

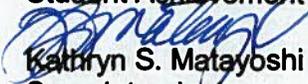


STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

July 2, 2013

TO: The Honorable Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Chairperson
Student Achievement Committee

FROM: 
Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Discussion/Recommendation for Board Action on Setting Cut Scores and Proficiency Levels for the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment**

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Education requests that the Student Achievement Committee recommend approval to the full Board of Education of the cut scores and proficiency levels for the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment.

2. RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon approval by the Board of Education.

3. RECOMMENDED COMPLIANCE DATE (if different from the effective date)

Upon approval by the Board of Education.

4. DISCUSSION

a. **Conditions leading to the recommendation**

Under provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), Hawaii administers the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment (HSA-Alt) for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in a school curriculum that includes academic instruction as well as functional life skills.

The HSA-Alt consists of a series of performance tasks that allow students to respond in a variety of ways, such as pointing and eye gazing to the correct response; selecting objects or pictures or picture symbols that represent the correct answer; or reading letters, words, or sentences to complete a task. The tasks are linked to the state academic content standards through the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment extensions.

Students in grades 3–8 and 10 are administered the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment in Reading and the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment Mathematics, and students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment in Science.

b. Previous action of the Board on the same or similar matter

The Board previously approved the Department's recommended proficiency level cut scores in 2002 for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. In September 2005, the Board approved the proficiency level cut scores for grades 4, 6, and 7. These cut scores were for a Hawaii State Assessment based on Hawaii Content and Performance Standards II (HCPS II).

In April 2007, the Board of Education approved the cut scores and proficiency levels for the new Hawaii State Assessment based on the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III.

In March 2008, the Board of Education approved the Hawaii State Science Assessment cut scores and setting performance standards for levels I, II and III for students in grades 5, 7, and 11.

In September 2010, the Board of Education approved the Online Hawaii State Reading and Mathematics Assessment cut scores and performance levels for grades 3 – 8 and 10, and the Online Hawaii State Science Assessment cut scores and proficiency levels for grades 4, 8 and 10.

c. Other policies affected

No other Board policies are affected.

d. Arguments in support of the recommendation

In 2012 and 2013, Hawaii developed a new alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The tasks and items are aligned with the:

- Common Core State Standards and the and the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III (HCPS III) in Reading and Math; and
- Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III (HCPS III) in Science.

The transition from the old portfolio-based test to a new performance-based test required that new performance standards be developed.

The Department is recommending three performance standards (cut scores) to differentiate four performance levels:

Performance Standards	Performance Levels
	Well-Below Proficiency
Approaches Proficiency	Approaches Proficiency
Meets Proficiency	Meets Proficiency
Exceeds Proficiency	Exceeds Proficiency

The Board is requested to approve the following cut scores:

HSA-Alt Reading

Grade	Approaches Proficiency	Meets Proficiency	Exceeds Proficiency
3-5	272	288	319
6-8	282	300	331
10	299	314	341

HSA-Alt Mathematics

Grade	Approaches Proficiency	Meets Proficiency	Exceeds Proficiency
3-5	263	291	331
6-8	268	300	344
10	279	322	362

HSA-Alt Science

Grade	Approaches Proficiency	Meets Proficiency	Exceeds Proficiency
4	278	300	336
8	275	300	338
10	276	300	327

Standard setting is a systematic process by which trained participants use their knowledge of academic content standards, test items, and student performance to recommend the level of proficiency on the test necessary to achieve each performance standard.

Standard Setting Workshop Panel	Panel			
	Frequency	Reading	Math	Science
TOTAL	74	26	24	24
Gender				
Female	61	24	14	23
Male	13	2	10	1
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	37	12	13	12
Caucasian	24	6	8	10
Pacific Islander	5	3	1	1
Other	8	5	2	1

Position				
Special Education	29	12	7	10
Regular Teacher	30	8	12	10
Community/business	11	4	3	4
Parent	4	2	2	0

The Department of Education used the *item-descriptor matching method* of standard setting (see Cizek & Bunch, 2007; Ferrara, Perie, & Johnson, 2003).

In the standard setting workshop for HSA-Alt, panelists reviewed the response demands of each item (i.e., content area knowledge and skills required to respond to items) and match those demands to the knowledge and skill descriptions in the Performance Level Descriptors. Panelists determined (a) which Performance Level Descriptors most closely matches the response demands of each item, or (b) indicated that the item is in the threshold region between two adjacent performance levels.

Panelists matched items to a Performance Level Descriptor only when they felt that the match was clear; otherwise, they indicated that the item was in the threshold region between adjacent levels. Each panelist identified a cut score in each threshold.

Developing a clear and meaningful description of each performance level was central to both establishing reliable performance standards and effectively communicating assessment results to parents, educators, and other stakeholders. AIR test development and score reporting staff collaborated to draft PLDs, which was then submitted to HDOE for review and subsequent approval. All PLDs were reviewed for sensitivity and fairness and were professionally edited.

Standard-setting panelists were initially provided with the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment extensions and PLDs. Panelists reviewed these documents to become familiar with the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment extensions and what students are specifically expected to know and be able to do at each level of performance.

The proposed cut scores were moderated to ensure their vertical articulation across grade bands. A key feature of the standard-setting workshop was to balance rigorous, defensible procedures and managing costs.

AIR's and Hawaii's staff provided training and guidance on content matters (e.g., Hawaii's grade level extensions and benchmarks, the performance level descriptors).

e. Arguments against the recommendation

Other methods of determining cut scores and proficiency levels are available. Individuals may suggest the adoption of alternate methods instead of the method recommended by the American Institutes for Research.

Additionally, individuals may argue that students who are well below proficiency may feel stigmatized. Teachers and schools with large proportions of failing students may feel threatened rather than knowing they will receive additional help.

f. Findings and conclusion of the Board committee

Not applicable.

g. Other agencies or departments of the State of Hawaii involved in the action

None.

h. Possible reaction of the public, professional organizations, unions, DOE staff and/or others to the recommendations.

The reaction from various stakeholders may be mixed, as some individuals may believe that the cut scores are too high for this population of students.

Other reactions may be positive in that setting the cut scores will identify that certain schools, curricular areas, and demographic groups are in more need of improvement and support.

i. Educational implications

The primary reason to teach academic content to students who also require instruction in functional and life skills is to promote equal opportunity to receive the same educational opportunities that all students receive. Educators are finding that once this opportunity is provided, many students gain useful skills that benefit them now and in the future.

Students may not master all of the grade-level content, but they may master some content for their grade level. The HSA-Alt provides a way for them to demonstrate this mastery. There are also laws that require all students to participate in academic instruction and assessment. Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997 and IDEA 2004) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), require that states provide an alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities that is linked to grade-level academic content standards. The state Education Accountability Act of 1988 (EAA) specifies that all students must be included in state accountability systems.

j. Personnel implications

Not applicable.

k. Facilities implications

Not applicable.

l. Financial implications

Not applicable.

5. OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS

None.