

TO: Indiana State Board of Education
FROM: Board Staff; DOE Staff
DATE: November 16, 2016
RE: Approval to Adjust Weights of Domains in the Absence of Growth for Schools with Grades 9 through 12 by an Expedited A-F Appeals Process

MEMORANDUM

Joint Staff Recommendation: If the Board deems it appropriate to take action, permit the Department of Education to Adjust the Weightings of the Performance and Multiple Measures Domains in the Absence of the Growth Domain

Issue

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify the State Board of Education ("Board") of an issue regarding schools with grades 9 through 12 that may arise when the 2015-2016 A-F grades are calculated by the Department of Education ("DOE").

Indiana Code 20-31-8-4 explains that the Board "shall place each school in a category or designation of school performance once annually based on the department's findings from the assessment of performance and academic growth" factors set forth under Indiana law. Pursuant to 511 IAC 6.2-10-5, growth points are calculated for grades 4 through 8 and 10. However, no growth points exist for grade 10 for 2015-2016 A-F grades. This is due to the Board-approved change in assessments at the grade 10 level between the 2014 and 2015 school years to a more rigorous assessment covering college- and career-ready standards, and the fact that growth for grade 10 is calculated based on a comparison of the student's performance in grade 8 versus grade 10. Furthermore, 511 IAC 6.2-10-3(d) identifies the weights of the remaining domains, in the absence of the growth domain, as 40% performance and 60% multiple measures.

The culmination of the lack of growth as well as the introduction of a new assessment based on more rigorous college- and career-ready standards creates a situation in which the A-F grades assigned to schools with grades 9-12, in the absence of growth, may not accurately reflect the school's academic progress.

Proposed Solution

To ensure that the A-F grades applied to schools with grades 9-12 accurately reflect the progress of these schools, staffs recommend allowing IDOE to move the weight awarded to the growth domain in a different manner than outlined in the administrative rule when calculating A-F grades for the 2015-2016 school year. Pursuant to 511 IAC 6.2-10-3(b), A-F grades are calculated based on the weighted averages of the performance domain, growth

domain, and multiple measures domain. Specifically, 511 IAC 6.2-10-3(d) requires the following weights to apply: 60% multiple measures domain, 20% performance domain, and 20% growth domain. In the absence of the growth domain, the rule moves the 20% to the performance domain, resulting in the performance domain comprising 40% of the overall grade and the multiple measures domain comprising 60% of the overall grade.

Staffs recommend that the Board permit the DOE to move the 20% weight awarded to the growth domain to the multiple measures domain and the performance domain. This would result in the performance domain being weighted at 25% of the overall A-F grade for schools with grades 9-12, and the multiple measures domain being weighted at 75% of the overall A-F grade for schools with grades 9-12, with the additional 15% being equally distributed between the graduation rate indicator and the college- and career-readiness achievement rate indicator.

Per 511 IAC 6.2-10-11, this recommendation is made based on other significant issues that prevent the data from providing an “accurate picture of school improvement and performance.”

If this memorandum is approved by the Board, it will serve as the Board's approval to permit the DOE to move the weighting assigned to the growth domain to both the multiple measures domain and the performance domain for grades 9-12 only when calculating A-F grades for the 2015-2016 school year. If schools with grades 9-12 wish to appeal any other issue relating to the 2015-2016 A-F grades, they must follow the normal appeals procedures.

Staffs jointly recommend that schools with grades 9-12 be promptly notified of this issue. This notification will explain the adjusted weights and the rationale for this adjustment.

Joint Recommendations on Undetermined Scores for Calculator Use in 2015-2016
ISTEP and Undetermined Scores for ISTAR

Joint Recommendation: Permit the Department of Education to Include Students with “Undetermined” Scores as a Result of Using a Calculator on Non-Calculator Sections of the ISTEP+ as Participants when Calculating a School’s Participation Rate

Issue

After 28 years with the same vendor, Indiana’s statewide assessment, ISTEP+, was delivered by a new vendor during the Spring 2016 administration. The mathematics portion of ISTEP+ includes both calculator and non-calculator sections in grades 6-8 and 10. With the previous vendor, icons were used in addition to language in the Examiner’s Manuals to clearly identify sections of the test for which calculators were permitted. The new vendor presented language related to calculator use in the Examiner’s Manuals but did not include any icons.

Challenges were encountered during the Spring 2016 assessment administration, as the format of the Examiner’s Manuals changed, and examiners did not carefully read the instructions related to calculator use. Paper/pencil test examiners distributed calculators and allowed students to use them on non-calculator test sections. Online test examiners mistakenly thought there was a problem with the online test platform since the calculator “was not working”, and they disseminated hand-held calculators for students to use. As an unfair advantage was provided to students in both of these scenarios, the students’ test sessions had to be invalidated which therefore resulted in an undetermined score.

