



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2015
9:00 a.m.

Indiana Government Center South
Conference Room B
302 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Board Members Present: Superintendent Glenda Ritz (Chair), Mr. Dan Elsener (Secretary), Mr. Troy Albert, Dr. David Freitas (participating by phone), Mr. Gordon Hendry, Ms. Andrea Neal, Mrs. Sarah O'Brien, Dr. Brad Oliver, Mr. Tony Walker (participating by phone), Mr. B.J. Watts, and Mrs. Cari Whicker.

Board Members Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Superintendent Ritz called the special meeting to order, the pledge of allegiance was recited, and roll was called. The roll reflected all members present in person or participating by phone.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Superintendent Ritz stated that she called this meeting to order regarding assessments for the spring of 2015. She stated that she would be rearranging the agenda and taking the discussion items first and action second. Superintendent Ritz also stated that she wished to take all public speakers first.

- Mr. Hendry moved that the Action Item - Resolution on 2015 Assessments, be removed from the agenda.¹ Dr. Freitas seconded the motion. Mr. Hendry pointed out that the Board approves the agenda, and that removing this item is consistent with the Board rules and Robert's Rules of Order. Superintendent Ritz stated that this would mean the only item she called the meeting for would be removed. Ms. Neal stated that the item being removed deals with pausing accountability, and that it is premature to consider pausing accountability until the ISTEP+ issues are resolved. She went on to state that today's meeting should focus on shortening the ISTEP+ test.
- Ms. Whicker added that in the email sent by the Superintendent to set up the special meeting it was stated that the topic would be the spring assessment. She went on to point out that the email stated that all options are being reviewed regarding test length. Ms. Whicker said she read that to mean this meeting would be about reducing the test and possibly also looking at the test windows. Superintendent Ritz stated that the resolution contains some of those items.
- Mr. Hendry responded that those items in the resolution dealing with the test length could be taken up separately. Mr. Hendry stated that every minute, hour, and day is critical to figuring out a way to shorten the test. He went on to say that this meeting is not the appropriate time or place to discuss pausing accountability. He stated that that debate could be had a later meeting. He said issues not directly relevant to ISTEP+ should not be addressed today. Mr. Hendry continued that today's meeting should be about the Board trying to help the Department find ways to shorten the test and improve the current situation.
- Mr. Hendry went on to state that the Superintendent has 11 people on her staff that work in assessment, and that he wanted those employees who work full time on assessment to have all the time possible in the next two weeks to deal with these issues.
- The Board voted 10-1 to carry Mr. Hendry's motion removing the item from the agenda. Superintendent Ritz voted no.

III. STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR

¹ The Department resolution for this agenda item can be viewed at http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/Accountability_Resolution_2015.pdf.

- Superintendent Ritz stated that the Department has been working on reducing the testing time since the last meeting on February 4, 2015, has been working with the consultants, and is prepared to reduce the testing time for all students by three hours and five minutes. Further, she requested that the General Assembly suspend social studies, which would reduce the test for fifth and seventh graders by one hour and thirty-five minutes. Superintendent Ritz stated that this would keep the testing schedule on track, including the keeping of IREAD-3 as planned.

IV. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

- Ms. Neal made some comments on behalf of her boss, who has 51 years of experience: 1) we are sucking the joy out of learning, 2) the ISTEP must be shortened, and 3) just do it.
- Ms. O'Brien commented that this issue is vital, and Indiana cannot miss the mark on this one. She thanked leadership in Indiana for helping find solutions. She stated that she is for responsible testing, and the test must be shortened. She stated that she hoped the Board can help provide input to the Department in shortening this test, even though the test is the Department's responsibility.
- Mr. Hendry thanked the Board members for being present and for raising the alarm about the testing times. He said late January was the first time the Board became aware of the substantial increase in testing times. Mr. Hendry continued that he has seen statements recently where there have been attempts to find a needle in a haystack about what had been told to the Board regarding the test length. He said the Department is responsible for administering the test and managing CTB. Mr. Hendry stated that he first heard about this in January, and that he was disappointed if the Department also just learned about this increase in test length in late January, considering the Department has stated it has frequent communications with CTB.
- Superintendent Ritz responded that a January timeline was provided to the Board, which was finalized on January 23. She went on to state that they were released to the field on January 26. Superintendent Ritz added that the Department could not do any of that work until the test was totally completed. She also stated that everyone needs to keep in mind that the Department has prepared a brand new test that is aligned to brand new standards. Superintendent Ritz stated that in August the Board did know the number of questions there would be, and did know that the amount of questions would be doubled on part 1 and more questions on part 2. She

stated that time cannot be assigned to that until everything is finalized. She said the Department did its job.

