

Assessment Review Task Force

Meeting Summary
Monday, March 16, 2015
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com>

Attendance

Task Force Members:

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Christopher Ball | Rhonda G. Jenkins | Lynne Panega |
| Michael Beyer | Jaimie Lodge | Terri Pigott |
| Caroline Billicki | Cathy Mannen (cochair) | Bob Pritchard (Rep.) |
| Lewis Cavallo Jr | Matt Martyn | Paul Ripp |
| Kathy Davis | Jennifer McDonnell | Julie Schaid |
| Angela Henderson | Susie Morrison (cochair) | Kelly Sholtis |
| Brad Hutchison | Gene Olsen | Rosemary Swanson |

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff:

Diana Zaleski

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff:

Jayne Sowers

Meeting Objectives

1. Review and approve meeting minutes from February 2, 2015.
2. Review survey data.
3. Determine next steps.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

The March 16 Task Force meeting was conducted as a webinar. Twenty-two task force members attended the webinar. Dr. Diana Zaleski of ISBE opened the meeting on behalf of the cochairs. The first order of business was a review of the minutes from February 2, 2015. Dr. Zaleski asked for additions or edits. None were given, and a motion was made, seconded and approved and will be posted on the ISBE website, (<http://www.isbe.net/ARTF/default.htm>.)

Review of Survey Data

The task force received the results of the three surveys from Dr. Zaleski a few days prior to the meeting with her request to review them prior to the meeting. Three groups completed three different surveys: (1) teachers/superintendents, (2) parents, and (3) students. When asked about the sample size, Dr. Zaleski stated that it included 151 districts according to the public act requirements and that responses came from approximately 9 percent of the districts. Dr. Zaleski briefly stated the definition of standardized assessments and the required demographics to be included in the survey per Public Act 098-1075. She noted the difficulties typically encountered when analyzing survey data, including the

time required for analysis and the amount of erroneous information given (e.g., open-ended responses that do not correspond to the question). Dr. Zaleski then presented the survey results from the “Draft Report, March 12, 2015.” The data results were displayed in tables that corresponded to the survey questions. She described the responses for each survey question, presenting notable findings. Task force members made comments and asked questions and Dr. Zaleski responded with additional information or indicated that deeper analysis and disaggregation of data could or could not be made as requested.

Demographics of Respondents

With a total of response rate of 561 respondents, Dr. Zaleski considered this rate to be high. This was especially true given the short response window and the need to depend on district superintendents to send the instrument via e-mail. Table 1 includes notable findings, task force questions and comments, and Dr. Zaleski’s responses related to the demographics of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski’s Response |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1: By category (e.g., teacher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 254 teachers ▪ 214 parents ▪ 52 superintendents ▪ 41 students | | |
| 2: By category and district type (e.g., parent, high school) | | | |
| 3: By student grade level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3rd grade: 2 responses, (4.9%) ▪ 4th grade: 1 response, (2.4%) ▪ 5th grade: 37 responses, (90.2%) ▪ 8th grade: 1 response, (2.5%) | Concern that no high school students responded; why did this happen? | No responses were received from high school students. Responses depended on superintendents sending out the surveys to the various groups and encouraging those groups to participate; younger students who responded wrote comments that were illuminating (will discuss later) |
| 4: By county (e.g., DuPage) | Most of the responses were from Cook, Lake, and Boone counties but still good representation statewide. | Why are the largest numbers of responses from Cook County? | This is survey research and was sent to the required districts per the public act that included Cook. It is not possible to control responses. |

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | What is the percentage of all Illinois students that Cook County students represent? | 25%, but even more when including Chicago Public Schools. Thus, they would have a large number of total responses. |
| | Could analyze by district beyond county if the task force wants to see that data | | |
| 5: By years working in district | A large range of responses with many being first year teachers | | |
| 6: By subject taught and district type | Large percentage in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, which is expected as most responses were from elementary teachers | | |
| 7: Parent response by grade level of oldest child | This is considered a good response, with 211 parents responding and good representation across grade levels. | | |

Content and Design of Standardized Tests

The next section of survey questions focused on responses regarding the three types of assessment used in Illinois: (a) those required to meet federal and state accountability assessments; (b) those nonrequired but used to fulfill state and federal mandates; and (c) those nonrequired but that districts or schools use for local purposes. Teachers and superintendents responded to this group of survey questions. Table 2 contains a summary of notable findings, the task forces' requests for additional ways of disaggregating the data and Dr. Zaleski's responses.

