



# Illinois State Board of Education

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**James T. Meeks**  
Chairman

**Tony Smith, Ph.D.**  
State Superintendent of Education

July 11, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

The second year of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing is now complete. I thank all of you who have provided valuable input into ways we can improve state assessments to meet the needs of all students. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) continually strives to strengthen the quality and functionality of state assessments to assist educators in identifying the needs of and providing individualized supports for all students as they prepare for college and careers. ISBE must also make strategic decisions that are informed by feedback from school districts and in response to the state's current budget climate. As part of this effort, I am excited to announce a plan to provide a streamlined assessment system at the high school level that will promote equity and access to opportunities for all students.

Many of you have shared with me the importance of providing access to a college entrance exam for all Illinois students. I believe this access is essential as it supports all students with the opportunity to receive a college-reportable score that may assist with admission to an institution of higher education. Guaranteed access to the exam best ensures that students in Illinois, especially those who are most in need, have opportunities in higher education they might otherwise not receive. During the upcoming year, all public school students in grade 11 will complete the SAT, including a writing component. The SAT will serve as the state assessment for purposes of state and federal accountability, will be provided at no cost to public school districts in Illinois, and will be offered to students during the school day. The SAT aligns with the Illinois Learning Standards and provides a college-reportable score for admissions purposes. It and will continue to empower educators to measure college and career readiness.

Students in grades 3-8 will continue to take the PARCC assessment. The PARCC assessment is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards, and its results provide information to assist educators in providing individualized supports for all students.

I look forward to working with you all on this exciting new endeavor and welcome your feedback along the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Smith".

Tony Smith, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Education