Per 511 IAC 6.2-10-1(15) and (35), only “eligible students” count in the proficiency rate calculation. In order to be an “eligible student”, the student must have obtained a valid test result. Since the students impacted by the use of a calculator on non-calculator sections of the ISTEP+ did not receive a valid test result, they are not included in the proficiency rate calculation incorporated in the performance domain of the accountability system. The exclusion of these students from the proficiency rate calculation does not help or hurt the school.

Students impacted by the use of a calculator on non-calculator sections of the ISTEP+ would, however, negatively impact a school’s participation rate. The participation rate calculation is not limited to “eligible students” as the proficiency rate calculation; rather, 511 IAC 6.2-10-1(33) clarifies that participation rate looks at all students enrolled at the time of test administrations. Additionally, per 511 IAC 6.2-10-1(32), only students who complete and obtain a valid test result on the statewide assessment may count as participants. Therefore, students who received an “undetermined” test result on the

mathematics sections of the ISTEP+ due to the misuse of a calculator will count as non-participants and negatively impact a school's participation rate.

Proposed Solution

Staffs recommend that the Board permit the DOE to count any student that received an "undetermined" test result on both mathematics sections of the Spring 2016 administration of the ISTEP+ as participants when calculating the participation rate calculation incorporated in the performance domain of the accountability system. This flexibility would apply only to students who received an "undetermined" result on both sections 1 and 2 of the mathematics portion of the ISTEP+, and would only apply for 2016 A-F calculations.

The DOE is working with the ISTEP+ vendor to remedy the misunderstanding that occurred on the part of the test examiners in order to prevent this situation from happening during future administrations of the statewide assessment. Specifically, the ISTEP+ vendor has been asked to incorporate calculator/non-calculator icons that have been used in Indiana for many years into the Examiner's Manuals. Also, language regarding calculators in the Examiner's Manuals will be made more prominent. In addition, the DOE will communicate specific calculator guidance to the field in a variety of settings, including during required pretest workshop trainings.

If this memorandum is approved by the Board, it will serve as the Board's approval to permit the DOE to incorporate the identified students impacted by the use of a calculator on non-calculator sections of the mathematics portions of the ISTEP+ as participants when calculating the participation rate for 2016 accountability purposes only.

Staffs recommend that schools impacted by this matter be notified. This notification will explain the inclusion of some "undetermined" students in the participation rate.

Joint Recommendation: Permit the Department of Education to Include Students who Took the Alternate Assessment during the 2016 school year as Participants when Calculating a School's Participation Rate

Issue

Based on the results of a Request for Proposal ("RFP"), Indiana administered a new alternate assessment ("ISTAR") based on college- and career-ready standards during the 2016 school year. The vendor for the ISTAR provided a test design including three tiers, across three testing windows, in order to ensure access to the assessed content for all students in this population.

The vendor's test design incorporated linking items between test window 1 and test window 3 within the same tier only. Indiana's Technical Advisory Committee ("TAC") was not comfortable with the test design because no linking items were included across tiers. The TAC members were also concerned about the limited number of test items in the design. As a result, Indiana's TAC indicated that conducting a standard-setting during the summer of 2016 would be problematic, and strongly recommended that the test design be revised for use during the 2017 school year.

For accountability purposes, students taking the ISTAR do not meet the definition of an "eligible student" per 511 IAC 6.2-10-1(15) since these students did not receive a valid test result. As such, those students who took ISTAR during the 2016 school year cannot count in the proficiency rate calculation incorporated in the performance domain of the accountability system (see 511 IAC 6.2-10-1(35)). Given this is a new assessment, it is impossible to know if the exclusion of these students from the proficiency rate calculation would help or hurt the school.

Proposed Solution

Staffs recommend that the Board permit the DOE to count any student identified as taking the ISTAR during the 2016 school year be counted as participants when calculating the participation rate calculation incorporated in the performance domain of the accountability system. This would allow schools to receive some form of credit for students who took the ISTAR in the absence of any test result.

In order to prevent this situation from happening in the future, the DOE is working with the ISTAR vendor to modify the ISTAR test design. The vendor has presented four options for an enhanced design, and staffs are working closely with the TAC to identify the best option. Linking items will be incorporated across tiers in the 2017 school year, and more items will be included in the assessment. Standard-setting will occur in the summer of 2017. Additionally, information regarding the 2016 test administration of ISTAR has been shared with parents during the summer of 2016, including tier assignment and percent correct.

If this memorandum is approved by the Board, it will serve as the Board's approval to permit the DOE to incorporate students who took the ISTAR during the 2016 school year to count as participants when calculating a school's participation rate for 2016 accountability purposes only.

