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.

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.

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.
Writing Standard #10: Writing Routinely

Standard 10 states that students will write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. They develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources.

http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/

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

Evaluating Sources for Research

Teaching the process and application of research should be an ongoing part of all school curricula. It is important that research components are taught all through the year, beginning on the first day of school. Jean Dreher’s Easy Steps to Writing Research Reports states “to take advantage of the resources that technology offers and to become prepared for the demands that will face them in the future, students need to learn how to use an array of technologies.”

Students need to understand and have opportunities to practice strategies for gathering information, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information through critical thinking.

Click here to access a lesson from ReadWriteThink.org that has a question guide for examining a website and an instructional plan highlighting an easy to follow detailed system that teachers can employ in the classroom.
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 scorable.

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 rerun the IML for those who didn’t join us last year.

This years 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 in limited.

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

Henri Poincare

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

New on Illustrative Mathematics

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

Another new feature is the Fractions Progression Module. This progression starts with the basic representing of halves in 2nd grade through dividing fractions by fractions in 6th grade.

Teachers will be interested in learning about how fractions progress from the meaning of unit fractions, equivalent fractions, to comparing fractions to adding, multiplying and dividing fractions.

Go to www.illustrativemathematics.org/fractions_progression to see these eight helpful videos that are colorful and informative that contain many visuals that will aid in planning lesson plans about fractions.
Children and adolescents living with mental illness can lead successful lives. They can achieve success in school, in work, and in their communities. However, an overwhelming majority of children with social, emotional, and/or behavioral issues do not receive the supports they need to reduce the barriers to their success. Children’s mental disorders affect many children and families. Boys and girls from all regions of the United States, across all ages and ethnic/racial backgrounds experience mental disorders. 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/1gKlzo2
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
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/1gDTBlO
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 a 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/QIXbDq)
• ELEMENTARY (http://bit.ly/PrjWKR)
• MIDDLE SCHOOL (http://bit.ly/1I4MHUU)
• HIGH SCHOOL (http://bit.ly/1sdmATP)

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