

Assessment Review Task Force

Meeting Summary

Monday, February 2, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

100 North First Street, Alzina Building, VTEL Room, 3rd Floor, Springfield, Illinois

100 West Randolph, James R. Thompson Center, VTEL Room, 14th Floor, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance

Task Force Members:

Michael Beyer

Rosemary Swanson

Lewis Cavallo Jr.

Julie Schaid

Kathy Davis

Gene Olsen

Bob Pritchard (Rep.)

Brad Hutchison

Rhonda G. Jenkins

Kelly Sholtis

Jaimie Lodge

Cathy Mannen (Co-Chair)

Susie Morrison (Co-Chair)

Terri Pigott

Angela Henderson

Monique Redeaux

Sean German

Denise Gibbons

Linda Chapa LaVia (Rep.)

Members of the Public:

Ed Collins

Amy Alsop

Presenter:

Steve Cordogan

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff:

Diana Zaleski

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff:

Jayne Sowers

Rachel Trimble

Thi Tran

Meeting Objectives

1. Review and approve meeting minutes from December 16, 2014.
2. Discuss overview of state assessments.
3. Review and approve the survey tool.
4. Review and approve the sampling procedure.
5. Determine next steps.

Welcome and Introduction (Call to Order)

The second meeting of the ISBE Assessment Review Task Force began shortly after 1 p.m. on February 2, 2015. A total of 19 task force members joined the meeting from ISBE offices in Springfield and Chicago as well as on the phone. Co-Chairs Cathy Mannen, representing the Illinois Federation of Teachers and an educator at Dr. Howard Elementary School, Champaign Unit 4 School District, and Susie Morrison, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Education officer of ISBE, welcomed the task force.

The task force members introduced themselves as did ISBE staff member Dr. Diana Zaleski. MWCC staff members Dr. Jayne Sowers, Rachel Trimble, and Thi Tran assisted in the meeting and introduced themselves. Guest presenter Dr. Steve Cordogan and members of the public, Ed Collins and Amy Alsop, introduced themselves as well.

Co-Chair Mannen followed protocol for opening the meeting and reviewed the agenda: approval of the previous meeting's minutes, state assessment overview, introduction to the survey tool and sampling procedure, and determining next steps. The task force members approved the minutes with a few amendments. Co-Chair Morrison reminded the task force to identify themselves each time they spoke and that the meeting summary will be posted on the ISBE website. Co-Chair Mannen reminded the task force members of the charges set forth by the legislators in Public Act 098-1075. "The task force shall review

- A. The content and design of standardized assessments;
- B. The time and money expended to prepare for standardized assessments as measured against the purpose of the assessment;
- C. Parent, student, and educator perceptions of the level and intensity of standardized assessments;
- D. Other issues involving standardized assessments identified by the task force."

State Representative Bob Pritchard suggested focusing on item "D" of the charges, explaining that the task force should broaden the phrase "standardized assessments" to be more inclusive of all assessments given. He stated that the main issues to address are the amount of time that testing requires (and thus, takes away from instruction) and the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment.

State Assessments Overview Presentation

Co-Chair Mannen introduced Dr. Cordogan, retired director of research and evaluation at Township High School District 214 and an editor of the Illinois Common Core State Standards. Dr. Cordogan was invited to provide an overview of Illinois state assessments, including the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and ACT. In connecting the assessments to standards, Dr. Cordogan noted that the new Illinois standards are more rigorous and more comprehensive than the prior standards. They also create a framework that is useful to guide curriculum and instruction. Dr. Cordogan noted that:

- ISAT cut scores are less rigorous than the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE).
- PSAE content is not closely aligned to the ISAT.
- ACT has positives, such as a set of standards for college readiness, guidelines for teachers for creating a curriculum, provision of funds to schools from the state to use the test, and its usefulness for annual measures.

- ACT has limitations, such as ACT products are not aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and it lacks measurement of student progress and diagnostic values to provide interventions for students.

The task force members offered their opinions and comments about numerous issues and concerns related to PARCC:

- Higher education institutions have not indicated they will accept PARCC as a replacement of ACT or SAT scores for student admittance.
- There is a lack of knowledge about PARCC’s validity in measuring college and career readiness.
- There is a need to create a transition period from ISAT to PARCC rather than immediately switching to PARCC.
 - ISBE staff noted that this is not an option because of the state’s adoption of standards in 2010 with a corresponding test (PARCC) required to measure the achievement of those standards.
- There is a concern about the use of PARCC results to evaluate teachers under the Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA).

