

### STANDARD SETTING

Two important ideas relating to standard-setting which have

Important Ideas

overarched our process are:

The **rationale and standard-setting method** used for determining proficiency at the content level is described

1. It is important to clearly distinguish between content standards and performance standards (Hambleton, 2001). Content standards refer to the curriculum and what students are expected to know and be able to do. Performance standards refer to the level of performance that is expected of students in relation to the content standards (Ibid).

2. All standard-setting methods involve judgment. This point emphasizes the need to be sure care is taken about who makes the judgments and how they have been prepared to make them.

Contrasting Group Method

We have utilized the Contrasting Group Standard Setting Method as outlined by Dr. Rich Hill in a standard setting training provided in May 2003.

#### Step 1: Create Performance Descriptors

Performance Descriptors

As a district we developed performance descriptors for each content area using the State's performance descriptors as a model. The descriptors covered performance levels for advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic levels. These descriptors were presented to the district advisory team, which is composed of parents and community members for their input and review. These performance descriptors became the foundation for setting cutscores at the content area level. (See descriptors on pages 14-16 of this section.)

**Stakeholder involvement** is described.

Stakeholders

The district identifies that the **cut scores are tied to the performance descriptors. Performance levels are identified.**

#### Step 2: Classify Students According to Proficiency Levels

Classify Students

In this step, content experts who had taught these students compared students' performance levels to the performance descriptors. Utilizing professional judgment, students were ranked *advanced, proficient, basic, or below basic*.

#### Step 3: Aggregate Data

Next, student scores from common district assessments in each content area were tallied. This was done with assessment data, which had

Aggregate Data	<p>been entered throughout the year in PowerGrade, the computerized grade book by teachers as they administered and scored the common district assessments. (Sample screen shots are provided on pages 9-10 of this section.) This step resulted in profiles of aggregated total scores for all points earned in each content area. These point profiles were used in the next step.</p>
Cut scores	<p><b>Step 4: Compare Score Distributions and Select Cut Scores</b></p> <p>Data was analyzed to identify total point scores that overlapped advanced and proficient levels. A cut score was identified for the advanced level. This process was repeated for the proficient and basic levels. Any performance below the basic cut score was considered below basic. This process was completed for each content area. (See table on pages 4-5 in this section.)</p>
Decision Check	<p><b>Step 5: Compare Results With Other Indicators</b></p> <p>We next compared our classifications with WyCAS scores and GPA's of students as a check on our classifications.</p>
Stakeholders	<p><b>Step 6: Communicate the Process</b></p> <p>Parents and community members were invited to review performance descriptors and to be a part of the standard setting process. However, none chose to participate. As a result, we shared the process with parents, students, and community members explaining how the information will be used to make graduation decisions.</p>
Process over time	<p><b>How proficiency is tracked over time.</b></p> <p>Our standards are embedded in course instruction. Common district assessments are given which assess specific standards. Scores on these assessments are entered by teachers into PowerGrade where they are stored and aggregated over time. The system has been programmed with the cut scores for each content area. Each quarter on student report cards, a standards-based section shows how students are doing on overall mastery for a content area. (See pages 11-12 in this section for examples.)</p>
Standard Setting	<p>Counselors also receive a report each quarter for every student</p>

which provides current standard proficiency progress on all content areas. (See page 13 of this section.) This information is used in advising students and planning schedules.

Adequate Notification

The plan includes a timeline for their **student notification process.**

Graduation Progress

Multiple Opportunities

How and when individual scores are **aggregated to make “graduate/not graduate decisions** are explained.

Since standards are embedded in course instruction, progress toward standard mastery is reported on a continual basis from the time a child begins school. Parents are kept up-to-date on their child’s progress toward standard mastery from Kindergarten through standards-based report cards. Starting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, parents are provided information explaining graduation requirements and our body of evidence system. (See example letter on pages 7-8.) Our counselors also meet with parents and students at the beginning of each school year and review progress toward graduation. Each content area is reviewed. If a student has not mastered standards at any grade level, parents are notified and students are provided additional remediation opportunities. Each summer our district offers an additional avenue through summer school for students to have additional opportunities for instruction and to become proficient on deficit standard areas. This process continues through the senior year. Students have multiple opportunities during each year and over years to become proficient. Parents are kept informed and involved on a continual basis. If at any time a student becomes at-risk of not graduating based on standard performance, parents are alerted and invited to an intervention planning meeting.

Graduation Decision

Correlation Study

At the beginning of the junior year, a student’s standard profile is reviewed to determine which content areas have standards completed and which areas need additional opportunity. The student and parents are then advised what is needed to complete standard graduation requirements. The final decision regarding graduation is made in the spring of the senior year.

**Checking With Other Indicators**

Our district is now beginning a correlation study with MAP, ACT, and PAWS to see if standard decisions correlate to student scores in these areas. (See pages 18-20 in this section for the beginning of this work.)