



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Key Findings from Phase II of the Illinois State Board of Education Listening Tours on the Every Student Succeeds Act**

### **Appendix**

**October 2016**

## Contents

Summary Notes of Freeport School District 145 Listening Tour Session on September 6, 2016.....	2
Summary Notes of Moline-Coal Valley School District 40 Listening Tour Session on September 7, 2016 .....	5
Summary Notes of Hall High School District 502 (Spring Valley) Listening Tour Session on September 8, 2016 .....	9
Summary Notes of Bloomington School District 87 Listening Tour Session on September 13, 2016 .....	11
Summary Notes of Mundelein High School District 120 Listening Tour Session on September 15, 2016 .....	14
Summary Notes of Carbondale Community High School District 165 Listening Tour Session on September 19, 2016 .....	19
Summary Notes of Effingham Community Unit School District 40 Listening Tour Session on September 20, 2016 .....	24
Summary Notes of Quincy Public School District 172 Listening Tour Session on September 21, 2016 .....	29
Summary Notes of Peoria School District 150 Listening Tour Session on September 22, 2016.....	33
Summary Notes of Lockport Township High School District 205 Listening Tour Session on September 26, 2016 .....	43
Summary Notes of East St. Louis School District 189 Listening Tour Session on September 27, 2016 .....	47
Summary Notes of Chicago Public School District 299 Listening Tour Session on September 27, 2016 .....	54
Summary Notes of School District U-46 (Schaumburg) Listening Tour Session on September 28, 2016 .....	63
Summary Notes of DeKalb County Farm Bureau (Sycamore) Listening Tour Session on October 5, 2016.....	70



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**Freeport School District 145**

**September 6, 2016**

**Regional Office of Education Superintendent Aaron Mercier**

**Presenter: Melina Wright**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Cora Goldston & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

26 Participants: Regional Office of Education Staff, School Board Members, Educational Association Members, Principals, Teachers, School Librarians, Community College Coordinators, Youth Coordinators, Technical Assistance Providers, and Union Members

### **Public Comment**

#### **Lauren Collen, Librarian in Harlem School District 122**

- Came with one idea, but has another idea after listening to Melina. Was going to talk about the value of school librarians—research has extensively shown the positive effects of having a school librarian. School librarians can be an indicator of school success and growth. Schools need real certified librarians—librarians have a measurable impact on student achievement. Including librarians as part of the accountability system is both measurable and benefits students.

#### **Jane Lenser, Director of Cherry Valley Library and former School Librarian in a rural district, where students have no access to a public library**

- Students could purchase a library card, but it would cost over \$100. While public libraries do great things for students, many students don't have the opportunity to go to a public library. The school library might be the only opportunity for students to visit a library for the first 18 years of their lives.
- Licensed librarians are trained to support student success and should be included in the state's accountability measures.
- Classroom libraries can't usually have the same effectiveness and centrality as a school library.
- School libraries inspire students to be lifelong learners. They will hopefully inspire a lifelong love of learning which students will hopefully maintain.
- Librarians are specially trained to help students select high-quality materials.

#### **Cheri Crawford, Teacher in Freeport School District 145 and Member of the Freeport Education Association**

- Illinois is committed to reducing out-of-class time due to suspensions and expulsion, and it's changed how our district looks at restorative justice programs. Our middle school was looking a new alternative justice system, but couldn't find examples in Illinois to look towards.

### **Sharon Keena, Rockford Teacher**

- Wanted to address 4 things. First student growth—the goals have to measure student growth. NCLB expected teachers to attain unachievable goals when students were already coming in behind. The indicators need to measure where students are when they come into our classrooms and how far we can take them, preferably at an accelerated rate. We can take students where we can. Another thing to talk about are resources. How many districts know how much money they'll get from the state? How can we use funding when the state legislature doesn't pass budgets? Bad things go together—absenteeism and suspension/expulsion. We can't improve students' academic skills if they don't attend school. We need to look at what's working in programs that are successfully encouraging students to get to school. Last year, we made special arrangements to get students to school if their parents weren't able to get them there. When it comes to discipline, my rights end where your rights begin. We need to find a remedy that respects the right of every single child, not just the child that's about to be suspended or expelled—that's not fair to the student population.
- Question from the audience: someone asked if IL is using PARCC or SAT or other tests.

### **Kelly Mandrell, Jr/Sr High School Principal in Pearl City**

- This year I showed my staff the PARCC results, but the next year we're doing SAT. How can keep changing assessments when we don't know how teachers will be held accountable? Also, we can only spend funding whatever we're allotted. We lost \$35,000 in Title I funding, which is huge for our district. And we don't know when the ag grants are coming in. We need those grants. And as far as absenteeism, it's not entirely in the school's control. We need to evaluate why students aren't in school. Is it because parents are asking doctors to write sick notes? Also, we talk about measuring growth and accountability for high schools. But what about students who move into ninth grade into the middle of the year—what if students pull away from the school if they're not used to the school climate? Our district staff is phenomenal, but we need support from the state. What is a quality teacher? What's the difference between a quality teacher in Pearl City, which has 800 people, and Freeport, which has 26,000?
  - **Response from Amanda:** What we're hearing from the board is that we're committed to PARCC from 3-8 grades. We're switching to the SAT for high school to ensure that students can take a college entrance exam, especially because the legislature didn't pass funding last year for college entrance exams. State legislators need to hear from district staff—if you call and build relationships with them, they'll let you know what's coming down the pipeline. Go over and meet your state legislators, and let them know what struggles you're facing (not just in terms of financial issues—also discipline as well). It's important that everyone knows that an impact these bills have on districts

- **Follow-up from Kelly:** For high school math test, we didn't know what the target scores were until the test scores came out. The target score went up from 718 to 750. Plus the scores aren't compared apples to apples—some students were being assessed as juniors, others were being assessed as freshman. There was confusion even over what “junior” meant—they had to clarify that they meant all third-year students. If the PARCC target score changes, it's a big deal for my seventh and eighth graders, and right now we don't know ahead of time what the target score will be.

**Kristin Rademaker, Teacher Leader with the Illinois Science Teachers Association**

- With the new learning standards for science supposed to be implemented this year, and the science assessment guidelines being implemented last year and with the elimination of MSP grants, why isn't there anything science related in the accountability piece?
- **Response from Melina:** I will get more information and get back to you—that's a great question to raise.

**Deb Hamilton, Teacher with Pearl City Schools**

- In the ESSA plan, is “academic achievement” based on MAP scores? Test scores?
- Response from Melina: it's based on the state assessment scores—so PARCC or SAT for Illinois.

**Lauren—did you say what would be used to measure achievement for first and second grade?**

- **Response from Melina:** I don't think we know—if tradition continues from NCLB, achievement will be measured from grades 3-8 in grade school, and then K-2 achievement will be back mapped from measured grade 3 achievement. There are people on every side of the table—we have some smart people thinking about the possibility of K-2 achievement indicators. We're trying to build consensus—there was some contention around the length of time for the interim and long-term indicators. This is why we're bringing it out to the public.

**Sarah Kuhlmeier, Early Childhood Coordinator at ROE 8**

- How can we assign point values in the accountability system to something if we don't know what it is? For example, how can we assign accountability values to preK-2 achievement if we don't know how it'll be measured?
- **Response from Melina:** The examples we showed are hypothetical—nothing is set in stone.

**Lauren—the plan will be ready by March?**

- **Response from Melina:** Actually, it'll be January, because we have to send it to the governor review.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## Illinois ESSA Listening Tour Moline-Coal Valley School District 40

September 7, 2016

Regional Office of Education Superintendent Kristin Sanders

Presenter: Melina Wright

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Note takers: Cora Goldston & Lisa Shimmel, Midwest Comprehensive Center

### Stakeholders Meeting

26 Participants: State Representatives, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, School Board Association Members, Principals, Union Representatives, Principals, Retired Teachers, School Library Service Coordinators

### Public Comment

### Initial Questions from the Audience

Have there been discussions about what the  $n$  will be?

- **Response from Melina:** There have been discussions, and trends go toward lowering the  $n$ , which means more students would be included in accountability measures

Concern about EL proficiency—do we know what the cut point would be for EL proficiency?

- **Melina:** We don't know what the cut point would be yet.

Is the group of stakeholders planning to come up with one balanced accountability system for everyone, or is there flexibility for districts to tailor accountability to their needs?

- **Melina:** The state is working to balance federal requirements, which require the state to have a statewide accountability system, and something like IBAM, which allows some flexibility for districts.

About the assessment tool—there's been some language about different innovative assessment tools—is there district flexibility in choice of assessment?

- **Melina:** There's been some discussion on the state level about applying for the innovative assessment pilot, and that's all I know right now.

Have any targets for potential indicators?

- **Melina:** We haven't gotten that far.

## **Testimony**

### **Carolyn Mesick, Librarian at Moline High School**

- As ISBE prepares to use an accountability system that accounts for differences across schools, consider school libraries. Libraries decrease gaps in technology and content knowledge. For example, Moline is hampered by a lack of library media specialists at the middle school level. Librarians teach research and decisionmaking skills every day. A librarian teaches students how to find strong information, how to critically think and analyze. School libraries provide the media-rich environment that allows students to meet the Illinois state learning standards. School libraries encourage collaboration, lifelong learning, literacy, and 21st century skills. Licensed librarians are trained to help students find reliable resources. School librarians are concerned with the whole child. The Linking for Learning standards encourage well-rounded education within school libraries. If IL made the presence of a school library an accountability measure, it would be easy to measure, effective, and would encourage districts to invest in libraries in every school.

### **Dave Rockwell, Rock Island School Board Member and Representative of ISBE Blackhawk Division**

- Realized that I have more questions than answers. It took a long time to get around to kids when ISBE was presenting on accountability. Historically, we've reflected the success of schools in test scores and not many other metrics. It's critical to measure as many metrics as possible to really serve students. Although ISBE is not trying to make a sanction-based accountability system, depending on what metrics are used, schools can be sanctioned by perception. Some of the best teaching is happening in the most challenging schools. We have to look at the positive things that occur—we won't ignore issues.

### **Stew Adams, Retired Special Education Teacher**

- It doesn't make sense that we test special education students at grade level. It makes more sense to compare pre/post scores and measure growth.

### **Scott Kiffel, District Superintendent**

- Local districts are trying to do right by students, but they don't have the resources to deal with accountability and compliance. When we think about metrics and accountability, we think about "how will this help our students?" Also, the schools identified for additional supports are relative, so if all schools improve, some schools are always going to be at the bottom.

### **Matt DeBaene, Assistant Superintendent of Moline Schools**

- It seems like there's some leeway for bad decisions when it comes to licensure requirements. We've manufactured a teacher shortage crisis because the licensure requirements are so intense.

### **Stephanie Jordan, Director for Grants and Curricular Support in Moline**

- Has there been talk about evaluations this year?

**Chris Tennyson, Principal at Fulton High School**

- College and career readiness is exclusively measured by ACT scores, and that doesn't tell the whole story—it's not valid accountability. I know we're switching to the SAT and I'm for measuring achievement along with growth.

**Michael Oberhaus, District Superintendent for Rock Island Schools**

- NCLB has been around for 14 years, and the supports for schools that were low-performing haven't changed, but ultimately, evidence shows that the current supports haven't been successful in moving the target. Are we just spinning our wheels? My district has some of the lowest performing schools, and right now the state is telling us how to work towards improvement—we want autonomy to choose how we improve.
- **Scott:** Right now we serve two masters—we have to make sure that we comply with both the state and the federal government. We saw Dr. Smith's letter back with questions about accountability. When there are high levels of accountability and compliance measures, creativity goes downhill. High levels of regulation mean that we can't even think about innovation.

**David Rockwell, Member of the Rock Island Board of Education:** Has the device been designed to accommodate student growth measures, or will it be designed to accommodate teachers and classroom context?

- **Melina:** It's still up in the air.

**Matt:** We're comparing apples and oranges with the PARCC and SAT scores.

**Michael:** What conversations has the state had about support?

- **Melina:** The goal of these listening tours is to get your input—what do schools and districts want to see from state supports?

**Participant:** I encourage you to keep flexibility in mind to accommodate different needs of different districts.

**Stephanie:** EL proficient is one of the 4 goals—the psychometrics are already there. In areas like my district, we have a high percentage of refugees and immigrant students, to achievement/proficiency targets will be very hard to meet. If we can measure growth instead, it'll give us a much more realistic snapshot of how we're doing with our students.

**Comment from Melina:** The state plan is a work in progress—we're working hard to give schools and districts the support you need. That being said, we need to hear from you to know what challenges you're facing. So please email me ([essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net)) and tell me what you need

**Scott:** What happens with the listening tour feedback?

- **Melina:** I'm working with DHS on supports for foster students—that's not a statutory requirement of the plan, but we'll be implementing new supports. There are two parts here: coming up with the plan and implementing the plan. So we'll be implementing changes as new funding opportunities come up (e.g., the next time Title I funding



applications come out). We're just taking baby steps at this point. There are pieces of the ESSA statutes that are very similar to NCLB, but there are many pieces that are different and allow us the opportunity to do things differently. This isn't a statutory requirement, but we have to review our state plan every 3-4 years. We don't anticipate having the plan sit around for many years, like the NCLB plan that's been the same since 2002. We see this as a living, breathing document. I created an operational manual for Title I, and even though it won't be submitted to ED as part of the final plan, it'll be the guiding force behind our Title I implementation. It's all still a work in progress.

**Chris:** Is there a goal to have information to schools before the 2017-18 school year?

- **Melina:** Absolutely! If we submit the plan to ED in March, we should hear back from the feds in July.
- **Follow-up:** It's crazy to expect that schools and districts can implement changes if they don't know whether the plan was approved until a month before school starts.
- **Melina:** We also let ED know that we thought the timeline is not reasonable, but right now, the timeline is what it is.

**Scott:** There isn't a lot that's substantially different about operational details in the state plan.

- **Melina:** That happened because there aren't many operational details—right now, we wrote to what's in the statute, which is not very specific operational details.
- **Scott:** So it doesn't seem like a lot will change before this draft goes to ED.
- **Melina:** It will depend on the feedback from these tours, plus we have to finalize our accountability plan.

**Participant:** Will focus and priority schools still be in place next year?

- **Melina:** I would need to check the regs.
- **Follow-up:** If the list is readjusted, would it depend on PARCC scores?
- **Melina:** I don't know.

**Pat Verschoore, State Representative**

- I came here to listen and listened to the district staff. What we need is extra money. One of the biggest problems is the disparities of funding available across the state. The best teachers sometimes don't get the credit they deserve. My wife was a Title I teacher, and she would say that she knew her students wouldn't read their schoolbooks at home. It's hard to see success when there isn't parent involvement. A lot of times, parents don't have time to be involved because they have to work multiple jobs.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour Hall High School District 502 (Spring Valley)**

**September 8, 2016**

**Regional Office of Education Superintendent Mike Struna**

**Presenter: Melina Wright**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Cora Goldston & Lisa Shimmel, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

15 Participants: ROE Superintendents, District Superintendents, School Librarians, ROE Administrators, District Administrators, Union Representatives, and School Board Members

### **Public Comment**

#### **Karen Fisher, Past President of the Illinois Association of School Boards**

- Has had the opportunity to visit different school districts and divisions, and I've heard fears that the accountability will not be punitive. We can grasp and take the system if it's not punitive. As school board members, our focus is on funding—we can't do what the state expects us to do if the funding isn't there. If the funding isn't available, our effort will fall flat. We're excited that legislators have reauthorized the funding. Hoping that ISBE will identify schools for additional supports in private. Once low-performing schools are identified, students will feel like they can't get a good education, parents will feel let down, and the community will suffer for a long time while they are trying to improve. The public and the media shouldn't know which schools are improving because it hinders their improvement efforts. Many of these schools are working their hardest to provide a good education, but without appropriate funding, they may not be able to make major changes. Glad that ISBE is doing these listening tours, and hope that ISBE will continue to gather feedback and hear about triumphs and challenges that schools and districts are facing. We want the state plan—we just want ISBE to listen to us about any problems that come up.

#### **Katrina Bromann, School Librarian**

- Speaking about this importance of including school library programs. I've been a school librarian for 6 years, so I've seen a variety of schools and communities. Recognizing the importance of school librarians and school library programs would really benefit the schools. School libraries can tell a positive story for accountability. Licensed librarians provide significant and sustained support for student achievement and college and career readiness. I attended a workshop at IVCC and we talked about the gap in knowledge for students heading to college. It would be great to include the presence of a school library as an accountability indicator.

## **Jeff McKay, Member of the Laughlin School Board**

- Reaffirming some of the thoughts Karen shared from a school board member's perspective. The common theme is funding—how can we get funding? We support our students and staff, but we always come back to the struggle of having to balance the budget. When programs are put in place but aren't funded by the federal or state governments, it causes struggles as we try to achieve our goals. We want to keep our budget in the black, and for that to happen, we have to put some accountability back with the state to fund new programs. If we put several plans in place, we might have to front the money for these programs, and we need to know that we will eventually be reimbursed. We need to be responsible to our community and taxpayers to keep our schools open. And ultimately, we're most accountable to our students—we need to provide the best schools possible.

**Question from Melina:** What were folks' expectations about what they'd see in the plan? What were people hoping to get from the discussion tonight? I wrote a Title I operational manual, and it was cut from the state plan because it was more detailed than what we needed. When we first started writing, it was a real struggle because we didn't know what to write.

