State Board of Education
Discussion Resolution
Comment/Response Form

This comment and response form contains comments from the September 4, 2019, meeting of the State Board of Education.

Topic: Direction of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment – Science 2019 Results

Meeting Date: September 4, 2019 **Level:** Adoption Resolution

Division: Division of Academics & Performance

Completed by: Office of Assessments

Summary of Comments and Agency Responses:

The following is a summary of the comments received from State Board of Education members and the Department of Education's (Department) responses. Each commenter is identified at the end of the comment by a letter, which corresponds to the following list:

A. Kathy Goldenberg, President
State Board of Education

B. Dr. Ronald Butcher, Member
State Board of Education

C. Andrew Mulvihill, Vice President
State Board of Education

1. **Comment:** The commenter asked if this is a change in the cut score or if the assessment is new. **(A)**

   Response: The New Jersey Student Learning Assessment-Science (NJSLA-S) is a new assessment implemented in 2017-18 to replace the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) science and the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT). The NJSLA-S is aligned to the current New Jersey's current science standards, the New Jersey Student Learning Standards-Science (NJSLS-S).

2. **Comment:** The commenter asked what the percentage of passing (60%) means. The commenter stated if you look at the common understanding of a proficient student it is higher than 60%. The commenter asked what the rationale behind percentage as it seems low. **(C)**

Response: The New Jersey Student Learning Assessment-Science (NJSLA-S) is not comparable to a classroom assessment. The focus of the NJSLA-S is to be a summative assessment covering the standards contained within a three-year grade band for the purpose of assessing the ability of all students in New Jersey in the tested grades (grade 5, grade 8, and grade 11). With the designation of at or above Level 3 being considered proficient, the Department still needs to be able to identify and distinguish the highest performing students while providing as much feedback as possible to the lowest performing students.

3. **Comment:** The commenter asked if we are we setting standards high enough, so we are pushing students to achieve. **(B)**

   Response: Historical standards for NJ are extremely high. The Department must also look at equity across the board and make sure all students are provided the opportunity to demonstrate their level of proficiency in science based upon the NJSLS-S.

4. **Comment:** The commenter asked where we are in rank regarding these cut scores compared to other states. **(A)**

   Response: There are currently 20 states that have adopted the Next Generation Science Standards and 24 states that adopted standards inspired by the three-dimensional framework the Next Generation Science Standards are based off of. The Department has reached out to other states regarding their cut scores and many of them are also going through the approval process so were unable to share that data publicly at this time. Massachusetts and Kentucky were able to provide their cut scores. The overall percent correct needed for each performance level is similar across states.

New Jersey (Proposed):

Grade	Maximum Score	Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
		Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct
5	60	25	42%	39	65%	49	82%
8	70	20	29%	40	57%	52	74%

Massachusetts:

Grade	Maximum Score	Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
		Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct
5	54	18	33.3%	33	61.1%	45	83.3%
8	54	16	29.6%	31	57.4%	44	81.5%

Kentucky:

Grade	Maximum Score	Apprentice		Proficient		Distinguished	
		Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct	Raw Score	% Correct
4	48	15	31.2%	27	56.3%	36	75.0%
7	48	13	27.1%	26	54.2%	38	79.2%

5. **Comment:** The commenter asked if this is a pilot. **(A)**

   Response: No, the spring 2019 administration is the first operational year, commonly referred to as a benchmark year, as the performance level cut scores are set based off the results of this administration. In future years, the assessment will be equated back to the performance level cut scores adopted from this administration to ensure the results are comparable.

6. **Comment:** The commenter asked if we had a pilot for two years. **(A)**

   Response: No, the NJSLA-S was implemented as a field test in the Spring 2018 administration. The purpose of a field test is to evaluate the assessment items to ensure they are performing as expected.

7. **Comment:** The commenter asked what percentage of the standards a student should know in order to be successful in science. The commenter asked if 35% of the standards need to be complete or if 35% of the questions need to be correct. **(C)**

   Response: The science assessment is assessing a grade band, so all standards from 3-5, from 6-8, and from 9-12 are grouped on an assessment for elementary school, middle school, and high school respectively. With the number of standards present in the grade band it is not possible to assess all standards, but rather a sampling of the standards is selected to be representative of the broader categories, physical science, life science, earth and space science, investigating practices, sensemaking practices, and critiquing practices. While all standards are available to be chosen each year for the assessment and will be represented over the course of a couple of years, they cannot all appear in a single year. New Jersey's technical experts (current science educators) have recommended the number of points they feel a student would need to earn to be considered proficient; these recommendations are being submitted as the proposed cut scores for the science assessment.

8. **Comment:** The commenter asked if the students are meeting the level 2 cut score to pass the class or if it's a depiction of what their understanding is. **(A)**

   Response: It is a summative representation of their proficiency on New Jersey Student Learning Standards-Science, not performance in the course taken at their school.

9. **Comment:** The commenter asked to have a copy of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Science (NJSLAS-S) for the next meeting. **(A)**

Response: The New Jersey Student Learning Standards-Science (NJSLS-S) can be found at https://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/science/.

State of New Jersey
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Adoption Resolution
October 2, 2019

A Resolution to Adopt Proficient Level Cut Scores for The New Jersey Student Learning Assessment-Science (NJSLA-S)

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education (State Board) has required that all students enrolled in grade 5, grade 8, and high school be assessed in science in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.

Whereas, the Department has recently established new tests to replace the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for Science (NJ ASK) and the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT) that were in use by the Department of Education; and

Whereas, the Department has participated in standard-setting studies for the NJSLA-S to determine the validity of and the theoretically appropriate proficient level cut scores for those tests; and

Whereas, the State Board approves the Department's selection of the respective New Jersey Student Learning Assessment-Science initial proficient level cut scores; and

Whereas, the Department will monitor the impact of these tests and proficient level cut scores on the proficiency rates for each grade level where the test is administered and will report any problems with the same to the State Board; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education hereby acknowledges and approves the following proficient level cut scores, effective November 1, 2019:

Proficient Level Cut Scores

Grade level	Raw score	Percent correct
5	39	65%
8	40	57%
11	45	58%

End of table.

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
Secretary, N.J. State Board of Education

Kathy Goldenberg, President
N.J. State Board of Education