While we shift our Summative focus from ISAT testing to the PARCC Assessment next school year, keep in mind that the most impactful assessment to increase student learning is done through Formative Assessment that is done daily in classroom throughout Illinois.

Three Types of Assessment

The first type is Formative assessment which provides regular feedback to teachers so they can adjust instruction to improve student learning.

The next type is Interim assessments which are designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction.

Finally there are Summative assessments which are designed to measure overall curriculum and program effectiveness. Summative assessments are standardized to allow comparison across student groups.

As we begin to reflect on our school year and consider what lies ahead for the coming year, standards-based, common formative assessment should be on our to-do list. Get together with teammates, compare some assessments you are currently using to see how they align to the New Illinois Learning Standards, and make some adjustments for the strongest alignment possible. Next year, after using these assessments, share your student results with your teammates, using the results to guide your teaching and working to increase student learning with professional discourse on the best methods to support learning.
Writing Standard #2: Informational/Explanatory Texts

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes:

- to increase reader’s knowledge of a subject,
- to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or
- to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept.

To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea and a coherent focus on a topic and more skilled at selecting and incorporating relevant examples, facts, and details into their writing.

Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumes. As students advance through the grades, they expand their repertoire of informational/explanatory in a variety of disciplines and domains.

(www.corestandards.org, Appendix A, p. 23)

Genre Writing and PARCC

PARCC developed a list of writing forms that teachers can expect to see on the PARCC assessment. To that end, teachers can elicit writing that is authentic for the students. Teachers should not plan to use the list as a checklist of forms to be taught. Instead, the list is provided to demonstrate the wealth of forms for writing that may be used to elicit authentic student writing. Another resource to consider for genre writing is the Teachers College of Reading and Writing Project. Lucy Caulkins and her colleagues host videos inside classrooms sharing practical tips and ideas about writing that cover introductions, endings, assessments, conferencing and more. To access the videos, click here: http://vimeo.com/album/2777080

Think-Pair-Share or Think-Write-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is a collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned reading. This technique requires students to (1) think individually about a topic or answer to a question; and (2) share ideas with classmates. Discussing an answer with a partner serves to maximize participation, focus attention and engage students in comprehending the reading material.

Teachers can modify this strategy and include various writing components within the Think-Pair-Share strategy. This allows teachers to see whether there are problems in comprehension. Teachers can create a Read-Write-Pair-Share strategy in which students:

P: Pair up with a partner.
S: Share ideas with a partner/the whole class
R: Read the assigned material.
W: Write down their thoughts about the topic prior to a discussion.

Adapted from http://www.adlit.org/strategies/23277/
PARCC Sample Tests

This week PARCC released grade-level practice End-of-Year tests on the TestNav platform. Currently only the Traditional Pathway for High School End-of-Year practice tests are available. End-of-Year assessments are comprised only of type I tasks, items that are machine scoreable.

These tasks assess concepts, skills, and procedures and can involve any or all of the Mathematical Practice Standards. These practice tests provide educators, students, and parents the opportunity to take the appropriate grade End-of-Year assessment on the platform.

This means everyone can practice with the types of tasks and the tools available online. It is highly recommended to take the tutorial before trying a test.

To find out more or to take a practice test, go to http://practice.parcc.testnav.com/#

Mathematics Performance Based Assessments (PBA) for each grade-level are scheduled to be released on the platform this fall. Each PBA will contain type I, II, and III tasks. Type II and III tasks require hand-scoring based on a rubric.

Illinois Institute for Mathematics Leaders

We have had so much fun with our Illinois Math Leaders this past year that we decided to re-run the IML for those who didn’t join us last year.

This year’s IML is only 2 days, June 16th and 17th at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield.

Learn all about the new Illinois Learning Standards, research-based ways to be a leader, up-to-date information on PARCC, and much more.

Hurry! Space is limited.

To register go to https://www.eventbrite.com/e/illinois-institute-for-mathematics-leaders-sponsored-by-isbe-math-content-specialists-registration-9908713228

“Mathematicians do not study objects, but relations between objects.”

