

**Illinois English Language Learners Assessment
Advisory Committee (IELLAAC) Meeting
September 28, 2010**

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions:

On the back of the Agenda is a chart of how many students for whom we have ACCESS scores. It was provided for the committee's reference.

It was asked, how many ELLs, current and former, drop out of school vs. those who graduate. Some of this should be available through the Student Information System which was operational in 2005 for most of the state, 2006 for CPS.

The minutes from the previous IELLAAC meeting (held on May 18, 2010) were read aloud. No additions or corrections were requested. They were approved by committee vote.

It was asked whether there was an in-depth discussion in May about universal design.

Comments were that it's a topic that has come up periodically, but has not been successfully incorporated into Illinois state tests. It's part of the PARCC consortium design for the new assessment system. There's a better chance of inclusion if it's introduced early in the process.

A concern was mentioned that there's currently a lot of activity in the state regarding school assessments and that the various efforts may not be in good communication with one another. There's a task force at work for Kindergarten readiness. It was not aware of the Kindergarten MODEL assessment for ELP. In addition, RTi would include 2-3 interim assessments to measure depth of knowledge. These entities need to coordinate their efforts to avoid over testing.

It was asked whether the student assessment division would be the clearinghouse (or central connection) of all these assessment. The answer was no; they fall under the authority of various agency divisions. For example, ELP screening... is under the authority of the English Language Learning Division.

It was asked whether the Student Assessment Division would represent Illinois at the PARCC consortium discussions of the new assessment system. The answer was that, yes, the Assessment Division is expected to play that role.

A member then shared seven principals of universal design from a web site.

WIDA has announced changes to ACCESS for 2011 that are in one of the handouts. They affect the speaking and writing domains. Does the committee have any comments or concerns to pass on to WIDA?

Multiple members of the committee expressed concern regarding inflated speaking scores and poor standardization of the speaking test administration, especially at the lower grade levels. There is little confidence in the accuracy of the data. The changes for 2011 may help somewhat.

Comments included:

- There is no speaking piece in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). They are focused on college and career readiness.
- The ACCESS speaking test is too impromptu for the students. ELLs would do better if they had more opportunity to consider their response.
- Depth of knowledge has a significant impact on the speaking domain performance.

Other, variables affecting the score are student self-consciousness, time, and familiarity with the test administrator (TA).

- Speaking and writing development are somewhat linked. That may be a way of examining the data.
- We might look at recording the test. The TAs sometimes fill in the content gaps in their own minds instead of scoring actual expression.
- How does ACCESS speaking compare to other speaking tests?
- What is the distribution of speaking scores among WIDA states? How do TAs in IL compare?
- Spot checks and dual scoring are possible options.
- The committee may want to review the speaking test training and make suggestions to WIDA.

The committee passed a motion to strongly recommend to districts that they have their ACCESS TAs, who administer speaking, review the training material. This recommendation would be announced at the next director's conference and be disseminated over the DELL listserv.

A member expressed dissatisfaction about the timing of the ACCESS administration. It may fatigue students for ISAT, and the results are not available soon enough to inform instruction for the current school year. ELLs are also being double-tested in reading.

Another replied that the issue of timing has been examined at length, and there are problems no matter when it's given. Districts like to do progress testing, but ACCESS wasn't designed for that role. There are not enough items and forms for multiple administrations.

It was commented that the MODEL series is meant to be a close approximation to ACCESS accuracy, and is available throughout the year.

Someone expressed that if the PARCC consortium successfully creates a fair and balanced assessment system, perhaps the double testing will be eliminated. The ELP test should count as the academic reading and writing assessment.

Several updates were shared:

- The State Board of Education had approved new ELP screening rules for pre-K students. The approved process allowed more options than just the Pre-IPT-Oral instrument, but did not allow as much latitude as the version of the rules under consideration, at the time of the May-2010 IELLAAC meeting, to which many members strongly objected.

A member commented that many early childhood experts object to standardized testing of students of that age. Many of those children have no oral language skills at all. Even native-English kids screen very low.

Another said that many districts are concerned about proper staffing to serve this population.

Another reported that "some" districts are telling parents of these students to waive services.

Another comment was that many districts have neglected serving this group for a long time.

There was some discussion regarding the appropriate vs. required credentialing for Pre-K teachers and that this is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

- WIDA has announced some upcoming alignment studies. They will align the WIDA ELP standards to the ACCESS assessment and to the CCSS. The former in the fall of 2010 and the latter by spring 2011.
- Field testing sites for the Alternate ACCESS have been recruited and scheduled.
- The ONPAR-Math project received a second, one-year extension after losing a major portion of pilot testing sites. The project is now scheduled for completion by March 31, 2011.