- Mr. Hendry responded that advanced planning is important. He said this information should not have been at the last minute.
- Mr. Walker commented that when the state decided to implement more rigorous standards, it only follows that a more rigorous assessment will follow. He commented that the test should not be as long as it is now, but that open ended questions should not be removed. Mr. Walker said he definitely didn't think areas like social studies should be taken out. He said major surgery on the test would be a bad thing.
- Mr. Watts stated that teachers aren't against the one state assessment. He said a reasonable test is what needs to happen. He thanked leadership in Indiana for recognizing this problem and finding solutions.
- Dr. Oliver stated that the meeting was important; he also thanked school leaders who have been writing to help find solutions. He also stated he appreciated the Governor for making resources available. He stated that shortening the test is a must.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- John O'Neal, from the Indiana State Teacher's Association ("ISTA"), spoke first. He stated that ISTA supports pausing accountability based on the current circumstances. He stated that we would not be in this situation had it not been for the actions of the legislature and the Governor.
- MaryAnn Schlegel-Ruegger had the floor after Mr. O'Neal. She asked the Board members if they had any questions regarding her comments at the last Board meeting. None of the members had questions. Ms. Schlegel-Ruegger spoke about schools that aren't communicating their school grades accurately.
- Ms. Neal handed out materials on behalf of a constituent that could not be present at this meeting.

VI. DISCUSSION AND REPORTS

B. Presentation from national assessment experts Edward Roeber and William Auty²

² The experts' presentation can be viewed at http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/ISTEP_Presentation.pdf and the experts' memo can be viewed at http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/IN_Recommendations.pdf.

- Robert Guffin, Executive Director of the Board, introduced nationally recognized experts Dr. William Auty and Dr. Edward Roeber to the Board. Dr. Roeber presented to the Board regarding solutions for shortening the ISTEP+ test. He stated he has been working together with Dr. Auty. He stated that CTB and the Department have been helpful.
- Dr. Roeber stated that testing times must be reduced for all grades, while ensuring test validity. He commented further that changes made in the 2015 program should not unduly impact the 2016 program. Dr. Roeber stated that new federal guidelines could add some challenges depending on what they are. He said the recommendations being made are not restrictively prescriptive. He stated that the experts' roles are to help the Department fix this problem.
- Dr. Roeber commented that testing times in excess of 12 hours are currently scheduled for the mathematics, English/language arts, science, and social studies tests in ISTEP+. He added that the English/language arts items are the real culprit. He stated that a major part of the extra testing time occurring in the English/language arts assessment is due to policies on the release of open-end or constructed-response items.
- Dr. Roeber discussed the issue of piloting. He stated that the lack of previously pilot-test or field-test items requires the use of more items than normal this year. He added that he and Dr. Auty believe that there are ways the Department can reduce testing time and accomplish its assessment purposes. He added that, with the new standards and other issues, the new more permanent test going forward could be longer than past, but not as long as this year's; he also stated that other states are in a somewhat similar positions in that regard.
- The experts made the following recommendations:
 - The Department not release 100% of open ended ("OE") items used in the 2015 ISTEP+. Instead, we recommend a far smaller percentage of item releases—perhaps 20%
 - Some parts of the 2015 ISTEP+ be administered to only a sample of students being tested this year
 - Upon inquiry by Mr. Elsener, Dr. Roeber stated that matrix sampling is the preferred method, is frequently used, and is reliable
 - Move the deleted OE items to fall pilot testing, and then matrix sampling in 2016 test, in order to use them to build forms for 2017 and beyond
 - The Social Studies part of the test be suspended for 1 year

- Vertical scaling items should be removed from the online assessments
- Dr. Roeber then moved on to the following work that needs to be done with respect to each recommendation:
 - Recommendation 1 (Limit the amount of open-response items to be released)
 - Recommendation 2 (Identify the “core” and “sample” parts of the tests. Matrix sample the sample items)
 - Recommendation 3 (Pilot test the deleted OE items in Fall 2015 and field test them, using matrix sampling in 2016)
 - Recommendation 4 (Suspend the Social Studies tests for one year)
 - Recommendation 5 (Remove Vertical Scaling items from this year’s test)
- Dr. Roeber stated that these recommendations will reduce testing times substantially. Ms. O’Brien asked about the timeframe for action, and Dr. Roeber responded that that could be a challenge.
- Superintendent Ritz stated that the Department is ready to proceed with part 1, and the online portion is not given until May. She stated that part 1 will be reduced by 3 hours and five minutes. Superintendent Ritz continued that the Department is going to limit the amount of open response items to be released and provide sample pieces. She also stated that, which regard to the matrix sample, the Department is prepared for half of the students to take half of the items.
- Superintendent continued that, with respect to piloting the OE items, the Department believes that there will not need to be a fall test, that all the goals can be accomplished using the matrix piece that will be put into place with the part 1 piece. Superintendent Ritz also stated that she is asking the General Assembly to suspend social studies. She added that the Department will consider removal of the vertical scale, but that she really wants to start the baseline of the growth piece with the new accountability rule coming up.
- Superintendent Ritz stated that the Department is prepared to follow the recommendations going forward. She then invited Dr. Michele Walker, Director of Student Assessment at the Department, to address the Board. Dr. Walker said with the vertical scale each student would only take five items in math and five items in English during the part 2 portion of the window. Dr. Walker responded to a question by Dr. Oliver concerning why the Department wants the vertical scale, by saying that the vertical scale is a small number of items, and that the Department wants to measure growth on the new standards rather than using a statistical measure.

