

**ALPINE TESTING
SOLUTIONS**

**Standard Setting Report for the Nebraska State
Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading
(NeSA-AAR)**

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Standard Setting Report Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Purpose and Overview	4
Nebraska NeSA-AAR Assessments	5
Standard Setting Workshop	5
Methods and Procedures	6
Workshop Panelists	6
Workshop Orientation	6
Performance level Descriptors.....	6
Standard Setting.....	7
Results.....	9
Performance level Descriptors.....	9
Standard Setting.....	9
Policy discussion of Standard Setting Results	13
Conclusions.....	15
References.....	16
Appendix A: Recommended Performance level Descriptors	17
Appendix B: Detailed Standard Setting Results by Grade Level	25
Appendix C: Impact Tables by Grade Level	26
Appendix D: Evaluation Comments	27

Statement of Confidentiality

The information provided in this report is proprietary and confidential. It is meant to be used by NDE solely for the purpose of informing the standard setting process for the Nebraska NeSA-AAR Assessments.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge several people who assisted us with the standard setting workshop. Panelists of select educators made up the largest contingent of people whose work contributed to the outcome of the standard setting workshops. They participated in the activities that resulted in the cut score recommendations for each of the Nebraska NeSA-AAR Assessments. The success of the workshops was due, in large part, to their efforts.

We also appreciate the assistance and support of Dr. Pat Roschewski, Jan Hoegh, Carla Osberg, Jon Moon, and Jackie Naber from the Nebraska Department of Education who assisted in the preparation and execution of this workshop.

Finally, we want to thank Cristina Goodwin, Myisha Stokes, and Scott Russell from the Alpine Testing Solutions team. Their assistance was critical to the successful execution of this workshop.

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to document the procedures and analyses undertaken to assist the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) in recommending performance level descriptors and cut scores for the Nebraska NeSA-AAR assessments. The included assessments were for grades 3-8 and High School.

This report summarizes the procedures and the results of standard setting workshops conducted June 28-30, 2010. The first part of the results contains the recommended Performance Level Descriptors drafted by the standard setting panelists. These descriptors illustrate the expected knowledge, skills, and abilities of students by performance level and grade level. The second set of results includes the recommended cut scores for each assessment within the NeSA-AAR program.

Standard Setting Report for the NeSA-AAR Assessments

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) contracted with Alpine Testing Solutions (Alpine) to conduct a standard setting workshop for the Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR). Alpine worked closely with NDE to design, and prepare for, the standard setting.

Nebraska NeSA-AAR Assessments

The Nebraska NeSA-AAR program encompasses the alternate assessments for students with the most severe cognitive and physical disabilities. The grade level curriculum and test content are built to represent the progression and continual development of knowledge and skills across the successive grade levels. The results of the NeSA-AAR assessments are used to evaluate students' abilities and classify them into one of three performance levels (i.e., Below the Standard, Meets the Standard, Exceeds the Standard).

Standard Setting Workshop

The standard setting workshop for the Nebraska NeSA-AAR assessments was conducted June 28-30, 2010 in Lincoln, NE. There were two goals of this workshop. The first goal was to produce a set of recommended performance level descriptors (PLDs) that summarized the expected knowledge, skills and abilities of students at each performance level. The second goal was to elicit recommended cut scores that define the expected performance for students within each performance level consistent with the performance level descriptors.

The subsequent sections of this report describe the procedures used to accomplish each of these goals. Also included in this report is a full summary of the results produced from the standard setting workshops. These results have been presented by NDE to the State Board of Education who is responsible for approving the cut scores for each performance level.

Methods and Procedures

Workshop Panelists

Prior to the workshop, NDE recruited panelists to participate in each grade span panel. Each grade level panel included 11-13 content experts from across the state (Jaeger, 1991; Raymond & Reid, 2001). Each panel represented substantial experience and included SPED teachers, General Education teachers, SPED coordinators, and administrators. The experience and qualifications of the panelists is noted in Table 1.

Table 1. Experience and qualifications of each grade-span panel

Panel	Number of Panelists	Degree			Average Years of Experience
		Bachelors	Masters	Ed. Specialist	
Elementary	12	4	8	0	11
Middle	13	2	10	1	17
High School	11 ¹	2	8	1	18

Workshop Orientation

On the first day of the workshop, a general orientation was held for all panelists. Jan Hoegh from NDE and Chad Buckendahl from Alpine welcomed the group. Susan Davis from Alpine provided an orientation that covered the purpose and goals of the workshop, and the processes that would be used to accomplish each goal. Following the orientation, panelists worked within smaller grade-span panels for the remainder of the workshop (Elementary = grades 3-5, Middle = grades 6-8, High School = grade 11).

Performance level Descriptors

To begin creating the performance level descriptors, panelists were divided into grade-specific groups within their grade-span panels. As inputs to the PLD development process, panelists were provided (1) draft policy PLDs created by NDE, (2) the current PLDs for the general NeSA Reading assessment, and (3) the Nebraska extended indicators for Reading that define the current curriculum for those students with the most severe and profound disabilities in Nebraska. Each grade-span panel facilitator reviewed these materials with the entire panel then tasked each grade-specific group with creating a list of illustrative knowledge and skills that would be expected of students at each performance level within their respective grade. These groups were then provided time to work independently on their draft PLDs.

¹ Two panelists in the High School panel only attended the first day of the workshop (PLD activity) but did not participate in the operational standard setting.

Within the elementary and middle school grade-span panels, each grade-level group then shared its draft PLDs so group members could compare the transition from one grade level to the next. This vertical articulation process was critical to ensure the set of PLDs represented a logical progression of skills from one grade-level to the next. As per feedback from the grade span panel, the PLDs were then modified as needed for each grade level.

