



River Trails
SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

Aligning Data to Reality: Understanding the Impact of Assessment Changes

October 14, 2025

Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Bill Timmins

Objectives

- Review district and state assessments
- Understand the difference between renorming and recalibration as they relate to district/state assessments
- Understand the purpose of renorming and recalibration of district/state assessments
- Understand the impacts of the renorming and recalibration on the district



Let's Review

Assessment	Description	Use
NWEA MAP Grades 2-8	An online test that adjusts to each student's level, showing what they already know and what they're ready to learn next.	District Assessment: Measures growth , proficiency , and informs how educators differentiate instruction.
Aimsweb Plus Grades K-3	A short assessment that quickly shows how students are doing in reading and math.	District Assessment: Measures growth and proficiency while identifying students in need of differentiation beyond the Tier 1 level of instruction.
5 Essentials Survey	A survey that collects student and teacher feedback on school culture in five areas: leadership, teaching, families, environment, and instruction.	State Assessment: Monitors annual progress towards cultural improvement . Assessment is part of overall summative evaluation ratings.
IAR (Grades 3-8) ISA (Grades 5 & 8)	The state tests in reading, math, and science that measures how well students are meeting Illinois proficiency targets.	State Assessment: Monitors annual progress towards proficiency . Assessment is part of each schools' overall summative evaluation ratings for proficiency and growth .



What *is* and *is not* changing?

- **How do we use assessments: (Unchanged)**
 - To monitor progress over time
 - To inform instruction
 - To communicate progress to stakeholders
- **How is this year different from previous years?**
 - Several *renormed* assessments (NWEA, Aimsweb, 5Es)
 - Statewide *recalibrations* (IAR, ISA)
- **What is the difference between renorming vs. recalibrating?**
 - Renorming: Recalculating averages based on recent performance of the current population
 - Recalibrating: Adjusting a system for better accuracy



Renorming

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Aimsweb

5Essentials



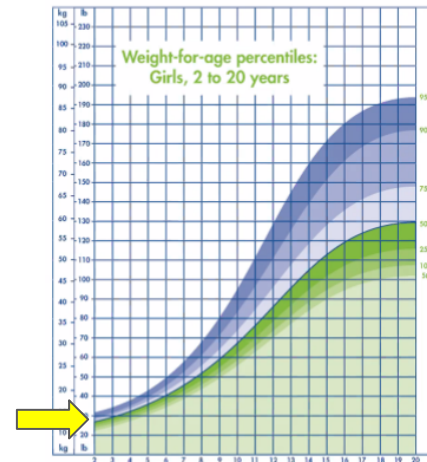
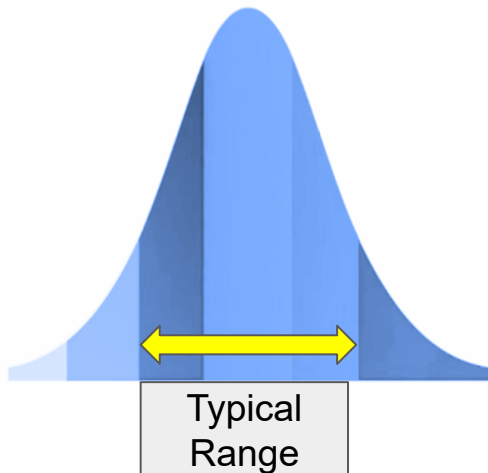
Norms

Norms provide essential context, and without context, a score is just a number.

Example: My child weighs 27 pounds.

Norms provide the comparison that transforms numbers into **INSIGHTS**.

Example: My child is 2 years old.



And that context changes over time



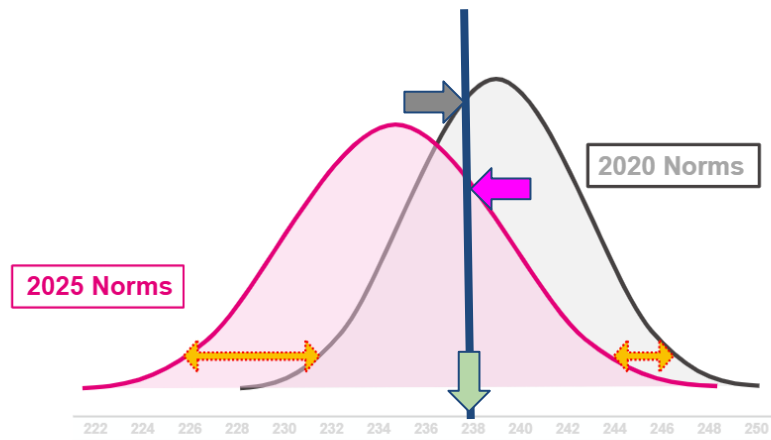
Updated norms let us see how we compare to the current environment.



