

August 7, 2014

TO: Administrators

FROM: Margie Vandeven, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services

As many of you are aware, the state has seen an overall decline in Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test scores this year, particularly in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics grades 3 and 4.

Test validity and reliability

Upon receipt of the data, the Department, the testing vendor (CTB/ McGraw-Hill) and a contracted third party conducted independent reviews of the assessments and the data for the 2013-2014 school year. No technical reason for the drop in scores was found.

- The 2014 Test Characteristic Curves (TCC) show that the tests are of the same level of difficulty than previous forms.
- The calibration and equating output is within industry standards.
- No psychometric errors were found.

If not validity and reliability, then what?

While we continue to search for a cause to the decline in scores, there does not appear to be one consistent reason; rather, there appears to be a host of reasons working together that contribute. Some of these circumstances look different across the state and from district to district. Consider the following:

- Missouri had a change in test form for the first time since 2010.
 - Statewide testing procedures typically require a test form change each year. Because of budget constraints, Missouri used the same test form for four straight years.
 - It is not uncommon to see score declines occur after the same form has been in place for a number of years.
- Administration conditions of the test this year varied from previous years.
 - Many schools missed a significant number of snow days, resulting in a loss of instructional time and disruptions to the instructional process.
 - Public unrest regarding the Missouri Learning Standards (Common Core State Standards) created a high degree of uncertainty among teachers and administrators.
- This is a transition year for many schools in terms of teaching the Missouri Learning Standards versus the earlier Grade Level Expectations.

Results

A review of 558 district and charter local education agency preliminary MAP Performance Index (MPI) calculations for ELA and math shows mixed results.

- 318 show an increase in one or both subjects (128 in both subjects, 116 math only, 74 ELA only)
- 430 show a decrease in one or both subjects (240 in both subjects, 116 ELA only, 74 math only)

Cut scores

The MAP scale score cuts used for the Achievement Level data for the grade-level assessments have not changed for English language arts and mathematics since 2006.

No changes have been made to the Annual Performance Report Projected Status Targets since the scoring guide's approval. The Performance Rubrics have been updated to reflect the 2014 Status Targets. See Appendix A, pages 68-75, of *The Comprehensive Guide to the Missouri School Improvement Program*.

Updates included in the 2014 *Comprehensive Guide to the Missouri School Improvement Program*.

The Comprehensive Guide to the Missouri School Improvement Program was updated in July 2014 to include the following:

- The cover was modified to include the 2014 revision.
- On page 2, the following sentence was deleted: "The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education expresses its appreciation to all who contributed to the process."
- Commas were added to pages 9, 10, 32, and 42 for consistency.
- Student was changed to he/she on page 13 under Map-Alternate.
- MSIP 5 Performance Standard 3: Statement was added to notes section: Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, all juniors will participate in the statewide administration of the ACT®. For additional information see the 5/29/14 Administrative Memo.
- The Performance Rubrics for Standards 1-3, pages 61-65, were updated to reflect the 2014 APR Status Targets. See Appendix A, pages 68-75.
- Notes were modified:
 - Information was included about the revised assessment plan
 - Standard 5-year graduation rate information modified to include 7-year rate
- Appendix D was modified to include an example of the calculation of grades for AP, IB, Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment.
- All links were updated.

Communication

State results will be shared with the State Board of Education on Tuesday, August 12. The Department will be sharing talking points with you prior to the release of the final Annual Performance Reports on August 29. We welcome your insight on this issue.

Please know that – whatever the cause – a one-year dip in scores after nearly a decade of improvement does not alter the confidence we have in our teachers and leaders across our state. We have great faith in the public educators in our schools and appreciate the work you do every day to serve Missouri's students.