

Assessment Updates

Implications of Illinois Benchmark
Right Sizing and of MAP Re-Norming

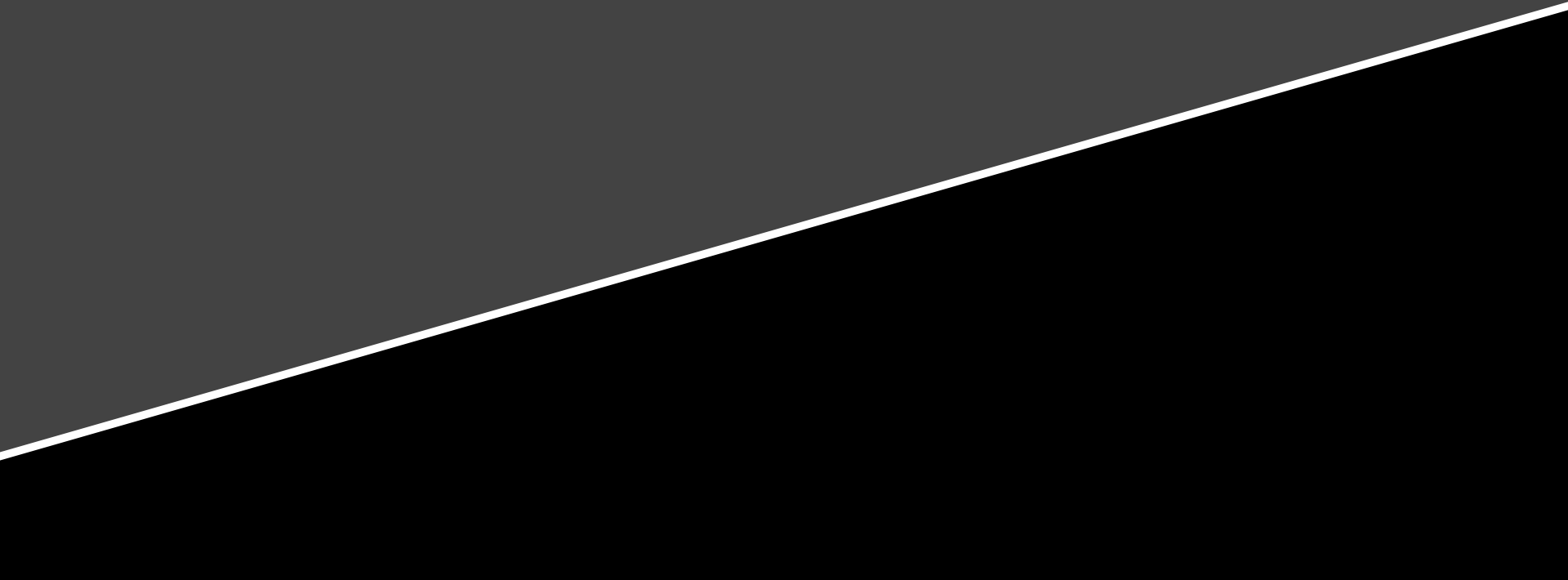


**The Illinois benchmarks
(performance levels)
and MAP norms each
underwent revamping
this past year.**

This presentation will outline:

1. the changes made by Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in 'right sizing' performance benchmarking.
2. the changes made by NWEA in re-norming the MAP scores and distributions.

ILLINOIS Benchmark Right Sizing



Why did Illinois benchmarks need to be ‘right sized’?

- Illinois’ benchmarks for English language arts proficiency were the **most restrictive in the country**, resulting in the mislabeling of high-achieving, college-ready students as “not proficient.”
- In 4th grade math, **Illinois had the most difficult-to-reach proficiency benchmark** in the nation, according to the National Assessment for Educational Progress.
- For every other grade and subject, **our proficiency benchmarks ranked among the top four most restrictive.**
- When ISBE adopted the SAT as the state’s high school assessment in 2017, **the benchmarks for proficiency were set 60 points higher in English language arts and 10 points higher in math than the College Board’s own research-informed national college readiness benchmarks.**
- This meant that students who were succeeding in school—passing Advanced Placement and dual credit courses, taking on leadership roles, and enrolling in college—were often still labeled “not proficient” on the state assessment.