MAP Growth (NWEA)

- Renormed
- Students **may** appear differently compared to national peers.

Distribution shifted down *and* became more variable



nwea

Example:

Student Score: **238**

Previous % : **45%**

New %: **60%**

Student skills HAVE NOT changed, but their comparison to the current peer group HAS changed.

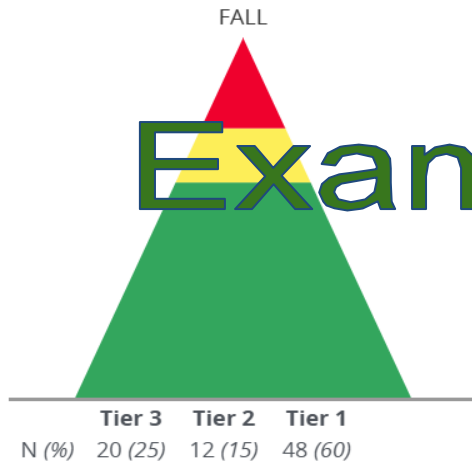


aimswebPlus

- Renormed in Early Literacy/Reading.
- Percentiles shift approximately +9 points on average.
- Risk tiers (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3) were recalibrated.

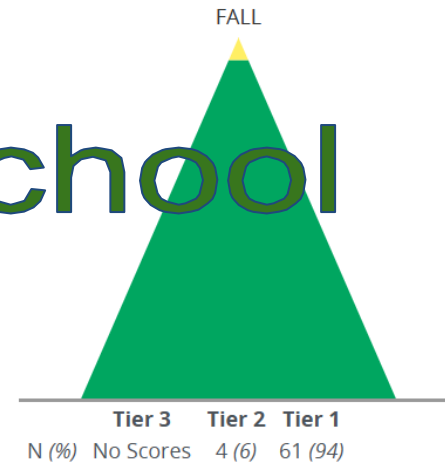
FALL 2024

Tier Transition Summary



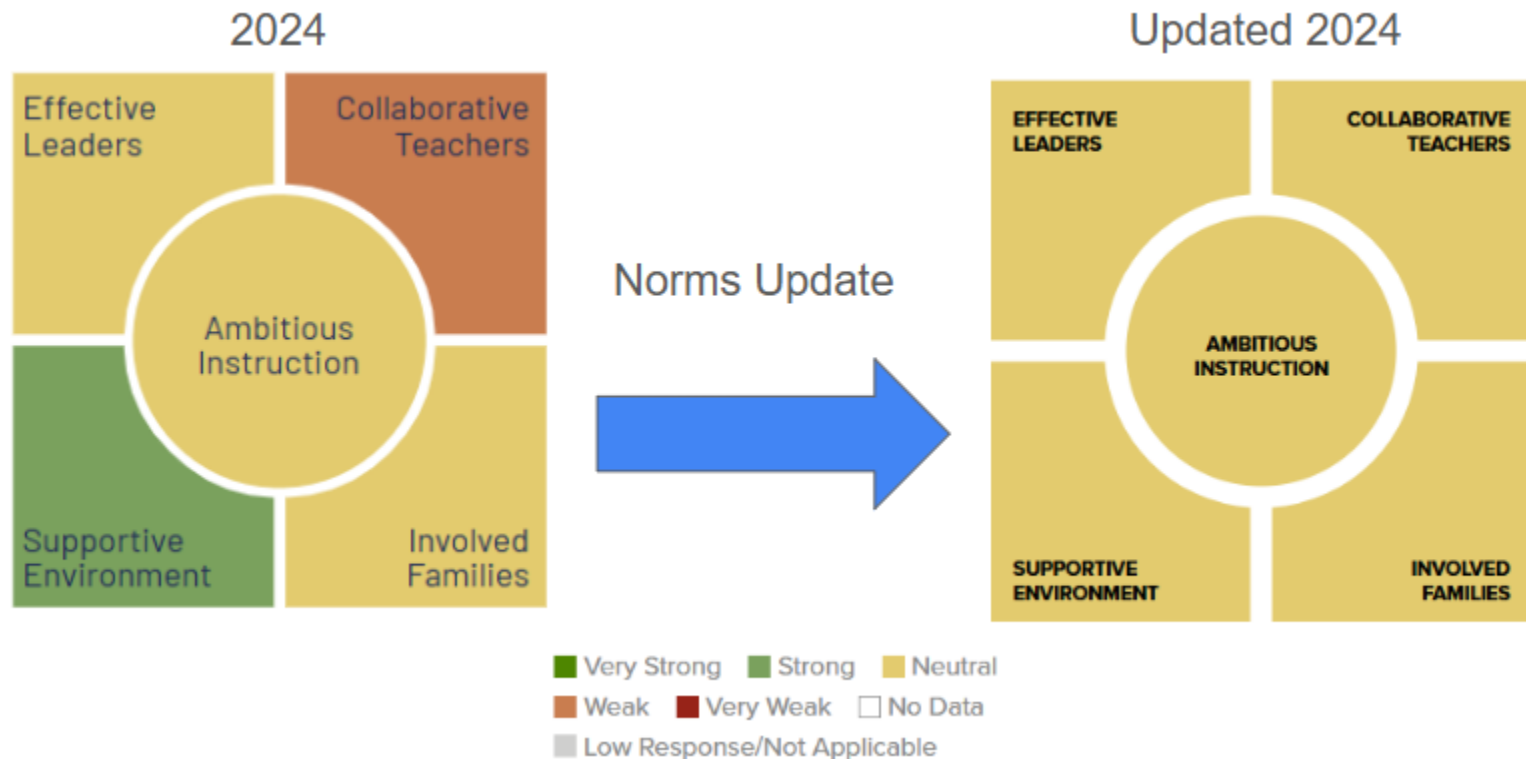
FALL 2025

Tier Transition Summary



5Essentials (Illinois)