After this initial vertical articulation process, representatives from the grade-span panels met to repeat the process described in the previous paragraph for adjacent grades (e.g., grades 5 and 6, grades 8 and HS). Again, this process resulted in slight modifications of the draft PLDs.

At the beginning of the second day of the workshop, the panelists were presented with copies of the full set of draft PLDs (grades 3-8, HS) and given an opportunity to review these PLDs as well as make any final edits or revisions. These revisions were then recorded by the Alpine facilitators. After the panelists indicated their approval of the draft PLDs, they completed an evaluation of the process used to create the PLDs.

Standard Setting

The recommended range of cut scores is based on the Impara and Plake (1997) modification of the Angoff (1971) method. In this process, panelists are presented with the assessment (in this application they were presented with the student and administrator materials) and are asked to make item-level judgments. For each item, they are asked to imagine the “target student” and make their best judgment as to whether or not they believe this student would answer the item correctly. In this application, there were two groups of target students: the student that barely *Meets the Standard* and the student that barely *Exceeds the Standard*. By focusing on the transition points between the performance levels (e.g., **barely Meets the standard** differentiates between *Below the Standard* and *Meets the Standard*), panelists demonstrate their expectations for students who represent the minimum level of knowledge and skills at each of the upper performance levels. These expectations are then used to represent the minimum score required for each of the upper performance levels (i.e., the cut scores).

This part of the workshop began with a practice activity whereby the panelists could become familiar with the standard setting process using pilot items that are currently embedded on the operational examination forms. After becoming familiar with the standard setting process, panelists engaged in their operational standard setting ratings for each grade-level examination.

The operational standard setting was conducted as follows. Panelists made their initial ratings (Round 1) independently using their professional judgments guided by the Extended Indicators, PLDs, and the examination booklets (Administrator and Student materials). Panelists recorded these judgments on specially designed rating forms which the facilitator collected and used to compute the panel-level statistics. Rating forms were returned to panelists that included their recommended cut scores. The facilitator also shared with the panelists the group median cut scores, the range of cut scores across the panel, the estimated impact if the median cut scores were used (i.e., which percentage of students would be classified in each performance level) and

the percentage of students who answered each question correctly during the previous administration year (i.e. p-values). After explaining this feedback, the facilitator instructed the panelists to review their first round of ratings and make any modifications they felt necessary based on their reaction to the feedback (Round 2). The second round ratings were used to compute the final recommended cut scores.

The final activity for the panelists was the completion of an evaluation form designed to measure their level of confidence in the standard setting activities and their cut score recommendations. After the evaluations were completed, each participant was provided with a certificate of participation and the workshop was concluded.

Results

Performance level Descriptors

The draft PLDs are included in Appendix A and are submitted to NDE as recommended descriptors. We suggest that NDE review these descriptors and make any modifications necessary to ensure that the grammar and language are consistent across grade levels.

The results of the evaluation from the PLD development activity are included in Table 2. Overall, the results indicate the panelists felt the process was successful, the amount of time allotted to the process was appropriate, and they were confident in the draft PLDs they produced. Panelists were also provided an opportunity to provide comments on the process - these are included in Appendix D.

Table 2. Evaluation results from PLD development process

	Elementary	Middle	High School
1. Success of Training 6=Very Successful to 1= Very Unsuccessful	5	4	5
2. Time allotted to training on PLD development 4 = More than enough time to 1=More time needed	3.5	3	3
3. Confidence in appropriateness of draft PLDs 4 = Confident to 1 = Not at all Confident	3.5	3	3

Standard Setting

The standard setting included two rounds of judgments. The full results are included in Appendix B. The summary results for each grade level are presented in Table 3. This table includes the median recommended cut score for each performance level, the impact if the median cut scores were implemented (percent of students in each performance level), and a range of cut scores defined by the median plus and minus two standard errors is included. The standard error is a measure of the variability in the recommended cut scores. Because the only plausible score points are whole numbers, the recommended cut score ranges were estimated using the standard errors and then rounded on each end to the closest score point. Therefore, some ranges are not symmetrical around the recommend cut score. Selecting a cut score within this range would be seen as reflective of the results of the process. The median recommended cut scores, and the acceptable cut score ranges, are shown graphically for each grade level in Figure 1 and the impact of the median cut scores are shown graphically for each grade level in Figure 2. The impact by score (percent of students who scored at a particular scale score and below) is listed in Appendix C. From this information one can estimate the impact of any set of proposed cut scores.

Table 3. Summary of Round 2 standard setting results - median, impact and recommended cut score range, by grade level.

Grade		Below the Standard	Meets the Standard	Exceeds the Standard
3	Median		17	23
	Impact	35%	28%	37%
	Median \pm 2 SE		15-19	22-24
4	Median		14	22
	Impact	28%	35%	37%
	Median \pm 2 SE		13-15	21-23
5	Median		13	21
	Impact	24%	38%	38%
	Median \pm 2 SE		12-14	19-22
6	Median		14	20
	Impact	27%	24%	49%
	Median \pm 2 SE		12-16	18-22
7	Median		15	20
	Impact	27%	15%	58%
	Median \pm 2 SE		13-17	18-22
8	Median		17	22
	Impact	29%	25%	46%
	Median \pm 2 SE		15-19	21-23
HS	Median		13	22
	Impact	19%	41%	40%
	Median \pm 2 SE		10-16	20-24

