

06.27.2016

Memo

To

Indiana State Board of
Education

From

**Indiana Technical
Advisory Committee**

Karla L. Egan, TAC
Chair; Karen Barton,
Derek Briggs, Chad
Buckendahl, Gregory
Cizek, Ed Roeber,

CC

Cynthia Roach,
Michele Walker

Re

ISTAR Standard Setting

During the June 2, 2016 meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Dr. Katie McClarty presented a standard setting design on behalf of Questar. The design was intended to allow a standard setting for ISTAR in summer 2016, even though the current test design did not allow for student test forms to be linked. The proposed Questar standard setting design attempted to link the cut points for the various ISTAR forms through the performance level descriptors. This linking process was intended to create comparable cut points for each test form.

The members of the TAC discussed the design and concluded that, if it was deemed essential to derive performance levels for 2016, the design was feasible given the difficult constraints. However, the severity of the constraints ultimately led the TAC to recommend that standard setting should not be conducted for ISTAR in 2016. The rationale for this recommendation is based on the following:

1. The 2016 ISTAR form was an operational field test that did not allow linking across the various tiers; thus, students taking different forms would not have comparable test scores.
2. The Questar proposal to link scale scores through performance level descriptors would result in only tenuous comparability of cut scores across tiers.
3. Even if a standard setting study was conducted for 2016, it would be likely that another standard setting study would be needed in 2017, given the necessary changes in ISTAR test design. Although more of a policy issue, the TAC recommended that it would be desirable to avoid implementing different cut scores for the ISTAR in consecutive years.

Finally, the TAC discussed approaches that would permit defensible setting performance levels for the ISTAR as soon as possible. The TAC discussed changes to the 2017 test design that will result in a new baseline being established in the 2017-2018 school year and would permit standard setting in 2017, with cut scores that, absent other significant design changes, would represent stable performance standards for several years.
