

Illinois Assessment Review Task Force

Meeting Summary

Monday, April 6, 2015

1 p.m.–4 p.m.

Illinois State University Alumni Center

1101 North Main St., Normal, Illinois

Conference Call Number: 888-494-4032; Access Code: 7066563739

Attendance

Task Force Members

Michael Beyer	Rhonda G. Jenkins	Dr. Lynne Panega
Caroline Bilicki	Jaime Lodge	Dr. Terri Pigott
Kathy Davis	Cathy Mannen (cochair)	Bob Pritchard
Dr. Angela Henderson	Susie Morrison (cochair)	Dr. Julie Schaid
Brad Hutchinson	Gene Olsen	Kelly Sholtis

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Dr. Diana Zaleski

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Thi Tran Rachel Trimble

Guest

Amy Alsop

Meeting Objectives

- Review and approve meeting minutes from March 16, 2015.
- Review subcommittee recommendations, report summary and suggested changes to the report.

Welcome

The task force met on April 6, 2015, at the Illinois State University Alumni Center. Fifteen task force members and one guest attended the meeting in person and via conference call. Co-chair Cathy Mannen opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending, and proceeded with the review of the meeting minutes from March 16, 2015.

Minutes

There were two noted changes to be made to the minutes from March 16, 2015: the draft date on page two and Rhonda G. Jenkins's name being listed twice. Brad Hutchinson moved to accept the changes and the minutes. Representative Bob Pritchard seconded the motion.

Review of Subcommittee Recommendations

The subcommittee made four recommendations to the task force. The recommendations were one, two, three, and four. The majority of the task force voted to accept all four recommendations.

1. The subcommittee recommends requesting an extension of the final report deadline.
2. The subcommittee requested that the deadline be extended from May 2015 to December 2015.

The task force voted on accepting the first and second recommendations of extending the deadline to December 2015. The majority of the task force members voted in favor of extending the deadline.

3. The subcommittee recommended re-administering the survey to obtain a larger sample.
 - The subcommittee recommended the formation of another subcommittee to review the survey and possibly include additional questions concerning the number of times an assessment is administered, the loss of instructional time, technology, conflicts with multi-grade classes, and time and money invested in test-preparation resources.
4. The subcommittee recommended reviewing the method of survey distribution to obtain a larger sample.
 - The subcommittee recommended that the State Superintendent should communicate with districts and possibly make the survey publicly available so all interested parties could respond. In addition, the subcommittee recommended that the task force members should encourage their respective organizations to respond to the survey.

The task force voted on accepting the third and fourth recommendations. Task force members who volunteered to be on the subcommittee included Michael Beyer, Caroline Bilicki, Rhonda G. Jenkins, Cathy Mannen, and Dr. Julie Schaid. Task force members who were not in attendance will be given the opportunity to join the subcommittee via e-mail.

Review of Subcommittee Report Summary

A representative from the subcommittee shared the following summary information regarding the survey responses:

- The subcommittee felt the survey responses were not representative of the state or subgroups—students, parents, teachers, superintendents (Table 1 to Table 8).
 - Dr. Pigott responded that the response rate was within the bounds of what would be expected when conducting survey research.
- A patchwork of tests is currently being used across Illinois to fulfill federal accountability requirements and requirements imposed by program mandates, grants, and educator evaluations. Presently, combinations of at least 20 tests are reportedly being used throughout Illinois for those purposes (Table 11 to Table 15).

- Responding districts noted very few local assessments in addition to those already identified as used to fulfill mandated federal requirements (Table 6 to Table 20).
- One-third of the tests used in elementary districts to fulfill mandated federal requirements did not appear to have value for local assessment purposes. There were not enough responses from high schools to fairly or accurately analyze this impact for uppergrade levels (Table 11 and Table 15).
- A wide range of time is reportedly spent on assessments. The range and standard deviation make it difficult to accurately determine the actual amount of time currently being devoted to assessments. Nonetheless, the bulk of time is reportedly spent on required federal assessments as opposed to those used for local purposes (Table 21 to Table 23).
- By district, the number of tests reportedly administered to fulfill mandated federal purposes is about the same as the number of tests administered for local purposes, and generally includes between one to four tests. However, many districts reportedly administered no assessments for either purpose (Tables 15 and Table 20).
- About the same amount of money per student (\$36) was reportedly spent on assessments used for mandated federal purposes as for local purposes. Collar counties (the five counties that border Chicago’s Cook County; i.e., the counties of Dupage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) reported a dramatically lower assessment cost per student (\$12).
- The ratio of total negative comments (*disadvantages*) to total positive comments (*advantages*) was higher for federal accountability assessments and lower for assessments used for local purposes as reported by superintendents and teachers.
 - Dr. Zaleski added that students reported more advantages than disadvantages for administering standardized assessments. Approximately 47 percent of parents reported the information received from standardized assessments was helpful. In addition, 45.8 percent of parents reported that standardized assessments had a negative impact on their child’s typical school day while 46.3 percent of parents reported that standardized assessments had either no impact or a positive impact on their child’s typical school day. Finally, 70 percent of students reported that they take “about the right amount” of standardized assessments while only 15 percent reported they take “too many.”

Review of Subcommittee’s Suggested Changes to the Report

The subcommittee shared the following suggested changes to the current draft report:

- Appendix B should be organized by the grade level of assessment.
- Table 1 should include the total number of districts surveyed.
- Remove percentages in Table 1 through Table 3.
- Table 4 should group counties by region surveyed.
- Create a new table summarizing Table 11 and Table 15.

Next Steps

The task force determined that the next steps are as follows:

- The MWCC will provide a resource with expertise about surveys at the May 4, 2015, meeting.
- A subcommittee will be formed to review the survey tool and distribution plan.
- Task force members will work with Representative Bob Pritchard in requesting an extension request to the legislators.

Adjourn

The Illinois Assessment Review Task Force meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

DRAFT