



Memo: MSAA Science Standard Setting

Date: October 17, 2022

During Spring 2022, MSAA Science was administered to eligible students in Grades 5, 8 and 11. Since this was a new assessment, new alternate achievement levels needed to be determined. The MSAA Standards Setting committee met July 26-28, 2022, and included educators from across the participating MSAA Partner entities, including Maine. During a standard setting process, a committee is convened to make a recommendation of performance level cuts to the State/Entity. Typically, the performance levels remain in place unless there is a major change to the assessment or academic content standards.

The committee engaged in the process, which was facilitated by our assessment vendor, Cognia, and observed by Partner leads from participating MSAA entities. The educator committee also provided their recommendations to the MSAA Partner Leads for review and approval in their respective entities.

During the MSAA Science Standard Setting process, Cognia inadvertently provided the panelists with incorrect target data (or starting points) during their review of the items. This was not known to the panelists nor the Partner Leads during the meeting. Cognia notified the MSAA Partners and shared more details about the potential impact of providing incorrect target data to the overall process the first week of August. The MSAA Partners then elected to back panelists to ask about the process, and how the incorrect data may have potentially influenced their recommendations.

Spring 2022 results are based on provisional cut scores following the reconvening of standard setting panelists, consultation with the MSAA's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and multiple follow up discussion with MSAA Partners. Additionally, the MSAA partners have decided to reconvene during the Summer of 2023 to conduct another full standard setting. This will provide additional data before final performance level cuts for Grades 5, 8, and 3rd year of high school are approved.

With MSAA Science being a new assessment for the MSAA States/Entities, and in light of the interruption to instruction and assessment over these past few years, the MSAA Partners are erring on the side of caution regarding the approval of final performance levels.

For more information about the MSAA Science, alternate assessments, or provisional cut scores, please do not hesitate to reach out to the State Director of Assessment, [Jodi Bossio-Smith](#).