Figure 1. Median cut scores and recommended cut score ranges

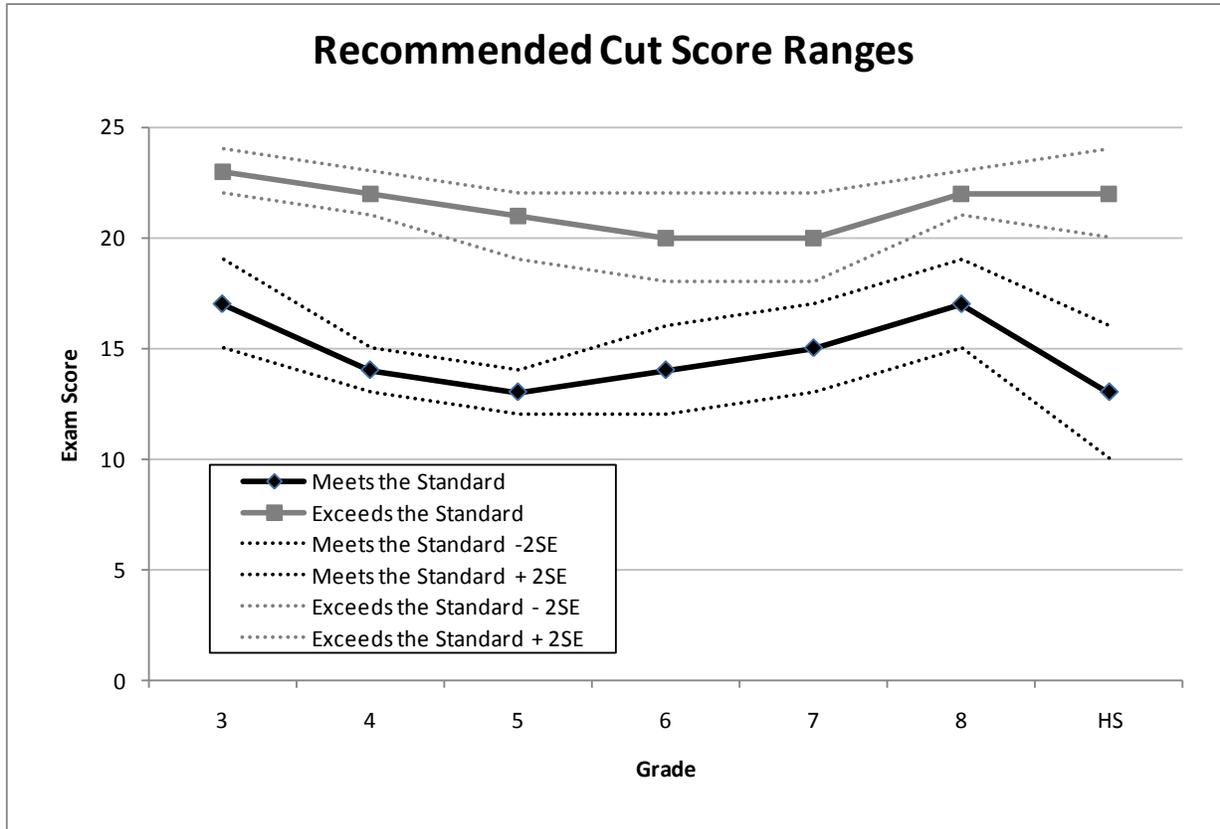
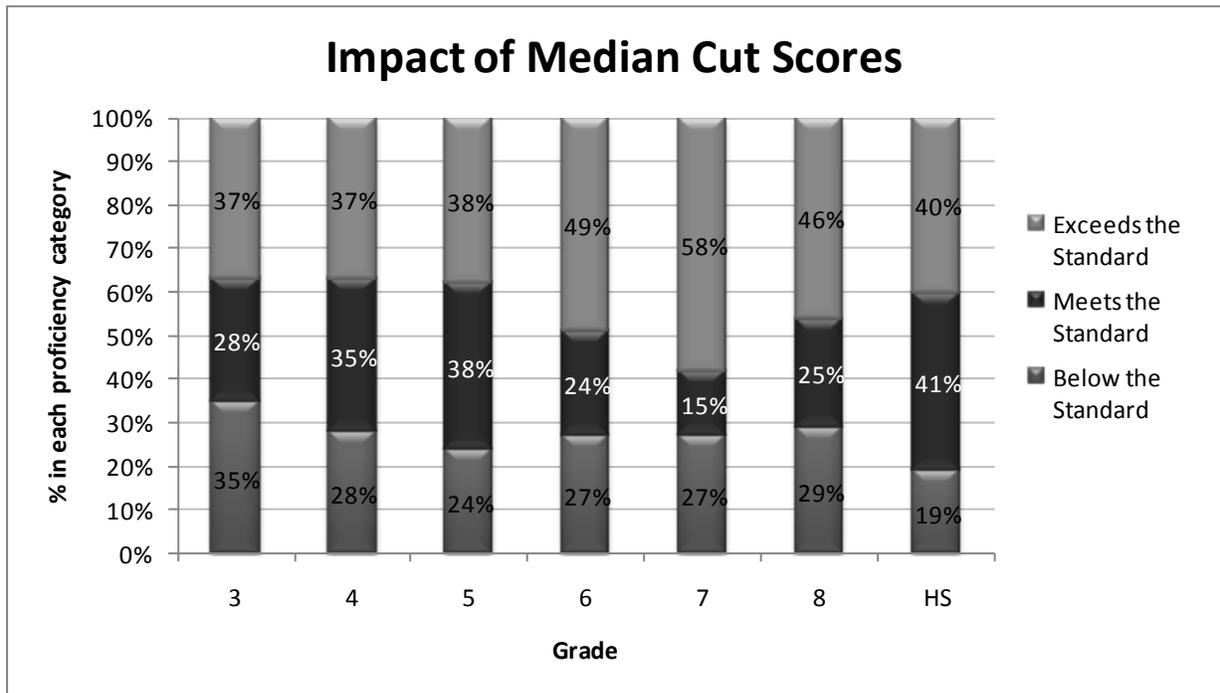


Figure 2. Impact of median recommended cut scores



Each panelist responded to a series of evaluation questions about the various components of the operational standard setting. The median response for each panel for each evaluation question is shown in Table 4. The overall results suggest that each panel felt the workshop was very successful and felt the workshop was very successful in arriving at appropriate recommended cut scores. In addition to the closed-ended questions, panelists were allowed to provide comments about the workshop. These comments are included in Appendix D.

