



2024 Wisconsin ACT Performance Level Standard Setting

Overview

The ACT with writing has been the required summative assessments for grade 11 in Wisconsin since the 2014-15 school year and PreACT Secure was adopted for use for grades 9 and 10 beginning with the 2022-23 school year (ACT ASPIRE was administered in grades 9 and 10 from 2014-15 to 2020-21.) Multiple changes in the Wisconsin Forward Exam (for grades 3 through 8) due to the introduction of a reading score for all students and recent revisions of academic standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics called for the Department



of Public instruction to engage in a performance level standard setting process. Through this process, new cut scores were developed. To align performance levels within the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS), a group of Wisconsin educators participated in a Wisconsin ACT performance level standard setting workshop. During this workshop, educators evaluated multiple data points and made recommendations to update the current ACT cut scores, previously adopted in 2015.

ACT Standard Setting Process


A diverse group of 26 educators from around Wisconsin met in July, 2024 to engage in a [standard setting process](#), led by experienced ACT psychometricians, to evaluate cut scores for the Wisconsin ACT assessment. During the standard setting process, educators met in content area groups to examine the performance level descriptors, ACT college-readiness benchmarks, Forward Exam results, other ACT census states' cut scores, grade level expectations of content knowledge, and ACT research on the performance of Wisconsin students, resulting in a recommendation to update ACT cut scores.

These updated cut scores separate students into four [updated performance levels](#) (developing, approaching, meeting, and advanced). These performance levels provide a more accurate snapshot of students' progress in learning grade level skills and content, using language that encourages and motivates student learning.

Educator Demographics and Participation

- The participating educators have experience working with students with diverse backgrounds, including students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Educator representation spans across multiple Wisconsin Cooperative Education Service Areas (CESAs). Educators from large and small school districts, private Choice schools, and rural, suburban, and urban school districts participated in this event.
- Participants included teachers, principals, instructional coaches, curriculum coordinators, department chairs, and college and career instructional specialists.

Standard Setting Process Details

- Educators participated in an orientation led by ACT where they learned about the performance level standard setting process which uses data and research to establish recommended cut scores. This standard setting process was approved by the Wisconsin Technical Advisory Committee of national assessment experts.
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- ACT led educators in a discussion about the new Wisconsin performance level descriptors, ACT's College and Career Ready Benchmarks and how to identify students' *Meeting Grade Level Expectations* in terms of probability of success.
 - Educators received data books containing impact data to make initial cut score recommendations for the four performance levels.
 - Educators participated in four rating rounds to establish cut score recommendations. This process consisted of individual educator rankings, data review, subject specific and cross-subject discussions, and group analysis to solidify the final discussion and approval of cut scores.
 - At the conclusion, educators finalized their recommendations for submission to the State Superintendent for consideration. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with department staff, established final [Wisconsin ACT cut scores](#) on July 18, 2024.

For more information about required statewide assessments, [visit the DPI's website](#).