- Ms. O'Brien asked about the English/language arts portion being the culprit. Dr. Walker responded that with the new standards, students will be providing evidence to support their claims in the writing portions. She stated this is to ensure they understand what they read. Dr. Walker stated that its evidence based writing, and is not significantly longer than in previous tests. She said it is more the standards and not the number of items. Dr. Walker stated that since open ended items must be released they had to do two of each item in part 1.
- Ms. O'Brien asked if there will be a reading score from the ISTEP+, and Dr. Walker responded that a separate reading score was built into the RFP to begin in 2015-16. For this spring, English/language arts will still be a total score that is then broken down, but not a separate reading score.
- Dr. Oliver asked if we have more reading items than needed to get and English/language arts score. Superintendent Ritz responded that there is not a recommendation here for an overage; she stated that almost all items are piloted and some will fall out. Dr. Walker said our standards are more rigorous and also deeper. Dr. Walker said it was built as minimally as possible.
- Dr. Roeber said Dr. Oliver's question is related to recommendation 2. If the Department could identify a core that will be ok for this year; he said all items are not required this year.
- Upon inquiry by Mr. Elsener, Dr. Roeber stated that these changes will create a reliable test.
- Dr. Walker reiterated that this is a one year occurrence, and then the test will return to the test lengths of the past. Dr. Walker also stated that increase in standards rigor requires more time for the students to answer the questions.
- Dr. Oliver said he has heard from the field that the stress test did not go well; he asked if there is any benefit to moving the window. Dr. Walker said the window is locked down and there is no need to extend the window. Regarding the stress test, she stated that the server capacity has been fixed, and when that was done it did cause a freeze.
- Mr. Elsener asked about an increase in reading items. Dr. Walker responded that the biggest increase was in part 1 because they had to give all students the four multiple choice items, instead of having them read a passage and do a writing prompt. Dr. Walker said four multiple choice items were added during part 1, which added 60 additional minutes, and then they had to double what they had plus that, she stated. Dr. Walker continued that they actually didn't add any multiple choice items for reading. Mr. Elsener said the Roundtable and the Board voted against adding these

- items because of a concern that they would lengthen the test and Dr. Walker responded that it actually doesn't lengthen the test.
- Mr. Walker said he feared that chopping away at the test will just cause more confusion. He recommended administering it as is in segments. Dr. Walker responded that the test has already been divided up.
 - Mr. Hendry stated that he believed it was the Department's position earlier this week that the test would not be changed. Superintendent Ritz said no that was not the Department's position earlier. Mr. Hendry again stated that he thought it was the Department's position earlier this week that the test would move forward as is and Superintendent Ritz disagreed with that characterization.
 - Superintendent Ritz commented that practice tests were eliminated but that sample items had been released for a while so that students can go over them.
 - Mr. Albert recommended that any changes to the booklets be communicated quickly to the field, and Superintendent Ritz stated she would do that.
 - Mr. Hendry asked if the Superintendent intends that the Board discuss the recommendations and Superintendent Ritz said the Department is already planning on implementing the recommendations. Mr. Hendry then asked why the Board was asked to meet today if the Department is already planning on shortening the test. He stated there are a few recommendations he disagrees with and was puzzled as to why the Board was called to meeting without a discussion with input from Board members.
 - Mr. Hendry stated that this is a Department decision, and that they have the contract with CTB, and that he anticipated a line by line discussion regarding the recommendations to assist the Department.
 - Mr. Elsener stated that he hasn't gotten a clear answer yet and specifically asked Dr. Roeber if the spring ISTEP+ is set up to get a reading score. Dr. Roeber responded that there are five standards that will be reported, and reading is mentioned on a couple of those. He said it is his understanding that it's not a stand-alone reading test, but that there are reading items that are used in conjunction with writing prompts. He stated that the release policy also causes extra time. Dr. Auty stated that the test blueprint could be provided. Mr. Elsener said the Roundtable and the Board had concern about the addition of reading items adding test length.
 - Upon inquiry by Dr. Oliver, Superintendent Ritz stated that IREAD-3 would be given as is.
 - Ms. Whicker commented that her frustration is that the stress test was a fiasco, and it took up most of her class time yesterday. Ms. Whicker said had she known the