How Illinois Fixed Benchmark Misalignment

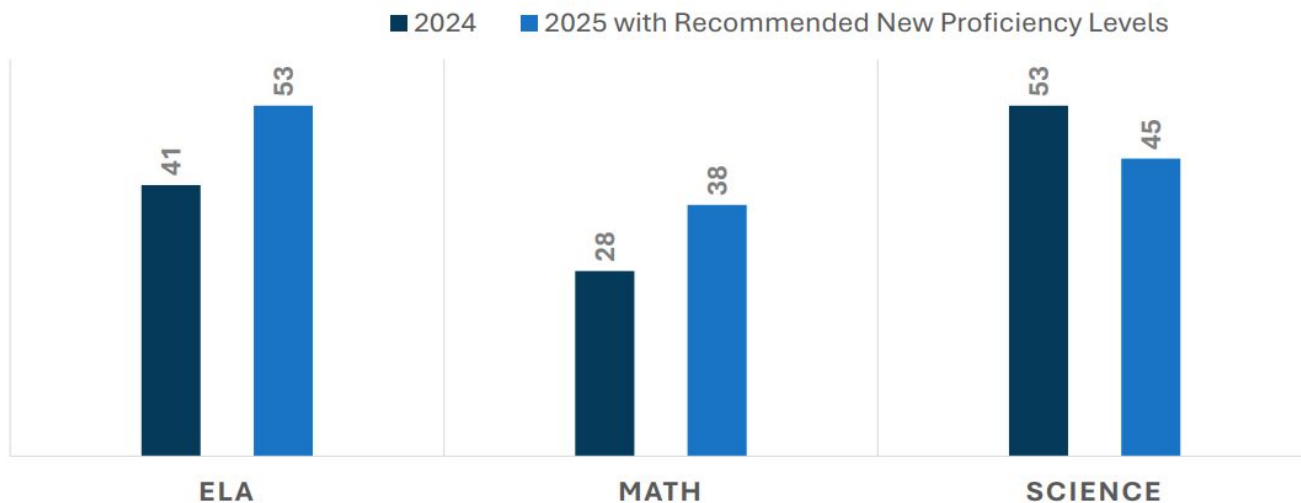
Top educators and policy leaders worked together to realign and redesign Illinois Performance Levels.

- The changes aligned the ACT 'Proficient' benchmark to the score a student needs to get into college, pass college coursework, and succeed in the workforce.
- The changes redesigned levels for IAR and ACT to be vertically unified. All grade bands now have the same performance levels.
- The new unified performance levels are:
Above Proficient
Proficient
Approaching Proficient
Below Proficient
- Additionally, there are new cut scores for proficiency. Some students who were on the 'bubble' between approaching and proficient in ELA or Math, may now meet proficiency due to the adjusted cut scores. With Science the adjustments made it more difficult to reach the proficient level.

Results of the right sizing 2024 vs 2025 Proficiency Levels

A Truer Picture of Student Performance

RATES OF PROFICIENCY BY SUBJECT IN 2024 VS 2025 WITH THE
RECOMMENDED NEW PROFICIENCY LEVELS



Note: 2025 data is preliminary and will not match report card calculations.

EAHS Graduates Examples



Student A

GPA: **4.1**

10 Dual credit/AP courses

200+ hours of Community Service

Honors Society, Seal of Biliteracy award

ELA: 520 → **Not Proficient**

Math: 470 → **Not Proficient**

Outcome: Direct admit to School of Nursing (Full Scholarship)

Student B

GPA: **4.2**

10 Dual credit/AP courses

4-Year Cheerleader, Honors Societies

Seal of Biliteracy award

ELA: 460 → **Not Proficient**

Math: 440 → **Not Proficient**

Outcome: Enrolled in 4-Year Radiology Program

Despite being labeled “Not Proficient” by the state assessment, both students demonstrated college readiness and were accepted into rigorous degree programs.

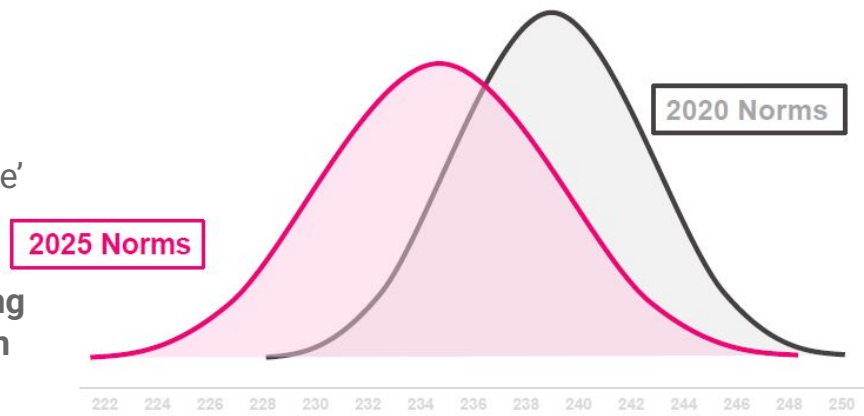
The State did not review the SAT scores to provide updated proficiency levels as we now use the ACT