Table 4. Median evaluation results by grade level

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Successfulness of training [6=Very Successful to 1= Very Unsuccessful]			
1a. Orientation	5	5	6
1b. Training on Yes/No method	5	5	6
1c. Overview of Feedback	5	5	6
1d. Practice with Method	5	5	6
Time allocated to training [6= Totally Adequate to 1=Totally Inadequate]			
2a. Orientation	4	3	3
2b. Training on Yes/No method	3.5	3	3
2c. Overview of Feedback	4	3	4
2d. Practice with Method	3.5	3	3
Round Two Yes/No Ratings			
3. Confidence in predictions [4=Confident to 1=Not at all confident]	4	4	4
4. Time for predictions [4=More than enough time to 1=More time needed]	4	4	3
Overall workshop			
5. Confidence in cut scores [4=Confident to 1=Not at all Confident]	3	3	3
6. Most useful feedback data (mode reported) [4=P-values, 3=Impact data, 2=Panel Summary]	4	4	4
7. Least useful feedback data (mode reported) [4=P-values, 3=Impact data, 2=Panel Summary]	2	2	2
8. Overall success [4=Very Successful to 1= Very Unsuccessful]	4	3	4
9. Overall organization [4=Very Organized to 1=Very Unorganized]	4	3	4

Policy discussion of Standard Setting Results

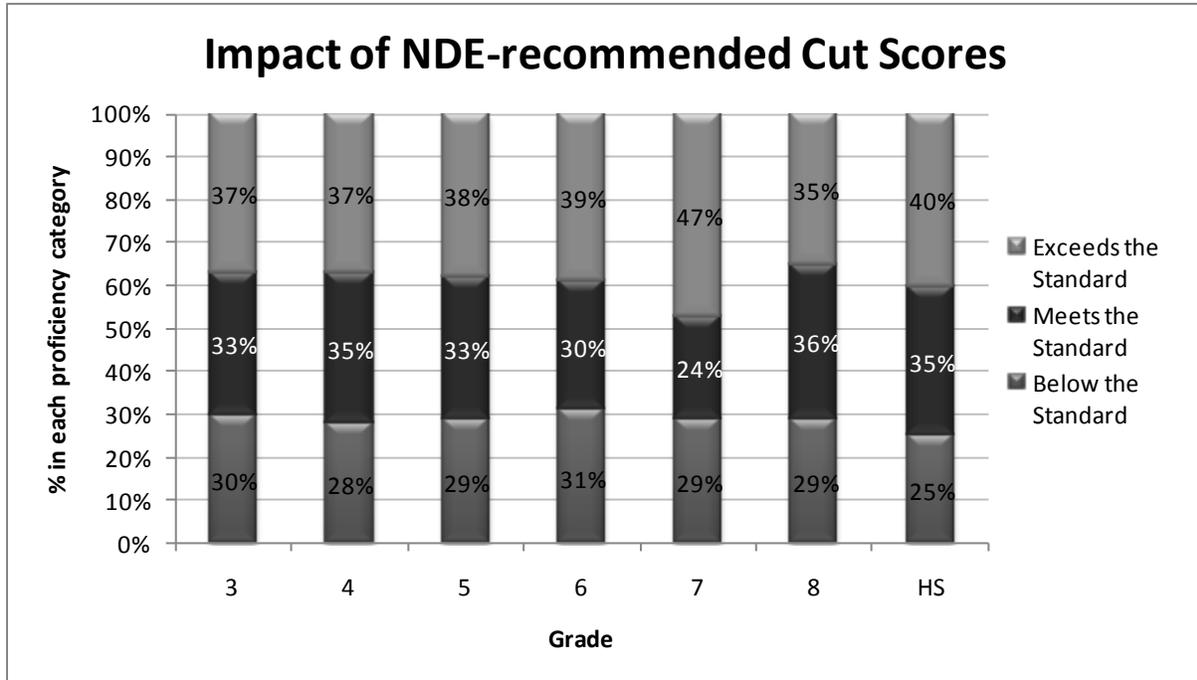
On July 6, 2010 representatives from NDE and Alpine met to discuss the results of the standard setting process. The purpose of this meeting was to debrief on the standard setting workshop, review the results of the standard setting process across the grade level, and evaluate decision rules that would smooth the results and identify a set of recommended cut scores that NDE would take to the Nebraska Board of Education for consideration.

As a result of this meeting, the panel recommended cut scores from within the ranges suggested by each grade-level panel that would (1) maximize the similarity in impact across the grade levels, (2) result in impact values similar to those for the general Reading assessment, and (3) honor the content expertise of the Nebraska educators that served on the standard setting panels. To meet these three goals, this meant recommending cut scores from the lower part of the panel-suggested range for some grade levels. At other grade levels, this meant recommended cut scores from the higher end of the panel-selected range. The final recommended cut scores are shown in Table 5 along with the associated impact values. The impact values are also shown graphically in Figure 3. On July 8, 2010 these final recommended cut scores were approved by the Nebraska Board of Education.

