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## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** School District Superintendents

**FROM:** Jacob Oliva

**DATE:** November 4, 2022

**Contact Information:**

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DPS: 2022-155

**SUBJECT: Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking Assessments Standard Setting Panels**

This year, we began the transition to assessments aligned to the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. While the new assessments are being administered for the first time this year, the final step in this transition is to set the Achievement Level cut scores for each assessment. The purposes of this memorandum are to describe the standard setting process, and to seek your nominations for the B.E.S.T. Assessments Standard Setting panels.

Consistent with our current reporting system, as well as section 1008.22, Florida Statutes, Florida must identify new cut scores, or standards, that will define the new Achievement Levels for each of the new English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments, which include the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) progress monitoring assessments in grades K–8 Mathematics, grades K–10 ELA Reading, and VPK Early Literacy; as well as end-of-course (EOC) assessments in Algebra 1 and Geometry. (Note: Cut scores are also referred to as standards because they serve as the minimum “standard” a student must reach to be classified in each Achievement Level.) These cut scores must result in Achievement Levels that range from 1 through 5, with Level 1 being the lowest, Level 5 being the highest, and Level 3 indicating on-grade-level performance.

The purpose of the standard setting panel is to recommend the cut scores on the reporting score scale that correspond to policy definitions and Achievement Level Descriptions (ALDs). To do so, the panel will consist of the following elements:

1. Exposure to the tests. Panelists are asked to take the tests in order to get a concrete sense of what the student experience is like.
2. Training. The standard setting process is usually not a familiar activity for the members of the panels. Therefore, training is given with the goal of making the panelists competent in the required tasks.
3. Judgment process. Panelists are asked to make judgments about how well examinees should perform on the items on the test. The results of the judgment process are used to estimate the points on the reporting score scale.
4. Estimation of performance standard. A statistical or psychometric method is used to convert the ratings from the members of the panels to points on the reporting score scale.
5. Cycles in the standard setting process. Making the judgments that are used for estimating points on the reporting score scale is a challenging activity. Therefore, standard setting panelists are

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given multiple opportunities to make the judgments, with summary feedback data for the panel provided between opportunities. The purpose of the feedback is to help members of the panels understand their task and to give an opportunity for a consensus to emerge for the location of the cut score, or standard. This feedback often includes student impact data.

6. Endorsement of the performance level. Standard setting requires panelists to indicate their level of support for the final result of the process. This is usually some indication of whether results are consistent with their judgments.
7. Evaluation of the process. Members of the panels are asked if they understood the process, if they felt unduly influenced by the team facilitating the panels, whether the feedback they received was of use to them, and if they had enough time to perform the tasks.

In addition to the FAST and EOC standard setting activities described above, separate panels will convene during these meetings to set standards for grades 4–10 B.E.S.T. Writing assessments using different methodologies than those described for FAST assessments. Because the new state writing assessment will be reported separately from FAST ELA Reading, a passing cut score must be established on the 12-point rubric. While these panels will use different methodologies, the other processes described above apply to them.

As illustrated in the standard setting steps, school districts, the Department, the State Board of Education and the Florida Legislature all have important roles to fulfill in the process. It is critical that the Standard Setting Educator Panel consists of individuals who are able to make expert judgments about content-based expectations. **To ensure that this occurs, the Department is relying on each superintendent to carefully consider and then nominate individuals who would best be suited to this effort.** The Department potentially has separate committees to fill for each grade and subject. Please consider nominating several individuals from across your district for each subject area, including both school and district staff and representatives with ESE or ESOL certifications. While every district may not be represented on each committee, the Department will ensure that the panel as a whole reflects the breadth of Florida’s student population. As you consider potential nominees, please be advised of the following timeline that will guide the process.

Month/Year	Task
	<b>Assessment Activity</b>
August 2022–May 2023	Administer baseline FAST and Algebra 1/Geometry EOC assessments aligned to the B.E.S.T. Standards.
April 2023	Administer B.E.S.T. Writing Field Test.
	<b>Standard Setting Activity</b>
October 2022–November 2022	Request nominations for Standard Setting panels.
January 2023	Finalize Standard Setting panel membership.
March 2023	Send Standard Setting invitations to panelists.
July–August 2023	Conduct Standard Setting meetings, including “reactor” meetings with business leaders, educational administrators, and other citizens.
August 2023	Conduct rule development workshops and seek input from the Florida Legislature.
October 2023	Submit proposed rule amendment to the State Board of Education for the approval of Achievement Level cut scores assessments aligned to the B.E.S.T. Standards.

It is critical that the individuals nominated be available to serve on an Educator Panel that will likely convene in late July 2023. **Nominating individuals to serve as part of this process is also a commitment that the district will support the nominee's participation, regardless of any other school- or district-level responsibilities that may conflict.**

The nomination form is attached for your use. Please note that each nomination must be supported with your signature prior to submission. Each nominee selected should expect to attend one week-long meeting. All nominations must be submitted by **December 30, 2022**, to Catherine Altmaier in the Department's Office of Assessment at [Catherine.Altmaier@fldoe.org](mailto:Catherine.Altmaier@fldoe.org).

If you have questions related to the nomination process or Standard Setting in general, please email [Assessment@fldoe.org](mailto:Assessment@fldoe.org) or call (850) 245-0513.

JO/ca

Attachment

cc: School District Assessment Coordinators  
School District Accountability Coordinators