

Missouri Standard Setting Options

As Missouri transitions from high school tests given at specific grades to more focused, end-of-course (EOC) exams, Missouri will still have to meet the participation requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The transition to the new high school tests includes a stand-alone field test administration this spring (spring 2008). The field test will include students currently enrolled in the content areas to be assessed (i.e., Algebra, Biology, and/or English II). Because of the transition between programs, some of these students will not take either the current high school grade test or the operational end-of-course exam in the content area to be field tested. In other words, these students will not be administered an NCLB, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) test during their high school career and thus will not meet the participation requirements of NCLB.

Presented below are several options DESE is considering so the state can maintain compliance with NCLB. Note that each option essentially proposes that standards be set based upon the spring 2008 field test data. The first option sets standards based on field test score distributional information, and includes a standard setting workshop held in 2009 after the first operational administration of the new tests. The second option proposes a standard setting workshop to be held in spring 2008 after the stand-alone field test administration. This option would also include an “adjustment” to spring 2009 scores from the first operational administration. Finally, a third option combines key features of the first two options. In addition to a description of each option, some *Pros* and *Cons* for each option are presented.

Option 1

The first option sets standards based upon student score distributional information from the spring 2008 field test. In the past, achievement levels for each MAP grade level/content area have been determined in accordance with Missouri’s Senate Bill 1080, which requires the State Board of Education to align the performance standards of the MAP such that the standards meet, but do not exceed the performance standards of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) exam. Given Senate Bill 1080, DESE could pre-determine the percentage of students that should be Proficient and above, and apply those percentages to determine the Proficient cut score on each EOC assessment. The cut scores could then be applied to the student data to determine each student’s proficiency status. These scores would never be reported back to students, but rather would be available to DESE if the federal government requires that they be used for AYP determinations.

In addition, with Option 1, a standard setting workshop would be held following the first operational administration in spring 2009. The standard setting would use a well known standard setting method (e.g., Bookmark) with all the required steps. The standard setting would use impact data from the spring 2009 operational administration to help maintain compliance with Senate Bill 1080.

Pros

- Limited use of field test data. Data used only to meet the requirements of NCLB.
- Standard setting focused on first operational administration of the new EOC tests.
- Allows for continuity in distributions between the years.
- Compliant with Senate Bill 1080.
- Fewer changes in scope from the original MO EOC proposal.

Cons

- Proficiency level(s) for 2008 determined only by score distributions.
- Would not know very much about what students need to know and how highly they have to perform to achieve at the Proficient level.
- Standard setting panelists (2009) may be frustrated if their contributions take a back seat to score distributions in setting the cuts.

Option 2

The second option proposes a standard setting workshop to be held in 2008 after the stand-alone field test administration. The standard setting would use a fairly strict application of the Angoff method, to avoid undue influence from potentially problematic field test results. In addition to setting cut scores, an important result of the standard setting workshop would be to thoroughly understand what students need to know and how highly they have to perform to achieve each performance level. Strategies for building or creating a proxy to impact data based upon field test results might still be considered – a uniquely modified Angoff procedure. The usefulness of such data may be questionable, though, given current instructional practices, student motivation, and the inclusion of *all* students taking the course (i.e., not just those expected to pass the course, as planned for the operational tests). Following the spring 2009 operational administration, a standards validation would be conducted. This would allow the state to review the cuts that were set by the Angoff procedure with impact data available from the first operational administration. Some adjustments in the cut scores might result.

Pros

- Would know more about what students need to know and how highly they have to perform to achieve each performance level.
- The cut scores would have the same (or similar) meaning for the 2008 students as they would for 2009 and beyond.
- Operational data would be available to examine impact and to make adjustments during a standards validation process.

Cons

- Greater use of field test data to meet the requirements of NCLB.
- Limited or no use of impact data during the initial standard setting.

Option 3

Option 3 combines key features of the first two options. With this option, standards would be set based upon student score distributional information from the spring 2008 field test (similar to Option 1). The cut scores could then be applied to the student data to determine each student's proficiency status. These scores would never be reported back to students, but rather would be available to DESE if the federal government requires that they be used for AYP determinations.

Additionally, a Bookmark or Angoff "type" approach, focusing on the items that bracket the cut scores, could be used to gain a more thorough understanding of what students need to know and how highly they have to perform to achieve each performance level. Strategies for building or creating a proxy to impact data based upon field test results could also be considered.

Following the spring 2009 operational administration, a standards validation would be conducted (similar to Option 2). This would allow the state to review the cuts that were set distributionally in 2008 with impact data available from the first operational administration. Some adjustments in the cut scores might result to maintain consistency with the 2008 standards and compliance with Senate Bill 1080.

Pros

- Would know more about what students need to know and how highly they have to perform to achieve each performance level.
- Allows for continuity in proficiency standards distributions between years.
- Compliant with Senate Bill 1080, should it apply.

Cons

- Greater use of field test data to meet the requirements of NCLB.
- Limited use of impact data during standard setting.