- Renormed to create state comparison groups.
- Previous norming sample ONLY included schools in CPS in 2013.
- ALL administrators went through a full day training on the impacts of the renorming in relation to setting goals for improvement.



Recalibration

Illinois Assessment of Readiness

Illinois Science Assessment



Performance and Proficiency

Performance Levels

Are the score ranges that divide the full spectrum of performance on the state assessment into categories.

The state decides how many levels there are, the **cut scores** that divide each level, and which levels qualify as “proficient.”

Proficiency

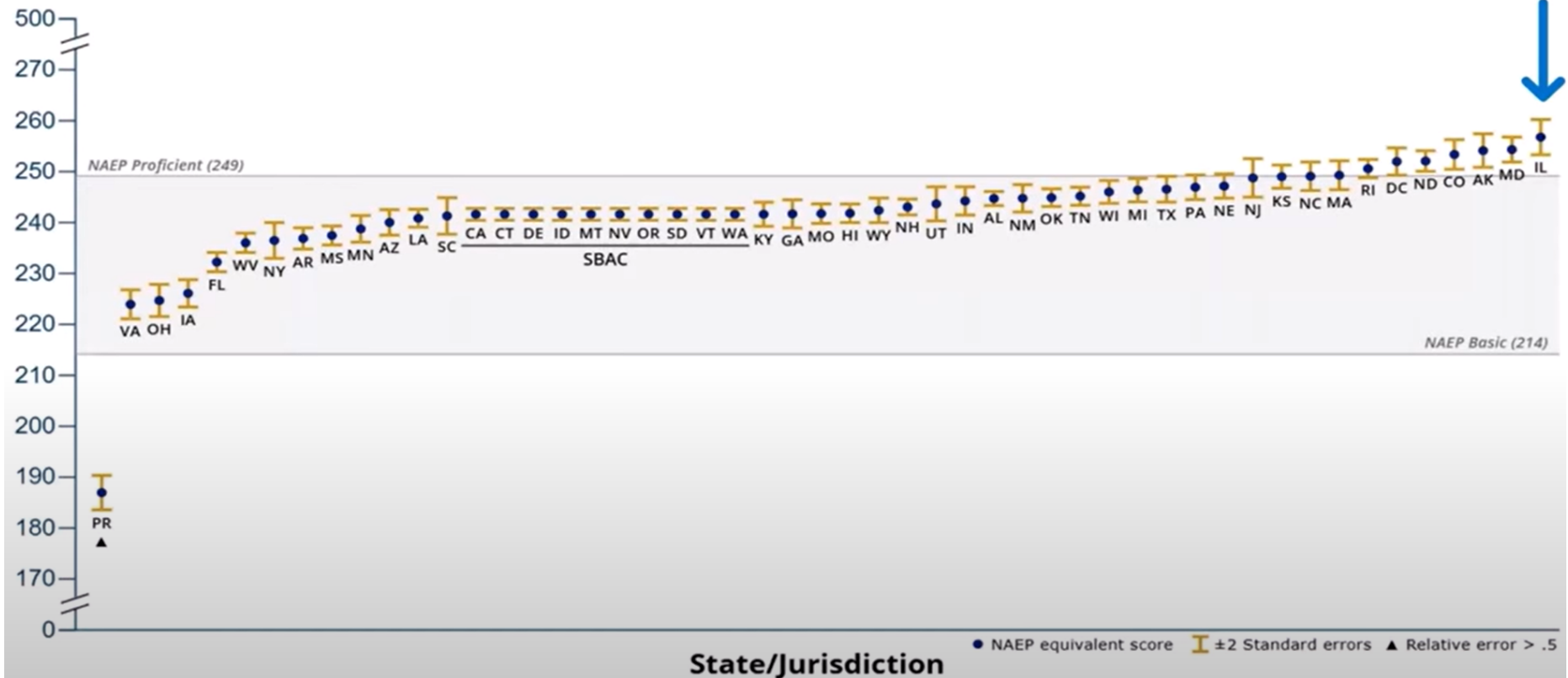
Being proficient means that a student is on track in their learning.

