



News Release

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CPS Proposing Minor Changes to High School Rating Method After Vendor Error

SQRP Steering Committee Recommends Adjustments

After ACT Provides Test That Was Previously Administered and Available Online

In order to maintain an accurate measure of school quality, Chicago Public Schools CEO Forrest Claypool and Chief Education Office Janice K. Jackson are proposing minor modifications to the School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) after high school students took tests that were available online and also sold to CPS and other school districts in previous years. As a result, the Board of Education will consider a resolution to amend the SQRP measures and weights used to calculate 2015 ratings.

“Principals, teachers and students are working hard to show their progress – and hard work should pay off,” said CPS Chief Education Officer Janice K. Jackson. “Because ACT provided old tests that tainted the testing process, we are proposing a minor adjustment that removes these scores while still maintaining a fair assessment that our principals, teachers, students and parents can rely on.”

ACT Inc. was supposed to provide the district with new tests for instructional purposes, teacher and principal evaluations and school ratings. Instead, ACT sold two old tests that had different form numbers. As a result, CPS is withholding payment of \$576,000 for the assessments.

CPS officials determined that EXPLORE and PLAN tests given to 9th and 10th grade students in the 2014-15 school year were old assessments, after a teacher reported similarities between the 2015 test and other tests available online. No students or staff are accused of wrongdoing, but students who practiced with the publicly available test would have gained an unfair advantage.

To provide families and educators with the most accurate and comprehensive assessments of schools, while CPS consulted with its SQRP Steering Committee – comprised of principals and other education leaders from across the city– to determine the fairest way to rank schools while removing potentially inflated scores. Pending Board approval, CPS plans minor adjustments to its rating policy for high schools aligned with its commitment to providing families and educators with the most accurate and comprehensive assessments of schools, without penalizing students, teachers and school leaders who practiced the exam with the publicly available test.

SQRP scores would have factored growth for all high school grades at 20 percent of the SQRP score, with growth of priority groups accounting for an additional 10 percent. Instead, the growth measured from the Spring 2014 PLAN tests taken by sophomores to when those same students took the ACT as 11th graders will metrics will be reduced to 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Students' EXPLORE and PLAN scores from 2014-15 would have been one of multiple measures used to calculate this year's SQRP ratings for schools. CPS is eliminating test results for growth from eighth to ninth grade and from ninth to tenth grade, but will still count growth from tenth to eleventh grade because the eleventh grade ACT test was not compromised.

The adjustments to the SQRP formula are as follows, with the weighting distributed among other widely accepted metrics for performance:

Metric	Weight - Previous	Weight - Updated
Student Growth on EPAS	20%	10%
Growth of Priority Groups on EPAS	10%	5%
Student Attainment on EPAS	10%	10%
Student Attendance	10%	12.50%
Freshmen On-Track Rate	10%	12.50%
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	10%	12.50%
Early College/Career Credentials	5%	6.25%
1-Year Dropout Rate	5%	6.25%
College Enrollment	5%	6.25%
College Persistence	5%	6.25%
5 Essentials Survey	5%	6.25%
Data Quality	5%	6.25%

Since the questionable tests only impact high school ratings, elementary school weightings will remain the same for the 2014-15 calculations. As a result of these testing irregularities, CPS will also propose changes in its evaluations of high school principals and teachers.

Principal evaluations will reflect the loss of reliable test data for these two grades. Teachers, whose evaluations also typically incorporate test scores, will be evaluated using classroom observations and one student performance task. Performance tasks are activity-based, teacher-designed and teacher-graded assessments intended to measure subject-specific growth over the course of the year.

In 2014-15, as in years past, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students took the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT tests, respectively. These tests are collectively known as EPAS. Last year, eleventh graders took the ACT without incident.

Both EXPLORE and PLAN have been discontinued, and CPS will no longer use their scores after this year. In the coming months, CPS will review the SQRP modifications, get feedback from principals and the SQRP Steering Committee and propose next steps for the SQRP rating.