**IEA Awesome Podcast**

**Episode 11 – The Every Student Succeeds Act**

00:00 *Kelsey: Welcome to* the AWESOME *IEA* Podcast brought to you by the Illinois Education Association.

00:05 *Diana:* The podcast for curious well-informed association members.

00:09 *Kelsey:* I’m one of your hosts, Kelsey Harms, a Computer Specialist from the IEA Program Development Department

00:14 *Diana:* And I’m Diana Zaleski, one of your Instructional Resource and Professional Development Directors from IEA Teaching and Learning.

00:21 *Kelsey:* The goal of this podcast is to educate our members about important new educational policy initiatives in a brief and *hopefully* entertaining format.

00:29 *Diana:* Today we are going to discuss updates concerning our state education accountability system.

00:34 *Kelsey:* Before we get into the updates, let’s recap what we talked about during our last accountability podcast.

00:40 *Diana:* Great idea! As you might remember, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* or ESSA has replaced the *No Child Left Behind Act* as the new federal education accountability law. Each state is required to develop their own state plan that includes a new or updated accountability system. Illinois’ plan was approved by the federal government and will begin full implementation this school year.

01:04The accountability system is a set of policies and practices that the state, specifically the Illinois State Board of Education, uses to measure and hold schools and districts accountable for the achievement of all students. The accountability system has two parts. First, a process for measuring and communicating expectations for school performance. Second, the actions low performing schools must take to increase achievement, and the distribution of state resources to support those actions.

01:35 *Kelsey:* Diana, can you remind us, how will the state measure school performance and what ratings might they receive?

01:41 *Diana:* Yes, school performance will be measured using traditional academic indicators including math and English language arts proficiency, English language proficiency, and high school graduation rate. However, a new measure of student growth in math and ELA will also be included for grades 3-8. Science proficiency will also be included as an indicator next school year. These indicators are weighted to account for a majority or 75% of a school’s accountability rating.

02:11 *Kelsey:* Hey Diana, are there new school quality indicators?

02:14 *Diana:*  There definitely are, great question. New school quality indicators will also be collected, but these indicators will only account for 25% of a school’s accountability rating. These indicators include chronic absenteeism, school climate, college and career readiness, and 9th grade on-track. The state plans on adding an elementary and middle grade indicator, a Pre-K through second grade indicator, and a fine arts indicator next school year as well.

02:45 Based on the outcomes of the accountability system, schools will be placed in one of four tiers: exemplary schools, commendable schools, underperforming schools, and lowest-performing schools.

02:57 *Kelsey:* And, so how will these ratings affect schools?

03:01 *Diana:* Both underperforming and lowest-performing schools will be required to complete a needs assessment and develop local school improvement plans in collaboration with teachers and paraprofessionals to receive support from the state. The local school board approves plans for underperforming schools and the local school board and state approve plans for the lowest-performing schools. The most important thing for our members to know is that representation from their local association must be involved in these important conversations about school improvement.

03:35More information about the state plan can be found on the ISBE website. We’ll include a link on the podcast page to an executive summary of the state plan.

03:45 *Kelsey:* Thanks, Diana. Now that we have had a refresher on the accountability system, what new information can you share with us?

03:52 *Diana:* Great. We have a lot of new information to share about the state plan. So, for those of you that have read the state plan you might have noticed quite a few details were missing when it came to actually collecting and analyzing the accountability data. Therefore, ISBE convened a Technical Advisory Committee or TAC to help review these components of the plan and provide recommendations.

04:16The TAC worked within the constraints of the decisions already made within the state plan. One of these constraints was that school performance on each indicator would be scored using a 100-point scale. Therefore, the primary questions the TAC considered were how would the indicators be scored using a 100-point scale? And what statistical model would the state use to compute the student growth indicators?

04:43 *Kelsey:* So Diana, did the TAC come up with any recommendations?

04:47 *Diana:* Yes, they came up with a number of new recommendations. First, the TAC recommended a general framework for awarding points for each indicator using a 100-point scale. This framework requires the state to determine long term and interim goals for performance on each indicator. Based on these goals, 100 points would be awarded for schools who met or exceeded a state-defined long term or interim goal.

05:13 One to ninety-nine points would be awarded to schools who did not meet or exceed a state-defined long-term or interim goal but met a percent or proportion of a goal within a state-defined “effective range.”