- The ONPAR Science project experienced a financial snag at the state level (VT), but is very close to completion.

The committee has been interested in analyses of ACCESS and ISAT data. One being the use of accommodations on state tests and the relationship between ACCESS scores and ISAT achievement. We depend upon Shuwan to get access to the data, and she won't be available until the School Report Card is done.

A member expressed concern over removing LEP indicators in SIS following transition. ISBE says remove the indicator and they will use the transition dates to include them in the LEP subgroup for AYP. However, the 2009 data did not correctly reflect this. The coding for first and second year out must be entered manually. If not they are coded the same way as never-LEP students. There is also a problem with the transition process from first to second that can cause a district to lose a year of counting a transitioned student in the LEP subgroup. The DELL, assessment, and SIS divisions need to collaborate on correcting this problem. There doesn't seem to be any automation to capture this group.

The committee passed a motion that ISBE modify the Student Information System to add a value to the formerly LEP field (column L) to distinguish between never-LEP students and transitioned LEPs who are beyond the second year since exit.

1 = First Year since exiting LEP	4 = Never LEP
2 = Second Year since exiting LEP	5 = Withdrawal
3 = More than two years since exiting LEP	6 = Refusal

Also, check for an automated computation that changes First Year out to Second Year out to ensure that it's not updating prematurely. Program directors must be alerted to the situation, so that any manual corrections are carried out accurately.

Some member expressed concern over kindergarten students that screen as LEP, but then test out again at their first ACCESS assessment. They are taken out of the services that they need.

The December 2009 special study done with special populations and the audio accommodations had mixed results, but follow-up analyses may reveal a clear effect. We have the data from Pearson now, and only need an opportunity to examine it.

The committee has an ongoing interest in tracking longitudinal ELL data. It will require working with Shuwan. So the plan is to follow-up on that once she's available.

There have been complaints from the field that too many first grade students are screening into ELL services. What's been the experience of committee members? How does the difficulty of the MODEL compare to the grade 1 WAPT.

Members acknowledged that this occurs, but do not feel there is a serious concern. Any false positive will be transitioned out after the next ACCESS administration. Members will have to consult with their teachers regarding the difference in screener difficulty.

IL is part of the PARCC consortium, that has 26 members. How will this affect the way we assess ELLs? It's clear that the members will have a common definition of ELL, but not necessarily the same instrument. Half of PARCC uses ACCESS. Some develop their own instruments: NY, CA, and MA. PARCC has four of the large ELL states (CA, FL, IL, & NY). Florida will be the fiscal agent for PARCC. Some PARCC summary materials were shared and discussed. Concern was expressed that several members of PARCC are English-only (CA, FL, & MA). Illinois requires bilingual education. How can these divergent approaches to services be reconciled into a common assessment system? ISBE will provide regular updates to the committee, so that we may be prepared to provide input at the appropriate moments.

A member asked where IL stands with development of a growth model.

No one present had firm knowledge of where that is, except that it is still being discussed and considered for the future accountability system.

There was some discussion of the reauthorization of ESEA, but there is not a clear indication of how it will change..

Members spent some time discussing the meaning of ELL, whether it is a temporary state that disappears with English mastery, or it's a lifelong state of being that will always affect the way the individual approaches language and learning.

Members later talked about possible approaches to defining LEP, and how IL can be ready with input when PARCC has those discussions. Also mentioned was the WIDA approach to standards and testing in comparison with other developers.

Illinois has been in the practice of modifying English test items for bilingual students. A better approach would be to prepare the item writers to create questions more appropriate for ELLs to begin with. Perhaps there is something that can be provided to the item writers to help them do that, in the interest of Universal Design?

A member asked about the prospect of computer-based testing in the future. The PARCC consortium has that as a basic piece of its system. Illinois has been reluctant to take that approach because of expensive equipment costs that it may demand, and because states that have taken that route have had their online systems fail at test time.

The committee favored setting the next meeting during the annual conference in December. A meeting time will be requested that does not conflict with the IACBE meeting.

The meeting then adjourned.

Attendees (in order of sign-in):

Barry Pedersen
Carmen Acevedo
David Barker
Maria Lozano
Araceli Ordaz
Harriette Herrera
Jodi Arvis
Beatrice Childrice
Antonio Acevedo
Karen Mulattieri
Julie Colgrove
Boon Lee
Judy Yturriago