

Panel to Study Alternatives to the ISTEP Program Test
2016

Note: Please do not miss the invitation for 9/16/16 printed in red near the end of this document.

Members include:

Sen. Dennis Kruse, Chair Senate Education Committee
Rep. Robert Behning, Chair House Education Committee
Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education
Nicole Fama, Chairperson
Steve Baker, Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development

The following members represent various stakeholders, i.e., parents, principals, teachers, superintendents, and community from throughout the state: Scot Croner, Byron Ernest, Kenneth Folks, Brent Freeman, Julie Kemp, Callie Marksbarry, Michelle McKeown, Marilyn Moran-Townsend, Edward Rangel, James Roberts, Wendy Robinson, Jean Russell, Melissa Scherle, Lynne Stallings, Charles Weisenbach, and Ayana Wilson-Coles.

Staff: Allen Morford, Attorney Eliza Stephenson, Fiscal Analyst David Lusan

June 14:

Discussion at this meeting regarding concerns of educators was very similar to that held at our LWVIN Education Study Committee face-to-face meeting on Saturday, June 11th. We were surprised that information was not available on what was happening in other states. Dr. Michele Walker, Director of DOE's Office on Student Assessment, gave a thorough explanation of what tests are given, how RFP (Requests for Proposals)s are evaluated, and scoring process with final awards.*

July 19:

Dr. Michele Walker reported on the number of schools testing, the percentage of online testing (79.6%), and the percentage of paper/pencil testing (20.4%), giving reasons for paper and pencil testing.

Ed Roeber, Assessment Director of Michigan Dept. of Education for 19 years, reminded the group that:

Summative tests offer assessment *of* learning.

Formative tests offer assessment *for* learning.

A system of assessments is needed. Formative tests are used frequently by teachers to help plan instruction. Summative tests usually are given once or twice a year. These tests can give the school data for instruction and are needed to meet ESSA (Every School Succeeds Act); to conform to Title I requirements; to report performance of students; to evaluate teachers; and to provide information to parents and students. Summative tests are not diagnostic tools. In Michigan, PSAT and ACT tests are not tied to student graduation.

Assessment of literacy is an issue. An assessment specialist is needed in each school to promote testing literacy among administrators, teachers, parents, students, community, legislative

bodies, school boards and the public. Roeber's recommendations were: a shorter summative test with quicker results; interim tests aligned to Indiana standards with immediate results; professional development on formative assessment practices for all (including administration); and (in high schools) End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs) and college entrance tests, professional development, and individual profiles.

Discussion at this meeting focused on testing for standard performance only vs. computerized testing during which the student is challenged to perform at the highest individual level, with questions increasing in difficulty as correct answers are given.

August 9:

The committee's mission statement: "Indiana will develop an assessment system that is student-centered and provides meaningful and timely information to all stakeholders on both a student's on-grade proficiency level [grade-level proficiency?] and growth toward Indiana's College and Career Ready standards."

Dr. Nancy Hoffman from Jobs of the Future, Boston, MA, presented ways to promote career readiness. Massachusetts began integrating career readiness in 2012. The process is not easy. Its primary aims include how to prepare students for careers, what to report to the public, and how to show accountability. All students need to understand the labor market and all need STEM skills. All students need work experience in high school, whether they are headed for a four-year degree or a two-year degree. In Switzerland, 70% of students have signed a contract with an employer by age 15. Dr. Hoffman suggests that employment experience is the most important strategy to help young people find careers. Dr. Hoffman stated that Indiana will be joining the "Pathways to Prosperity" Network. Their mission: "Building systems of career pathways linking high school, work, and community college, to increase the number of youth who complete high school and attain a postsecondary credential with labor market value."

Dr. Karla Egan, of Ed Metrics, a research organization "helping clients transform educational practices by leveraging data to make informed decisions," was the next presenter. Dr. Egan recommended that the committee needs to set a specific testing goal. Dr. Egan stated that a variety of tests are available. One test will not meet all objectives. Scott Croner, a member of the Legislative Committee, advocated for students, with the support of parents, to set goals for themselves in 9th grade, thereby picking the test by which they would be measured -- *ACT*, *SAT*, *NCRR*, *Work Keys*, *ASVAB* (military), etc. Several members questioned why the GQE [*Graduation-Qualifying Exam*] was necessary. Dr. Egan then reviewed the alternate test given to students who are unable to participate in general testing and/or have significant cognitive development issues.

Committee discussion reflected disagreement on the goal of testing as a tool to help teachers with instruction vs. testing to measure performance for accountability. The chair was asked to get information on tests required by the federal government and to hear from corporate community on the topic of students graduating with appropriate career readiness skills and how SAT might be used to evaluate all students.

Chalkbeat Indiana Reporter Shaina Cavazos files a report after each meeting. These can be seen at <http://www.chalkbeat.org/in/> Her online headline following the 7/19 meeting read, "[The clock is ticking for Indiana to replace the ISTEP exam, but no plan has emerged.](#)"

Materials for Local Leagues' Consideration
LWVIN Education Study 2015-17

Note: Shaina Cavazos of *Chalkbeat Indiana* will speak at the LWV-Indianapolis Lunch with LWV on Friday September 16th at noon in the Truman Room of the Scottish Rite Cathedral, at North and N. Meridian Streets. Lunch can be purchased at the Double Eagle Cafe adjacent to the Truman Room, and free parking is available in the lot west of the building, accessed off North St. No reservation is necessary. Please attend if you wish!

*Dr. Michele Walker's PowerPoint presentations are available in .pdf format if you request them. Please send an e-mail to kkbleonard@sbcglobal.net .

Remaining 2016 dates for the ISTEP replacement study committee are: 9/13; 10/11 and 11/15.