

DuPage County Assessment Advisory Committee
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ILLINOIS TRANSITION TO COMMON CORE STANDARDS New ISAT Cut Scores – 2012 ISAT Results Re-scored

February 7, 2013

Illinois State Board of Education has released rescored 2012 ISAT results to align with new performance levels under the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. The new performance levels are intended to provide more accurate information about students' progress toward success after high school graduation. The scores were released to school districts today and are expected to be available to the public on Monday.

The higher expectations of the new ISAT cut scores will cause a downward shift in the number of students who are meeting or exceeding standards. This drop is a result of raising expectations, not a reflection of student or teacher performance.

Background

On June 24, 2010 the Illinois State Board of Education adopted rigorous new Learning Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The goal of the new standards is to increase Illinois students' preparation for success in college and the workplace in a competitive, global economy.

Schools are now implementing the more rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the state is preparing to replace the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in Math and English/Language Arts with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. This transition includes an increase in the performance expectations on the ISAT for elementary and middle schools students.

New ISAT Cut Scores

Twenty percent of the 2013 ISAT questions will be based on the Common Core State Standards. The inclusion of the CCSS begins the transition to the PARCC Assessments. The ISAT will be administered for the final time in 2014 and PARCC Assessments will begin in the 2014-2015 school year.

The ISBE has developed new cut scores to better align with college and career readiness goals. The cut scores increase the standard for students to meet or exceed expectations on the state tests. As a result of these higher expectations, we expect to see fewer students in the meets or exceeds category.

As mentioned above, the ISBE has rescored the 2012 ISAT results based on the new cut scores to provide districts with predicted scores based on the new performance levels. The

scores were released to school districts today and ISBE has indicated that they should be available to the public on February 11.

The comparison information will allow districts, schools and families to determine where their students stand in college and career readiness performance levels. After reviewing the data, educators and families will have better information and can provide additional supports for their students if needed. Knowing how our students perform under the higher standards and are making progress toward achievement of standards will better position them to be competitive in a global marketplace.

What are Educational Standards?

Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

Why Do We Need Educational Standards?

We need standards to ensure that all students are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Illinois is among 45 states that have formally adopted the Common Core State Standards for college and career readiness. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students.

Rationale for the Illinois Changes

The current performance expectations for our grade 3-8 students are too low and do not align to the PSAE given to 11th grade students, which provides a good indicator of college and career readiness. While there will be no change to the PSAE performance levels, we need to raise our expectations as we move forward with implementation of the PARCC assessments to set appropriate benchmarks that ensure students are on track for successful entry into college and careers.

The current Illinois State Standards were adopted in 1997. Since that time the world has changed significantly causing our expectations for what students must know and be able to demonstrate to be more rigorous. The new standards aim to provide clear, consistent academic benchmarks with “fewer, clearer and higher” academic standards for essential learning and skills. The CCSS were developed while considering the standards of top performing countries and the strengths of current state standards.

The CCSS provide benchmarks for academic progress (skills and knowledge) that students should have at the conclusion of each grade level. This will allow teachers to establish the best approach to help their students meet those standards. Students and parents will clearly understand the knowledge students are expected to attain each year.

A world-class education is a necessity as our students need to compete with peers within the state, across the country and around the world for the jobs of tomorrow.

How are the Common Core State Standards Different?

The standards have been developed by a national team of parents, teachers, school administrators, experts and state leaders and have been informed by the best available evidence and the highest standards across the country and globe. These standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to go to college or enter the workforce and that parents, teachers and students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The CCSS are benchmarked to international standards to guarantee that our students are competitive in the dynamic global marketplace.

An Eye to the Future

The new performance expectations pave the way for the PARCC assessments to replace the ISAT.

- PARCC assessments are scheduled for the 2014-2015 school year and will include a computer-based assessment that will provide more timely results.
- Unlike the ISAT, which is given once a year, the PARCC assessment will be administered more than once during the school year. Therefore, teachers will receive real-time information about how well their students are learning.
- These assessments will provide teachers, parents and students a clearer, more detailed picture of students' strengths and areas that need improvement. Educators and parents will be able to tailor their attention to a student's individual needs.
- The PARCC assessments also give ISBE the opportunity to compare Illinois students' progress on a national scale and ensure that we are keeping pace with the goal of college and career readiness.

To prepare for these changes, the DuPage ROE:

- Distributes weekly Common Core updates to superintendents, principals and curriculum directors
- Is providing training on effective teaching strategies for English/Language arts and math
- Is creating math assessments for local district use
- Is assisting districts in the criteria development to choose district-wide assessments

"This shift to Common Core is an exciting endeavor into increased academic rigor," said Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, DuPage Regional Superintendent of Schools. "We have been working to ensure that we are properly preparing our students for college and the workforce. The Common Core is standardizing this process and will lead to better prepared students."

The DuPage Assessment Advisory Committee is a group of DuPage educational leaders who are sharing resources and best practices to provide the best possible transition to these new standards for all students of our county.