- **Karen:** I wanted to know how the ESSA state plan would be different from NCLB. If the accountability system is supportive rather than punitive, the state will get a response from people. Every school board member goes in with the idea of doing the best they can. Students don't get to come back and get their education again. In 38 years of being in the school board world, I've never seen an accountability system that's not punitive. We should follow student outcomes after high school to see what happens. I think the state of Illinois will be pleasantly surprised by the growth of students after they leave high school. We're pretty pleased with what's happened to our graduates in my district, and we don't even have the most resources in our district. Districts that can spend top dollar on their schools must be thrilled with the growth of their students. Who gets to be at the top of the pecking order? Is it dependent on which schools have the most money? Yes, there will be schools who overachieve that don't have a lot, but often it depends on the districts' resources. Parents play a major role in student success—if we can't convince parents to be invested, we can't do much to improve achievement. We can't have teachers dismissed from teaching because parents didn't do their part.

**Parting thoughts from Melina:** We have an opportunity to craft our accountability system as opposed to having it created for us. If we put our heads together, we can come up with something really effective. We have the power to shift education in Illinois.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## Illinois ESSA Listening Tour

Bloomington School District 87

September 13, 2016

Regional Office of Education Superintendent Dr. Barry Reilly

Presenter: Jason Helfer

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Note taker: Cora Goldston & Alicia Garcia, Midwest Comprehensive Center

### Stakeholders Meeting

56 Participants: State Legislators, School Librarians, Policy Advocates, Union Members, Assistant Superintendents, Superintendents, Principals, District Administrators, ROE Administrators

### Public Comment

**Note from Jason:** When thinking about data for reporting, but not including in the accountability system—also consider if there are data that districts want to collect solely for their own internal use, not to share with other districts or the state.

### Gretchen Zaitzeff, Mother of 6 children and School Librarian

- Here to discuss how school libraries affect every student in IL. An effective school library is not a collection of outdated books. The 21st century library is more like a state-of-the-art kitchen, which provides a buffet of options. Every student in every school should have access to a certified school librarian. Libraries contribute to the success of students both during their school years and beyond. No substitutes can replace a licensed school librarian, who can instill a passion for learning. Research has proven time and time again that licensed school librarians can improve English proficiency. As an indicator of effectiveness, having a licensed school librarian would ensure that all students have access to high-quality library resources. Remember that licensed school librarians are specifically trained to help students meet IL learning standards. Small classroom libraries, often purchased personally by classroom teachers, do not provide the breadth or depth of materials required by the current IL learning standards. Title funds would allow school librarians in collaboration with classroom teachers to implement standards-aligned instruction. On behalf of school librarians, I ask that ISBE look at federal and state funding options to support school libraries. For instance, I encourage ISBE to pursue Title II and Title III funding. New Title funding is also available for the education and professional development of school librarians. An effective school library program prepares students for living in an information-rich society, directly impacts every student's ability to succeed. Successful students become successful adults. By defining an effective school library as one that includes a licensed state library and is adequately funded, IL can invest in students for years to come.

### **Chris Baldwin, Kindergarten Teacher in District 87**

- Would like to talk about how student growth is a reliable indicator. My class has 25 students, and 6 students scored in single digits in letter recognition. For the first 5 years of their lives, those students haven't been able to recognize the letters in their name. Under an achievement model, I'm expected to teach 26 uppercase letters, 26 lowercase letters, and 31 sounds (which includes long and short vowels). They're also expected to know 42 sight words. A growth model is much more appropriate because I can definitely teach students while they're in my class. Under an achievement model, the students will technically fail—they're too far behind to catch up. Thirty-three of the kindergartners in my school scored red or yellow on their DIBEL scores. If you put those students in responsible grouping, that would require a lot of interventionists—we only have 3 kindergarten classrooms in my school. I believe in accountability and teachers being held accountable, but the measure should be in a student growth measure.

### **Susan Stanton, Network Lead for Voices 4 Kids**

- We are supported by families, educators, community advocates. On behalf of our 160 member organizations, we ask that IL take advantage of opportunities to expand afterschool programming. Afterschool programs can greatly improve academic outcomes for students. Students improve significantly in their math scores when they participate in afterschool programs, and there are also gains for English scores as well. Afterschool programs should be considered as the state factors in nonacademic indicators. In putting together an accountability, it's important to think about what helps the child be whole, like health outcomes and SEL. Making that information recorded and available ensures that even more people are looking out for youth. Afterschool programs create a crucial bridge between communities and schools. We encourage ISBE to take advantages of opportunities to increase parent engagement. Afterschool programs provide research-supported improvements, and they are low-resource programs. In using school improvement funds, Title II grants for literacy, and Title IV Part A. There's an emphasis in ESA of college and career readiness—there's only so much time during the day to encourage CCR. If there isn't enough time during the school day, the schools can partner with afterschool programs. We want to point out the state afterschool quality standards—these are evidence-based standards that lead to positive outcomes for youth. The standards can be offered for training. In conclusion, we hope ISBE capitalizes on the benefits offered by afterschool programming when implementing ESSA.

### **Ralph Grimm, Superintendent of Galesburg District 205**

- Worked with the IBAM group, which led to the passage of HB 2683. We do have an accountability system on the books, and there are differences between IBAM and the proposed IL ESSA accountability model. In the draft ESSA plan, 6 indicators are proposed—I would ask that ISBE consider the feasibility of measuring those indicators. We want to make sure we actually have the capacity in a system that's seeing its resources diminished. I would ask that you only consider indicators that are already being collected. We don't need to collect more data—IBAM relies on indicators that are already being collected. We don't want to add to the workload of schools and districts. On pages 17-18 of the IL ESSA plan, there are discussions about weighing academic and

nonacademic indicators. IBAM currently has 70-30 split, but I realize the ESSA is looking for something different. Academic indicators are important, but we need to account for the fact that these academic indicators are often “measured” by a onetime test. In reading the plan, it seems like we’re spending a lot of money on the bottom 10%-15% of schools. We think there’s a better way to distribute that funding—there are ways to support all students across the state.

**Amy Webb, Teacher Librarian in the Mahomet-Seymour district**

- Commenting on page 18 (academic indicators). Adding a section on access to a licensed school librarian would be logical. In our district, we have 5 schools in the district, and our library curriculum incorporated both ISAIL and Common Core standards. Library classes come in once a week. I teach 20 classes in three days, which adds up to about 15 minutes/day with each class, but we really pack it in. We have a library assistant who comes in two days a week; so much of the work falls on our school librarians. Our librarians try to push out knowledge into other content areas, but librarians face a choice—do they keep the library open, or do they push into an English class or a history class. I work with first- and second-grade students, and our school is all about literacy. When you connect with a student and help them find a book they’re really passionate about, that’s essential. We also support staff along with students—we do trainings to help staff choose print and nonprint sources for incorporating in their curriculum. I create resource lists based on NGSS—I pull the standards-aligned books and bring them around to teachers. I meet with each class of students once a week—I’m able to reinforce content knowledge with library skills. So I’m able to work with teachers as a team to reinforce the skills that students need. Our librarians provide services to our students and staff. We’re providing skills that will make students college and career ready. Please consider including access to school libraries and licensed school librarians as accountability indicators.

**Lou Ann Jacobs, Retired School Librarian**

- I witnessed how school librarians affect the development of the whole child. The library is often the largest classroom in the school. They help students problem solve and build information skills. Working with classroom teachers, my librarians have created experiences for students to explore STEM through weather stations, using batteries, maker spaces, and other STEM topics. We work with teachers to make sure reading materials are available for all students and all reading interests. Many of us have taught alongside teachers and technology staff to ensure that students can discriminate information served on the Internet and other sources. Book clubs and other reading incentives have become an integral part of encouraging students to read. To help comprehensively address the academic and socioeconomic life of students, we would like to encourage ISBE to incorporate Linking for Learning standards into the ESSA plan. The Linking for Learning standards are one to which all libraries should hold themselves.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**Mundelein High School District 120**

**September 15, 2016**

**District Superintendent Dr. Kevin Myers**

**Presenter: Melina Wright**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Cora Goldston & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

48 Participants: School Librarians, Teachers, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, District Administrators, Education Association Members, School Board Members

### **Public Comment**

#### **Amy Sanecki, Illinois School Library Media Association and Librarian in Wauconda**

- Talking about assessment—the librarian community encourages ISBE to consider the 2016 study. The study demonstrates how effective libraries and licensed librarians influence increased test scores. School librarians are often early adapters of STEM-focused learning and can be invaluable resources in helping LEAs and schools use and implement technology.
- Research shows that the presence of an FTE-licensed librarian and school library leads to student achievement regardless of socioeconomic status. I was excited to know that I had chosen a career where I could create positive changes and support student achievement. In Cotton Creek School, I work with hundreds of students each week. I am currently collaborating with teachers and other librarians on SLOs, which include online safety modules. We hope that 95% of our fifth-grade students will sign up for our Battle of the Book program. I'm teaching our fourth graders how to use our library database to find resources at their Lexile level. Our kindergarteners were delighted when we did a unit about storytelling. We participate in school improvement activities, encourage positive behavior, present resources that support students through many mediums, and put students on the path to becoming lifelong learners.

#### **Todd Skelton, Special Education Teacher at Mundelein High School and Member of the Special Education Committee for IEA**

- Wanted to talk about the 70-30 rule for class sizes, which was under review back in 2013. Chris Koch proposed getting rid of the rule, and there was widespread resistance from parents and educators, so the rule remained in place. However, the rule isn't being adhered to, and the issue is accountability. Mundelein HS was one of the schools that was in violation of the rule. I was on a committee that investigated the depth of violations of the rule, and we found that several districts were in violation of another rule on placing students in the least restrictive environments—as they fixed that issue, they fell out of compliance with the 70-30 rule. We had a meeting at the state level, and out of 81

attendees, only 2 indicated that they needed to do the paperwork for their out-of-compliance classrooms, even though almost all attendees acknowledged that their schools might be out of compliance. The superintendent shared our outrage, but I started to meet some resistance when we asked ISBE to support our efforts to increase accountability. It seems like ISBE isn't there yet in helping us hold schools accountable. When we're talking about accountability, we need to make sure that districts are committed and accountable to creating the best education possible. When teachers speak up and want to address these issues, they can't be treated as rabble-rousers—we're looking out for the best interests of teachers. We all need to work together to support the needs of students.

**Eugene Scura, Special Education Teacher at Carl Sandberg Middle School and Member of IEA**

- Over the years, we've talked about how IEA is only being funded at 16% by the government as opposed to their obligation of funding 40%. That means districts and states have to cover much more of the funding. My question is how this relates to differentiation of schools. At District 75, we have a 40% Latino community, but less than 10% African-American or Asian. How can we at District 75 be assessed at the same level as another district that has a different population and different amounts of funding?

**Robert Friend, Glenbard HS District 87 and Chair of the DuPage Division of IASB**

- The accountability feature is something we can be proud of. It's good to see the sanctions go. Working in a high school district, graduation rates are our biggest focus. Illinois demographics, including DuPage County, is changing drastically. Our district is now about 30% free- and reduced-lunch eligible. Funding is our biggest concern—as things are changing, we're thinking about how we're going to fund the services we need for the changing population.

**Nancy Wagner, Superintendent of Beech Park School District**

- **Question:** We've heard a lot of supplement versus supplant—what does it mean?
  - **Melina:** The feds came up with regs on supplement, not supplant on 9/6, so it's not included in our draft plan. This applies only to Title I buildings. We have an internal meeting with ISBE tomorrow, and we're planning to create a fact sheet and host webinar to explain the regulations. The webinar will be October 4th, and the memo is supposed to come out next week. I'll do a focus group on supplement not supplant at the Title I meeting next week.
- **Question:** Under which part of ESSA are they talking about school funding?
  - **Melina:** Nowhere—funding is a state obligation. Federal programs like IDEA or ESSA will always be a small part of the budget, because they are supposed to supplement district funding, which comes from state and local dollars.
- **Question from Melina:** Why did everyone come here today? Did you get what you were expecting? This set of tours is harder than the first set of tours, because I'm presenting more nuanced information, and the expectations have been different for the people coming into these tours. We have to get people to engage with the draft. We need to get input not only on the plan on paper but also on the execution—what will this mean in



practice for districts and schools? What does it mean if scores are slotted in different ways in the accountability piece? We're trying to get people to engage in those pieces. It's hard but it's also very exciting—this is our plan, and it's not being handed down to us.

- **Nancy:** I was at the original listening tour, and I was concerned about all of the special interest groups. When we look at this and start taking out pieces like, “We need money for this or this or this,” it's concerning. We need the flexibility to use funding for what we each need in our own schools, not being told that all districts will get funding restricted for a certain thing. Growth is a critical piece, especially when districts have significant low-income populations. We have lots of students who move in and out of the district in a school year, and they don't count for accountability, but someone needs to be accountable. Our district ended up on a list for additional services because of the performance of one subgroup in one school. Those services were very rigid.

### **June Maguire, Waukegan School District 60**

- We're the largest district in Lake County with nearly 17,000 students. Our graduation rate is 75%, and we're very proud of that. Many students are on the five-year plan. Sometimes its absenteeism, sometimes students don't have the parental support at home. We also have many students who move from our district into neighboring districts. We have a large low-income population. We try our hardest to help everyone

### **Dean Petros, President of Mundelein Education Association**

- The biggest flaw of NCLB was that it's punitive in nature. I would also say RTTT is punitive in nature—follow this program or you won't get the funding. We see ESSA as an opportunity to do what's best for students, but also not be punitive. Even though the federal law has the opportunity to be a tremendous improvement, we need to allow flexibility. We need to allow districts to have the flexibility to measure growth as what's appropriate for their districts and schools. This includes accountability measures of all stakeholders—teachers, school staff, parents. At the local level, some parents might choose to have their children opt out of testing. The federal government punishes schools if 95% of students don't take testing. I would urge that Illinois do everything they can to ensure that districts aren't punished if parents choose not to test and they do what they believe is best for their children. I'd also encouraged carefully examining the standardized tests, because not all of them are designed to help all students succeed (e.g., the SAT, which is designed to have student results fall on a bell curve).
  - **Melina:** We have written against it in our response to ED—I'd also recommend that you look at the proposed Title I regulations.
- **Question:** What happens after this event?
  - **Melina:** Our goal is to have the next draft ready for our board meeting on November 18th.
- **June:** Do charter schools have to follow the state plan as well?
  - **Melina:** Yes.

- **Melina:** The statute outlines what the state plan should include, and that’s what we included in the plan—nothing more, nothing less. Right now, we’re creating what’s required. We might add technical information about implementation later, but it’s not there right now—we don’t want to write a dissertation, but we have to make sure that we provide enough information. We’re going to go through the listening tour feedback and public comments, and we’ll continue working on our draft. At some point, the federal government will pass new requirements, and we don’t know what the timing will be—we’ll just have to go with it. In the meantime, the superintendent’s message is that we know what the statute says, we’re getting feedback from the stakeholders, and we’re doing the right things.

**Kathy Olson, Assistant Superintendent from Northbrook School District 27**

- At the beginning you talked about targets—are the targets of 90% for different requirements set in stone? I’m coming from a high-achieving district, and even so, 90% often is hard to achieve depending on how you measure the goal (e.g., using PARCC).
- **Melina:** Those benchmarks are pretty definite—I’d have to go back to find out how long we expect districts to take in reaching those goals. If anyone wants to make comments on anything we’ve talked about tonight, feel free to e-mail [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net). I check the mailbox regularly, so your comments will be counted.

**Jan Fitzsimmons**

- **Question:** What’s the role of higher education in ESSA?
- **Melina:** Higher education used to get some dedicated funding from Title II—that is no longer the case, but we continue to engage with higher education because we value their partnership.

**Madhu Krishnamurthy, Daily Herald**

- When schools are identified as schools that need additional support, will they be given time frames for how long they can receive support before they show improvement to get out of it?
- **Melina:** The statute says they might receive funding for 4 years.

**Kevin Myers, Superintendent Mundelein High School District**

- Who’s on the committees that are working on ESSA?
- **Melina:** P20 committee, the superintendent’s committee, committee of practitioners, accountability workgroup. The accountability workgroup has met 3 times. We’ve transitioned the workgroup to IBAM. There is some district representation through various associations, like the school board association and teacher unions.
- **Follow-up:** In ESSA, there’s no defined method or evaluation model for teacher evaluations, which is in conflict with our current model. Is the intent to change what we’re currently doing?
- **Melina:** I haven’t heard anything about PERA yet.

- **Kathy:** Can you talk about the vision for measuring growth? I find it disturbing to think that student growth would be measured against the growth of all students in their cohort.
  - **Melina:** There was a meeting last Friday with 24 or so stakeholders to try and hash out growth. My understanding is that they've identified three growth models to further explore. Work is ongoing to determine which growth model will be used, but it will definitely be based on PARCC. We have a contract with PARCC through 2018 and we have to administer a statewide assessment, so there isn't an option to use another assessment at this time.
  - **Follow-up question from someone else:** Is the information from the growth meeting public? What are the growth models that are being considered?
  - **Melina:** I can try to find out for you.
- **Melina:** We're trying to be thoughtful and engage with as many people as we can to make well-informed decisions—we're not operating in a vacuum. Please send us your thoughts and concerns. We're trying to do things differently at the agency by engaging as much as possible.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## Illinois ESSA Listening Tour

Carbondale Community High School District 165

September 19, 2016

Regional Office of Education Superintendent Donna Boros

Jason Helfer

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Note takers: Keri Garrett & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center

### Stakeholders Meeting

40 Participants: Legislators, Regional Superintendents, Regional Assistant Superintendents, Superintendents, Certified Licensed Librarians, District Coordinators/Directors, Principals, Coordinators, Coaches, Consultants, Union, Teachers, Parents

### Public Comment

#### Steve Murphy, Carbondale District Superintendent

- College and Career Readiness indicators—I think those are based on Redefining Readiness and some of the work of Dave Schuller, which I think is awesome. But I think I assume that the research was maybe moving us away from defining with a test score. If a kid does not have a test score, is there an alternative way to show an employer, “hey this kid didn’t get the kind of score he needed but he did put in this amount of military service or community service, he was there 95% of the time and they had this workforce learning experience.” So hey he has this score or this criterion to show readiness maybe instead of the test score. It seems like the draft version the state board has done has erased all of the “ors” and added the “ands.” So instead of this, will throw 5 more things on top of the test score.
- So I would like to communicate the intent of that research. It is my understanding and I think that is a dangerous path that is more prescriptive than NCLB. I think there was a slide that showed some of the other criteria—but when you look at the AP courses, the dual credit the workforce learning, there was a concern by the IASA board and superintendents and when you look at equity, create a division between the haves and have nots. We are seeing things being cut, so will Carbondale have more points on this system because we have more resources than other schools? There is a danger of inequity.