Table 2. Content and Design of Standardized Tests

| Draft Report Table Number: Response by Superintendents and Teachers | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|--|--|--|--|
| 8: Of PARCC field test participation by district type | | | |
| 9: Of federal and state accountability assessment participation | | Was there a link made between the assessment used and the mandate for using it? | No |
| 10: Types of assessment by district type to fulfill federal and state mandates | List of assessments and descriptions are in Appendix B of the report draft, 3/18/15. Most often used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NWEA MAP ▪ ACCESS for English language learners ▪ easyCBM ▪ AIMSWeb | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The responses should be organized by superintendents only or have two tables—one for teachers' responses and one for superintendents' responses ▪ Consider showing superintendents' responses only, because teachers would be duplicative | Yes, would be able to separate the information |
| | Need to be cautious about over-reporting, because more responses were received from elementary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is it possible to show how many assessments each district reported using? | Yes |
| 11: Types of assessment by district type to fulfill local purposes | | Might be interesting to know number of assessments by K-8 by district type | Yes, will separate the information |
| | | Can this be separated to show responses by superintendents and district types? | Yes |

| Draft Report Table Number: Response by Superintendents and Teachers | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | | Is it possible to show how many assessments each district reported using? | Yes |
| | | Good to provide a variety of ways to break-down data and then report-writing committee can decide how to use it | Yes, will provide a variety |

Time and Money

The third set of survey questions as required by the public act centered on the time required to implement the tests and the cost of testing. Teachers and principals completed these surveys. Again, the questions reflected the three types of assessment that the task force had previously determined that were used in Illinois: (a) those that were required to meet federal and state accountability assessments; (b) those that were nonrequired but used to fulfill state and federal mandates; and (c) those that were nonrequired but that districts or schools used for local purposes.

Table 3. Time and Money

| Draft Report Table Number: Response by Superintendents and Teachers | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|--|---|---|
| 12: Average administration time by assessment type | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximum times for administration of tests were similar for the three types of assessment— between 18 hours and 22 (hours per year) ▪ The mean varied from 3.77 for accountability tests to 1.60 for tests for local purposes. | Why is “zero” reported as the minimum amount of time spent? | Either the respondent did not enter a number or he or she entered something that was not appropriate; these are examples of “cleaning up the data”—a process that took about two weeks to complete. |

| Draft Report Table Number: Response by Superintendents and Teachers | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We could add the average amount of time a test is designed to require. | | |
| | | <p>Are the missing values (the zeros) averaged into the means?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No, they are not. ▪ Used SPSS but will double check that ▪ Could also look at data by county here but not by district or by superintendents versus teachers |
| | | <p>Can the missing values be reported instead of "zero"?</p> | <p>Yes, will do that</p> |
| 13: Total and per-student cost by assessment type | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal and state accountability tests have no cost ▪ There is a large difference in standard deviation of tests for federal and state mandates and for local purposes ▪ Could break it down by county ▪ Will look at ideas of disaggregation noted for Table 12 and do the same for this table | | |
| | | <p>Could the response of spending \$100,000 for mandated tests and \$110,000 for local-purposes testing be from CPS, thus skewing the results?</p> | <p>It could be, but there are other districts in Cook County that spend a lot for assessments as well.</p> |

Intensity

The fourth and final section of the survey focused on perceptions of testing that included advantages and disadvantages. Table 4a presents teacher and principal questions and responses to eight questions. The task force requested more disaggregation of the data, which Dr. Zaleski will provide.

Table 4a. Intensity: Responses From Superintendents and Teachers

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|--|---|------------------------|
| 14:By superintendents and teachers: Advantages of federal and state accountability assessments | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures student progress ▪ Provides feedback to parents/families ▪ Informs educators' instructional practice ▪ Measures student mastery of content standards | Can separate responses from teachers and superintendents? | Yes, will do that. |
| 15:By superintendents and teachers: Disadvantages of federal and state accountability assessments | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of instructional time ▪ Disrupts normal schedule and activities ▪ Increases student stress and anxiety ▪ Narrows curricular focus | Can separate responses from teachers and superintendents and sort by district type? | Yes, will do that. |

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|---|--|---|
| 16:By superintendents and teachers: Advantages of assessments used to fulfill federal and state mandates | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures student progress ▪ Informs educators' instructional practices ▪ Informs placement decisions ▪ Provides feedback to parents/families | Seems that finding ways to reduce student stress will be important | Yes, and will find that in the students' answers as well. |
| 17:By superintendents and teachers: Disadvantages of assessments used to fulfill federal and state mandates | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of instructional time ▪ Disrupts normal schedule and activities ▪ Increases students stress and anxiety ▪ Restricts use of technology | | Yes, will break down by respondent (superintendent of teacher) and district type (elementary district, K-8; high school district, 9-12; unit district, K-12; other) |
| 18:By superintendents and teachers: Advantages of assessments used to fulfill local purposes | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures student progress ▪ Informs educators' instructional practices ▪ Informs placement decisions ▪ Provides feedback to parents/families | "Loss of instructional time" keeps appearing as a concern | |

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 19:By superintendents and teachers: Disadvantages of assessments used to fulfill local purposes disadvantages | Top four in order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of instructional time ▪ Disrupts normal schedule and activities ▪ Increases students stress and anxiety ▪ Requires additional staff | | |

The responses were nearly identical in terms of advantages and disadvantages across all three types of assessments.