Table 5. Panel-recommended cut score ranges, NDE-recommended cut scores, and associated impact values, by grade level.

Grade	Below the Standard	Meets the Standard	Exceeds the Standard
3			
	Panel-recommended range	15-19	22-24
	NDE-recommended cut score	16	23
	Impact	30%	33%
4			
	Panel-recommended range	13-15	21-23
	NDE-recommended cut score	14	22
	Impact	28%	35%
5			
	Panel-recommended range	12-14	19-22
	NDE-recommended cut score	14	21
	Impact	29%	33%
6			
	Panel-recommended range	12-16	18-22
	NDE-recommended cut score	15	21
	Impact	31%	30%
7			
	Panel-recommended range	13-17	18-22
	NDE-recommended cut score	16	22
	Impact	29%	24%
8			
	Panel-recommended range	15-19	21-23
	NDE-recommended cut score	17	23
	Impact	29%	36%
HS			
	Panel-recommended range	10-16	20-24
	NDE-recommended cut score	16	22
	Impact	25%	35%

Figure 3. Impact of NDE-recommended cut scores



Conclusions

The panelists' recommendations to NDE and Nebraska's State Board of Education include a set of performance level descriptors for each grade and a set of cut scores that define the performance expectations for each performance level. We first recommend that NDE review and evaluate the performance level descriptors after the final cut scores are set. Second, the State Board of Education has selected a final set of cut scores for the 2010 administration of the NeSA-AAR assessments. Our recommendation is that NDE revisit the appropriateness of these cut scores for the 2011 NeSA-AAR program in light of any changes made to the assessments, the curriculum, or selection of students who are eligible to take this exam during the next school year.

It is important to highlight the critical elements that provide validity evidence for the results of this standard setting. Kane's (1994, 2001) framework for standard setting validity evidence identifies three elements of validity evidence for standard settings: procedural, internal, and external. Procedural validity evidence for these studies can be documented through the careful selection of representative, qualified panelists, use of a published standard setting method, completing the study in a systematic fashion, and collecting evaluation data that indicates the panelists felt they were confident in the cut score recommendations they made. Internal validity evidence suggested that panelists had similar expectations for the performance of the target students. This type of evidence is provided by the reasonable standard errors in the recommended cut scores for the second round of the standard setting process. The final type of validity evidence, external, can be provided by triangulation with results from some other estimation of appropriate cut scores from outside the current standard setting process and consideration of other factors that can influence the final policy. One way in which this could be accomplished is by conducting a second standard setting process such as contrasting groups from which one could triangulate the results of this standard setting process.

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Appendix A: Recommended Performance level Descriptors

The recommended PLDs are presented in this appendix by grade level. During the vertical articulation meeting between the 8th grade and High School panels, it was decided to recommend to NDE that the "Meets the Standard" policy-level PLD wording should be changed from "consistent" to "general" to match the PLDs for the general assessment. Although the change was not addressed at other grades, these panels recommend to NDE that it be made for each grade level.

During the elementary panel vertical articulation discussion, the panelists recommended to NDE that the key words in the policy-level PLDs be bolded or highlighted in some way (e.g., independent and consistent understanding, minimal prompting, consistent understanding, basic understanding, frequent prompting).

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR) Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 3

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Identify the meaning of words within a text using context clues
- Use a given text to answer questions about a character, basic facts, and setting
- Identify the meaning of a text by determining more than 1 event with some order
- Use text features (illustrations, text, and simple maps) to locate information
- Identify the character, basic facts, and setting of a text or story.
- Recognize when a text is informational and identify the main idea using context.

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Identify the meaning of words within a sentence
- Use a given text to answer questions about a character and/or basic facts
- Identify the meaning of a text by determining more than 1 event
- Use text features (illustrations and text) to locate information
- Identify character and basic facts of a text or story
- Recognize when a text is informational and identify the main idea.

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. Using only one strategy, the student may be able to:

- Identify the meaning of words, including plurals, in isolation use illustrations
- Use a given text to answer questions regarding a character
- Identify the meaning of a text by determining one event
- Use text features (illustrations) to locate information
- Identify a single character in a text or story
- Recognize informational text

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR)

Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 4

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Identify meaning of words in a given text using context clues, singular and plural nouns, and by categorizing words and illustrations
- Use a given text to answer questions about the identify the main character and setting
- Identify the meaning of text by sequencing 3 events in the correct order, as well as by citing the main idea.
- Identify main character, setting, and main idea of a text or story
- Use text features (titles, illustrations, simple maps, and graphs) to locate information

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Identify meaning of words in a given text using context clues and singular and plural nouns with illustrations.
- Use a given text to answer yes/no questions about the main character and setting
- Identify the meaning of a text by choosing the first and last events in a sequence
- Identify author's purpose through the feelings of the reader
- Identify the main character or setting of a text or story
- Use text features (titles, illustrations, simple maps) to locate information.