#### Ellen Popit, Member of the Illinois Heartland Library System

- I have been a school librarian for 29 years, and I have been a member of the association for some time. Our association has developed talking points for this tour. I will submit my talking points. As a system employee, I interact with school employees in 58 counties in southern Illinois. My years in the field have taught me a lot, I know that effective libraries and invite and encourage members of the community to be active in the learning process. I know that effective library systems level playing fields for all learners

regardless of socioeconomic status. I know that effective school libraries offer a welcoming space for students to explore, and a wide array of tools to allow for exploration. I know that that licensed school librarians bring an interesting skill set to their educational communities.

- In the interest of fostering information literacy, it is never a matter of only delivering materials to users, it is always a matter of asking the questions to clarify the need to help students with what they truly need to effectively do their work. Librarians know that their library is more than a physical space; their library is a book club, or a tech group. Libraries are supporting the curriculum and fostering possibilities. I know licensed librarians are educational collaborators. They know that their programs are enriched when there is buy-in and input from the entire educational community. I know librarians are leaders in supporting the curriculum and the interest of their students they work broadly to build collections to meet the needs of their users.
- I know licensed librarians are learners and in order to keep up with trends and technology but to also know how to function as a responsible individual in today’s world. Sadly I know schools that do not have effective libraries and licensed librarians are missing out. I would encourage that we include licensed librarians in the ESSA work.

#### **Mike Shimshak, Superintendent of Carbondale Elementary District 95**

- I have two comments today. One is about the attendance criteria and students actually coming to school. Some of these things are rooted in the ability of the school to partner with the community and the community be involved in the school and be a partner in their students coming to school. It is a hard item to quantify in districts across the state and the impact of poverty on the learner before they even get to school. How we as a school district can impact that in our birth to three and preschool programs.
- And the other comment is that I am wondering if the state board’s consideration of world class schools and I am wondering about the state board’s consideration of world class standards and wondering if we really want to measure our outcomes wouldn’t we use world class standards to see how we are really doing?

#### **Jon Sanders, ISBE Board Member**

- As we look at the first page of this document, the Illinois State Board really wondering what ideas you guys have. I see so many experts and so many out here in this audience of ideas that could assist ISBE in its accountability system. Speak up and we do want your thoughts. This is not like church where you sit in the back row and you do not have input. Please let us know so we can jot it down as we do like the input. I am interested more in your comments about “and” and “or” and maybe you could even expand a little more.
  - **Superintendent Murphy responds:** I think in defining readiness in the beginning I think the “ors” in the document are there for a reason. So maybe there were alternate pathways to lead to readiness; instead of stacking them they were separate. Instead of A, B, C, D, E, but maybe you could do A, B, D or A, B, and F or C, D, and F. They were not all stacked together. I thought the specific reason was to provide an alternative—again not sure why you went from other “ors” to the “ands” and not sure how all of that discussion played out in the retreat. It just

seems different now. I think that redefining readiness is a starting point, and I don't know if it is all developed and we are trying to get away from defining from just a test score. We seem to have a lot more criteria on.

- **Jon Sanders, ISBE responds:** I'm trying to think, I don't know if it's the score on the SAT of one other academic. I think the thought was a kid is not going to go to college but if the kid can score well on other indicators to show readiness—can the kid be ready for the workforce if they complete the workforce education program and show up 95% of the time and some other things and some hours of community service and they don't score well on the SAT is there some other way of looking at that. Or are we just taking the SAT score and is that the right way to go.

#### **Melinda LaBarre, ISBE Board Member**

- **Melinda explains how that happened:** CTE teachers feel they are not looked upon as not as good as those who are in a college program. So we are thinking is there a way to combine them, and Jon spoke up and started talking like you are talking Steve. We do appreciate what you say—because we think one way and then we hear comments and then we see it another way—we want to know—we see things in one moment—and then we see it differently.
- **Steve Murphy comments:** I appreciate your thoughts and the hard job you have. We are talking about this at the IASA board level and what we should endorse. The other side is, if a kid can't read, so are they reading just because they are in attendance 95% of the time, did the amount of community service and they were in a workforce readiness program . . . What role does the test score play and should there be a test score?

#### **Jon Sanders, ISBE Board Member Responds**

- Is moving away and using the graduation rate as the indicator, is this the best way, the concern was moving students along to graduate or just using a PARCC score, is that the best way—is using just a test score or PARCC score the way—how is this ESSA better or worse from before. What I want to know is how you feel about that, is this a good indicator, and is ESSA different, better or worse than what we did before. I think that is what we are wanting to hear from you on.

#### **Chris Roadey, Superintendent of Murphysboro District**

- My point is it is not so much about the assessment and you brought up the graduation rate. My understanding is that they take your freshman class and then four years later look at your senior class. Murphysboro has a declining population, and my graduation rate cannot mathematically be 100% and show that all of my seniors will graduate because of how we collect it. When we start looking at SAT or whatever data we look at, my concern is that we need a better tool and how we will collect that data. You have the IIRC and you can track the kids (everybody has a student code) and maybe a kid was in Murphysboro for a while and you can track this kid, it is the data mining versus the actual assessments or the actual scores that they have in my opinion. We have a lot of data out there and we need to look more into that.

#### **Andrea Brown, Retired ISBE Board Member**

- As we're understanding the new federal law . . . I guess I am wondering if achievable or aspirational—knowing that and wondering as you selected those goals do you have the question on here about the timeline and where we stand on those numbers right now and what we can do about the places where we are not there. I guess I am wondering if they are doable and how are you going to relate those. A couple of years ago, before NCLB, and before accountability and for a while, there was punitive aspect to it. In fact in Cairo they said they had to close. That was in the state legislation but in the federal they were going to be OK. I guess I am wondering again, even though these are two separate things I hope things are aligned very carefully so that schools don't feel like there are two sets of rules.

**Melinda LaBarre, ISBE Board Member**

- Are there any principals here? I know as a principal we evaluated our test scores often to see what we needed to toss out or tweak. Then went on to see what we could improve. So, I don't think that is asking a lot as this state is so big that every four years we should reevaluate.

**Daniel Booth, Carbondale High School Principal**

- Just to kind of second something Jason mentioned making sure we are focusing on growth and not proficiencies in remembering we work in a state with inequities issues. I am excited about the opportunities and moving away from NCLB rhetoric for many years. This is a great opportunity for our districts to be recognized for even small things. I would like to say we can now look at what growth means and take a look at that over time and time is a really big deal when dealing with groups of students.
- I can also say from a principal's perspective when you are implementing something new and something big like ESSA means having a coherent plan is important as our challenge is sharing things with our faculty and staff. When you come from a time of NCLB and our people really nervous about change and change that will label them in some sort of way. Just making sure those supports are in place.
- Lastly, I think it is a good mind-set to not label a district or to label them failing but label them passing but looking at their growth rather than labeling them.

**Jon Sanders, ISBE Board Member**

- Any suggestions on how ISBE can help with that?

**Daniel Booth, Carbondale High School Principal**

- Yes, timeline is important. If there is something we come up with in April or May and we expect it to be implemented in August, keeping in mind we need time to implement and have the conversations with our staff so they can also change their mind-sets. Time to learn what we are sharing, it does not look good when we stand in front of our staff and don't know what is going on. It is a really big deal for us.

### **Nathaniel Wilson, Superintendent of DeSoto District 86**

- We have 200 kids and kind of like what Mr. Booth was saying about giving us some time to know what we are talking about. There is a consistently moving target and it makes it very difficult when we try to do many jobs like I am. I serve as superintendent and principal in small district; I deal with faculty, truancy, and whatever the day brings. It's not that I don't want to get things done—it is I don't have the opportunities to get things done.
- Time is key for me and having the time to roll that out is important to me. You need to think about the size of school and its resources as that is a factor for me. Thinking about the PARCC, I don't feel as expert with PARCC as I did with the ISAT. If we are going to have something that is measurable that we are using, make sure we are getting good feedback on it. I don't feel like I am getting good feedback on PARCC at all. I don't know what to tell my teachers to fix from last year's test scores. Where is that information or am I missing that information? So where is it? If we are going to have something, make sure it is easy to find.
- ISBE website is a mess. Help us find things. I am speaking today for the little guys today; we could use a little more consideration and resources our way. A young superintendent like me is already under a learning curve. I am still trying to learn to balance that out. Give us the time to roll it out and be clear about what you are after. Give good feedback.

### **Daniel Booth, Carbondale High School Principal**

- There may be some schools that may not have EL deficiencies. That is going to have to be dealt with. What about the schools who do not have the adequate number to even measure? There may be some schools from an equity standpoint do not even have those things to offer. How will they be penalized for that?
- Right, so what do those tests look like? So you have an EL kid who does not even know English but the test is given in English.





# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**Effingham Community Unit School District 40**

**September 20, 2016**

**Regional Superintendent Julie Wollerman**

**Jason Helfer**

**4:30 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Notetakers: Keri Garrett & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

45 Participants: Legislators, Regional Superintendents, Regional Assistant Superintendents, District Administrators/Directors, Certified Licensed Librarians, Illinois Association of School Board, Principals, Coordinators, Coaches, Consultants, Union, Teachers, Parents

### **Public Comment**

#### **Joe Fatheree, Effingham High School Teacher, Illinois Teacher of the Year**

- I have two questions. The first one is about College and Career piece. One thing that concerns me is the information on the GPA. Will everyone be caught up in the 2.8 as it seems to be a number that is out there? If I have a heart surgeon who is a 2.8, I would be concerned. A kid who graduates from a career center with a 2.8, and struggling and I am not so sure that this is a valid use. The thing that is bothering me is no reference to global citizenship. For our kids who are to be global ready, I would like to see something about 21st century core competencies skills and really digging into that piece. For our kids to be global ready, we need to start that conversation.
- The other piece is does ISBE plan to evaluate the piece about bringing new teachers into the profession. Worldwide we have a massive shortage. We know worldwide many states are making changes. In some states legislation was passed as all you need is a bachelor's degree to teach. When I started back in 2007 and was IL teacher of the year, with NCLB, first thing we heard was we had to be highly qualified. Teachers busted their tails to get that certification. We argued about we were not sure our certification was the issue. So we began to arm wrestle about what highly effective meant and I was in Senator Kennedy's office about that. Now we're really damaging the brand of teaching and no one wants to do it. In a lot of others states a warm body can fill those positions. I am really concerned and what can we do to ensure our students have the best teachers in the world and what can we do for our best and brightest students to consider taking on those roles and jobs? What can we do to make sure the teachers in our state are of high quality?

#### **Roger Eddy, Executive Director of the School Board Association**

- As this pertains to the accountability models, we are very interested in the indicators to make sure there are multiple measures. However, we really need to move to multiple measures as to what our districts are doing for our children. We need to move away from just relying on one set of assessments on ELA and math. We need to use many other

measures that are good for our children. We are happy we are moving away from the punitive under this model and moving away from NCLB model.

- We want to underscore the importance of resources and appropriate supports. Some of the achievement gaps are not going to be closed without the appropriate resources. Lastly, I have to say this and we do mean it from the school board association's perspective . . . allow some global flexibility and know that these districts know their children better than Springfield or Washington to make decisions they think is best for their children.

### **Sara Hill, Information Services Librarian at the College**

- We are a national organization with over 5,000 members. Read the mission statement of the organization. So in my day job at Lakeland College I see teens from area high schools who have graduated. Without a Certified Licensed Librarian (CLL), students come to Lakeland College without the skills needed to succeed in college-level classes. They have never used a database, don't know how to evaluate the information they find on the Internet, and they are really behind their peers in information literacy.
- I am asking ISBE to level the playing field by ensuring all students have access to CLLs and library programs. CLLs play a critical role in a student's education. The new Title money coming with ESSA could help with the issues by providing CLLs in libraries for students and providing professional development on information literacy and resources. I do believe that CLLs are the natural curriculum leaders in many small schools and play an important role.

### **Jake Roskovensky, President of the Illinois School Librarian Association**

- Currently CCL for the Charleston School District. I taught K-12 library for 11 years. I have taught over 2,100 students in eastern central Illinois.
- Yesterday a former student stopped by my classroom while visiting the high school and said the library was her favorite place. She said she did not have many friends in the school and she said she always felt she belonged in the library. She was not an avid reader or researcher but she found her place in my classroom. Yesterday there were 130 students in my classroom before the morning bell rang. Those students were working on assignments, finding resources, and interacting with their peers. The media center gives all students a place to belong. CLLs are concerned about the whole child.
- With ESSA, we would like to remind you that school libraries promote well-rounded, lifelong learners and the library is the largest classroom in the school building. CLLs provide a wide variety of programs for students to participate in. CLLs are trained to provide high-quality materials to its users. CLLs foster a love of reading and literature with our students.

### **Lisa Lutz, Paraprofessional, North Clay School District, District Librarian**

- I am not a CLL. I do everything a CLL does, or I try and I am self-taught and I maintain the K-8 and HS library. I am available for K-5 library, process books, facilitate the study halls, manually entering data into the data software. I function with the notion that there

is little money. I buy used books, repair books, and I am mindful of the costs. I shop thrift stores and any donations are welcomed.

- This year I got the AR program funded through Title money. I now will have dollars to buy other things our program needs, pencils. I am hoping for comfy furniture and books.
- School libraries need to be supported by ESSA and funding to support the needs. My students do not have access to a public library, and they prefer a real book over an e-book. Our district is not rural enough, poor enough, or urban enough for grant money. To do any of these things in ESSA but without proper funding of libraries none of the other things will matter.

### **Diane Hutchins, Retired School Administrator and Teacher**

- I have served in 6 districts statewide and taught grades 1-12 and have subbed. I really thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am concerned for the lack of a plan in the ESSA language for strengthening our school libraries. Media centers are the backbone of the schools in my opinion. They provide expertise to allow students to maximize their growth. Without viable librarians and licensed librarians, we as professional educators cannot expect our children to meet their academic goals. I say this as we do have wonderful classrooms, but they cannot add the wide perspective the CLL and libraries can offer to meet those 90% benchmarks.
- We are living in a tech age, and we must be able to access information, and classroom teachers cannot do this without CLLs. CLLs are trained to access the information and resources for students and teachers. I have heard that knowledge is ever increasing at a quickening pace and I hear that it is doubling with time. CLLs do their best to provide when the funding is available. CLLs help with providing robust technology and assist students in becoming fully knowledgeable in information and allow students to meet state standards. I was happy to see the flyer presented today and the talking points that Tony Smith is allowing for the whole child. The librarian is a support for the whole child.
- As a former English principal and teacher, when it comes time for the dreaded research paper, the only place is your media center and library as an important resource for all.
- I encourage you to adopt policies and procedures to adopt CLLs to assist with student progress and English language proficiencies. As you consider this—it is my hope because of the importance of school libraries and CLLs be included at the table as you work on the second draft. Our members can help you formulate the plan that includes libraries and helps our students access all information. Thank you for the time to address you all.

### **Doug Hill, Altamont Principal**

- Before we move forward, can we look at PARCC first. Can we take a look at how this is working for us as we are told the design is to improve student learning and instruction? The information I have seen tells me nothing. All I see is a number. I can't tell where my students are weak, I can't tell where the holes may be. All I see is a number, and until we get a system in place, we cannot begin this conversation.
- I grew up in Chicago and have taught in small schools, and until we look at ESSA, let's talk PARCC; we cannot move forward. I have a student in my building who will not be

2.8. He will not get a college readiness score on his SAT. He is career ready and best welder at the area vocational center and will make more money than I. I am not sure what career ready means. I have students who are career ready or job ready. I need to know more of what is college and career ready means; I thought the reason we went to college was to get career ready.

- All of the goals I have seen are 9-12. I think we need to start earlier at fifth and sixth grade. Thanks.

### **Jennifer Garrison, Superintendent of Sandoval Unit 501**

- I have 8 wonderful educators with me today who are taking a teacher leader course. We will not be so much in the weeds and we have questions and comments collectively.
- When we listened to President Obama's ESSA plans, we were excited. Then when we read the state draft, it feels like NCLB. So we are looking at the split of what is required to the state assessment to the other indicators of 51-49 or what IBAM is saying.
- Another question we have is the weight of the indicators. Where's the quality framework for research-based best practices? Proficiency versus growth? We know proficiency will count for some of the score, but we at Sandoval are advocating for growth. As a low-performing school, we are working to get out of that and we have had the status since 2011 and we are trying to get out of that. We are advocating for no delay as we want to show our growth and have not been evaluated since 2011. We have just been stuck in status as a priority district. We think more points should be assigned to growth as that is defined by two data points over time.
- The goals have to be realistic and the focus on the 90/90/90 over time. We also question the timeline and that goes back to growth or proficiency. Proficiency will take longer to get to the 90/90/90 and if we are looking at growth 7-10 is more realistic.
- Other issues, funding . . . not good. Obviously is a focus on inequity. It takes more funding to educate low-performing students in Sandoval. Our lack of funding is due to proration; we look at data and see the growth but we need more Title resources, teachers, and one-on-one instruction. If we lived in a perfect world, we would have mandated Pre-K for all. I think that is a good idea. How we blend or braid our Title funds, when I heard Jason say the feds thought this is too new . . . my response is how is too new? My response to the feds is that we do have districts with many revenue and grant resources and we are blending/braiding funds. Alignment, integrated, and no silos.