The proficiency benchmark is the score a student needs to reach on a state assessment to be considered on track for their grade level.



Proficiency Targets

Previous threshold to meet the proficiency standard for 'college ready' in Illinois.



IAR/ISA (Illinois State Assessments)

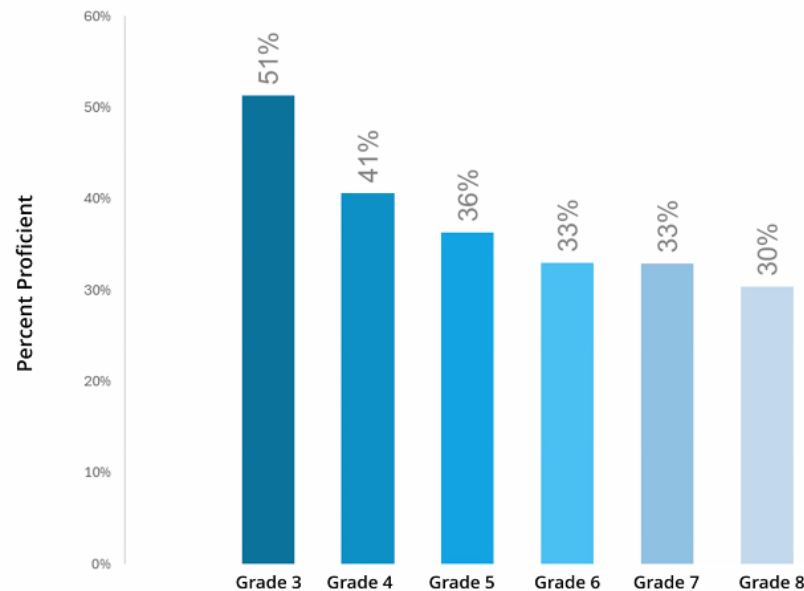
- Recalibration of proficiency levels
- Variability at different grade levels

		ELA		Math		Science	
		Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
IAR & ISA	Grade 3	750	735	750	732		
	Grade 4	750	737	750	740		
	Grade 5	750	739	750	740	799	812
	Grade 6	750	741	750	742		
	Grade 7	750	743	750	745		
	Grade 8	750	745	750	745	799	812



CAUTION: Do not assume student performance is decreasing!

