Illinois High School Assessment Update

July 2016 – Illinois State Board of Education announced discontinuation of the high school administration of the PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career).

**Reasons for this change**

- Feedback from teachers, administrators, parents and students challenging the value of the PARCC.
- Budget shortfalls meant that the full suite of PARCC high school assessments would not be funded.
- Flexibility in administration of PARCC reduced its usefulness in accountability and college placement, since only selected courses were tested.
- New state legislation required a college entrance exam during high school as part of ensuring equitable opportunity for college admission.
- The contract for a college entrance exam was awarded to the College Board to administer SAT.
- College Board demonstrated in the procurement process that SAT is well-aligned to the new Illinois Learning Standards.
- Federal accountability requires that all students are assessed at least one time in high school.
- Other states are using SAT for high school accountability (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Michigan).

**Original reasons for PARCC replacing the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE)**

- PARCC items were written by Illinois educators and experts to be aligned to the new standards.
- Performance levels were determined by Illinois educators participating in the PARCC process.
- The high school assessment needed to be aligned to the elementary assessment.
- Multiple assessments at the high school were intended to measure student growth.
- The PARCC assessments were intended to measure a college-bound path through high school courses such Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.
- PARCC assessed end of course knowledge and skills, so it could eventually be part of final exams.
- PSAE was primarily ACT and did not assess higher order thinking skills required by the new standards.
- PARCC items used higher order thinking skills; e.g., finding the best answer, analyzing a reading passage, solving a real-world mathematical problem, or using multiple sources to support an answer.
- PARCC used a technology platform for delivery of the assessment, which meant support features like highlighting text or eliminating answers could be available to all students.

**Issues related to the decision to use College Board SAT for accountability**

- Student growth will not be measured during high school.
- There will not be a connection between the elementary and the high school assessment.
- Confusion for community members and parents on school performance since there will be different expectations for accountability between elementary and high schools within the same unit district.
- Students from the elementary schools will expect PARCC-like features not available from SAT – technology, adoptions, accommodations, similar online format.
- Using a national test means that Illinois educators will not influence the test content, performance levels or administration.
- Student results will be determined by the assessment company with limited information shared.
- A local district budget will be needed for 9th or 10th grade assessments if districts want that data.
- Schools will continue to have issues with defining an “11th grader” in Illinois high schools.
- College Board SAT has never been used for federal accountability.
- College Board SAT will not include a career readiness assessment component.
- Higher education institutions will have to determine if there is enough information from SAT for placement decisions.