### **Mark Doan, Effingham 40 Superintendent**

- I appreciate the comments—I want to take a larger look at the college and career indicators. I think there are two groups: the college indicators and the career indicators. I think if we put them together, this could be a disservice to kids. It was mentioned about the student with a 2.8. We have a lot of students with 2.8. So we are going to take out a large portion right off the top. I think it is interesting how we often tie the GPA to college. We expect higher and we support that, but as we set state goals, they need to be reachable and realistic.

- When we talk to staff and kids, we need to set realistic and reachable goals. Bottom line is to separate these to allow kids the opportunity, and part of the overall accountability measure will be graduation rate. So to me, a portion of student body GPA does not matter; it is a matter of walking across the stage and getting a diploma. We are focused on that, and the way I see this, there are 4-6 things on this page a kid will have to focus on. At least 5. From the AASA group, it is not 6. If you are career ready, it's 4-5. So, not sure if that fits the model; we need to address this.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## Illinois ESSA Listening Tour

Quincy Public School District 172

September 21, 2016

Regional Office of Education 1 Superintendent Jill Reis

Presenter: Jason Helfer

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Note takers: Cora Goldston & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center

### Stakeholders Meeting

13 Participants: Illinois Center on School Improvement Staff, Teachers, School Board Members, Union Representatives, Grant Coordinators, Education Directors, and Assistant Principals

### Public Comment

#### Roy Webb, Quincy Public Schools

- Some of what we've talked about is quite a change. The teachers and administrators in our district are in change fatigue. We have growth assessments, data literacy, new assessments, new literacy evaluations, plus all the federal and state mandates. Then the state says we're going to have everything ready by March and that we'll have 5 months to implement—if there is significant change, that's not really a lot of time, given the summer break. If there is a lot of implementation change involved, give us the most time possible to measure interim and long-term goals.
  - **Response from Jason:** There are two places where states are pushing back. One is identification for additional supports—we're technically supposed to be doing that this year, but we don't have an accountability system in place. We haven't even started talking about identification yet. If we had to start identifying districts during 2016-17, we'd be pulling the rug out from districts because the identifications may not align with what we'll be doing. States are also pushing back on the requirement for a final single summative rating. The department's justification is that they think a single summative rating enables parents to easily understand the accountability rating. But if we use multiple ratings, it allows us to gauge what we think is important. There is some feedback on the supplement versus supplant regulations, which are more strict than under NCLB. We are doing everything we can to slow implementation down.
- **Follow-up from Roy:** How does this relate to IBAM?
  - **Response from Jason:** IBAM went through before ESSA, but the IBAM committee has been meeting to adapt to ESSA. The IBAM pilot implementation was supposed to start this fall, but has been pushing back. ISBE has a voice on the IBAM committee, but is not the only voice.

## Sheldon Bailey, School Board Member for Quincy Public Schools

- I applaud the inclusion of nonacademic indicators. That gives some more control to the local level—one of the purposes of the school board is to provide some local flavor. Some of the things brought out in the nonacademic factors really do translate into the classroom, such as truancy. Extracurricular participation contributes to students’ leadership skills, academic success, and well-rounded information. These help students develop the skills that employers, like myself, are looking for. In Quincy, we’ve been using MAP to measure student growth. We have one grade level that’s been through 9 different testing points. But having that growth data is critical to helping teachers work with students effectively. Is assessment changing under ESSA?
  - **Response from Jason:** The testing portion of ESSA is not fundamentally different from what it was under NCLB. However, that may change in the future. Part of the ESSA statute is that states must revisit their accountability plans at least once every 4 years. But those conversations don’t just begin in year 4—we can start conversations about updating the plan even now. It’s a very different level of action and oversight from the state. MAPP and other purchased exams haven’t necessarily gone through peer review, and they don’t necessarily align with standards. We know that SAT aligns with our standards—ACT doesn’t align with new standards, so we aren’t using that any more. There is some language that seems to suggest that there’ll be local input on assessment, but it’s not clear right now.
- **Follow-up from Sheldon:** Talking about the interim and long-term goals, there’s so much that we’ll learn over the years. We should allow for the long-term goals to be refined as we learn more. Even for short-term goals, we need enough time to gather data points—we probably need at least 3 years to see if we’re making progress even on our short-term goals.
  - **Response from Jason:** If we have 6- to 10-year interim goals and 11- to 15-year long-term goals, we’ll definitely be revisiting them as we revisit our state plans every 4 years. For those high-growth, low-attainment schools, it’s important to recognize the growth they’ve made.
- **Jason:** Let’s look at the College and Career Ready Framework. In order for a student to be college and career ready, they have to have a GPA of 2.8, attain a score that indicates readiness on the SAT, have two or more academic benchmarks, and have two or more behavioral/experiential benchmarks.
- **Sharon Teefey, IFT Representative:** We talk about what people need to attain for college indicators—what about vocational education? Students can be successful in vocations as well—why are we driving all students to college?
  - **Response from Jason:** Kentucky is ahead on CCR. They have discrete requirements for college readiness and career readiness. They assume that students will have one or the other, but students might be both, in which case the district gets extra “points” in their accountability system.
- **Sheldon:** It seems difficult to measure career readiness as opposed to college readiness.
  - **Jason:** We’re working to raise the visibility of career readiness. We’re using Perkins funding to create career pathways. We’re also working on increasing career

exploration opportunities. Many districts either have one career pathway (because they happen to have a teacher in that field) or they do surface-level introductions to careers but don't have several in-depth options.

- **Sheldon:** Regardless of your postsecondary path, you need to have problem-solving skills. In college, you likely have professors who help you problem solve. In the work world, students may not have that support, so it's critical that they can problem solve on their own.
  - **Jason:** Internships, apprenticeships, and shadowing opportunities would give students some of those problem-solving skills. We have a group of employers throughout the state who are working on creating these opportunities for students.
- **Roy:** If a student has a 2.9 GPA, has the appropriate SAT score, and meets the academic and behavioral benchmarks, would each student have 5 data points that would be tracked through grades 9-12?
  - **Jason:** If we use the proposed framework, yes.

#### **Jerry Douglas, Director of Special Education School**

- How do you see special education students fitting in and being able to meet the requirements?
  - **Jason:** Not sure—what do you imagine?
- **Jerry:** We have some students who are in different learning environments. Some students are self-contained, some live in a residential treatment program. I foresee that most of our students would not meet these indicators.

#### **Becky Dinsmore, Director of Advanced Education**

- Want to compliment ISBE on putting the state plan draft together and holding these tours. Would ask ISBE to think about continuous improvement. I'm concerned about the college readiness entrance score. Here we have an opportunity to be innovative—how is the entrance score different from the status we were looking at before? We don't want to drive students into a model where they may not be able to achieve that status.
- **Jason:** Let's say each person in this room is the king or queen of education in Illinois—if you were the one deciding on the framework, what would you change?
  - **Roy:** We want to show significant growth for students—the SAT and PARCC measure attainment, but we're missing growth. The current framework is still based on attainment and not growth.
  - **Dennis Williams, Quincy Teen Reach Afterschool Program:** I'm the one trying to help students reach these goals. The problem I see is sustainability—there are a lot of individuals that are being asked to fit in one box. I have students who probably aren't going to make it to college, but I want to help them succeed. Focusing on numbers creates a problem for the afterschool programs. Students may not retain what they need to retain for measured "success." Currently, there's more emphasis on the grade than the behavior. I can understand where Jerry's at—students with special needs will



- be left out. The state is trying to grow college and career success, but there are some things we need to reevaluate.
- **Jason:** For special education learners, what would we need to reach those learners? That way, we can truly identify measures for all students.
    - **Jeff Stevens, ROE 1:** If the GPA attained is 2.6 instead of 2.8, what does that mean for students?
    - **Jason:** It might be similar to other states, where students receive a CCR designation on their diplomas. We don't want to implement this framework just to say our students met it—we want to actually prepare our students.
    - **Sheldon:** The phrasing “college AND career readiness” places too much emphasis on the college aspect—we should use the phrasing “college OR career readiness.”
  - **Roy:** Under IBAM, there's a 10% set aside for compliance—will that still be included?
    - **Jason:** I don't know for sure—this year, we're figuring out what it will look like, but IBAM is currently in place (even though we're pushing back the pilot implementation).



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## Illinois ESSA Listening Tour

Peoria School District #150

September 22, 2016

Regional Superintendent Beth Derry

Jason Helfer

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Note taker: Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center

### Stakeholders Meeting

60 Participants: Legislators, Regional Superintendents, Regional Assistant Superintendents, Learning Technology Centers, Certified Licensed Librarians, IL Virtual Schools, Directors of Professional Learning, Principals, Coordinators, Coaches, Consultants, Union, Teachers, Parents

### Public Comment

#### Beth Derry, Peoria Regional Superintendent

- Great job on the addressing of the whole child. To see the whole child braided throughout the plan is very encouraging. ESSA takes all the expectations we have from ISBE and programs and braid them in a systematic way so that we have a systems approach.
- My theme over the next two years is alignment. Education has so much misalignment, and ESSA provides the alignment. We can be the hook for ISBE in supporting kids and addressing the needs of families.
- College and Career Readiness is finally shifting in our communities, meaning that you do not necessarily need a four-year degree.
- Peoria is a member of the 60 by 25 network and Peoria Pathways to Prosperity. We have partnerships that have collaborated with teachers union, school districts, the mayor's office, CEO council, Chamber of Commerce—how do we get kids excited about college and careers, 4 years, 2 years, licensed, or certification?
- Jonathan Furr, Executive Director for Education Systems at Northern Illinois University, has been assisting us with how to use data to make decisions. The new HB5729, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act, establishes new initiatives to smooth transition for students from high school to college or career, is helping us to look at new ways to address graduation requirements—building this into the state ESSA plan opens up a whole new door to address career pathways—it's a new way to look at our high schools.
- One of the barriers we hear everywhere is that we can't find licensed CTE teachers. The questions remains, how do we build in professional learning to get the teachers we need to teach dual credit (this is just one example). We need to prepare teachers to be ready to implement new ESSA requirements.

- It's really hard when things are always changing—going from PARCC, changing ACT to SAT. Changing statewide tests does not allow us to have the years of data needed to inform our instruction.
- We need to work really hard on our communication!

**Cindy Dollman, Peoria Director of Professional Learning**

- Gratitude for first round of listening tours, your openness, responsiveness, and coming to Peoria is recognized and appreciated.
- Theme—an evident theme in the draft plan is Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and how important MTSS is in working with students. I would like to see the same reference as to how we support our systems, our schools of all sizes, our regional offices...would like to see the same reference of MTSS linked to professional learning, differentiating the needs of professional learning for our teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- The plan mentions professional development, technical assistance, and coaching, request that language is changed from “professional development” to “professional learning.” Suggest explicit alignment with professional learning and Learning Forward Standards so that we are emphasizing leadership, data, outcomes, and resources.
- Professional learning— more focus on job-embedded professional learning and continuous learning support for our educators.
- Sustaining professional learning—I would like to see effectiveness of professional learning and building capacity—need to ensure the professional learning has lasting effects (sustainable), especially when funds are no longer available. Our professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching need to have practice and application so it reflects learning in students, teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- Foundational service—Free is not necessarily free. While the foundational learning professional learning is free, it is not free to the district. Districts are paying for substitute teachers and travel expenses—need to find supports to help districts with funding for professional learning for their staff to participate/attend.
- ROE—Did not see ROEs as professional learning delivery services in the plan...our ROEs have been providing professional learning for our schools and districts for years. It's important to continue. ROEs have great relationships with the community; they are familiar with the context of local communities as a whole (families, students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and partners).
- As we think about the MTSS for our students, we need to think about it for our systems too, the whole child, the whole school, the whole district, and the whole region—a system approach aligned for everyone.

**Randy Stueve, Director of Peoria Career Learning Center and Rachel Aiello, Student**

- **Randy Stueve:** Peoria Career Learning Center is an alternative high school under the auspices of the Peoria ROE. There are 66 students.

- Rachel Aiello, a student who graduated from the career learning center last spring, shared her thoughts...She stated she chose to go to school at the Career Learning Center because she loves animals and thought it would be super cool. It provided lots of innovative hands-on activities in small classroom environments. Peoria High was her high school, but she did not feel it was the best fit—too large. She wanted a smaller school so she could receive one-on-one attention. She had the opportunity to take Advanced Environmental Science class, which was a great experience, real-life experience. She is now a biology major at ICC.
- **Randy Stueve:** We have different alternatives and different interventions. We have great cooperation from all of our districts. The social and emotional component is huge. We're losing the battle if we do not consider the social and emotional component in addressing the whole child.

### **Angela Green, Library Media Specialist**

- School library media specialists in the ESSA act. School librarians have direct connections to promoting college and career readiness—dual credit is a great example; we can partner with teachers to offer dual credit/dual enrollment. For professional development, we have trainings to provide; it's not all about the books. We can provide technology trainings. We have skills and training that we (library media specialists) are not given credit for. It's unfortunate that these positions are being cut and replaced by paraprofessionals. The library media specialist is looked upon negatively because there are paraprofessionals in the classrooms, which replaces licensed library media specialists. I would hope the ISBE would consider funding librarians—we have support to provide to promote the whole child.
- The books available to our students are very old. We have to provide updated reading materials, updated electronics, and updated software and learning materials. Currently, I'm writing grants to get updated materials for my students. Feel very strongly that library media specialists must be represented in ISBE ESSA state plan. We offer our help in the development of the plan (e.g., could be represented on a committee).
- We have library media standards tied to Common Core learning standards (ELA, math, social studies, social and emotional)—all are incorporated in the Illinois learning standards.
- Think about librarians as the heart of the school. We can help the classroom teacher. We ask that we are not forgotten.

### **Laura Kelly, Peoria Public School Special Education Teacher, National Board Certified Teacher**

- Things I like about ESSA:
  - Attention to professional learning, specifically the reflective practice
  - Looks at the whole child, growth, and children with special needs
  - Qualitative and quantitative measurement—ability to look at all growth and success

- In terms of professional development, we have lots of problems with teacher retention, especially in special education. Research shows professional learning is the best way to retain teachers and support them with the skills needed. Teachers are competent to continue in their field of education.

### **John Asplund, Superintendent Farmington Central School District 265**

- Three main points:
  - First, you asked about how to blend federal funds better. The TRS is killing our building to use federal funds for students because of the high rate. We will not take 37% of our Title I grant and throw it away. We made a tough decision to put in lots of different technology pieces, rather than people, just because we don't want to pay for all the...
  - Next, we have broadband penetration. We have no problem with Internet, but a lot of our students have the inability to have Internet at home. We are very much impacted by the digital divide. Half of our students are identified as rural poverty, so trying to do different things such as flip classrooms is difficult because we know they do not have Internet.
  - Finally, for accountability, I really want to stress that we move away from PARCC exams and go back to...for instance, we use and believe in MAP test, been using it for years. We have longitudinal data. The test doesn't change every year like PARCC does. The PARCC data does not really do anything for us. It's just more time our students are out of the classroom. We believe accountability is important, but we believe districts should be given the opportunity to choose a national exam on their own—so that we can have more time in the classroom.

### **John Closen, Area 3 Learning Technology Center Director**

- In 2001, we had 15 Learning Technology Centers (LTCs); we are down to 6, and only 5 are active. There is no funding for LTCs. This impacts the schools and students. We are providing supports to schools. We only have one network specialist in the state because there is no funding. Currently, we try to help schools through professional development.
- On another note, I work for ROEs. We try to provide the training here at the ROE. One school in Peoria pays \$150 monthly for 1.5 megabytes for bandwidth. Another school in Area 3 pays \$200 monthly for 200 megabytes for bandwidth. Lincoln pays 6 cents per child for bandwidth. There's a big gap/difference. There is inequity among funding. We need to do something about the inequity. LTC representatives are working ISBE to find ways to help districts work to network with other districts so they can combine resources. We want the LTCs to continue. We provide service to the Illinois community educators. We provide services through many conferences in Chicago. We started an ICE chapter. There's no money. There's no subs. We're here to support and ask for a little more direction from ISBE.

### **Jennifer Kolar-Burden, Coordinator of Curriculum**

- I enjoyed reading about ESSA because it offers unique opportunities for Illinois Virtual School (IVS).

- IVS, through Peoria ROE, manages the online delivery system for statewide middle/high schools and professional development as part of the ISBE contract. IVS have made available content delivery for stakeholders to use as a one-stop location for school-directed 5-12 and state and regional directed educator professional development coursework.
- IVS and ESSA highlights:
  - IVS mission is in line with ESSA goals as our pedagogy has consistently centered around equity of access, collaboration, data-driven decisionmaking, personalization, alternative realities, and solutions wrapped around high-quality standards aligned content and taught by Illinois certified, highly qualified teachers.
  - Courses are developed around ILS, NextGen, UDL, and Quality Matters standards and coded to the ISCS.
  - IVS has the ability to implement ELL supports but has not had any scale requests. We are investigating expansion of curriculum beyond ELL support toward native language with English integration.
  - SAT preparation, any assessment preparation, can be delivered efficiently online.
  - School accountability indicators can be supported by IVS, such as expansion of arts, enrichment, advanced courses, CTE/certification offerings, career pathways, dual credit, SEL courses and programs, bridge programs, increased attendance, expulsion/suspension options, and improved dropout/graduation rates.
  - Student growth/success indicators can be tracked using data provided by the IVS systems.
  - Teacher training, certification, and retention may positively be affected via IVS-PD.
  - IVS-PD has established relationships with ROEs, LTCs, ISCs, etc. and can efficiently develop and/or deliver content in association with MTSS plans.

