

IELLAAC Meeting Minutes
September 15th, 2011
Illinois Resource Center

The meeting began at approximately 10 with a welcome and introductions.

Meeting notes from the April 21st and June 16th meetings were read and approved with minor changes.

Old Business

The reports requested by the committee for addition to the Student Information System (SIS) have been reviewed by ISBE management, legal, and the SIS staff. Four were approved for development, and are under creation at this time. Those not approved were designs that requested information regarding students who no longer attend in the district that is the subject of the report.

The committee then launched into a discussion about the meaning of the word “No” in SIS. The crux of the issue is having sufficient information to place students, who are new to the district, into ELL services in a timely manner. That is, accurate understanding of LEP status is critical for ELP screening and subsequent placement prior to the beginning of classes. Currently, it’s possible to view, before the new year, whether a student’s LEP status is yes or no. However, that LEP status does not reflect the results of the most recent ACCESS administration. Under these circumstances, “LEP-No” is open to a number of interpretations which makes proper placement problematic. The members strongly felt that SIS needed to offer clearer, up-to-date information regarding a student’s LEP status prior to the start of instruction to avoid disruptive shuffling and scrambling. It was suggested that some members attempt to speak with SIS personnel at the upcoming Directors Meeting in Springfield for a possible remedy.

The committee then returned to the topic of the new ELL reports in SIS, and discussed the four that were approved for creation.

Updates from the State

- Pooja Agarwal is the new Division Administrator for Student Assessment. She came from Washington University in St. Louis.
- The ONPAR-Math grant is complete, but the future of those test items is uncertain. WIDA has not announced any plans for using the ONPAR grant products.
- The Alternate-ACCESS is being released by WIDA for use in the Spring of 2012, but not in time for Illinois to use during its regular ACCESS testing period. Therefore, Illinois will plan to implement the Alternate ACCESS in the 2013 cycle.
- There was little to share regarding PARCC and the new assessment system. English proficiency testing will be done through a separate consortium. WIDA has applied for a Enhanced Assessment Grant to develop a new ELP assessment, and has posted a draft 2012 edition of the English Language Development Standards online for inspection.

Members commented that the 2014-15 implementation date is drawing close, and wondered whether the new assessment system would be ready and what Illinois will do if it is not. If not, ISBE intends to be ready to publish its own tests of the Common Core Standards which have been adopted as the new Illinois Learning Standards.

- ACCESS data was released late this past summer. Some odd rounding was discovered that affected the proficiency levels of about 200 students. MetriTech said it was a programming issue. They did some rescoring and provided the state with new results which became final.
- The ACCESS schedule for 2012 was modified to change the data correction window. Districts will now have three weeks of access to the preliminary results instead of four.
- The 2013 testing schedules for all state tests have been approved and posted online. There are no major changes, but the ACCESS window for 2013 will open on January 14th which is a little later in the month than usual. This schedule still allows a two-week space between the end of the regular ACCESS window and the beginning of ISAT testing.

A member asked whether tier determination will remain a local function for ACCESS testing or be automatically generated from state data. The answer is yes, tier determination will remain local.

There were comments about students transitioning from the results of a Tier A administration. This is possible, and it occurs, but requires a near perfect score given the cap of 4.0 on the reading and listening domains of Tier A.

New Business

The committee spent considerable time reviewing the data on accommodation usage for ISAT. Members were interested in further analysis of Form LM and the Reader Script looking at composite proficiency levels (CPL), and additionally, looking at the listening domain score as a possible mediating variable. Members examined the use of accommodations at the various grade levels. There was discussion about students who seem to plateau in their progress, and that the teaching of academic language versus survival language may be a key factor there. Members expressed an interest in seeing a distribution of accommodation usage connected to CPL results.

Then the group discussed a handout showing a chronology of ACCESS changes and their impact on the number of students transitioning from 2007 to 2010. These were the change to grade level scoring from grade cluster scoring, and the adoption of the current 4.8/4.2 transition criteria. A comment from one member was that, since the change from 4.0 to the 4.8/4.2 criteria, students now tend to transition in grades 3 and 4 instead of grades 2 and 3. Several members felt that was too early to leave services.

An increase in the numbers of students tested was noted, especially in kindergarten. There were other patterns of change that were not readily explainable.

Looking at a chart of ACCESS CPL with ISAT performance, members were quite interested in the numbers of ELLs meeting the state standards at various levels of ELP. They were interested in seeing something similar with PSAE data.

There was then some discussion of the current transition threshold, whether it should be higher, and whether there should be one at all given that ELLs make such good progress while getting language support. It was noted that for ELLs to meet and exceed on ISAT at the same rate as non-ELLs, their CPL needed to be well above 5. It was also noted that math achievement for ELLs compared favorably to that of the general population. Members expressed an interest in seeing further comparisons between ELLs and other subpopulations of students.

The committee then reviewed the presentation to be given at the upcoming Directors Meeting in Springfield. There were no changes or additions suggested. There was some discussion regarding the policy for testing students who transfer during the ACCESS window and their inclusion in the AMAO process.

A final comment was that the ELL community is very dependent on state-level data to demonstrate the effectiveness of services. There are calls, within the education community, to make changes to Article 14C of the school code that would allow greater latitude for cutting services, especially at the secondary level. State-level assessment data is essential to addressing that discussion.

The committee discussed the time and place of the next meeting.

The meeting then adjourned.

Attendees (in order of sign in)

Julie Colgrove
Barry Pedersen
Jodi Arvis
David Barker
Boon Lee
John McNulty
Maria Lozano
Wilma Valero
Annette Acevedo
Judy Yturriago