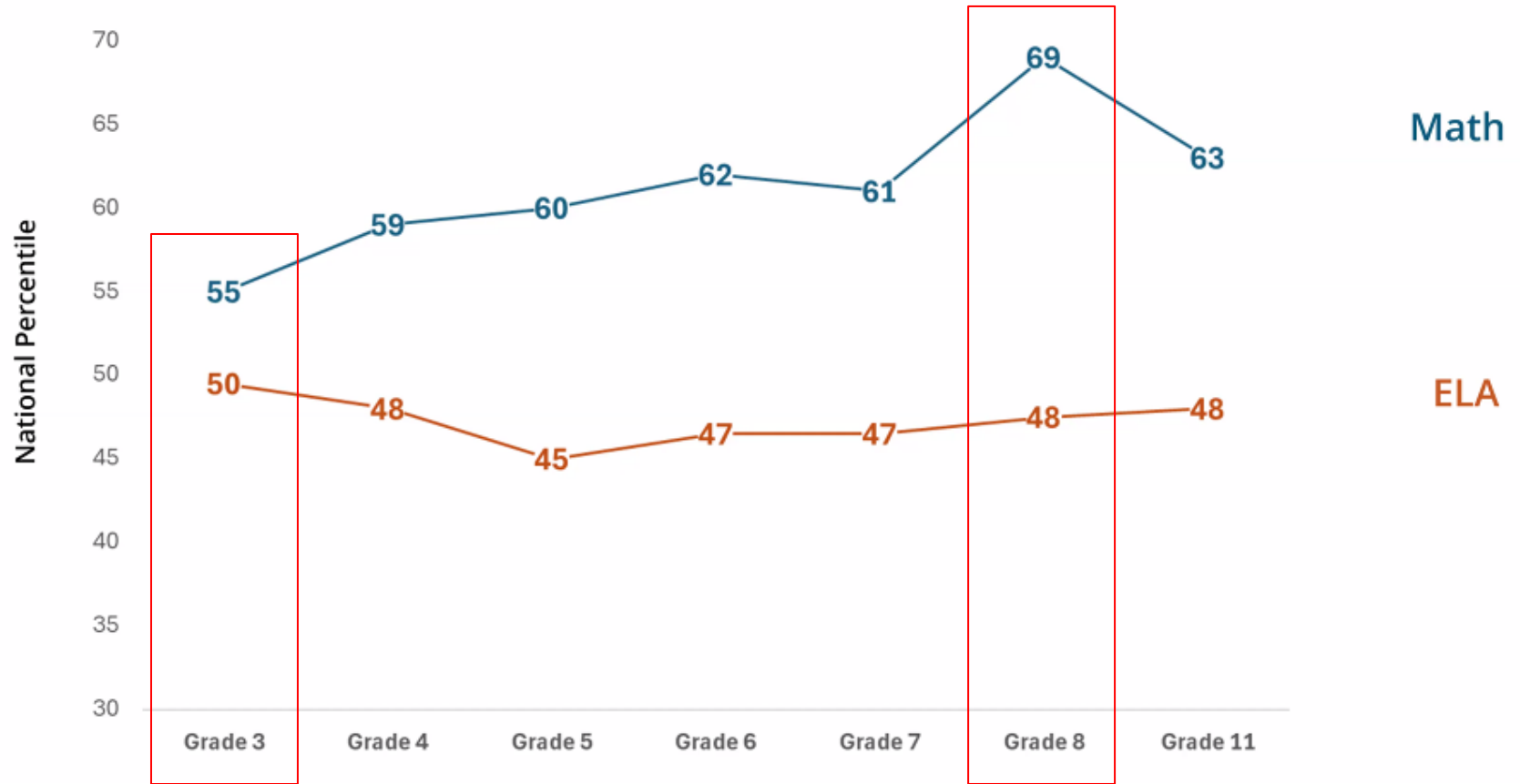
Math Proficiency for New Benchmarks Applied to Statewide 2024 Distributions



