
Standard Setting for Alternate Social Studies Assessments and MSAA Assessments

The Background:

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(2), it is the duty of the State Board of Education to “set rules and policies for . . . evaluating individual student progress and achievement, evaluating individual teachers, and measuring the educational achievement of individual schools.”

The Department of Education administered updated alternate social studies summative assessments, which are part of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), in 2021-22. These assessments include alternate assessments in grades 6-8 social studies. In order to complete the reporting of test scores for these assessments, it is necessary for the State Board to adopt cut scores that will be used to assign students to performance levels on the assessments. The cut scores recommended by the Department are based on the recommendations of Tennessee educator committees who participated in a content-based standard setting process.

Standard setting is a qualitative review of content standards with panels of educators who are content-area experts. Each panel completes three rounds of ratings and a process of vertical articulation to ensure alignment, consistency, and reasonableness across grade levels. During the weeks of May 2-4, 2022 and June 27-29, 2022, panels of Tennessee educators convened to review performance level descriptors for the assessments, and then to review student profiles against content descriptions of the performance levels to recommend cut scores for these assessments.

In addition to the TCAP-alternate social studies assessments, the department is also presenting cut score recommendations for alternate mathematics and English Language Arts exams that are administered as a part of the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) consortium in grades 3-8 and grade 11 for high school. Tennessee is one of 12 states and territories who make up the MSAA consortium. As a governing state, Tennessee has participated in the development, review, and standard setting process of the MSAA math and ELA exams. The following cut scores have been approved and put in place by the MSAA consortium for reporting results on the MSAA exams and should be reviewed and approved by the State Board in order to meet the expectations of both federal and state law for the adoption of academic performance standards.

The attached documents provide the Department-recommended cut scores resulting from these processes.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

T.C.A. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule, or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends approval of this item on first final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.