NWEA MAP Re-Norming (2025)

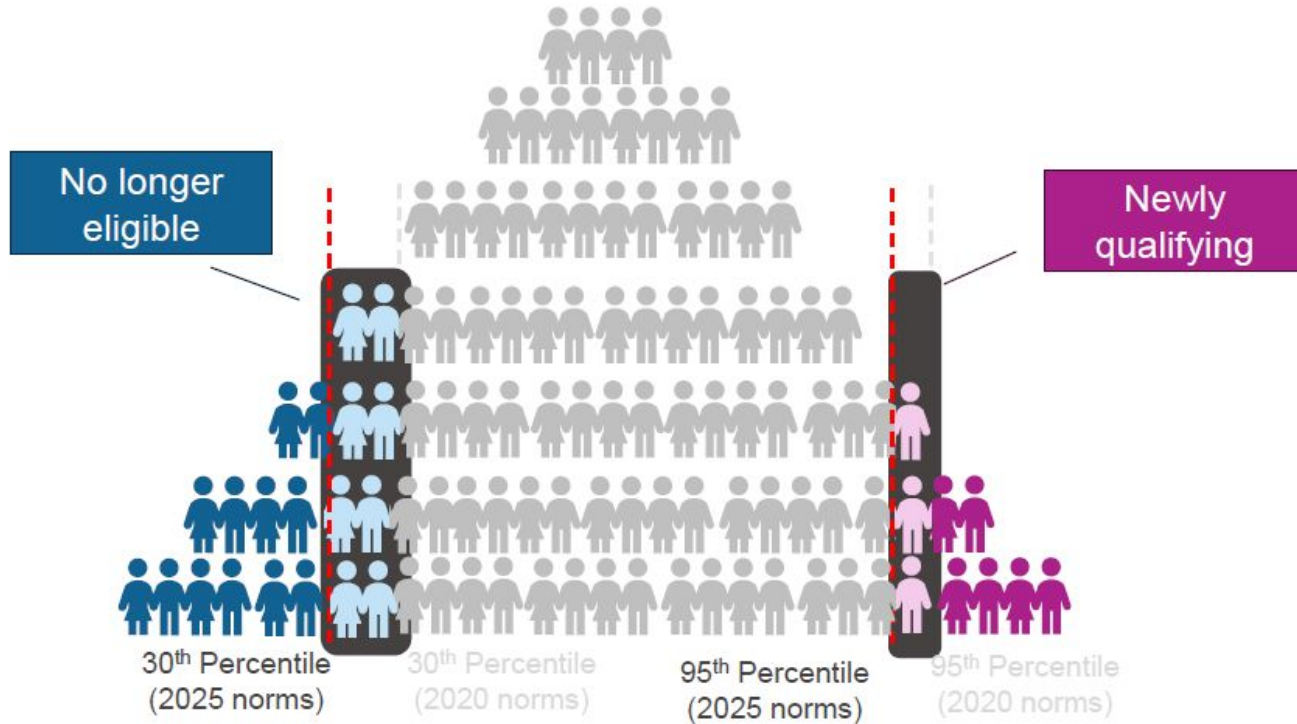
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NWEA MAP Re-norming Study

- The new 2025 norms take into account the impact due to **Covid, demographic changes in the public schools and an increased measurement sensitivity in the revamped Math section.**
- In order to better understand how students are performing, NWEA looked at scores from **22-23** and **23-24** to 'recalibrate' what it means.
- When comparing 2020 to 2025 norms we are seeing **learning loss but also the net effect of new data, new context and an improved test.**
- Not all students are affected equally; **the distribution shifted down and became more variable. Lower achieving students show steeper declines than high achievers.**



Implications for program decisions



What does this mean?

This means, as a general rule, the **same RIT score will now correspond to a higher percentile rank than it did under the 2020 norms.** While patterns vary by subject, grade level, and achievement level, this is the directional shift to expect across most (but not all) scenarios.

MAP Re-norming

Key Takeaways

- Revamping of the Math section means MAP is more responsive to what students are learning.
- 2025 norms reflect current national performance.
- Shifts are uneven across the distribution with larger shifts at lower achievement levels and smaller shifts at higher achievement levels.
- Placement decisions may need to be revisited.

Questions?

THANK YOU

