The joint NCATE/Illinois State Board of Education Board of Examiners that visited DePaul University began its deliberations at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 15, with all 10 members, a state consultant present, and an NEA observer present. We concluded our work at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, November 19. The visit schedule indicates that the entire team reviewed documents from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday afternoon and from 9 a.m. to noon on Sunday. In addition, BOE members carried documents back to their hotel rooms, read documents during times indicated on the schedule for meals that were catered into the exhibit room, and shared interview responsibilities, allowing some members more time for reading documents. The BOE sought to triangulate data and to understand patterns of evidence collected through document review and through interviews of candidates, faculty, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and others. The interviews and candidate performance fair conducted on Sunday afternoon were especially valuable. They enabled us to meet educators affiliated with a wider variety of school sites and DePaul campuses than we could visit, and they enabled us to meet candidates from all programs. Because of the timing of the visit at the end of a quarter, candidates were not available to be observed at school sites on Monday or Tuesday. The BOE used the NCATE/Illinois visit template for guidance in allocating time to data collection and analysis activities, including review of numerous documents listed in the BOE Report.

As indicated in the third paragraph of the section of the rejoinder entitled Alignment of Unit Initial Program Standards with State and National Standards, the rubrics developed for assessment of candidate performance in the DePaul University programs refer to “key elements” of the various standards that are aligned with institutional standards. A concern of the BOE was that the details of the state and national standards may be lost through varied understandings of the meanings of the “key elements.” Assessments related to the Illinois Technology Standards that apply to all initial programs are a case in point. In the rejoinder, the section entitled ISBE Technology Standards describes inputs (completion of a course) rather than a plan for assessment in every initial program of candidate application of the full range of technology knowledge and skills specified by the Illinois standards. BOE concern about clarity and consistency in unit understanding and assessment of this and other standards was motivated by our interviews of candidates, cooperating educators, and university supervisors, as well as by review of the documents. There is need for the goals and assessments of every program, as specified in accessible documents such as syllabi and rubrics, to communicate clearly to the candidates and those who assess their performance, not just “key elements,” but also the detailed expectations of the Illinois technology, literacy, and special education standards that apply to the performance of candidates in all initial programs. Although documents demonstrating the alignment of various sets of standards may exist, the BOE did not find clarity about expectations related to all standards in the documents and practices of the initial programs.