

To: Superintendent Michael Robey, Ed.D.

From: Eva N. Rosa

Cc: Board of Education

Date: November 1, 2012

RE: Bilingual Program Update

1. The Bilingual Parent Advisory Council met on October 10, 2012. During this meeting, the council reviewed parent suggestions for workshops for this school year. Our first parent workshop has been scheduled for November 7, 2012 on the topic of Home and School Connection: Getting Involved in your Child's Education.

2. GED classes through Triton College started on Monday, October 22nd. A number of our parents were able to take advantage of the program. Triton College continues to reach out to our parents for their participation in the program.

3. Response to Board of Education questions regarding the performance of English Language Learners on the ISAT.
Question #1: If District 89 English language learners (ELLs) are meeting the 2 target objectives for English language acquisition and progress toward English through the ACCESS test, why are they not making AYP through to ISAT?

Response:

Test Comparison: ACCESS and ISAT tests measure different objectives. The ACCESS test measures growth in the use of English in the different domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. ISAT on the other hand, measures academic achievement. Although the ACCESS test is in English, it measures growth by placing students under specific English levels using tiers A, B and C at each grade level clusters. ISAT is administered at each grade level using the same performance definition for all students.

Accommodations: While ISAT allows accommodations for ELLs, these are the same for all students regardless of English language level and grade level cluster. Also, the reading exemption is only for one year. After one year, non-English speaking students must take the reading portion of ISAT; a test which is designed for the average English speaker. Accommodations of time and setting do not accommodate English language levels. Accommodation of Simple English for math is still at a higher level for newcomers. The Spanish accommodation for the math portion of the test is a translation using higher levels of Spanish.

Language Barrier: Research shows that it takes a second language learner 5-7 years to acquire fluency in all domains in a second language. Contrary to research, second language learners in Illinois begin taking the ISAT at the Entering Stage –Level 1 (WIDA)-of their acquisition of English- not having yet reached the level of fluency in that second language that would render a higher level of performance to demonstrate academic achievement in English.

Question # 2: How are District 89 transitioned ELL students performing on the ISAT?

Response:

A significant number of transitioned students are no longer enrolled in District 89, but based on the 2011 ISAT data of students presently attending and who exited the bilingual program during school years 08-09 through 10-11 in grades 3-6, 75% had met or exceeded in reading and 93% met or exceeded in math. These students exited the bilingual program once they reached the state exiting criteria of 4.2 in literacy and 4.8 overall on the ACCESS test-Developing Stage (WIDA). The state established that a score of 4.2 in literacy and an overall of 4.8 on the ACCESS test will yield a score of Meeting or Exceeding on the ISAT. Our scores are consistent with the state data shown in Charts 1 and 2 of the State Statistical Report 2011 where it indicates transitioned or exited students scoring at higher levels than the ELL students. The data clearly shows that the state ELLs performed below 50% in reading and below 80% in math. This confirms that the wide gap between the performance of ELLs and non-ELL students is statewide. This data also indicates that once the students meet the established exiting criteria of 4.2 and 4.8, they have the potential and readiness in English to meet or exceed on the ISAT with some grades able to perform at above 90%.

Additionally, the status of meeting AMAO objectives one (1) and two (2) and not meeting objective three (3) for AYP appears to be the trend for most districts with a similar number of ELL enrollment. As shown in Chart 3, out of 167 ELL districts with similar ELL enrollment (Enrollment over 1,000 students), only 52 are making AYP with 115 not meeting that target.

Chart 1. Comparison of Performance of all ELL in Illinois on the ISAT-Reading in 2111

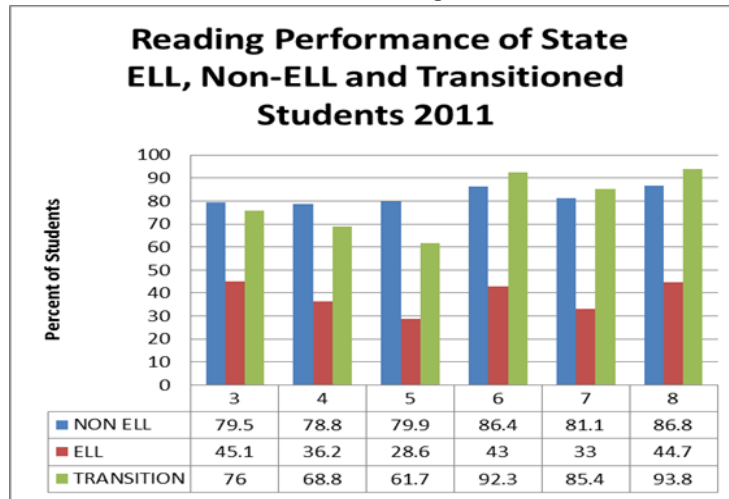


Chart 2. Comparison of Performance of all ELL in Illinois on the ISAT-Math in 2011

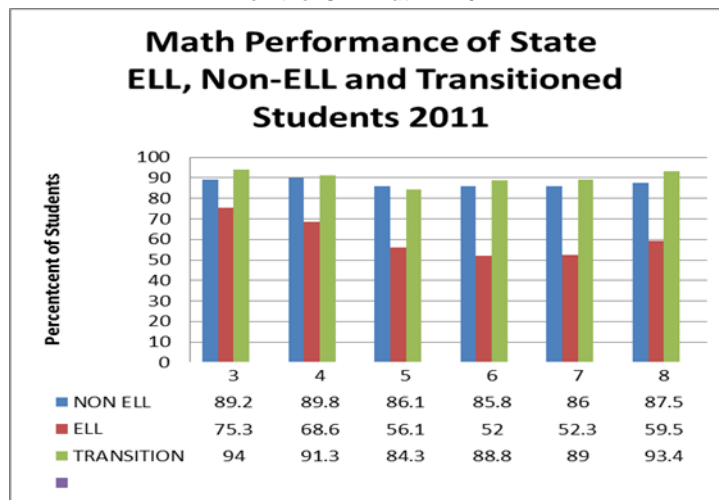


Chart 3. Comparison of ELL Districts in Illinois Meeting and not Meeting AMAO 1, 2 and 3 in Reading in 2011