### **Kenneth Maurer, Mayor of Metamora and Retired Superintendent**

- I spent 22 years in education, also been a teacher and principal, also I had dyslexia but didn't know it back then. I went all the way through school in teaching profession, principal profession, and superintendent profession (accidentally) and could not read the way you read—but I did learn to read.
- Over the years, I think we've made things way too complicated (NCLB and ESSA). A few things left out of the IL ESSA plan (although implied):
  - The student—we have to motivate students and convince them that education is important. We have to say it over and over again. If we do not do that we are not going anywhere, we're doing our students an injustice.
  - The parents—we can't leave them out. I do not see them in the plan. They are so important. Parents are valuable to students' education.
  - The teachers—if you want to get teachers back in the field, we have to give teachers more freedom to actually teach in the classroom.

- Mr. Maurer shared a survey he conducted with his students, teachers, parents, and administrators about their education experience. The results were all the same: #1 caring, #2 sense of humor, #3 enthusiasm for teaching, and #4 enthusiasm for the subject...eventually we get to knowledge.
- We are cutting people out of the teaching profession who ought to be teaching. We're making it complicated that we are driving people away.
- Education is the key for our communities. We must encourage and motivate our students. Students must have the drive and will to learn. Let's help Illinois be the best, allowing all to be innovative and creative.
- I appreciate what ISBE is doing but we're making it too complicated.

**Kristen McElligatt, Adjunct Professor at Bradley University**

- I'm here on behalf of Illinois Association of Gifted Children (IAGC)—current member and past president.
- First time there is federal legislation that provides provisions for highly able students, which I find extremely exciting—students who need completely different instruction, support, and resources. ESSA is a huge shift from NCLB, which focused on remediation.
- Although language regarding gifted children has been reinstated in the Illinois school code, it's contingent on funding—it's revised language from what was originally there.
- IAGC have produced gifted education seminars, professional learning tools for educators and administrators, and support personnel throughout the state AND we finally have a gifted endorsement.
- A recent report from One Chance Illinois found that about 27% of districts in Illinois have gifted programs.
- IAGC developed recommendations to share with ISBE for their consideration in the planning for ESSA.
  - Reverse the decline of gifted education in the state and fully develop talents of thousands of learners—ISBE helping schools' incubators of talents, develop the next generation of innovators and leaders.
  - We have the ability to support talent development and focused programs, train teachers to develop and recognize, and develop potential of diverse learners.
  - IAGC recommendations include changes in Title I, monitoring and reporting student growth for all students, and Title II, to build educator capacity to serve able students and a plan to support districts who have above average excellence and disparity within the learners they serve.
  - IAGC is eager to work with ISBE as they develop their plan.

**Sharon Kherat, Superintendent of Peoria SD**

- Unfortunately, I find the approach outlined in the state plan to be what Tony Smith states in his opening letter, “a piecemeal approach to children's needs and the programs that address those needs.” In addition, as currently proposed, the outlined approach continues

to be overly reliant upon components of compliance and appears to be very NCLB like. Many components echo of former approaches taken in the past, which proved themselves ineffective, inefficient, and unsustainable—School Improvement Grants for instance. While learning from the past is critically important in order to create a better future for our students, shutting down and recreating the entire system, reflected in ESSA by a planning year with little additional funds, reflects a start stop approach that hurts schools and compromises the trust and integrity of ISBE.

- Education in Illinois needs a different and robust act in rethinking the system. We need to use this opportunity to reimagine what our teachers and students are capable of, to change our education system so that it promotes innovative kids and helps students find their passion, their gifts, and their niche in order to truly succeed in life. Let's rethink and revisit teacher evaluation, the traditional model of professional development, and address the national teacher shortage.
- As it relates to ISBE ESSA Working Group, are there any conflicts of interest? In order for ESSA to be representative of what's really happening in the field, to be effective and truly make an impact, an idea could be that all stakeholder groups have membership that includes at least 50% current practitioners and meet more than three times.
- ESSA could provide Illinois the unprecedented opportunity to think outside of the box about education in the state of Illinois. ESSA Illinois State Plan should be used to rethink the system. Currently, it is a regurgitation of past failed attempts. As Albert Einstein so brilliantly put it, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used to create them." ESSA provides our state with the amazing opportunity to change our education system in Illinois so that it promotes innovative, excited, and inspired students equipped with the real skills they need to stay motivated, to actively engage in their education, and to succeed in today's world. We need our state of Illinois to help us get it right. What about a plan to dismantle and disrupt the traditional structure?

### **Tim Curtis, School Board Member**

- I have a different perspective. My concern is accountability. I see a list of indicators that need to be tracked that cost money. I would really like ISBE to find ways to allow flexibility in using Title monies or whatever funds that will be available that goes with ESSA.
- When I see the list of college and career readiness framework indicators, I do not think schools should be held accountable for something they have no control over. Please consider that when developing your list of indicators.
- Student growth is a much better model to keep in mind in order to track student progress. The nonacademic indicators are a little more complicated.
- We need standards that are flexible.
- Vision 20/20 has a balanced accountability model that includes continuous improvement, diversity of struggling schools, and elimination of achievement gaps. It would allow local flexibility, promote shared accountability, and be sensitive to local district improvements.
- Allow schools to tell their story. Demonstrate their knowledge without comparing them.



- As far as goal setting, long-term and short-term goals are reasonable.

### **Sean Kerwin, Washington Community High School Biology Teacher**

- As president of a local association, I am representing the Washington Education Association, the staff association of Washington Community HS district 308. I will address a few key indicators that have impacted our classrooms at the high school level. We feel these indicators need to be used as measures of success for Illinois schools.
  - **Student Growth:** In the past, educators relied on unrealistic score expectations on standardized tests. These tests are a poor measure of student achievement and growth. The current setup for testing is a mess at the high school level. There has been no continuity for the past 3 years. Now we have had schools able to select different grade levels to administer PARCC, the ACT has been tossed out, and SAT is in. The assessment that is going to be required needs to be valuable and usable data for students, teachers, and administrators.

Consideration of using student growth allows for realistic and tangible data that can be collected by schools to show that their students are improving. The data collected needs to be quality data.

- **Access to Resources:** New standards, evaluation tools, technology, laws, and no funding. Teachers are being held accountable for student learning and student growth, while there is no funding for initiatives. Our district has made cuts. These cuts stem from the unknown amount of money coming from the state and a backward system of funding schools. It is imperative that districts receive funding that they need in order to maintain student success.
- **Attendance and Absenteeism:** The number of days that students attend school is associated with student achievement, affecting their grades and achievement on reading and math assessments, as well as graduation. Including attendance as an accountability indicator motivates districts to quickly respond when student attendance declines. Including chronic absenteeism as an indicator can help to identify and provide targeted support to schools that need to develop strategies to better address the needs of chronically absent students.
- **Suspension and Expulsion:** Evidence shows that removing students from school increases their likelihood of dropping out. Adopting suspensions and expulsions as an indicator would result in not only a drop in student suspension and expulsion but an adoption of restorative justice programs and other alternatives to suspensions.

We believe that these four indicators—student growth, access to resources, attendance, and student discipline—are essential to student success. Please consider these indicators in your next draft.

### **Suzanne Carrescia, Director of Special Education**

- I have two points. The first is the number of Maintenance of Effort (MOE) exceptions needs to be increased. We have a couple districts who are working hard with their students to decrease their time out of general education, thus inadvertently reducing their need for special education teacher time. This is leading the district to make fiscally

irresponsible decisions because they cannot reduce staff or suffer MOE consequences in the form of long-term payments to the federal government, even though they are compliant with required state indicators. We need more exceptions or a way to account for changes to benefit staff. We have a district who has reduced health insurance costs, but cannot take the lower offer, due to the MOE implications. This savings will end up costing the district more in the long run. A system needs to be in place that will allow districts latitude, with parameters, to reduce when they are not cutting services to students.

- The 1% exception rule is impossible for some of my smaller districts to adhere to due to their sheer size. In a grade level of 20 students, with 2 students with significant disabilities requiring alternate assessment, this district is penalized by the state for its size. How about creating an accountability rubric that takes into consideration the needs of the students, the size of the grade level, and the overall indicators of performance on state assessments?

### **Tom Gross, Washington Community High School District 308**

- I have been an educator for 16 years—ten as classroom teacher and six as a school librarian. I serve on the board of the Illinois School Library Media Association and am president of the Illinois Computing Educators Heart of Illinois Chapter. I am an NBCT.
- I helped match several students up with books to read for enjoyment. I prepared book talks to take to English classrooms to get students excited about reading and finding books and authors that they will love. I prepared a lesson to talk about freedom of speech and expression as next week is Banned Book Week, and I see every sophomore student to talk about our rights as American citizens. At my school, I am an important part of our school improvement plan. I work with teachers, I present with teachers, and I teach with teachers.
- Significant new Title funding is becoming available through ESSA that would, if applied for and put to work by ISBE, allow licensed librarians to focus on school improvement not only through direct student contact but also through professional development for all faculty members on information literacy and resources, instructional technology, and more.
- We recommend that ISBE adopt school improvement policies that recognize and support licensed school librarians in our roles as teachers, co-teachers, and providers of instructional support for content area teachers.

### **Heather Brown, Director of Curriculum and Instruction**

- I attended the high needs conference in Springfield—when asked about feedback on the ACCESS (for ELs) test and their levels—a team of EL teachers got together and asked for leniency in regard to the writing score. Currently, it's keeping our students from scoring proficiency on the test—please keep this in mind as you develop your ESSA plan.
- For the 90 Goals—I asked that we set attainable goals verses the high-level aspirational proficiency goals, which models NCLB. The 90% appears to be too much. Prefer a system that measures growth but meets the school districts where they are at. We are not

all starting at the same point—so it’s important to start at an attainable level and set growth based off that.

**Christy Semande, District Librarian**

- I am here as a public library board member and licensed school librarian, but foremost a parent.
- My children attend Spoon River Valley School district, which is about 50 miles west of where we live. Two of the towns have public libraries, while three do not. Most of the school district is unserved by a public library.
- How does this relate to our purpose tonight? I know you have no control over the state public libraries, but one of the questions you asked was, what is necessary in order to develop a system that addresses disparities in funding and resources? All students in Illinois need equal access to high-quality school libraries staffed by licensed school library media specialists because it has been proven in research that it makes a difference in the quality of their education, and every child in Illinois deserves a good education.
- We recommend ISBE formally include school library standards in the state ESSA plan because school libraries make a difference in students’ lives.
- Laura Bush said, “Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”
- Please keep our school library doors open by including library programs and school librarians as part of the ESSA plan.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour Lockport Township High School District 205 September 26, 2016**

**Host: Superintendent Todd Wernet**

**Presenter: Melina Wright**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Corrin Pitluck & Alicia Garcia, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

35 Participants: School Board Association Members, Curriculum Directors, School Administrators, District Administrators, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Union Representatives, Principals, Advocates, Media Specialists, School Board Members, Title I Directors

### **Public Comment**

#### **Amy Walsh, Librarian from Joliet Township High School**

- Support students through providing library services. In Joliet, 49,500 students used the library last year. She is concerned with whole child development, and with helping kids build literacy skills while helping them find books. Librarians support creativity and problem solving and provide opportunities for students to work independently and in small groups. Librarians collaborate with teachers, co-teach, and provide PD to colleagues. As ISBE determines meaningful differences between schools, please adopt accountability standards that include recognizing licensed librarians as drivers for success.

#### **Rene Valenciano, ELL Coordinator for Joliet District 86, and Executive Board Member of the Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education (IAMME)**

- IAMME believes in multilingual and multicultural education for all students. Recommendations include:
  - Language arts and science assessments in Spanish, using Title 1 funds.
  - Stop connecting student assessment (currently in English) with teacher and administrator evaluations.
  - Increase the weight of Type III assessments, which may be conducted in home languages for a more accurate assessment of student achievement.
  - IAMME supports the recommendations put forth by the Latino Policy Forum.

#### **Don Hamerly, Director of School Librarian Licensure Program at Dominican University in River Forest**

- Include library programs headed by licensed librarians in school assessments.

- Use federal Title monies to support library programs headed by licensed librarians.
- Use federal Title monies to provide librarians with resources, including time and technology, to support student learning.
- Recommend that teacher and administrator preparation programs in Illinois universities should include curriculum to value and collaborate with school librarians.

**Loretta Burke, Library Media Specialist from Oswego District 308**

- All work performed by school librarians is tied to student growth. Please include licensed school librarians as members of the teaching profession supporting state standards. School librarian guidelines are needed in the state of Illinois. ISBE needs to use money from grants to meet student needs for access to information in their school libraries.

**Dr. Nakia Hall, School Board President, Lockport High School District 205**

- Accountability is still accepted, and ESSA is a needed change from NCLB. We support ISBE’s efforts.
- Defining district stories is very important, to tell, with more than numbers, our story about improvement and challenges. The Five Essentials gave us a chance to show what’s going well, what to improve, and we need our story to our progress. Mobility is part of our story. Mobility rates are shown on our ISBE school report card, but student outcomes are not disaggregated by mobility. We break it down by time in the district, and the longer a student is in our district, the better they do. This is part of our story.
- Over time, mandates for school board member trainings have dwindled. As of now, there are only 4 mandated trainings for school board members. If boards are to be held accountable, we need them to know how to set goals and engage the community. We do not want decisions made by untrained board members, who may not come from a background in education. Please allocate Title II funds for board member training. Agencies offer training, but districts don’t have funds. Board members need access to workshops and training to be in the conversations and have knowledge needed to set policy. Board effectiveness is related to student success.

**Open Conversation—Feedback from the Audience**

**ISBE:** What did you not see in the plan?

- Is there an academic indicator that would assign scores for courses in music and the arts to keep schools from narrowing curriculum?
- What is the role of PERA in the changes introduced by ESSA—will student test scores be disconnected from teacher evaluation?
- I’m expecting growth measures and accountability for high schools. For college and career readiness (CCR), you have to take them all the way through.
- I see there are industrial credentials included on the list of indicators, but this needs to be treated carefully. This can be another way to discriminate against minority students, until they are up to speed. A lot of employers use that to decide to hire graduates. If a student hasn’t made it to that level, they can be out of a job.

- Does JROTC need to be added? **[ISBE: Military service is on there.]** For some schools, it is an academic indicator.
- Would local districts have control over selecting some of these benchmarks, or will we have statewide targets? For example, 90% attendance might not be a problem for some districts, but 85% would be amazing elsewhere. **[ISBE: We're not that far yet. We're still thinking through options. We want the measures to be by student; each student should have all these options.]**
- Has ISBE considered measuring growth versus academic achievement? When you have high-performing kids, how do you show growth? **[ISBE: The team is aware of those issues.]**
- About the college and career readiness indicators, "Redefining Ready" is a white paper that lays out the research behind readiness indicators.
- One indicator on the list is "organized co-curricular school activities." Does this mean clubs? Would student council be considered as an indicator? **[ISBE: Student council would be co-curricular.]**

**ISBE:** There is an e-mail address to send your thoughts: [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net). You can tell me "get rid of PERA. From Bob." That would be OK, but a little more detail would be even better. What were your expectations for tonight? Now we're getting into the weeds. It's hard, but a great opportunity.

- The focus on growth at elementary level is appreciated. The ISBE growth charts were well thought, with challenges for high achievers. But there are challenges in the next steps for evaluation, and a lack of clarity on the assessment plan. Elementary schools have had substantial variation in their state test over each of the last five years. The old state test was changed across its last three years, and PARCC changed from two administrations to one between its first and second years. We would like continuity and reliable data to measure growth at all levels. Most people would appreciate intermediate-term consistency to plan and to embrace a growth mind-set.
- The 98-page state plan is tough to digest, though the reader's guide is helpful. Can you get a wiki or some tool to digest? **[ISBE: I have a survey on my to-do list, with something like a chance to rank a set of 10 quality indicators.]**
- Reiterated that there have been five assessments over the past 5 years. MAP is used for longitudinal data. Some data systems are in place. Please leave it alone for a while.
- Agree with letting ELL kids show what they know in their home language. Bilingualism is in demand, but we don't recognize it in our schools.
- I value differentiation. RTI programs support students who are gifted and those who are struggling. Special needs students are also treated through RTI; they are not pushed to the side but are supported in regular classes.
- In ESSA, the emphasis in the accountability system on academic indicators may not incorporate the whole child. I'm concerned that fine arts will get lip service but not real support. Can this concern be addressed through the weighting of success indicators? **[ISBE: Yes, qualitative indicators can be fine arts. Should it be in the accountability**

system or in the reporting system? Title I money used to just go to reading and math, but now it can go to a librarian, a music program, etc. Student achievement is still central, but world of options is opening up.]