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. Using only one strategy, the student may be able to:

- Identify meaning of words in isolation or in a sentence using illustrations
- Use a given text to answer yes/no questions about the main character
- Identify the meaning of text by choosing the first event in a sequence
- Identify the main character of a text or story
- Use text features to gain meaning using illustrations

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR) Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 5

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Provide examples of synonyms and antonyms
- Identify the meaning of words within a given text by using context clues or recognizing common prefixes.
- Identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, contractions, and compound words
- Determine when the author's purpose is to entertain or inform
- Answer literal questions using a text.
- Identify main idea, supporting details, and theme

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. Using a variety of strategies, the student can:

- Identify synonyms and antonyms using illustrations or words
- Identify the meaning of words within a text using context clues
- Identify nouns and verbs
- Determine when the author's purpose is to entertain
- Identify the meaning of a text by sequencing the beginning/middle/end, distinguishing fact from fiction, and choosing a summary
- Identify the main idea of a text using supporting details
- Answer literal questions about a text in a Yes/No format

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. Using only one strategy, the student may be able to:

- Identify parts of a text or story, specifically in reference to the main character and/or setting
- Identify synonyms using illustrations or words
- Identify nouns
- Identify the meaning of a text and event sequence.
- Identify the topic of text

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR)

Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 6

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. The student can:

- Understands meaning of words using a variety of strategies (prefix, suffix, comparisons)
- States the author's purpose
- Identifies elements of narrative text (plot)
- Identifies and retells main idea from informational text with a supporting detail
- Identifies organizational pattern of informational text and makes comparisons
- Answers literal questions and makes comparisons

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. The student can:

- Understands meaning of words using a variety of strategies (antonyms)
- Identifies if the author's purpose is to inform
- Identifies elements of narrative text (theme)
- Identifies and retells main idea from informational text
- Identifies organizational pattern of informational text (cause/effect)
- Answers literal questions

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. The student can:

- Understand meaning of words using a variety of strategies (roots, synonyms)
- Determine if the author's purpose is to inform in a yes/no format
- Identifies elements of narrative text (characters, setting)
- Identifies main idea from informational text
- Identifies organizational pattern of informational text (sequence)
- Answers literal questions in a yes/no format

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR) Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 7

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. The student can:

- Applies semantic relationships of words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, comparisons)
- Determines and applies meaning of words using root, prefixes, and suffixes in science, mathematics, and social studies
- Identifies narrative and informational genre and determines author's purpose to inform or entertain (e.g., magazine, newspaper)
- States main idea, supporting information, and organizational pattern (e.g., sequence, cause/effect, comparison) in informational text
- Explains literary devices in narrative passages (e.g., metaphor, similes, comparisons)
- Determines and applies elements of narrative text (e.g., character(s), setting, plot [beginning, middle, ending])

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. The student can:

- Determines meaning of words using root words, prefixes, suffixes, context clues, and text features
- Determines meaning of words using semantic relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, comparisons)
- Identifies narrative and informational genre and determines author's purpose to inform or entertain (e.g., storybook, textbook)
- Identifies main idea, supporting information and organizational patterns (e.g., sequence, cause/effect, comparison) in informational text
- Identifies literary devices in narrative passages (e.g., metaphor, similes, comparisons)
- Identifies elements of narrative text (e.g., plot [beginning, middle, ending])

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. The student can:

- Knows meaning of simple prefixes (e.g., un, re, non, pre)
- Identifies synonyms
- Differentiates between narrative and informational text
- Identifies main idea in informational text
- Identifies simple comparisons (e.g., big/little, before/after, up/down, start/finish)
- Identifies elements of narrative text (e.g., character(s), setting)

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR)

Performance Level Descriptor, Grade 8

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. The student can:

- Use word recognition, context clues, and decoding skills to determine the meaning of the words in science, mathematics, and social studies (e.g., singular, plurals, prefixes, suffixes, roots)
- Determine the meaning the words using semantic relationships (e.g., idioms, multiple meanings)
- Identify elements of narrative text (e.g., conflict)
- Identify narrative and informational genres in print or electronic format (e.g., magazine, newspaper)
- Answer literal and inferential questions using prior knowledge and supporting information from narrative and informational text
- State organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., fact/opinion)
- Use text features to locate information (e.g., maps, headings)

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a general understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. The student can:

- Use word recognition, context clues, and decoding skills to determine the meaning of the words (e.g., prefixes, suffixes)
- Determine the meaning the words using semantic relationships (e.g. comparisons, synonyms, antonyms)
- Identify elements of narrative text (e.g., plot [beginning, middle, ending])
- Identify narrative and informational genres in print or electronic format (e.g., storybook, textbook, dictionary)
- Answer inferential questions using prior knowledge and supporting information from narrative and informational text
- State organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., comparisons, sequence, cause/effect)
- Use text features to locate information (e.g., table of contents)

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. The student can:

- Use word recognition and decoding skills to determine the meaning of the words (e.g., singular, plurals, common prefixes)
- Identify semantic relationships (e.g., comparisons)
- Identify elements of narrative text (e.g., main characters, setting)
- Identify narrative and informational genres (e.g., storybook, textbook)
- Answer literal questions using prior knowledge and supporting information from narrative and informational text
- Identify organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., comparisons, sequence)
- Use text features to locate information (e.g., graphs, lists, illustrations, captions)

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate Assessment of Reading (NeSA-AAR)

Performance Level Descriptor, High School

Exceeds the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student exceeds the expectation by demonstrating independent and consistent understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student typically requires minimal or no prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do not interfere with conceptual understanding are rarely present. The student can:

- Use word identification and decoding strategies to support understanding. Use multiple strategies to determine word meaning and usage (e.g., context clues, decoding, prefixes, suffixes, root word).
- Use multiple strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words/text (e.g., titles, illustrations, captions, headings, tables, maps, indexes, synonyms, antonyms, comparisons, idioms, multiple meanings).
- Identify characteristics of text to aid in reading comprehension. Use multiple strategies, categorize, and explain key elements in the text (e.g., predicting, story map, sequencing, lists).
- Locate and organize information relating it to self and others. Apply information from the text to a task and analyze the results (e.g., supporting details, short answer questions, multiple choice, generate one question).
- Identify and use print and electronic resources (e.g., storybooks, textbooks, magazines, dictionary, encyclopedia, graphs, lists, illustrations and captions, table of contents, maps, headings, and charts) to aid in determining information relevant to narrative and informational texts.
- Uses information from narrative text to identify multiple elements (e.g., beginning, middle, end, mood, setting, predicting, cause/effect, characters, theme, conflict).