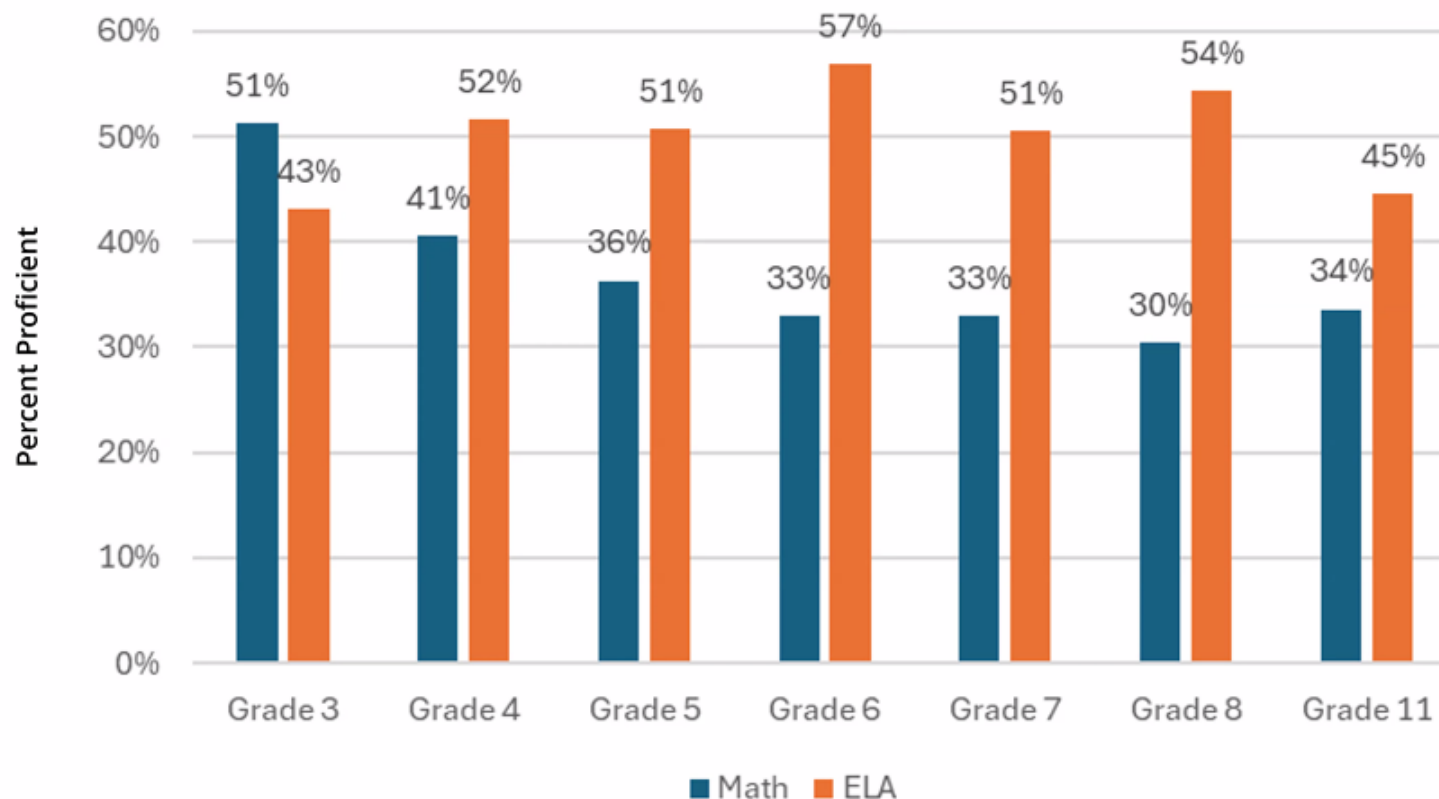
		Math	
		Old	New
IAR & ISA	Grade 3	750	732
	Grade 4	750	740
	Grade 5	750	740
	Grade 6	750	742
	Grade 7	750	745
	Grade 8	750	745

Students in grades 7 & 8 are held to a significantly higher standard of proficiency than students in earlier grades.

National Percentiles Corresponding to New Illinois Proficiency Benchmarks



Math Versus ELA Proficiency for New Benchmarks Applied to 2024 Statewide Distributions



Unified Performance Levels

Previous Misaligned Performance Levels

IA	Does Not Meet	Partially Meets	Approaching Meets	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
ISA	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary	

New Unified Performance Levels

IA	Below Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
ISA	Below Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient



District Implications

- There have been significant changes to all of our current assessments.
- Monitoring GROWTH is imperative when looking at school improvement.
- It is important to communicate with all stakeholders that benchmarks have changed NOT our students.



Next Steps

- Monitor and potentially adjust local thresholds for interventions & placement.
- Provide staff training on interpreting updated reports.
- Prepare parent communication with clear messaging.



In Closing

- We are committed to using data to drive instruction and measure growth.
- We are committed to developing deep understanding of how to responsively use the data.
- We understand the importance of aligning assessments with today's learning context.
- We will lead with clarity and transparency.

