

**REPORT ON THE JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE
P-16 PARTNERSHIP**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: The three boards that oversee education and higher education in Illinois, the Board of Higher Education, the Community College Board, and the State Board of Education, joined together in March 1999 to form a working partnership. The boards and their staffs agreed to use the Joint Education Committee—the P-16 Partnership—as the mechanism to build meaningful collaboration and joint ownership in the development and implementation of educational policies and practices across the continuum of education in Illinois.

The Joint Education Committee and its agency leadership staff have met several times over the last year, evolving from three boards that primarily shared information, plans, and provided updates on previous actions to each other to a group that is actually reshaping original plans to include the suggestions of the other partners. Substantive collaboration, planning and development have led to an important milestone in Illinois education and higher education: a three-component high school exit examination which will include the Illinois standards-based Prairie State Achievement Examination, as well as the traditional ACT exam and ACT Work Keys.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**REPORT ON THE JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE
P-16 PARTNERSHIP**

The three boards that oversee education and higher education in Illinois, the Board of Higher Education, the Community College Board, and the State Board of Education, joined together in March 1999 to form a working partnership. This commitment was made to bridge historical separations that have kept these boards working somewhat in isolation. While all three boards have had the goals of improved teaching and learning, the strategies and tactics for achieving these important goals have created a patchwork of policies and priorities. These three board and their staffs agreed to use the Joint Education Committee--the P-16 Partnership--as the mechanism to build meaningful collaboration and joint ownership in the development and implementation of educational policies and practices across the continuum of education in Illinois. The Joint Education Committee consists of two members from each of the three education boards and the Illinois Workforce Investment Board, and it is chaired by the Deputy Governor for Education.

This Joint Education Committee and its agency leadership staff have met several times over the last year, evolving from three boards that primarily shared information, plans, and provided updates on previous actions to a group that is actually reshaping plans to include the suggestions of the other partners. Substantive collaboration, planning and development are leading to an important milestone in Illinois education: a three-component high school exit examination, which will include the Illinois standards-based Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) as well as the traditional ACT exam and ACT Work Keys.

The State Board of Education presented a redesigned Prairie State Achievement Examination which will generate three separate scores: the ACT examination with its English, reading, mathematics and science reasoning sections; two sections of the ACT Work Keys; and the Illinois standards-specific components of writing, science content, and social science. The Illinois-specific component will generate a PSAE score that will provide feedback to the curriculum for improved teaching and learning. The ACT components will generate a highly portable ACT score for college admissions, and an increasingly portable Work Keys score for workplace readiness.

The test proposal discussed at the March 6, 2000, meeting will require 2-2 ½ days for students to complete. There was some discussion about including two additional sections on Work Keys to test for seeking and finding information and team skills.

Several goals and policy issues affecting all boards were discussed. There was conversation about how the test would or could be used by higher education institutions: admission, course placement, or as a predictor of success and employment. The Committee agreed that over a period of years, substantial data and research would be needed to validate the potential effectiveness of various uses. Other concerns about pressure to set low cut scores to maintain high pass rates were expressed. The group concluded that the PSAE/ACT might

ultimately be the best test of its kind in the nation—one that can be useful to students, K-12 teachers, colleges and universities, and employers.

The agency leadership of the Board of Higher Education and the Community College Board has agreed to join with the State Board of Education to sponsor state and regional P-16 forums to share information on the Prairie State/ACT exam and identify additional concerns. In addition, the presidents and chancellors and the chief academic officers will be provided more information about the new test and other P-16 initiatives and have opportunities to offer suggestions and comments.

In other collaborative discussions, the education and higher education partners have agreed on the general level and timing for a more rigorous basic skills test for admission to teacher preparation programs. This new test will be based on the writing and mathematics skill standards in the Illinois Articulation Initiative's General Education Core Curriculum. More detailed elaboration on this test will follow as more colleagues and experts are consulted.