Discussion of Draft of Survey Tools

The task force decided at the prior meeting that a survey was the best method for completing their charge to review the content and design of standardized assessments; time and money used to prepare for testing; parent, student, and educator perceptions; and other issues. Dr. Zaleski presented draft survey tools for each group: administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

Discussion about changes and edits for the administrator and teacher surveys included:

- Adding tests that were not standardized assessments (e.g., PERA Type I, II, and III) to indicate the use of these by districts or the taking of these by students
- Defining “time” as including preparation time or only the time taken for the student to complete the test
- Adding more items to the “disadvantages” and “advantages” of testing
- Increasing the clarity of the instructions
- Providing opportunities for a respondent’s feedback on individual tests
- Changing Likert scales terminology
- Organizing the tests into three areas, or “buckets,” for responses:
 - Bucket 1: state and federal required standardized assessments (e.g., PARCC)
 - Bucket 2: not required but fulfills mandates (e.g., response to intervention, English language learners, students with disabilities, grant requirements, PERA)
 - Bucket 3: optional district assessments (e.g., benchmarking, advanced placement, International Baccalaureate)
 - Include “What is tested?”; “In what grades?”; “How much time is required?”; “How often is the test given?” and “Who gives the test?”
 - Adding “cost” in buckets 1 and 2 titled “mandate” and “optional”; cost per student is a better question than a general cost because of variability in sizes of districts
- Considering ways to scale back survey to decrease its length and hopefully increase the response rate

When asked about what the legislature is hoping to find and therefore how the surveys can help meet that need, several legislators members mentioned: (a) how the groups taking the surveys feel about PARCC; (b) how assessments take away from instructional time; and (c) how assessments cost too much money. Dr. Zaleski reminded the task force members that PARCC will not be taken for the first time in the state until spring 2015. Dr. Cavallo commented that standardized tests should be viewed more as mandated assessments.

Discussion about changes and edits for the parent and student surveys included:

- Setting the minimal grade level of respondents for the student surveys to third grade
- Simplifying language in both the parent and student surveys
- Providing a list of or examples of standardized tests to both surveys
- Adding “Thinking of your oldest child...” to the parent survey
- Paring down additional items of advantages and disadvantages
- Adding to the student survey, “Do you feel like you’re being tested too much, too little, or just right amount?”
- Adding to parent survey, “Do you receive your child’s results to his or her test always, sometimes, or never?”

Based on the suggestions and comments of the task force members, ISBE staff will create a new draft of the four surveys. The new drafts will be sent to the task force within a week, and feedback is requested in a timely manner because the surveys will be sent to district superintendents on February 16 for dissemination.

Sampling Procedure Discussion

The task force charge from the legislature requires that “at least 5 percent of school districts in this state that represent a regionally equal sampling selected from among those counties of this state other than Cook County and the five counties contiguous to Cook County and shall include a school district located in a city having a population over 500,000.” To meet this charge, Dr. Zaleski created sampling procedures, which she explained:

- Four regions around the state (excluding those in Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, and Will counties):
 - Based on distribution and mirroring regions identified by the Illinois Department of Human Services
 - A total sample size of 120 districts
 - 30 districts randomly sampled from each of the four regions
- Fifth region of Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, and Will counties:
 - 30 districts randomly selected
 - Includes Chicago Public Schools

The task force members agreed that the sampling plan met the requirements per the legislative charge and offered no changes or additions.

Determining Next Steps

Dr. Zaleski presented a timeline to the task force members. She suggested a virtual meeting in mid-March via GoToMeeting or a webinar format to discuss the survey data and process of reporting the results.

It was decided by the task force to move the open survey date to February 16, 2015, and maintain closing the survey February 27, 2015.

Dr. Zaleski asked task force members whether they would like to form and be a part of a subcommittee to review results from the survey tool in the following months. Task force members Rosemary Swanson, Terri Pigott, Mike Beyer, Julie Schaid, Cathy Mannen, and Susie Morrison volunteered to be members of the subcommittee. Task force members on the phone will be given an opportunity to join the subcommittee.

As for next steps, Dr. Zaleski will draft a revised survey tool with the suggestions received from the task force members from the day. The protocol for feedback will be in an Excel document with a 24-hour turnaround.

Co-Chair Mannen concluded the discussion by opening the floor for public attendees to express their comments; none were made. The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.