05:28 The “effective range” is a range of points defined by a minimum and maximum that the state determines to be reasonable performance for that indicator. Schools who perform below a state-defined goal or the identified effective range would receive zero points. At this time the state has not yet identified those goals or effective ranges.

05:51 *Kelsey:* So let me see if I can recap. So, if you meet or exceed the goals, they get 100 points.

05:55 *Diana:* Yes.

05:56 *Kelsey:* If you fall somewhere between, meeting and not at all meeting, you’ll receive between 1 and 99 points.

06:02 *Diana:* Exactly.

06:02 *Kelsey:* But, if you’re not even close to reaching the goal, you get zero points.

06:05 *Diana:* That’s correct.

06:06 *Kelsey:* The goals have not been, not been created yet.

06:08 *Diana:* They have not been created yet. Yes, we are still waiting for the state to define those long term and interim goals and those effective ranges. So, stay tuned.

06:18 *Kelsey:* Do we have an expected date?

06:21 *Diana:* We do not. We do not. But, we will keep you updated. So, stay tuned to the podcast because we will certainly be back with additional ESSA updates as they define those goals.

06:34 *Diana:* Another thing that I want to note that the school climate indicator will be scored based on different levels of participation. However, the state will still define goals for this indicator. So, we will also post a link to a power point presentation that describes how each of the indicators might fit into this general framework on the podcast page.

06:58 *Kelsey:* And, Diana, how will these points be used to determine a final score?

07:03 *Diana:* Another important question. A single score will be produced for each school. This score is a weighted composite of scores for each indicator. The weights for each indicator have already been defined within the state plan. So, this composite score will be used to determine which tier schools will be placed in. The state is placing schools in tiers to determine which schools require additional state support.

07:30 *Kelsey:* So, that makes sense, but how will the state compute student growth as part of this composite score?

07:35 *Diana:* Great, so the TAC considered a number of statistical models before recommending the use of Student Growth Percentiles to compute the academic progress or student growth indicators. Many of our members may already be familiar with Student Growth Percentiles because they are already reported with the PARCC data and before that were reported with the ISAT data.

07:59 So, Student Growth Percentiles describe a student’s growth compared to other students with similar prior test scores. Student Growth Percentiles range from 1 to 99, where higher numbers represent higher growth and lower numbers represent lower growth. For example, a student with a growth percentile of 90 grew as much or more than 90% of her academic peers from one grade to the next. Only 10% of her academic peers grew more than she did.

08:32 So, the state will then calculate the mean or average growth for each school and transform that mean to the 100-point scale just as it will do with the other indicators. In addition, the state will also determine an “effective range” for the student growth indicators in order to award points as part of the composite score.

08:54 The state plan also indicates that schools will be awarded a letter grade based on their student growth indicators. However, the TAC as well as IEA have warned against this decision.

09:06 *Kelsey:* Are there any other recommendations from the TAC our members should be aware of?

09:10 *Diana:* Yes, the TAC recommends that the state continue to evaluate and refine their plan based on the accountability data collected. This means that if something is not working well the state should work with stakeholders like IEA to make appropriate changes to the plan.

09:28 *Kelsey:* Thanks for the update, Diana. Is there anything else our members need to be aware of?

09:34 *Diana:* Yes, definitely. Remember that if your school falls in either the underperforming or lowest-performing categories, teachers and paraprofessionals representing your local association must be involved in the development of your school improvement plan. The state will make schools aware of their initial designation this summer. We will post a link to a memo that describes the implementation timeline for this school year also on the podcast page.

10:03 Local associations should contact their school and district administration and inquire about their plans to collaborate. The IEA has an example letter local associations may adapt on our members only website. NEA has also developed some very helpful documents to guide local discussions about ESSA and school improvement. We will also post links to these NEA resources on the podcast page.

10:29 *Kelsey:* Thanks again, Diana. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback, please check out the contact section on the Podcast page on the IEA Website.

10:37 *Diana:* Special thanks to Mark for the audio help, Amanda for the transcription, and Dan for the website. As always, thanks so much for being a member, and thanks for joining us!

[www.isbe.net/essa](http://www.isbe.net/essa)

<http://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/>

[www.nea.org/home/gpsindicators.html](http://www.nea.org/home/gpsindicators.html)

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Illinois_ESSA_Plan_Executive_Summary.pdf>

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents_Board_Meetings/2018TAC%20RECOMMENDATIONSFINAL61118.pdf>

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Support-and-Accountability-Implementation-Timelines.pdf>