Meets the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a general understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. The student may require minimal prompting in order to complete a task. Inaccuracies that do or do not interfere with conceptual understanding may be present. The student can:

- Use word identification and decoding strategies to support understanding. Use a strategy to determine word meaning (e.g., root word, suffixes, context clues, decoding, prefixes).
- Use a strategy to determine the meaning of unknown text (e.g., titles, illustrations, captions, headings, tables, maps, indexes, synonyms, antonyms, comparisons, idioms, and multiple meanings).
- Identify characteristics of text to aid in reading comprehension. Use one or two strategies to identify key elements in the text (e.g., graphing, mapping, visual organizers to identify the author's purpose).
- Apply information from the text to a task.
- Identify print and electronic resources (e.g., storybooks, textbooks, magazines, dictionary, encyclopedia) to aid in determining information relevant to narrative and informational text.
- Use information from narrative and informational text to identify multiple elements (e.g., beginning, middle, end, setting, cause/effect, characters, theme).

Below the Standard

Using their primary mode of communication, appropriate supports, and accommodations, the student demonstrates a basic level of understanding of extended grade-level reading skills and concepts. Inaccuracies may interfere with conceptual understanding. The student may require frequent prompting in order to complete a task. The student may be able to:

- Use word identification and decoding skills to construct meaning from text (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, root word, context clues).
- Use a strategy to determine the meaning of unknown text (e.g., title, illustrations, heading, tables, maps, synonyms, antonyms, comparisons).
- Identify and use text components to comprehend meaning of narrative and informational text.
- Answers literal and inferential questions about a text to demonstrate comprehension.
- Answers questions about elements of narrative text (e.g., character, setting, conflict, and plot [i.e., beginning, middle, end]).

Appendix B: Detailed Standard Setting Results by Grade Level

Grade	Round		Below the Standard	Meets the Standard	Exceeds the Standard
3	1	Median		17	23
		Impact	35%	28%	37%
		Standard Error		1.06	0.51
	2	Median		17	23
		Impact	35%	28%	37%
		Standard Error		0.89	0.49
4	1	Median		16	22
		Impact	37%	26%	37%
		Standard Error		0.79	0.72
	2	Median		14	22
		Impact	28%	35%	37%
		Standard Error		0.47	0.35
5	1	Median		14	22
		Impact	29%	42%	29%
		Standard Error		0.69	0.69
	2	Median		13	21
		Impact	24%	38%	38%
		Standard Error		0.57	0.58
6	1	Median		14	22
		Impact	27%	43%	30%
		Standard Error		1.21	0.75
	2	Median		14	20
		Impact	27%	24%	49%
		Standard Error		1.21	0.82
7	1	Median		15	21
		Impact	31%	17%	52%
		Standard Error		0.84	0.73
	2	Median		15	20
		Impact	27%	15%	58%
		Standard Error		0.98	0.95
8	1	Median		14	20
		Impact	21%	19%	60%
		Standard Error		1.23	0.89
	2	Median		17	22
		Impact	29%	25%	46%
		Standard Error		1.11	0.54
HS	1	Median		14	21
		Impact	20%	32%	48%
		Standard Error		1.87	1.01
	2	Median		13	22
		Impact	19%	41%	40%
		Standard Error		1.5	0.95

Appendix C: Impact Tables by Grade Level

The table below indicates the cumulative pass rate for each raw score on the exam, by grade level.

Score	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
0	0%	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%
1	4%	5%	7%	4%	4%	5%	4%
2	5%	6%	8%	5%	4%	6%	6%
3	6%	8%	8%	6%	5%	6%	6%
4	6%	9%	8%	6%	5%	7%	7%
5	9%	12%	9%	6%	5%	8%	8%
6	10%	13%	9%	8%	6%	9%	9%
7	10%	15%	12%	11%	8%	10%	10%
8	12%	16%	13%	12%	9%	11%	11%
9	14%	17%	15%	14%	13%	12%	13%
10	17%	19%	17%	17%	16%	15%	15%
11	19%	21%	20%	21%	20%	18%	17%
12	22%	25%	24%	24%	24%	20%	19%
13	24%	28%	29%	27%	26%	21%	20%
14	25%	32%	31%	31%	27%	26%	24%
15	30%	37%	34%	34%	29%	28%	25%
16	35%	41%	38%	38%	32%	29%	28%
17	39%	44%	41%	42%	37%	31%	31%
18	42%	48%	51%	47%	38%	34%	36%
19	48%	53%	56%	51%	42%	40%	45%
20	52%	58%	62%	61%	48%	44%	52%
21	57%	63%	71%	70%	53%	54%	60%
22	63%	69%	81%	85%	63%	65%	67%
23	70%	77%	89%	93%	78%	80%	80%
24	82%	89%	96%	98%	90%	93%	92%
25	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Appendix D: Evaluation Comments

Elementary Panel Evaluation Comments

PLD Evaluation

- In the beginning it would be helpful to complete one PLD together or as a whole group - everyone appeared to have some difficulty getting started.
- I feel discussing as a large group our plan for developing/format of the PLD's would have been helpful. It took us at least 3+ minutes to decide how to even start.
- Might be helpful to complete some as a large group or an example - not sure though, it worked out really well in the end.
- Maybe do an example with whole group before we break into small groups.
- Have each grade level use butcher paper. Fold equally in 3 parts and write your PLDs down. Then attach them to wall side by side. This would save time by eliminating rewriting on dry-erase board. Each grade could use a different color marker. It would be more visual and easier to read since each group would assign the best printer for the job.
- Training was fine, just concerned if the content is too hard for the severe and profound student.
- A little more explanation of expectations from the beginning would have been helpful. We were a little lost at the beginning but once we received more explanation it went much smoother
- To be honest this has a difficult task, not all teachers had experience with some of these high needs students so it has difficult to assume what they would handle or not handle. This help of resources, Carla, Alpine team did get us back on track.

