



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Education  
& Early Development**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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October 3, 2023

Superintendents of Alaska School Districts

Dear Superintendents,

As the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) works to implement the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR) and the Reads Act, we want to be sure to get it right, understand the intersections, and align our systems with what the scores tell us about student performance and areas for improvement in Alaska. Knowing that we are in a period of growth and transition, our timeline and procedures for assessment cut scores have shifted slightly this year.

DEED committed to a multi-year approach to design and review AK STAR that included development of Achievement Level Descriptors and standard setting process in 2022, followed by a validation study and policy review committee in 2023. This process will ensure that the achievement levels best reflect student performance and best inform schools, teachers, families, and students of where they are in their learning towards the [Alaska Content Standards](#).

Now that DEED has updated the cut scores to align with the stated goals of AK STAR, DEED has initiated the State Board of Education (SBOE) approval process. DEED will keep districts informed of updated timelines and reporting dates as this process progresses. DEED is also continuously working closely with the U.S. Department of Education to ensure we are meeting federal assessment and accountability requirements. The current anticipated timeline for SBOE approval is as follows:

- December 6<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting – Revised Assessment regulations that reflect the proposed cut scores are submitted to SBOE for initial review.
- Mid-December – The 30-day public comment period will be opened immediately following the December 6<sup>th</sup> board meeting.
- January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Second review and anticipated approval of the regulations will occur during the SBOE meeting.
- Early March – Reports will be provided to districts following the approval of cut scores and the completion of reporting with NWEA.

Because this is a new system accompanied by robust and customized professional learning, the usual timeline has been extended. If we must choose between doing it quickly or doing it correctly, we are unwaveringly going to choose doing it correctly. Next year, we will return to the usual timeline for the release of assessment results.

If you have any questions during this process, don't hesitate to contact me. As Alaska transitions to this new model of connecting fall and winter MAP Growth interim assessments to the spring AK STAR, our goal is to implement an innovative vision for assessment that better supports teaching and learning, and more importantly, better supports teachers and students.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deena Bishop". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deena Bishop, Ed. D.  
Commissioner