Henri Poincare

New on Illustrative Mathematics

Illustrative Mathematics has many new resources available. They have new tasks that are being updated on a regular basis.

If you haven’t checked it out lately, now is the time. You can also like Illustrative Mathematics on Facebook and join them for their Task Tuesday each week.

Another new feature is the Fractions Progression Module while most useful for grades 2-6, this may be a good place to send some of your students that are still struggling with fractions.

These eight helpful videos address the meaning of unit fractions, equivalent fractions, comparing fractions to adding, multiplying and dividing fractions.

www.illustrativemathematics.org/fractions_progression
Here are some of the most recent updates. (A-Z website: http://bit.ly/1i47vvJ) provides up to date, research-based links for the classroom teacher covering over 50 educational student related topics. Based on the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine report (Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities, 2009) that gathered findings from previous studies, it is estimated that 13 - 20 percent of children living in the United States (up to 1 out of 5 children) experience a mental disorder in a given year and an estimated $247 billion is spent each year on childhood mental disorders. Because of the impact on children, families, and communities, children's mental disorders are an important public health issue in the United States. Learn more about Children's Mental Health at http://www.samhsa.gov/index.aspx and the National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (May 6) 2014, Inspiring Resilience, Creating Hope at http://www.samhsa.gov/children/national.asp.

A-Z Topic Resources Website

Ever Google® search “bullying”? When the search returns 26 million results it can be overwhelming to find research-based, school-based information. Don’t worry, ISBE Learning Supports is here to help. The A-Z topic resource page provides up to date, research-based links for the classroom teacher covering over 50 educational student related topics. Here are some of the most recent updates. (A-Z website: http://bit.ly/1i47vvJ)

Bully prevention
http://bit.ly/1gKlz02
Bullying can be defined as a "physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm the victim"—Farrington and Ttofi (2010). The resources provided include articles and tools for reducing bullying within the classroom and school building, anti-bullying efforts in the State of Illinois and a link to new guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education to support educators in reducing bullying.

Child Abuse
http://bit.ly/1kVh4B
April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and the A-Z topics has a community packet available for download. This packet is provided by Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and is new for 2014. The packet includes awareness and prevention resources. It provides examples of how to respond if individuals believe abuse is occurring. Included is also an order form for free brochures and posters to help support teachers in developing awareness in their school.

Children of Military Families
FAQ: http://bit.ly/1FNH6d
Toolkit: http://bit.ly/1k49vV0
The military population relocates students in the public education system every year. The Illinois Educational Opportunities for Military Children Council has created a toolkit to help parents, educators and districts prepare students for the transition to a new school. The toolkit provides “helpful hints” and “key contacts” to ensure a smooth transition for the families and schools.

Family Engagement Framework Guide
http://www.illinoisparents.org/ISBE.aspx
The guide is a tool for ISBE, school districts, and schools to use in developing and expanding school-family partnerships to support improved student learning and healthy development outcomes. This resource brings together research, promising practices, and a consolidation of key program requirements to provide districts, schools, and families with tools to assist in planning, implementation, and evaluation of family engagement practices.

School Discipline Guidance
http://1.usa.gov/1gDTB1O
The site includes videos, a Guiding Principles document and a webinar series on "Supportive School Discipline". The U.S. Department of Education recently released new resources on school climate and discipline. This resource incorporates emerging research and best practices to help guide States’ efforts to improve school climate and school discipline.

Trauma Informed Practices
http://bit.ly/1fAXfho
In the United States over 25% of the school population has been exposed to a traumatic event before the age of 18. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has an Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. The toolkit includes facts and suggestions for educators, There is also a two page resource document with educator resources on the Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Trauma. There are age specific issues:

- PRESCHOOL (http://bit.ly/QIXbDg)
- ELEMENTARY (http://bit.ly/PrjWKR)
- MIDDLE SCHOOL (http://bit.ly/14MHUU)
- HIGH SCHOOL (http://bit.ly/1sdmATP)

Related Conditions for Learning Indicators are included in the Rising Star on IRC school improvement tool and accessible at the ISBE Learning Supports web site.

Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.