- The state has been supportive with local choice. That choice and flex is important. But what gets measured gets done. If you choose to use funds in a particular way, you need to align indicators to that. Not every district does same things. [**ISBE:** We're struggling to find balance between a statewide system and local autonomy for balanced accountability. We want your ideas, questions, critique. What haven't we thought of? We need thoughtful partners.]
- A point system to determine school accountability could include categories, with options within each category, and each category containing equal numbers of points. You don't want a point system where you have tons of things worth 5 points each. Some choice is better than none.
- Concerned about the association of remedial work with career and college readiness. Why would remedial be included if the goal is to bring students up to par? We don't want the expectation of remedial courses.
- I don't see benchmarks for technology in the context of college and career readiness.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**East St. Louis School District 189**

**September 27, 2016**

**District Superintendent Arthur Culver**

**Presenter: Jason Helfer**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Cora Goldston & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

35 Participants: Parents, Principals, Assistant Superintendents, ROE Superintendents, Content Specialists, Special Education Directors, Union Representatives, School Librarians, Program Assistants

### **Public Comment**

#### **Jane Brown Owens, Aunt of ESL Alumni and Member of Parents United for Change**

- Am a product of ESL and I volunteer in the schools here. Some of my relatives are currently ESL students at Dr. Kay Wright Elementary School.
- Am here today on behalf of parents for Parents United for Change, which came together to make the community better for children and the community. Early learning is essential for student success. This includes school climate. ESSA is a real chance to make a more just system for all families. We're excited to see the emphasis on family engagement in ESSA, and we encourage ISBE to consider parents as more than people who participate in bake sales. Parents know what our children need, and we want to be part of the decisionmaking for our students. We are the leaders in our families and communities. With other groups, we're calling on the state to create a parent advisory council, where parent leaders can have real input on both early childhood and K-12 education. We believe that our voice can make education policy stronger and more effective. We believe that success is measured by school climate and discipline rates. Students who are suspended are more likely to be involved in negative activities. We're interested in ensuring that all of our little ones have access to early childhood education and care. We encourage ISBE to use funding to expand programs for children aged 0-5 and early intervention to help students participate in these programs. We hope you'll listen to our recommendations.
- Being a volunteer and parent is very important to me. When we get parents who are engaged but aren't being heard, it's very discouraging for parents, and it stops parents from coming out—they feel like they don't matter. But parents do matter. We hold parent meetings to let the district and state know that we are concerned about our students. We ask you to let us sit in on meetings so we can provide input on the decisions that affect our students. The parents are going to be heard, and if we aren't heard at this level, we'll move up to the next level.



## Mamie Cosey, Parent of 3 Children with Special Needs

- I'm so delighted to have ISBE here at East St. Louis High School. I volunteer here twice a week. I'm happy to see the state here today to gather feedback.
- I'm 75 years old, and I adopted my great-grandchildren. I have been an active parent in this district for 15 years. I haven't been to a board meeting lately because it feels like talking to a brick wall. I go where I'm valued.
- Having an accountability plan but having nobody review it—it would have no value. We need to have the monitoring system beyond just creating an accountability plan.
- I tell people that you can't work with my child if you can't work with me. I know what my child needs.
- The system is broken. We must listen to each other and have conversations in order to lay out our accountability plan.
- It seems like education has been put on the back burner in America. The state asks us to do things, but we don't have the tools to do it. You have to have the tools to work with.
- Everyone in this room can make a difference, if we put our minds to it.
- Our teachers spend time in this building, night after night, developing lesson plans and materials to make their classes work. This is where parents come in to help teachers be successful—buying little things to provide classroom materials.
- There is funding, but it's not trickling down. There should be something in the state plan that allows funding to be moved around.
- We need to have funding for transportation—transportation is vital here. We live in areas that are too dangerous for our students to walk. However, the current law says that students must live in more than 1.5 miles from the school to get transportation. Safety is the most important thing.
- This is so dear to me—is the state hearing us? We have children in our district who need medical care, but they can't get it because we don't have the funds to take care of students who are in school past their medication time. No one is going to give my child medication other than an authorized medical professional.
  - **Response from Jason:** We're working on including provisions on wraparound services for students.
- I'm grateful that ISBE is looking at the education situation. I hope that we'll come up with common curriculum across the state.
- We need to write the plan and make it clear. It needs to be something that parents, teachers, and administrators can all read and understand.
- We do improvement plans every year—what's the point of coming up with the plan each year when we don't have the funding or tools to make changes?

- When you look at the scores that are presented for testing, how does the state separate our scores from general education students and special education students?
  - **Response from Jason:** The 1% of students districtwide who require the most special consideration is currently considered separately, but many districts have more than 1% of their students receiving special education services. What I'm most excited about in ESSA is that we wouldn't just look at whether students have achieved a certain score; it also looks at how the students have grown. We have to tell the story of growth—there are some districts that might be low proficiency, but they are making great strides. This is why we need to hear from local staff—growth can really change our narrative significantly, but only if the local administrators are pushing back.

### **Martha Young, Parent**

- When ISBE comes up with acts, is it something people are creating to justify their paychecks, or do they come around and get feedback from the community first?
  - **Response from Jason:** This is an example of getting input from communities—we're developing our plan with input from the community.
- The most important people in education are parents—without parents, you have no good school system.
- I have learned to stop and take a walk around myself when I don't agree with something ISBE does. We're not always right, and ISBE isn't always right, so we have to work together. We have children who come from all backgrounds. I'm tired of people looking down on ESL, because we have the best in this district.
- Parents need to get up and get involved—it's up to the parents to work together with the school. You might feel frustrated at first that you aren't getting things done. If you take a piece of thread and keep adding to it, eventually you'll have a rope.
- What about the social aspects of our children? We need to think about the whole child.
- We need to cooperate with administrators more. As a parent, there are some things that I have to insist on—I can't just go with the status quo. I should be concerned about every school in this district.
- Invite parents to your planning sessions—we'll walk if we have to, but we'll be there. We want to understand all of the language. Bring me up, and we'll grow together. We have to cooperate with one another. I respect the superintendent, even if I don't agree with everything he says. Let's get something accomplished for our children. If I see something that I don't agree with, I'll tell you so we can resolve our differences.
- Every child in District 189 is a part of my soul.

**Question from Mamie:** Is ISBE thinking about classroom size? Classrooms in our district are too large.

### **Arthur Culver, Superintendent of East St. Louis School District**

- I see the eighth-, ninth-grade on-track indicator under consideration. I ask you to add 10th graders as well—if we get sophomores on track, we see that graduation rates have increased significantly. We have a “half-cap” ceremony, which is well received. We determine sophomore status by credit hours.

### **Edwina Holton, Educator in East St. Louis**

- About accountability: When we have the accountability plan, will there be something to ensure that the state is using the funding as it’s been properly allocated? We have a lot of different programs and systems going on in the district, so we’re implementing a lot, but we never really have time to refine what we’re doing, so it’s never implemented well enough. Will there be time to try things and see if they’re working?
  - **Response from Jason:** There is some language about state budgeting. There is a current fiscal monitoring system. We’re hearing that districts are not doing monitoring. Another issue with braiding and blending funding—about a month ago, ISBE met with the federal-level special education team. One portion of the team did an audit, but another part of the team came to talk about braiding and blending. We’re in contact with our SEA colleagues in Michigan, who have done a lot around braiding and blending funds, and we’re trying to learn from them. It may be that braiding is more effective than blending funding, because it preserves some of the Title programs. Thinking about what that could look like at the district level is really important; we’ve never really had this conversation. I want to point out that districts are required to get input at the district level. Districts are required to show that they’ve talked to business leaders, parents, and other community members to plan their programs. It’s up to the district to plan it out, which is exciting—then the district’s eye is on what’s best for students. Last Thursday, we had a superintendent talking about funding. One of the biggest issues is the TRS contribution. District staff are saying that they’re not spending Title funding on professional development, because 37% of it is just gone. We’re trying to get to the bottom of this, because it’s affecting all of our districts and killing professional learning in Illinois.
- **Follow-up:** Ms. Cosey’s comment jogged my memory about this—is there anything in the plan to address that districts will need different things from each other? Some districts are trying to address some basic fundamentals that we need to have in place before implementing other things.
  - **Response from Jason:** I think this would be locally determined. ISBE doesn’t make determinations about who districts hire, so districts can hire whoever they need.
- **Follow-up from Mamie:** How do we hold the districts accountable? What about the state’s requirements to do things that aren’t funded?
  - **Response from Jason:** I think ESSA is significantly different because of what’s required for accountability plans. We hear often about unfunded mandates on these listening tours. A couple weeks ago, I had a district superintendent who stood up and said that we need to figure out what we want. He was saying that we need to be able to tell districts what we need and why we need it. If we can’t do that, the districts are going to have big problems.

### **Jennifer Lara, Licensed School Librarian in O'Fallon District**

- I've spent 17 years in this district.
- After I became an English teacher, I noticed some serious deficiencies in how students process information. This inspired me to go down the path of becoming a librarian. I was inspired to ensure that students have the resources and knowledge to succeed after high school. I work with a staff of 4 dedicated individuals. I believe our school is a shining example of how libraries can support students. Sadly, my school's situation is not the norm in my area. There are some districts where they share one licensed librarian across a number of schools, leaving the libraries seriously underresourced.
- A strong effective school library has a licensed school librarian devoted to the academic achievement of all students. That librarian is committed to collaboration with colleagues across all content areas and grade levels. I know this because my librarian colleague and I average about 1,000 hours of developing programs and planning each semester. Just in the past few days, I've worked with teachers across 8 classes to support English learners. Licensed school librarians use their skills to help students achieve the Illinois state standards. At my school, our librarians work to integrate library and information gathering skills in English classes across all grade levels. Licensed librarians ensure that students have a strong understanding of using information.
- We're teaching students life skills: how to separate good information from bad, how not to be taken advantage of online. Librarians function as professional development leaders. My colleague and I have spent hours getting our Microsoft certifications so that we can train our colleagues. We invest in our own PD so we can support the professional development of other teachers.
- Librarians develop programs that support the whole child. Libraries bridge the digital divide by providing resources to students who wouldn't be able to access them otherwise.
- An average of 44,500 students choose to come through my library's doors and use our resources.
- One of my librarians was mentored and guided by the school librarian here as ESL HS.
- I ask ISBE to include licensed school librarians and effective libraries as accountability measures, use Title funds to provide librarians with the professional development they need to support students, provide support for collaboration between librarians and content area teachers.
- Without a strong and effective library program, there is a sizeable hole and weakness. Students pay the prices.

### **Mary Barteau, Teacher Librarian at Belleville High School**

- Librarians want to be part of ESSA.
- Librarians elevate student achievement through collaboration and instruction. About 5 years ago, we knew we had to do something to increase reading levels. This year alone, one-third of students entering Belleville West HS are reading 2 or more years below grade level.

- How did we turn it around at our school? Librarians worked with teachers. We dedicated ourselves to improving reading. The Belleville West librarians started by collaborating with English teachers, but it spread to all school staff, who in turn read along with students. In the first year, PSAT and ACT scores rose. Before the intervention, 45% of students were meeting/exceeding reading at grade level—afterwards, it was 60%.
- Our teachers know that if there's any downtime during class, each student has a book with them—they can pull it out and read.
- We have a Million-Page Challenge. Each grade has to read 1 million pages as a group. Every year, our students commit, and we read about 4 million pages. During the summer, our sports teams participate in a 1 team, 1 book program—the football team members all read the same book, and then we did a Skype session with the book's authors. The football players became reading role models for other students, and from time to time, I see the players recommending books to other students.
- A few years ago, we were recognized by the Follett Challenge, and that award allowed us to do 1 book, 1 school. Everyone, even cafeteria staff, read the book.
- We instruct students on GUM—Get, Use, and Manage information. We help students to become critical thinkers at all times. We provide resources to help students manage information and communicate—students can communicate through PPT, Prezi, podcasts, augmented reality, and many more avenues.
- We hope that ISBE will help librarians and teacher-librarians and show some continued support so we can continue to support students statewide and nationwide.

### **Alayna Davies, School Librarian**

- I'm one librarian who has to maintain 7 school libraries for 3,600 students.
- Parent volunteers can do shelving and organizing books, but students need more than that.
- Librarians are being devalued. Don't devalue us—we are important to your schoolchildren.
- Libraries need licensed school librarians and materials that are current.
- For many students, the school library is the only library that students are exposed to. Students need librarians to teach them how to find relevant information.

**Jason:** It'd be great to get your feedback on the college and career readiness framework that ISBE created. Thoughts?

- **Question:** What other exam options do we have beyond the SAT or ACT?
  - **Response from Jason:** ED requires that any statewide exams be peer reviewed. Currently we're using the SAT at the high school level.
- **Question:** Is there an SAT benchmark that's been established for college and career readiness?
  - **Response from Jason:** Not yet, but ISBE is working on it.

- **Question:** Why is the GPA requirement 2.8?
  - **Response from Jason:** We used the Redefining Readiness work to inform our college and career readiness framework. The 2.8 benchmark isn't all about academic achievement—the GPA is also correlated to grit and perseverance. If 2.8 is used for accountability for schools, then that score would be an aggregate for students in each class. But for individuals, what happens if students will never meet a 2.8? What if 90% of students won't achieve that 2.8 and therefore college and career readiness. That's come up at every single meeting. Some states have standards for career readiness that are separate from college readiness, like Kentucky—in those states, you get points for having students that are ready for both.
- **Question:** Are the academic benchmarks determined by the district or the state?
  - **Response from Jason:** They would be determined by the state, but there are some challenges. For example, a student might receive an industry credential in their area, but it may not be recognized in other parts of the state. There are local issues with dual credit options, because not all students would be able to use dual credit, due to the requirements for junior college and university accreditation. Another challenge is considering AP exam scores versus AP course grades. This college and career readiness framework is the most defined part of the plan so far; however, it's all contingent, and we want to incorporate local reactions. You don't have to respond right now, but please share your thoughts through [essa@isbe.net](mailto:essa@isbe.net). We need your best thinking.
- **Question about 90% attendance:** With the rise of technology integration in schools, many schools are integrating technology into their curricula; however, we're still requiring that students be within the school walls during the school day. Why are we requiring so much seat time when there are other ways to achieve those outcomes?
  - **Response from Jason:** We did a pilot with 3 districts for an e-learning program to see if districts could provide learning during inclement weather. Oswego SD has a waiver for e-learning, and they've developed a really robust system.
- **Barbara O'Donnell, SIUE:** If you live in a small rural community, there may not be AP course or dual credit offerings. In those cases, the students are limited in the academic benchmarks they can use towards being considered college and career ready.
  - **Response from Jason:** The kids who don't have those things in their district shouldn't be held hostage by their circumstances. The state needs to work on ways to provide educational opportunities to all students around the state, potentially through virtual learning.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**Chicago Public School District 299**

**September 27, 2016**

**Host/Regional Superintendent**

**ISBE Presenter: Melina Wright**

**Time: 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note taker: Sara Wraight, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

89 Participants: CPS Administrators, Teachers, Parents, School Librarians, Principals, District Administrators, Community Members, Teachers Union Representatives, Advocates, Local School Council Members

### **Public Comment**

#### **Jose Hernandez, Parent, LSC Chair, and Member of Parents United for Healthy Schools**

- Parent-led coalition.
- As we know it, ISBE is responsible for distribution of funds, to promote equitable access for high-quality learning for all students, promote connection between health and wellness.
- Like NCLB, ESSA recognizes importance of physical and mental health, and importance of ensuring education quality for all children—want to emphasize role of parents in shaping experience of whole child—ISBE should reserve a portion of the Title I funding:
  - To support parent and family engagement to build cap around health and wellness.
  - To support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing PD.
  - To support programs to support parents and families at home and to improve...
- ESSA represents an important opportunity for ISBE to support parents and families to create healthy school environment.
  - Parents are important in shaping regulations that impact children in schools.
  - ISBE has opportunity to create health and wellness in plan.
  - Because school improvement plan require... health and wellness should be integrated into every part of the school experience.
  - The reason for health and wellness in schools is such an important issue for parents is simple—healthier children better able to learn, thrive; also reduce chronic absenteeism.
  - ISBE has a chance to prioritize the whole child.
  - Ask that it be implemented.

### **Amy delaFuente, Former Early Childhood Education Teacher, Parent, and Advocate for Equity**

- Concerned with continued use of PARCC test in IL. Just found out that IL will use it for next 2 years. Appropriate to discuss what will be replaced and why we should be concerned.
- Continued use not a good decision. Value assessment, but task of choosing should not be taken lightly. Assessment should help improve and track growth over time. PARCC is neither reliable nor valid. These are gold standard for research and assessment. The fact that it is not ready is a concern. Another issue—takes so long. Time to take and to prepare. IL concerned with funding, CCR trajectory, preparation for college and career—a lot of concerned individuals are trying to reform. Spending on PARCC a gross misuse of funds...in order to be prepared for college and career need to have more time to engage not take test...automatic scoring for written response.
- Recommendations:
  - Replacement of PARCC—consider federal government pilot on innovative assessment.
  - Parents should have right to opt out...if a district chooses bad assessment based on x, then parent should be able to choose to....
  - If we are looking at how we are providing students with assistance, and how to best support, need to look at who is in our schools, need to look at trauma, and that is not factored in—just poverty, which is a poor indicator—need to address behavioral, health, mental health...

### **Charlie Pitman, Member of the Act Now Coalition**

- All children have access to quality and affordable afterschool programming.
- When we reviewed draft plan, found a lot of opportunity for where we can support goals—can help improve outcomes, promote, cost-effective.... Can improve low-performing students. As research indicates, those who participate demonstrate improvement in achievement, grad rates, health and wellness, etc. Peace for working families. Data can be collected to track positive youth development outcomes. Unfortunately, like many states, needs exceed what we have. There are parts in ESSA for funding to improve afterschool (e.g., Title IV, Part A; Title II, Part B)...we hope that ISBE will take voice of afterschool into consideration...

### **Megan Kowalski, Educator in Pilsen**

- Love my school and feel that current rating system does not reflect hard work.
- Need to take into account leadership, resources, facilities.... Students can't feel comfortable to test in a school that heats up to 100 degrees by noon, no working drinking fountains. Regulations tied hands of colleagues. In order to make real progress, need a higher level of trust in what teachers do each day. Need greater independence from state and federal mandates re paperwork....need leaders who can mentor and build us up. Thank you.



