

From: [Tim Doran](#)
To: [Commissioner, DEED \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Assessment Cut Scores Testimony
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State School Board Members-

I urge you to either postpone action on setting the new Assessment Cut Scores until a full item analysis of the 2022 AK Star is completed or mandate that such an item analysis be undertaken in short order. Given the impact of the recommended Cut Scores upon the test proficiency levels it is a disservice to students, educators and schools without considering how and why students responded to each question. The projected impact data shows low proficiency rates in both the Language Arts and Math portions of AK Star. Indeed the 8th grade math proficiency indicates less than 15% proficiency which begs the question of why 85% of students statewide chose the "wrong" answer. Is it an issue of misalignment in curriculum (standards), instruction, and/or assessment (test scores, cut scores, test format, other factors)?

It is notable that from 2005-2014 State Proficiency rates were approximately 70-80%, but that in 2015 State Proficiency rates dropped to 30-40% and have stayed similar since then. What changed in 2015? The test format for one shifted from paper to computer, yet the impact of this has not been looked at. Additionally, none of the tests administered since 2015 have undergone an analysis to review how students responded to the questions nor for technical issues (e.g. typos, distractors, missing answers). Both the SBAs and the HSGQE underwent such a review, including an adjustment in cut scores, at least once.

As educators and public officials it behooves us to make certain that the data points are accurate portrayals of student proficiency and school performance. As it stands a single data point (AK Star scores) determines up to 75% of a school's Summary Success Score. Additionally, this single data point is the major reference for the public and politicians perception as to whether public education is deemed successful or not. We ought to have that data point correct!

Again, I urge you to take the steps to ensure that we are accurately capturing a snapshot of what students know and can do. The ripple effect of gaining an important insight into how we are doing as schools is significant. Accountability is necessary and important. However, we owe it to our students, educators, schools and communities to get it right. I am concerned that this is a continuation of loss in credibility on the part of parents and students for the assessment system.

Please be an advocate for students, even in the face of checking off a box for regulatory compliance.

Thank you for your time and service.

-Tim Doran
(Alaskan Educator for 40+ years)

