide input through committee meetings, in writing and directly to the board. As we move forward, the continued participation of the IELLAAC, BAC, districts and other stakeholder groups will be critical. Assistance in investigating research, what other states are doing, and what is happening in Illinois classrooms will be an ongoing need. The additional support of organizations such as the RELmidwest Center and the Assessment and Accountability Center should also enable Illinois to make the most well-informed decisions it can.

When decisions are made, they need to be shared through our standard communication channels (superintendent’s bulletin, assessment listserv, ELL listserv, coordinator e-mail blasts and press releases), but we also need to be sure to utilize organizations, such as LEND, to assist in conveying the message. Additionally, we will be updating the members of the General Assembly. We need to ensure that the people working most closely with these students, the teachers are informed, and we will be asking the unions to assist with that effort.

**Pros and Cons of Various Actions**

One of the cautions we must heed is not try to do more than we realistically can. Illinois has had the experience of both engaging in development activities that have resulted in invalid assessments and having its system overwhelmed to its detriment. One of the advantages to the above plan is that it thoughtfully allows for all three options to be implemented at one level or another in 2008-2009. The lessons learned during the next year should serve ISBE well as they are applied more widely in future years.

One of the benefits to pursuing the presented plan for PSAE is that the current assessment can be used to investigate the process and procedures for translation/transadaptation with the students who have the highest probability of having the most years of education in their native language. It is expected that although fairly new to education in English, many of the students eligible for ELL programming as 11th graders will have participated in instruction in their native language outside of Illinois.

Using the Spanish form of the PSAE will be a state-allowed accommodation; it is not an ACT approved one. Students using the Spanish version, while receiving a PSAE score, will NOT receive an ACT reportable score. Of course, students would have the option of choosing to take the English PSAE rather than the translated PSAE in order to obtain an ACT reportable score.

At the ISAT level, even for 2009, all three options (accommodations, linguistic modification and translation/transadaptation) are represented in one way or another. The linguistically modified form will be available for the widest range of ELLs in terms of language groups, English proficiency levels and years in TBE/TPI programming. As an additional significant advantage, that form will be available for other students (i.e. students with language disabilities) to use. It may even serve as the basis for an alternate assessment for those students referred to as the
2%. ISBE’s experience with this form of the assessment will be extremely beneficial as we move forward and its familiarity to the field may be reassuring. In addition, Illinois already has some validity evidence of its process to modify ISAT items making them more accessible to the ELL population. The conclusion of the study conducted when ISAT items were first incorporated into IMAGE was that the adaptations made to the items resulted in items that were fair to the ELL population and were fully comparable to the original versions in terms of precision and skills assessed.

Although only a starting point, the ISAT plan for 2009 does allow for new native language accommodations. It is expected that the option of translating students’ short answer and extended responses for math and reading will be valued as a means of making those items more accessible.

The state will be making significant strides in its assessment of its ELLs, while at the same time allowing the required time to gather additional data and information to inform future development. In addition, the quality development and beginning validation of one additional assessment form for grades 3-8 and another for grade 11 is feasible. To attempt to do more would put the state at risk.

The BAC had one additional recommendation: the development of a Spanish academic achievement test aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and the Illinois Spanish Language Arts standards. This recommendation was especially geared for those ELLs participating in dual language or two-way immersion programs in which 50% of the instructional day may be in Spanish. Given increasing implementation of dual language programs across the state, the future creation of a Spanish language arts assessment would be very useful for program evaluation and other accountability purposes in these instructional settings.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**
I recommend that the following motion be adopted:

> The State Board of Education directs staff to implement the plan developed for assessing ELLs for Title I accountability purposes.

**Next Steps**
Should the Board endorse the presented plan, staff will need to proceed quickly in contracting for the required services. Work toward linguistically modifying the ISAT math and science and translating the PSAE math and science would need to begin immediately. Additionally, we will widely communicate the plan as described above.