### **Member of Bilingual Organization and Pro Bono Consultant**

- Document does not talk about how will communicate with parents who come from homes where speak another language other than English. ....
  - Will submit 14-page document to inform.
  - First relates to EL students with disabilities, assessment, identification of students, and how will provide services to children, train teachers.
  - Group composed of university professors, teachers, etc. Have been endorsed by various state orgs.
  - Second document—statement from working group on EL policy—ESSA of 2015—document of 250 brains across nation—re how ESSA should be implemented to address needs of EL students and their families.
  - Third is document from ED—September 23—nonregulatory guidance re EL. Document as well as ESSA from ISBE. Draw attention to K on pages 41-43—ELs with disabilities....
- The population of EL students—all languages—increasing and will continue to increase. This issue is ignored. What I am giving to you is more paperwork, brains, hours, and days—feedback in round 1 did not appear in round 2.

### **Grandmother and Co-Chair of Power PAC**

- Are here because ESSA—have more opportunities to say what our families and students need. Need to have these sessions in Spanish.
- We believe our voice is not heard from state level because we don't have parent counsel advocate for children—reality—we are parents and we know reality—5 kids went to Wells HS—school in probation...a lot of dropout rate. When I come and LSC chair—changes. ESSA needs to have state-level parent advisory council. Dropout rate—push out the school....social emotional issues...start working with students that have 2.0 not just those with 3.5. Make parent...

### **Juan Gonzalez, Father and Former LSC Member in Chicago, Speaking on Behalf of Stand for Children Illinois**

- Meaningful accountability system for students—fair
  - Don't lose sight of achievement gaps.
  - Student growth should be weighted more than proficiency or any other indicators.
  - Want to work together to support innovative approaches to improvement schools.
- One of things NCLB introduced—subgroups—by shining light, schools could no longer hide issues with subgroups. Want to make sure this still exists.
- Regarding student growth—research shows that measures of proficiency not fair—want to emphasize student growth as measure that is much more valuable to support each child. Think that in high school level—IL switching to SAT—should also add PSAT so can be growth measure in high school level.

- Saw examples of indicators—need to measure outputs not inputs (e.g., not access to certain things, which is more about resources than what a school actually accomplishes with the resources they have).
- Also, state plan requires that school plans need to have quality, but at the same time, there has to be a way for still providing resources despite a weak school improvement plan.
- Thank you for having listening tours.

### **Kurt Hilgendorf, Chicago Teachers Union Representative**

- Broad comments tonight. Will have more detailed response later.
- Opportunity to remedy NCLB—the key is to avoid the mistakes of the past. That better measures will improve things. Need to look at inputs that make a difference. Some key pieces:
  - Under the federal regulations, high likelihood of recreating rank, sort, etc. of NCLB—need to look at resources. Effects of poverty are persistent and pernicious—need to really look at resource accountability as part of this.
  - Inputs matter—need to maximize the weight on things schools can control and not the things that they can't, like standardized tests, which are really poverty...
- Long history of strong correlation of poverty and test scores. Those students with most resources get best PARCC scores. Reuters points out the SAT creates major barrier because of the word problems. Not a test of math, a further test of literacy. Results get skewed.
- Interventions not right.
- Timeline—question on timeline needs to be schools or districts—not measuring school because so much turnover over period of time—not the same thing at the two points of time.
- Bottom 5%—same schools same issues in 1997 and 2017. How do you get out this when structural issues because of poverty—not because of lack of effort but conditions are very challenging.
- In support of state board—local intervention is better than the requirements under NCLB—turnaround, etc. Punish.

### **Chris Ball, Member of Raise Your Hand**

- Important that we understand what we mean by accountability. Accounting alone is insufficient. Not to say that measures don't matter—they do. The measures are not enough. Understand still in draft. Current draft very vague—need more detail to assess quality of accountability system. Some early indicators of potential problems. Any performance measures should take into account the resources in a school and the challenges facing schools—why not taking into account class sizes, percentage of ELs, etc. For example, we should not consider a school that spends 3 times as much but gets same proficiency rates as performing equally well. Some perverse inferences (e.g., HS

curricular offerings). An underfunded school will by definition have fewer of these offerings—seems unfair to punish in this way.

- Another indicator that might be a problem is attendance. Can understand that a school that has low attend and low prof, but what if a school has high rates of proficiency but low attendance—why would we punish a school that is doing well? But if high attendance and low prof, why reward if not making use of time? These indicators alone do not provide enough information about the quality of the school. Do not give us an account of performance. Some of the Accountability Working Group ideas are good, but still very vague what these will mean. There are times where we are wondering whether we mean the same things by the same words (e.g., portfolio indicator sounded great, but then it was revealed that this included Lexile level, which seems to be another testing measure). Wondering why not looking at innovative assessment approach under ESSA. New York State piloted portfolio-based system—why are we not doing this? Or looking to get into federal demonstration program. Agree with points on PARCC.

### **Rebecca Navarro, Advocate With Latino Policy Forum**

- ELL forum has developed compendium that will send.
- Three highlights:
  - ELP—now in Title I—bubble syndrome issue...can also happen with ELP—if focus just on kids on cusp. So should look at growth to encourage all support.
  - Need content assessments in Spanish. CA has adopted CC in Spanish and assessments with ETS. Could do this in IL.
  - LDS to look at how ELs are doing over time. Should look at current ELs and those that are reclassified until graduation—research shows that these students with a big focus in home language do well over time, not necessarily early.

### **Josie Yanguas and Jane Montes, Members of IAMME**

- Three recommendations:
  - Now that we know that EL academic accountability—strongly advocate that part of state’s Title I dollars be used to develop assessments in Spanish in particular (e.g., CO, NM, NY, NJ to pool funds together to come up with this kind of assessment).
    - Our state has developed great leadership in state seal of biliteracy, which can give college credit, indicate ready for world of employment.
  - ESSA is silent on teacher evaluation becoming a state matter as a result. The mandated connection between teacher evaluation and high stakes results...IL must rethink system of evaluation while still...now that states have more federal flexibility—no research that links teacher effectiveness to student performance. IAMME recommends that more weights be given to classroom assessments. Such a change would encourage development of more native language assessments in more languages.
  - Endorse recommendations of Latino Policy Forum.

### **Ali Stout, Special Education Teacher at Austin College Academy**

- Have been teacher for 8 years—only teacher for there for that long that looks like me. Not preparing best and brightest to succeed and excel in large at-risk urban school districts.
- Issue—most teacher prep programs do not provide real and applicable issues (e.g., students suffering from trauma). How do you ask a student to prepare for PARCC or ACT when you are reeling? Or restorative justice. None are required courses in IL. Want ISBE to require cultural competency coursework to truly prepare educators to address.

### **Megan Cusick, Member of the American Library Association**

- Resources taken out of schools, particularly as they pertain to libraries. As we talk about accountability—want to challenge ISBE to think about how we develop systems that refocus from punitive to focus on students and focus on spending so we are providing services before an intervention needed. Completely unfair to ask schools to be accountable when they don't have resources. One of the things left out of NCLB was school libraries. Happy that school libraries included but no definition of what an effective school library looks like. ALA has developed definition. Includes adequate staffing, resources, and time for PD and collaboration with teachers.
- As you continue to draft ESSA implementation plan, I ask that you consider how studies show that certified librarians impact student achievement/outcomes. Regarding CCR—research that reason that college students are not prepared to use libraries/college information services. School librarians are uniquely equipped to provide access, experts, etc. should be provided for in Title IV plan....are tech integrators, etc., build digital literacy, digital citizenship, etc., offer PD, team up with teacher, enhance school culture, and write grants. As you consider use of Title II funds, consider that can help bring additional Title II funds through LEARN and other grants. Urge you to work with local admin and school librarian...

### **Sarah Sayigh, School Librarian in Chicago**

- One of 3 remaining HS serving primarily AA HS. One librarian to 5,000 students for HS students in CPS. Still in my position because of my students. Two days after receiving letter from CPS to let her go, staged a "read out"—a peaceful and meaningful protest. Along with protest, students launched social media campaign. Covered in press. Why did my school community feel strongly about keeping me? During protests, CPS sent reps. Students talked about different roles of librarian...teacher, helped with projects, research, etc. Co-teaching with teachers, individualized instruction, also IB students that have to do projects. PD for teachers on planning. Also help with technology. Consistent presence in students' lives from freshman to senior year. Clubs, extra curriculum...bring in resources, written many grants. Students valued my role because I helped them to succeed not just academically. In my position this year but it is precarious....so sad for the many CPS students who do not have librarian in their school. ESSA speaks of need for effective SLP that offer personalized.... Step would be for ISBE to put into place policies to provide trained librarians in every school. Not far-fetched...

### **Sonia Matthew, Civic Learning Manager for the McCormick Foundation**

- Part of education is developing...seek to restore civic purpose of schools...students deserve opportunities to learn and practice civic engagement...IL democracy schools focus on civic education...since 2006, 54 HS have been recognized as IL democracy schools—common elements—vision and leadership, curriculum, PD, school community partnerships, climate. Work can be used to inform indicators. Developing students' civic identify should be important part of educating the whole child. Resources to support PD for teachers essential to support implementation of these new standards.

### **Heather Davis**

- Oversee arts education for network of 30+ IL schools.
- IL must include student access to arts education as part of accountability system. Student at school and was disengaged—had opportunity to focus on art and started to....

### **Sharon Pincham, Member of IAMME**

- Entering seventh year as elected community rep on south side of Chicago... member of several committees.
- Here because want to address portion of ESSA on 2 topics:
  - Fair and level funding—IL has most inequitable funding system in country—largest funding gaps in the country. Students who need the most receive the least. Evaluation of student achievement is biased—should be developed to reward growth and not a baseline of students that is unrelated. Schools that are selective enrollment should have much different criteria for performance for schools with open enrollment. State subsidies to fill gaps. Standard formula used. Shame that schools in elite suburban area can spend 30K per student and in CPS 13K—also 8K of this does not go to the school. In order to achieve equity in ESSA, this is a place to start: 75% should go to the school house.
  - Moratorium on charter school expansion. Today public schools have less than half of student dollars, in addition have to share with quasi-public schools. And not measured by same standards. Charters can admit and then dismiss and dollars allocated for student stay with charter school.

### **Jennifer Edwards, Member of Community Organization**

- Suggestions—police cadet program, community policing.
- Incidents of police misconduct have created deep distrust of police in communities.
- Police departments should mirror communities that they serve—need to address imbalance. Cultural difference can cause issues—misinterpreted inflections of voice, etc. Need to be opportunities for men and women in community to become police officers.
- Two recommendations:
  - Policy cadet program—CPD had program in 60s and 70s called the police cadet program to introduce young men and women to police experience. Cadets who successfully completed program...good blue collar job. Ending program ended partnership between youth and police. When added requirement of 60 hours of

college credit resulted in significant decrease of minority applicants....direct ties to community and natural street instinct....left youth out of this process because could not afford to go to college.

- Expansion of community policing.

### **Carmen Palmer, Founder of Educational Village Keepers**

- Discontinue academic violence of NCLB.....

**At this point, Melina asked that if had written testimony, then summarize and we will put full written testimony into the record.**

### **Speaker**

- Strongly advocate for civics law be enforced and that it further include the following requirements—that it be a stand-alone course, for entire school year, and that civics carry a full unit of credit, that civics be taught starting in the middle school grades. The elementary and high school students take Constitution test...feel that civics will help contextualize education. The cost of training teachers pales in comparison to having an uneducated electorate...second recommendation regarding City Colleges of Chicago—advocate that be counted for postsecondary enrollment purposes.

### **Jillian Ongue, Teacher and Member of Teach Plus**

- Addressing 2 questions:
  - Both growth and attainment need to be valued. Students at top of proficiency difficult to take into have growth—achievement should be valued...also something regarding transient students.
  - Consistently underperforming—of every 2 years—in reference to student groups—ELL students take 4 or more years to achieve on par—recommendations regarding specific assessment types—dynamic assessments—process and not just the product of learning. Concerned about PARCC's ability to measure growth. Need adaptive tests that measure growth.

### **Nick Schmidt, Teach Plus Fellow who taught in Chicago for 7 years**

- Give support at HS level—access to a diverse range of offerings—IB, AP, etc.—ensure all students have access and that it is counted,
- Teacher support necessary to improving schools. Training is necessary. Support and highlight need for mentoring program using Title II funds.
- Seemed like need to collaborate, researchers, assessment experts/designers to give input and be part of the process.

### **John Weber, Director of Learning Programs for Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

- With respect to state's plan for ESSA implementation, advocate that arts will be included in accountability measures. Not a surprising factor that lower performing schools do not have access to arts. Title IV—ESSA has converted STEM into STEAM....

**Jonathan VanderBrug, Member of Arts Alliance Illinois**

- Arts are essential to a complete and competitive education. Essential that IL include access to the arts as an indicator beyond just a reported item.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

## **Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**

**School District U-46 (Schaumburg)**

**September 28, 2016**

**District CEO Tony Sanders**

**Presenter: Melina Wright**

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Note takers: Cora Goldston & Alicia Garcia, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

### **Stakeholders Meeting**

74 Participants: Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, School Librarians, Education Managers, Grant Specialists, Education Association Members, Union Representatives, HR Coordinators, Special Olympics Coordinators, PTA Administrators, Gifted Coordinators

### **Public Comment**

#### **Tony Sanders, CEO of School District 246**

- A little about District 246—have 40,000 students in our district; we’re the second largest in the state.
- In regards to process, I would recommend talking about how this fits in with IBAM, which the state is also working on. We don’t want to end up with misaligned systems.
- The funding commission has also started talking about accountability for funding—I’d recommend coordinating with them.
- There are 16 references to “equity” in the IL ESSA state plan, but we live in the state that has the worst funding equity in the state. We need to create funding equity to have academic equity.
- We don’t currently test students on application of knowledge and thinking skills. We ask that IL apply for the innovative assessment pilot.
- In SD 246, 47% of our students are English learners. We’ve created a very productive dual language program in our district. We’d like to see the plan include exiting students after the full 4 years of EL supports. We also want to see assessments in Spanish.
- Talking about the college and career readiness framework. We’d like to see the seal of biliteracy as an indicator for the CCR framework. We’d like to see a state exam to determine if students qualify for the seal—one test throughout the state.
- Teacher equity—teachers matter more in the classroom than anything else we can do for school reform. We need to invest in board certification, recruitment, and retention.
- We need consistency of assessments—tests need to be the same across the state. Need to support the replacement of PARCC with SAT for high school.



### **Judy Sauri, President of the Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education**

- We're a statewide association that promotes high-quality educational practices for culturally diverse students, including English learners.
- We believe there is a benefit for all IL students to become multilingual and develop multicultural understanding.
- I'd like to repeat a recommendation made during first round.
- First recommendation—make sure schools are held accountable for the development of English learners. Title funding should be used to develop assessments that are in the most commonly spoken languages. IL could join a consortium with other states who are developing these types of assessments. It's a logical continuation that assessments would be created in Spanish—in Chicago, we're piloting one Spanish language test for early elementary grades.
- Second recommendation about teacher evaluation. The mandated connection between educator evaluation and high-stakes test results must be reevaluated, since those assessments are entirely in English. It is important to correct this now, since states will have more flexibility to choose assessments. There is no research that linked teacher effectiveness and student performance. We would encourage the development of more native-language classroom assessments. Such assessments would provide a more reliable picture of what students know in different content areas.
- Third—we support the comments put forward by the Latino Policy Forum on the IL ESSA state plan.

### **Antoinette Rice White, Parent and Member of Parents with Power**

- Here on behalf of Parents with Power; we are supported by COFE. We are committed to make our communities better places for children and families.
- We've worked with the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning to provide more ECE options in the Elgin area.
- Parent engagement is critical for student success.
- We see ESSA as an opportunity to make a more just system for all families and improve educational opportunities for low-income students and students of color.
- We aren't just people who do bake sales—parents have a real say in students' education. The more important thing is that we care about our youngest students, and we're thankful that ISBE is thinking about that.
- Parents have real knowledge and valuable input about how policies affect our children. We know what affects our children, and we want to be involved in the decisionmaking around policy. We hope ESSA can provide us with even more opportunities for parent leadership statewide. Power-PAC is a consortium of parent groups—we're calling on ISBE to create a statewide parent advisory council so parents can provide input on both ECCE and K-12 issues that affect our children.
- We also recommend that school climate and school discipline rates are included as accountability indicators. Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out and get

involved in bad activities. Black students are more likely to be suspended than White students, and Black preschoolers are 4 times as likely to be suspended as White preschoolers. Something is seriously wrong here.

- We encourage ISBE to expand funding for our children aged 0-5 and provide access to early intervention. ESSA is a big opportunity to improve things for students and families who are struggling.

### **Julie Luck Jensen, Chair of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children**

- We will send more information by e-mail.
- Students with high potential have been neglected through NCLB. We see ESSA as a great opportunity to serve these students who have been neglected for so long.
- In 2003, 85% of districts offered gifted education options at the elementary level, and 79% at the high school level. Now, only 27% of districts provide high-achieving education programs.
- We see ESSA as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to incubate talent, rather than a place where students aren't developing to their fullest potential.
- Title I—we want to see funding to support students in poverty. We're recommending a 5% increase in support for students, which aligns with 5% of IL students who are identified as gifted and talented.
- For accountability, we'd like to see some indicators about completion of advanced-level coursework.
- Title II—there's a huge opportunity to provide PD around the academic and socioemotional needs of high-achieving students.
- Research-based strategies that we know are effective should be incorporated as well.
- Title IV—we'd love to see sub-grants for expanding and establishing programs for high-achieving students.
- Tony Smith came to our gifted conferences last year—he noted that he grew up in poverty, and what set him on the right path was the gifted education opportunities in his schools.

### **Ruth Cavanaugh, Music Teacher for District U-46**

- Very passionate about engagement in the arts, and we hope ESSA will include arts education in the definition of a “well-rounded” education.
- Title I funding should continue to support arts education.
- Our district's grant writer wrote a grant for a “school-within-a-school” program. This just started in the spring and was meant to supplement instruction for all students. This program leveled the playing field for students so they can all participate in arts education.

