



September 12, 2019

UEN Testimony Regarding Cut Scores

Margaret Buckton, on behalf of the Urban Education Network, comments from Council Bluffs, Des Moines, and other UEN districts, Sept. 12, 2019.
Public comments to State BOE regarding State Assessment Cut Scores

We appreciate the daunting task that the Department has undertaken in launching a new statewide assessment of academic achievement. We also understand that the Department and Iowa Testing have set a very aggressive timeline to ensure that results of the Spring 2019 ISASP administration are available as soon as possible. However, we would ask that the State Board consider delaying the adoption of the recommended proficiency cut scores until school districts have an opportunity to fully understand the impact of the proposed cut scores and provide the Board with public comment on the impact.

We believe that it will be exceptionally difficult to fully understand the impact of the recommended proficiency cut scores without knowing how the scores will align to the cut scores on the former Iowa Assessments, such as Form F, as well as proficiency scores on other nationally recognized assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). By providing a comparative context for the proposed cut scores, schools can better understand the rigor of the expectation set forth in the new ISASP. We believe that completing linking studies for both Form F and the NAEP, sharing that information with school districts and allowing a little process time are absolutely necessary prior to the adoption of proficiency cut scores for ISASP. This is one case where getting it right is more important than getting it done today.

Additionally, we know that the proficiency categories have huge impact for informing the public, for dedicating school improvement resources, for engaging and training our staff and mostly, for what we want our students to know and be able to do to be successful. The timing of setting these cut scores without context is further flummoxed by the last minute 10% reduction to federal Title 1 funds which schools found out after budgets were certified and contracts were signed. \$3.6 million, with cuts disproportionately born by urban districts, based on what we believe is faulty census data, yet another communication and school improvement challenge.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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