



Illinois State Board of Education

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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

February 27, 2015

David Vitale
President
Chicago Board of Education
1 North Dearborn Street, Suite 950
Chicago, IL 60602

Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools
42 West Madison Street
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mr. Vitale and Ms. Byrd-Bennett:

In response to your letter dated February 24, 2015 regarding Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing, we must be clear that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will be held to the requirement to test *all* students with the PARCC assessment with the exception of those students that are specifically exempted by state and federal law. As previously outlined in our June 2014 letter, CPS will be required to administer this test like every other district in the State of Illinois. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) simply does not have authority to permit school districts to violate state and federal law.

ISBE is required to administer the same assessment to all students within the State of Illinois. While we cannot prevent CPS from asking the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver, we will not be joining into that request because we believe that PARCC, which is fully aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, should be given to all Illinois students. We will lastly add that CPS requested the same “compromise” in June of 2014 and ISBE very clearly stated that testing 10% of students was contrary to law and was not good educational policy. To be raising this issue now when CPS should be preparing to administer PARCC to 100% of its eligible students is irresponsible to the students of your district.

Finally, we are putting CPS on notice that if the district fails to administer the PARCC assessment to 100% of its eligible students, ISBE is authorized to withhold all of CPS’:

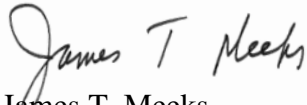
- Title I administrative and program funds;
- Title III administrative and program funds; and
- IDEA administrative and program funds.

In addition, if CPS fails to test students, it may be immediately placed on Probation status for state recognition purposes pursuant to 23 Ill Admin. Code 1.20. Once placed on

Probation, CPS is required to submit a corrective action plan in order to avoid being non-recognized. Any corrective action plan that does not include full testing of all required students during the 2014-2015 school year will not be approved by ISBE. Should CPS lose its recognition status, it will lose its General State Aid funds. CPS lays out some of the ramifications for the district and its students if ISBE withholds these funds if CPS chooses to violate the law. Furthermore, ISBE withholds its right to impose additional sanctions as it deems appropriate in the future. Please be clear that loss of these funds is entirely within the control of CPS. If CPS administers the PARCC assessment, like every other district within the state, it will not be sanctioned in this way.

We know that the Chicago Board of Education will do the right thing for the students of the district and will administer the PARCC assessment.

Sincerely,



James T. Meeks
Chairman



Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D
State Superintendent of Education