- changes were already going to be implemented, she would have been with her students who desperately need her. Superintendent Ritz stated that all of this information is recent; Ms. Whicker responded that a phone call the morning of this meeting would have allowed her to turn around and be with her students.
- Dr. Oliver stated that the original email to the Board was to engage the Board and get input around the reduction of the test. He said it wasn't until an email a few days prior that the accountability pause issue was raised.
 - Dr. Oliver stated that he is hearing a consensus that the test must be shortened as much as possible without sacrificing validity and reliability. And that reading items should be reduced as one method of shortening the test.
 - Mr. Hendry said he had concern about recommendation 4. Mr. Albert stated that the seventh grade test is geography, and it would amount to an hour and a half; he stated he would be fine if it's taken out this one time. Ms. Neal was fine with social studies being taken out this one time, despite its importance.
 - Mr. Elsener asked the Superintendent if the test will be reliable and valid based on the reductions the Department is making, and the Superintendent responded that it will be and that they have been working with the experts. Mr. Elsener said at the last meeting the Board was told the test would not be reduced, and that he was glad the Governor got involved. He stated this could have been taken care of a long time ago. Mr. Elsener commented that there was a major leadership void that caused a lot of this distress.
 - Ms. Whicker felt that social studies should not be eliminated. Dr. Oliver stated that social studies is important but that it should be cut this one time given the situation. Dr. Oliver also expressed that it's important that the Department ensure the test is valid and reliable.
 - Mr. Albert stressed the importance of implementing the test with integrity, security, and confidence because they have been teaching the standards. Mr. Watts stated that even though he is a social studies teacher and values the subject very much, reducing the test outweighs the need for it to be tested this one time.
 - Ms. O'Brien said social studies is vital, but every opportunity must be taken to shorten the test to preserve validity. Mr. Walker commented that these issues should have been a priority before. He said he doesn't believe there is a crisis here. He stated that chopping away at the test will create issues. He continued that nothing should come out of the test. Mr. Walker stated that the adults are causing negativity, rather than having confidence and faith in the children to take the test.

- Dr. Freitas said he does not support removing social studies from the ISTEP this year. Mr. Hendry clarified that social studies is just for fifth and seventh grades.
- Kristine Nickerson, Senior Program Manager for the ISTEP at CTB, addressed the Board. Ms. Nickerson stated that they have been working with the experts to shorten the test. She pointed out that CTB has outlined ways to shorten the testing time.
- Mr. Hendry asked when CTB knew the test would be as long as it was. Ms. Nickerson responded that back in August they presented regarding the items and questions in the test as a result of the standards. Mr. Hendry stated that CTB never said how long the test would be. Dr. Walker said until the test is created and items selected it's impossible to know how long the test would have been.
- Ms. O'Brien asked how realistic it is to make these changes given the timeframe and Ms. Nickerson stated that it is realistic and she is confident it can be done.
- Upon inquiry by Mr. Elsener, Ms. Nickerson stated that the shortened test will be reliable and valid.
- Scott Smith, from Brownsburg Community Schools, had the podium at this time for public comment. He recommended cutting some of the pilot items. He stated that the experts agree with his recommendations made at the last meeting. Dr. Smith expressed concern about students taking different tests, so if there are bad items, everyone has the bad items together.
- Dr. Walker stated that part 2 does not have extra items, except five items, taking five minutes, for the vertical scale. She stated it has two items for fallout. She stated in part 1 we have double, but they are not identical because they are not aligned to the same standards. Splitting part 1 in half is the best way to reduce the time, she said.
- Dr. Roeber said that was not in their plan, their plan was that half of the items be administered and half saved for testing next fall. He said both plans could work but the key is that half is given to any one student.
- Char Walker, a concerned parent, spoke next. She said her daughter has an IEP, and so the test is 18 hours for her child. She stated that the test must be shortened. She also said her daughter is not a test taker, but she has talents not measured by these tests. She stated that her child will fail the test if there is not a big change. She asked what she is to tell children who have to endure the testing; Mr. Hendry responded to tell them the Board believes in them.
- Dr. Oliver said one of his children struggles as well, and recommended she work with school officials because it has helped his family.

- Debra Klinger, a parent from Carmel, was the last public speaker. She stated that her children are not outliers but that they now hate school. She stated there needs to be a change in testing and the high stakes attached to it. She said it distracts from the goal of student learning. She said it creates a goal that every student pass to keep the numbers up. She recommended ending the ISTEP and replacing it with something like the NWEA. Ms. Klinger also said don't worry about the waiver.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion and a second, the Board voted 11-0 to adjourn the meeting.