Standard Setting Evaluation

- Alternative Assessment went very smoothly.
- Great process and a learning experience. I would like to participate in future NDE standard setting workshops.

Middle Panel Evaluation Results

PLD Evaluation

- Process needed to be explained better - an example as a group to get everyone on same page.
- Not enough guidance was given prior to writing the PLDs. There was enough time but there was no guidance or direction on the PLD development. Prior to developing the PLDs, the group was unsure of what the expectations were for the PLD development.
- Not very confident in PLDs because not representative of students in this population.
- The most frustrating parts of this process were: 1) Lack of direction when presented with task. 2) Lack of cohesion between groups. 3) Lack of leadership through process.
- Myisha was fabulous in keeping the group on task, providing insightful direction, and maintain a great level of rapport with the group.
- We needed more direction to eliminate wasted time. More input is needed to give a good direction of the task. Organization and better display of the PLD would have been helpful.
- I felt sorry for directors having to put up with negative people who complained instead of using corrective input. This was very informative for me as a first timer. Thanks
- I think having a computer and LCD projector would help me see the "whole" picture of the grade(s) for the PLD.
- Needed more direction in the beginning of the process. Lots of time spent "lost" in the process. Too many different directives. Some "panelists" were rude. Seems like we needed a model to follow. If we had been told to use a specific formula and make the adjustments for each grade level, it would have been easier.
- We need very clear, concise directions when we split into grade-level groups. We also need a leader to check in with the groups as we work, so that we know if we are doing it correctly. Middle level has to coordinate with 2 other break-out levels, and that calls for more guidance than we received. I don't mind hard work, but I do mind re-doing work that was made unnecessarily difficult.

Standard Setting Evaluation

- Felt like more direction was needed at the onset so less questions later. Needed NDE direction at all the time during the process.
- After we rated Round 1 of 8th grade (our final assessment) then someone finally explained to us what the data meant. Up until that point the data was posted on the board and simply read. I feel my work on the 7th and 6th would have been more valid had the data been explained earlier.
- The actual scoring I felt was very successful. The practice test helped out a lot. Having the P-values helped when doing the round 2 scoring. Thanks
- Difficult to use P-values from last year as it appears that many of students taking alternate assessment should not have.
- This operational setting was much clearer. 1st day = fix. Draft performance levels descriptors needed to 1st be modeled before expecting to develop descriptors. A lot of time was wasted as we (6-8 group) felt like we were blind to what was expected. Then

we had to redo our descriptors because we were too specific (gave direct examples) and did not just use the extended descriptions and level/rate them according to difficulty. Helpful when a staff member came in to tell us if we change our markings on y/n how it impacts the percentage of basic/proficient/adv (like a balloon). This would have been helpful at the start of the 2nd ranking session.

- Success of standard setting workshop was fairly successful. More direction and instruction of what is asked of the team of educators was needed and clearer view of the target outcome. Meeting each other at the beginning of the training would have been useful to help build camaraderie and respect. Dr. Susan started the session stating, "use positive views". This statement should be held accountable by the leaders. Myisha was amazing! She gave a warm perspective and was good at maintaining a positive rapport by using the educators' names, smiling, keeping us organized by not standing over us. It would be a better cohesive environment with positive remarks and positive encouragement was made by Cristina. More training or a higher level of expectations of the target goal needed to be made. Having Carla give her view point was useful. It was an interesting experience.
- If too many students took the test who shouldn't have, then the cut-scores are not realistic for the intended population. Our district students who I perceive should take this assessment would mostly all score at the basic level.
- Give examples/guided practice before you want us to do the task. Use a LCD/Laptop (technology) to help keep things organized.
- More detailed training in beginning. Some people were judging tests and had never been exposed to them... An overview of the format would have been beneficial. Completing a practice test together (guided practice) before doing independent practice would have been very helpful. Thanks for all that you do at NDE!
- Nice Job!
- I appreciate having plenty of time for each task. I did not feel rushed or bored, because we knew ahead of time that there would be down time.

High School Panel Evaluation Results

PLD Evaluation

- Use electronic white boards to display the different levels and grades of PLDs - that way if it is easier to see the flow and agreement between the groups so that language is more consistent.
- Use technology instead of the flip charts.
- I am not confident that this process will be in the best interest of our profound kids.
- We still do not address our students with the most severe disabilities. Rather than showing growth at their level, they will continue to always be basic. It will never look as though they have made progress.
- Good facilitator. Some concern regarding individual teacher interpretation of tasks. Items are still curriculum based and not reflective of community based learning.
- It would have been very helpful to be able to see all the lists at once. It would have solidified the process of aligning the PLDs with consistent language and progression.

Standard Setting Evaluation

- Chad did a fabulous job of facilitating our group. He had amazing patience and composure (and wit and humor). It was a great experience overall.
- Thank you!! Things went really well today.
- I really enjoyed being part of this process. I learned a great deal from Chad and from my peers. Food/hotel accommodations were great! Chad did great!