Table 4b provides a summary of answers to the questions of parents and students, with each group answering three different questions.

Table 4b. Intensity: Responses From Parents and Students

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|---|--|---|---|
| 20:Parents: I receive information about my child's standardized assessments results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 197 parents responded, which is a good response rate. ▪ 85.8 % reported that they receive information about their child's assessment results. | How were parents polled? | As described earlier, the superintendents of the districts as outlined in the public act were sent the surveys to distribute to teachers, parents, and students. They were also sent several reminders to resend. |
| 21:Parents: The Information about standardized assessments is helpful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 50 % responded that the information they receive about the tests is very helpful. | | |
| 22.Parents: The impact of standardized assessments on my child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interesting results ▪ No impact: 54.5% ▪ Negative impact: 33.0% ▪ Positive impact: 12.5% | Could run by age of student and district type | Yes, will do so. |

| Draft Report Table Number and Source of Response | Notable Findings | Comments/Questions From Task Force | Dr. Zaleski's Response |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 23:Students: Amount of standardized assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70% of students reported the amount of standardized assessments they take is “about right” | Had PARCC begun yet? | No. As described at all task force meetings, the surveys needed to be completed before PARCC to meet the report's due date to the General Assembly of May 31 |
| 24:Students: advantages of standardized assessments | <p>Four answers provided in survey; top two selected by respondent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies my strengths and weaknesses ▪ Provides feedback to my teacher and family | | |
| 25:Students: Disadvantages of standardized assessments | <p>Five answers provided in survey; top two selected by respondent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increases my stress and anxiety ▪ Disrupts my normal schedule and activities | | |

Additional Comments

Dr. Zaleski indicated that this was the first round of analysis and that she will conduct more analyses based on the task force's suggestions including new cross tabs.

Some concerns continued to emerge or be reiterated:

- A total of 41 students from across the state completed the survey, and none of these students were in high school. Thus, there is concern as to the lack of representativeness of students at various grade levels and throughout the state with so few responses.
 - One task force member wanted to know if the 41 responding students came from the same or different districts or from the same kinds or types of district.
 - A task force member asked to reopen the survey. Dr. Zaleski noted this would not be possible as the report is due May 31, 2015, and the timeline does not allow for that additional time.

- A task force member agreed with Dr. Zaleski and noted that this report would be a “jumping off” point to study this topic further.
- One task force member believed that stress is dependent upon how the test is presented by the teacher.
 - Dr. Zaleski noted that the survey was a descriptive analysis only; it could not predict why participants answered the survey as they did.

Next Steps

Dr. Zaleski asked if the task force was ready to vote on next steps or if it wished to continue discussion. Terri Pigott motioned to move ahead to the writing of the report. Rosemary Swanson seconded. The motion passed. A task force member added that the report would need to contain the limitations of the survey and the report.

The identified writing subcommittee (Michael Beyer, Cathy Mannen, Susie Morrison, Terri Pigott, Julie Schaid, Rosemary Swanson) will begin its work virtually (i.e., online) or through teleconferencing media. The goal is to have a draft report prepared for the next Task Force Assessment Review meeting in Bloomington, Illinois, at the Alumni Center, on April 6, 2015.

Co-chair Mannen indicated that she was unable to unmute the teleconferencing media at the appropriate time but wanted to speak regarding reopening the survey. She noted the possibility of receiving an extension of the May 31, 2015, report deadline from the governor or the legislature. That would allow task force members to communicate with the people they represent to obtain better responses. Currently, without knowing specifically who received the survey, it is not possible to encourage them to respond. Dr. Zaleski stated that given the sensitive nature of this topic, keeping the district names anonymous is essential, and it is also important to maintain a random sample. The districts received four reminders; thus, it is doubtful that any additional responses will be received. Member Rhonda Jenkins noted the need to respect the answers received and to avoid resending the survey as a means of obtaining the answers that “we want.” Again, Dr. Zaleski stated that for a survey, the response rate was good and it is not possible to control the answers.

Open for Public Comment

The meeting was opened for public comment. No comments were forthcoming.

Adjourn

Rhonda Jenkins motioned for the meeting to adjourn, and Jamie Lodge seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.