### **Patti Fleser, President of Illinois School Library Media Association**

- As school librarians, we believe that effective school librarians provide valuable instruction to maximize student growth, teach literacy skills, critical thinking, and information-gathering skills to all students.
- We support all students—special education, high-achieving, English learners—everyone.
- School librarians help students achieve academically and develop 21st century learning skills.
- Research shows a correlation between effective school libraries and student achievement.
- I've been a teacher for 30 years, and I've been a school librarian for the past 17 years. As a librarian, I've been able to provide support for my school's students. All students are my students, and my library is open to them. We're open after school for all students as well.
- The library supports the whole child.
- I ask that ISBE look at the new and extended sources of federal funding so that all IL students have access to an effective school library and licensed school librarians.
- I'll submit more information about how libraries support accountability, standards, assessment, school improvement, and the whole child.

### **Anne Roloff, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Niles Township Schools**

- I've been working with Ed Read, which is a local lobbying group, and we have a variety of recommendations and considerations.
- One consideration is to adopt an SAT-only option, rather than allowing districts to choose their own tests. To make meaningful comparisons, everyone should be taking the same test.
- We're concerned that the 90% threshold for achievement is a little unrealistic, and we think that growth should be meaningfully included to help the state make decisions. We don't know what the elementary exam will be after the current contract ends in 2018.
- Also, consider that the SAT is designed to create scores distributed on a bell curve, so it's not necessarily intended to foster a 90% success rate.
- We're worried that media coverage will detract from district success.
- We know the state is working on a fully standards-aligned elementary school assessment, as PARCC is not currently aligned.
- The subgroup threshold for reporting is of concern—the federal requirement is 60 students/group; we're worried about mentioned decreased to 20 or 30.
- English learners—we'd want to consider districts with numerous languages. My district has 90 languages represented and is the most diverse district in the state.
- I will e-mail these comments.

**April Wells, Coordinator for Gifted Programming in District 246 and Board Member of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children**

- We think that existing resources have provided a strong understanding of the psychosocial needs of high-achieving learners.
- Only 9% of districts have policies in place for acceleration, which doesn't allow students to be entirely supported in moving forward.
- For preschool students—many circumstances outside of school can be mitigated with exposure to high-quality vocabulary and verbalization education.
- Look for additional ways to allocate Title I funding.
- In D246, we've been creatively using funding to bring opportunities to our district, so students can have enriching experiences even if they don't travel.

**Wendy Evans, Education Manager for the Elgin Symphony Orchestra**

- I'm here to establish the importance of a strong music and arts curriculum.
- Research shows that studying an instrument fills learning gaps—studying music has helped students catch up to peers in reading and math.
- Music has effects for students regardless of SES.
- Schools with music education programs have significantly higher graduation rates than schools without.
- In my role, I bring students to the orchestra to hear educational concerts. Title I funding funds many of these field trips.
- D246 music teacher Jonathan Bast says he's seen a significant increase in students who sign up for band class. "I have no doubt that visiting the ESO encourages students to begin playing music...Live music has a quality that isn't available on a recording."
- The arts bring the community together in powerful ways. Students and family connections to arts in the community fills out student education.

**Dan Podraza, Teacher and Doctoral Candidate in Early Childhood Education**

- Passionate about what I've heard.
- To hear about parent organizations and how much teachers care about children is so important. I've enjoyed hearing about programs that D246 is implementing.
- Here we're talking mostly about academics. However, we need to start by focusing on the social and emotional components of children first, not academics.
- I knew a student who didn't have any algebra or geometry in grades 1-8. The teacher gave the student an algebra book, and he was able to teach it to himself in four months.
- When we talk about cultural diversity and multiculturalism, it's very important. However, we all share some social and emotional components, regardless of culture.

- Children need structure and they need social and emotional support. I teach in an alternative school, and I make sure to address their social and emotional needs first. We need to deal with students' fears that they aren't being accepted by their peers.
- I give elementary school teachers all the credit in the world—to engage those students is very difficult.

**Question from Melina:** These testimonies bring up a very good point about what's in the ESSA state plan and what's not in the plan. The plan is written to meet Congress's specifications. That means it doesn't necessarily go into great detail about implementation specifics. We'll include more detail in implementation plans later. For Title I, you must abide by the statement of purpose to receive funding. Under ESSA, the statement of purpose is about closing the achievement gap and raising student achievement. So we have to gear requests for arts education funding, social and emotional support, etc. around closing the achievement gap. Here's a question: What did people want to see, but didn't see, in the plan?

- **Response:** Teacher evaluation and vocational programs, community schools, higher education.
- **Response:** Seal of biliteracy.
- **Response:** STEM or STEAM.
- **Response:** Digital literacy.
  - **Melina:** there's a section on it in the statute, but we could go more in-depth.

**Melina:** The federal government put out proposed regs, and they received over 21,000 comments. They now have to read through and respond to the comments, and then issue final comments. The final regs are about accountability, data reporting, and the state plans. By December, we'll have gone through 3 rounds of public hearings, and we'll have a fairly flushed out plan—which is probably right when we'll get all-new regs.

- **Comment:** Listening to the presentation, it concerns me that we have different names for doing a lot of the same things. If we're going to be accountable based on testing for math and ELA, then we're left with figuring out what kinds of measurements we're using. We can look at STEAM expos and authentic writing experiences as possible performance-based assessments. Then we wouldn't be focused on testing but have a more well-rounded picture of how students are learning and using information.
  - **Response from Melina:** Congress has put ESSA into law, which has certain language around assessment and accountability. We're pushing the boundaries somewhat. The law says that the accountability system must be statewide, but we're pushing the boundary for district and student choices, particularly around the college and career readiness indicator. If you have ideas about other types of assessments and accountability, send it to us, but we don't know what we'll be able to do.
- **Follow-up:** If we're talking about math and ELA, we can think about that in lots of different ways. Librarians provide another way to think about ELA. If we're just doing testing and reporting assessment scores in the newspapers, then what is really improving?
  - **Response from Melina:** Give us a chance, we can turn the tables.

- **Comment from Jody:** Nobody is listening to parents—what about the parent voice?
  - **Response from Melina:** Parent engagement is difficult because it's not something we can force.

**Matthew John Rodriguez, President of the Illinois PTA**

- Thanks to ISBE for conducting these tours and gathering feedback.
- Getting that family engagement and feedback has been our primary goal.
- We've been working with Illinois Vision 20/20, P20, and many other organizations to talk about parent and family engagement. There are many points that we don't agree on, but we can agree to disagree and at least come together to talk about it.

**Comment from Participant**

Thinking about accountability after high school. My concern is that the most important part of each year is thinking about the next year—are students successful after the intervention? I can tell you that students are not ready for work. We don't ask the people who are hiring young workers what skills the students need to succeed. Just participating in 2 extracurriculars isn't going to cut it. Many of the important work-ready skills are not easy to measure. It breaks my heart to see my former students working at the convenience stores in my district—these are the jobs they're getting. We need to prepare our children for more than that.



# Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**DeKalb County Farm Bureau, October 5, 2016**  
**Representative Bob Pritchard, Host**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**Time: 4:30 – 6:30**

**Note Takers: Corrin Pitluck & Rachel Trimble, Midwest Comprehensive Center**

75 Participants: Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, ROE Administrators, School Librarians, Special Education Directors, Teachers, Graduate Students, Union Representatives, Afterschool Program Directors, Advocates, Education Association Members, School Advisors, and Community Members

**Public Comment (Please include name and affiliation – bullets or narrative of comment/discussion)**

**Kendra Asbury, President of the Belvidere Education Association**

- Items on right nightmare for kids track. Don't have the record keeping. Workplace learning is expensive. ON left, cost money for faculty to sum coursework.

**Amanda Christensen, Regional Superintendent for the DeKalb County Regional Office of Education**

- Why 90% attendance as an option for schools to choose, when mandated by compulsory and truancy laws?

**Jay Streider, Superintendent of Somonauk CUSD #432**

- Concerned about GPA requirement, not everyone's grade scale is the same.

**Participant from the Belvidere Education Association**

- Agree with that, but 2.8 is high. 2.5 is more reasonable.

**Participant from Addison School District #4**

- The GPA measure would be problematic for schools using standards based measures to report to families. How to report if you tell parents not letter grade but standards readiness and achievement?

**Shawn Healy, Chair of the Illinois Civil Mission Coalition**

- Regarding the community service piece: please consider having the metric as project based. Basing community service work on hours only has been discredited in research and don't get to the ends we want. Project based aligns with service learning goals.

**Participant from Rock Falls Elementary School District #13**

- The new requirements for work outside of high school, like advanced study, dual credit, work based learning is public education telling kids to go above and beyond high school work. If you're not going above and beyond you're not the norm anymore.

**Jessica Lyons, Data Analyst with the Illinois Consolidated Committee of Practitioners**

- Indicator for college and career readiness—what does that mean for me?

**Jim Thompson, Counselor in DeKalb**

- I work with students struggling post-high school and college. I'm interested in preparation. Are students prepared to go to school or job after high school? Is there data about better predictors, are we looking at kids who don't make it, what did you need? Kids with no study skills, no attack skills, is a concern.

**Sally Thomson, Past President of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children**

- We favor a growth model. But to show growth for gifted students, we need above-level testing. Ceiling is too low to show growth with on level testing. Need to be able to show disaggregation.

**Participant from Addison School District #4**

- I respect English language proficiency as indicator. However, when weighting, it still severely divides school districts or schools with high ELLS. One school will have 100% of its students proficient in English because it is their home language, and that school gets 10 points above a school with 90% ELs though they are doing outstanding job of increasing English proficiency with their students. I think the solution is to assess in students' native language. That would allow for comparing apples to apples with achievement. Weighting EL separately can be confusing.

**Nancy Dailey, Special Education Science Teacher for Leland Schools**

- I think the proposals are like favoring larger schools. Small schools are at disadvantage. AP classes—we can't provide. We don't have options for courses. Deck stacked against small schools/

**Shatoya Black, Education Advisor and Coach**

- We're giving access to students, but when they're way below level, they're not completing. Growth to what capacity? How to assist whole student? How to give students what they need, where they are?

**Larry Frank, Illinois Education Association**

- The charge against NCLB was rank, sort punish. ESSA may rank, sort and reward. What is the reward? How will the accountability system determine meaningful help?



**Deanna Thunberg, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Dual Language PAC Chair in Belvidere**

- My school has numerous subgroups. When comparing schools, our school is going to have hard time to perform against schools without as many subgroups. Not fair.

**Data Analyst**

- How to operationalize? How to collect and organize data? Have to redo every year because metric and population change. Have to look at what you have now to look at growth. Hard to say long term goal because kids change in the door every year.

**Tad Everett, Superintendent of Sterling Public Schools #5**

- ISBE should not define growth. Closer to classroom, more accurate. Not the state's job; it is the school district's job. We hold ourselves accountable.

**Crystal Swan-Gravatt, Special Education Director for Sandwich Public Schools**

- Agree about growth at district level. Allow schools to work their plan. Every community is different. Every goal is to have teachers in class to teach—what it takes to run a school district—already to do school, we know the plan, goals objectives. Judge us on our plan, not pointing at our students. We will be our own judge. Judge our implementation.

**George Russell, Director-at-Large for the Illinois Association of School Boards, Kishwaukee Division**

- We live in twitter age – a plus for me, but a negative for you. Dealing with creatures changing constantly—kids. Onus should be local to determine growth, but need to be held accountable to uniform standards at some point. Admire state board but this may be overreach. Board members need to get clarification on what the community holds as value for growth and adapt it to what state board has come up with to meet ESSA.

**Deanna Thunberg, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Dual Language PAC Chair in Belvidere**

- Until we come up with different ways to fund public schools, we won't get anywhere. Money needs to be distributed differently to have anything change.

**Sally Thomson, Past President of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children**

- Title II can be used for teachers working with GATE students. ESSA is very clear on it now. Please look again at group to be disaggregated, Teachers need that support from title II funds.

**Robert Walsh, School Board Member for Rochelle District 212**

- Charter schools—will they apply? They may be at a disadvantage without AP classes

**Shawn Healy, Chair of the Illinois Civil Mission Coalition**

- My work is in social studies, new standards coming out. ISBE is supporting PD around those, but few teachers know the standards are in the pipeline. Need for PD K-12 around social science standards

**Jennifer McCormick, President of the Sycamore School Association**

- Disconnect between getting resources to teachers. How to get services to teachers? Sometimes heard about things later

**Jay Streider, Superintendent of Somonauk CUSD #432**

- Ratchetting up services provided: do you have data about those that are more effective? If so, throw money. Instructional coaches is effective please fund.

**Special Education Director**

- The goal is supposed to be eliminating fiscal barriers, but ideas for dollars, with state—3% increase... a good portion to districts, earmarked for students with disabilities. State has own set aside. If braiding with Perkins and tech education, why not be creative, but flow through dollars, troublesome.
- Writing grants and expenditure reports, open to it, but have to say idea dollars are going to students with disabilities only.

**Conzada Stracner, Librarian Teacher in Sycamore and IES Member**

- Bundle programs like literacy grants for high needs schools, pay for libraries.

**Participant**

- Culture is that some funding streams can't be used to pay for salaries. We have curriculum kits in closets because we can't pay anyone to use them. If they were purchased with Title I funds, microscopes for science funds,--some kids can use, no one to implement, cant' share.

**Shatoya Black, Education Advisor and Coach**

- Agreed—what the students need is effective teachers, invested in learning. If there is no one to implement because they're not being paid. Teachers go above and beyond. More investment in teachers with pay and with resources, so people stop leaving. Need consistency and stability, collaboration. No one stand-alone part. If a piece is missing or broken tough for everyone. Need holistic approach. Let schools decide on growth plan, and assess that. Needs to match standards. If one area does not have funding, that plays a role in picture for siloed schools.

**Amanda Christensen, Regional Superintendent for the DeKalb County Regional Office of Education**

- Truancy optional education program. Caseload about 400 every year. Not everyone—these are with referrals. Money from grant—we are most efficient group to help truants. 208\$ per child. Poverty and children’s brains—we need to reallocate funds to meet needs of chronic truants

**Parent**

- A lot doesn’t make sense to me—if kids don’t eat, they won’t learn. Adequate time for nutrition. Healthy option. But not allowed to eat, kids in line seven minutes before bell rings. Need more time. Thank you for reducing testing pressure—not a good judgment of growth. Appreciate looking for other ways to show growth and learning. Teachers will be happier with distance form testing. Teachers know what kids need, teacher choice is great. More breakfast, more lunch, less testing.

**Christine Barr, School Librarian and Illinois Library Association Member**

- School libraries affect every sub group. Have changed with the times. Lifelong learning, community hub. Quality materials, age appropriate. Support common core. Collaborate with teachers. Critical thinking skills. Need certified school librarians. Fund school libraries.

**Marilyn Bellert, P-20 Network Administrator**

- P-20 Network is NIU, 11 community colleges, 30 high schools and superintendents. Post-secondary perspective. Plan is shaped around wrong goal, accountability for schools. Plan should be state goal of 60% of Illinois getting post-secondary degree or credential by 2025. Different metrics and strategies. Need well trained work force. 4 strategies:
  1. Collaboration with higher ed.: P-20 networks by region. ECE to workforce
  2. Collective impact at local level: Get alignment for career pathways in communities.
  3. Change in birth to third grade:
  4. Micro credentialing.

**Sally Thomson, Past President of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children**

- Have to include disaggregated data for above level students. Looks at underrepresentation of students of color and ELs in above level groups.
- Need to improve skills of teachers to recognize student above level performance. Want Title II Funds for training teachers in GATE recognition and support.

**Shawn Healy, Chair of the Illinois Civil Mission Coalition**

- College and career readiness, and civic life, is our main concern. Had state task force on civic ed. Civics requirement in HS, and state social science standards update. Both done, glad. McCormick Foundation support. 165 hours of PD to over 1000 teachers in support of new requirements and standards. Glad in the IL ESSA, impact of mentor teachers—we’ve recruited mentor teachers. Sent them out in support of civics work. Implementation

is just beginning. Early evaluation shows ongoing need for PD, like teaching controversial issues, simulating democratic practices. Want ESSA support of whole child to consider these needs. Need support around new social science standards; paradigm shift in state to skills and common core alignment. No longer low level stuff. Aligned with ELA, will support those assessments. Coalition and partner organizations have done great work in civic space for a long time, will partner with ISBE to advance the work.

**George Russell, Director-at-Large for the Illinois Association of School Boards, Kishwaukee Division**

- Glad for topics like combining funding streams. Want flexibility locally. Testing issue—agree that it doesn't bring out best in everyone. Coach analogy. Need testing in some form, need to show that teaching has been done and can be performed

**Shatoya Black, Education Advisor and Coach**

- In Ph.D. program. Accountability—accessibility, completion and preparation. Unique impact, focus on unity. People doing things on own, need to work together. Statistics against me. People don't know how to help. Journey of education— my grandma completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and mom struggled to complete high school. Dad got GED at 42. She is not a statistic. Was a mom myself at 18. Education not norm in family. Homeless. Surgery for cancer, 2009. DeKalb County offered place to stay, got work in Chicago. Completing degree to assist students. Got encouragement from community college rep. changed to being education driven. Counselor demanded to get bachelor's degree. Got further help, invitation to job at campus. Got bachelors, entered master's program. Now in Ph.D. program. Map out plan—not her plan. Accessibility and pathway tools, then how to complete? Daughter with her, people would help while she went to class or meetings. Find someone to assist with barriers. Hearing labels for her life while in school, poverty, etc.—not necessarily how she saw her life. Mapping to completion. Brings to preparation—is what you're teaching me going to get me ready for the next course or expectation? Teachers have freedom and autonomy, but are they getting students ready for the next step: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup>, college courses semester after semester? Have to know what you're implementing is helping.