February 28, 2014

Dear Principal:

We are offering the following guidance to principals on the administration of the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) in schools where parents have opted out of the test and/or teachers refuse to administer the test despite our directives. The overwhelming majority of students have not been opted out of the test and we must be sure that we create a fair testing environment without distractions or disruption for those students. But, we also must ensure that students whose parents have opted out are engaged in productive and educationally appropriate activities during testing.

We recommend the following protocols before and during test administration:

(1) For students who will be tested:

a. In advance of testing day, schools should ensure that there is at least one appropriately licensed test administrator for every classroom in which students will be tested. Please refer to your Test Administrator Manual or the ISAT IAA Administration Overview slides available here: https://sites.google.com/a/cps.edu/kc/assessment/isat

b. We must plan for the event that some teachers will be insubordinate and refuse to administer the test. If the teacher regularly assigned to the classroom has refused that assignment, another teacher or an administrator should be assigned to administer the test. The teacher who has refused the assignment should be given the option of going home without pay on all testing days or supervising the students who are not taking the test in silent reading activities. If there are special concerns about a teacher’s conduct, principals should immediately consult with their Talent Generalist at 773-535-2800.

c. The test administrator should administer the test in accordance with ISBE protocols (note that in classes with 35 or more students an additional proctor is required under those protocols).

(2) For students whose parents have opted them out of the test:

a. In advance of the testing days, the school should gather educationally appropriate independent reading level materials for these students or ask that students bring their own.

b. On test days, schools should assign students who have opted out to other classrooms, the library or other appropriate space.
c. Per ISBE guidance, test booklets must be distributed to students and the testing directions read to students.

d. When students decline to take the test, they should be assigned silent reading using their independent reading level materials. Testing materials should be collected from students who indicate they are done.

e. Schools should ensure that there is at least one teacher or other appropriate staff member assigned to supervise these students. Schools should anticipate that teachers who have refused to administer the test to their own classes may also refuse to distribute the test booklets and read the directions to students who have opted out. When giving teachers that option, schools should advise them of this responsibility and have sufficient alternative staff available to distribute textbooks and read the testing instructions to them if necessary.

For special concerns regarding test administration, please consult with your Network Office staff.

Sincerely,

Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public School