Language Arts Proficiency Score Standards 1998-2002

An evaluation of the proficiency cut-scores for the Language Arts Wisconsin Knowledge & Concepts Examinations (WKCE) tests were necessary due to the department's decision to separate writing from the TerraNova score reporting. Forty-six of the original 63 Language Arts panelists (about 75%) were able to return to participate in the November 11, 1998 cut-score review for Language Arts. CTB/McGraw-Hill conducted the training, data analysis and oversight for the session while DPI consultants facilitated the panel deliberations. Four additional members of the Office of Educational Accountability staff provided security, logistics, problem-solving, and observer functions.

 The detailed Agenda was followed. The panelists were divided into three tables of 5 people per grade level for purposes of the standard setting process. Assignments were made to distribute CESA and other representation across the tables. One panelist at each table served as a table leader and participated in additional training prior to the large group training.

The fundamental tasks that participants performed under the Bookmark Procedure were to:

- (a) study the test items in order of "difficulty" (IRT scale score location);
- (b) determine the increase in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to correctly respond to items as the items increase in difficulty;
- (c) make judgments as to which items represent content that students in each proficiency category (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Minimal Performance) should know and be able to do and place a "bookmark" at the item in their item ordered booklet that represented the dividing point between each of the proficiency categories; and
- (d) write descriptions of expected student performance at each level after the cut points had been established via the standard setting process.

Panelists were reminded to produce their own independent judgment as they made each vote. While consensus was not required, the discussion resulting from each round's vote produced ratings that were much closer together.

How do the revised cut-scores impact student data and how different will the impact be from data reported for Fall 1997 testing using the prior cut-scores? Essay writing is considered to be a much more difficult task than understanding and applying editing skills, writing strategies, and sentence structure. Revised cut-scores for Language Arts only are easier than those produced with Writing included. Therefore, more students are expected to score in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

Note: The nature and difficulty of the text (e.g., stimulus narratives and/or test questions) becomes increasingly more demanding as grade levels progress. However, skills measured on the tests remain constant.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Descriptors
Advanced	Consistently demonstrates a clear understanding and application of: • writing strategies such as graphic organizers, generating ideas, generalization, and supporting detail < • editing skills such as capitalization, punctuation, and usage • sentence and paragraph structure such as parallel construction, subordination, transitions, and coherence ,/li> *(scale scores: 668 and above @ Grade 4; 707 and above @ Grade 8; 734 and above @ Grade 10)*
Proficient	Generally demonstrates a clear understanding and application of: • writing strategies such as graphic organizers, generating ideas, generalization, and supporting detail • editing skills such as capitalization, punctuation, and usage • sentence and paragraph structure such as parallel construction, subordination, transitions, and coherence *(scale scores: 631 to 667 @ Grade 4; 669 to 706 @ Grade 8; 693 to 733 @ Grade 10)*
Basic	Occasionally demonstrates a clear understanding and application of: • writing strategies such as graphic organizers, generating ideas, generalization, and supporting detail • editing skills such as capitalization, punctuation, and usage

	- sentence and paragraph structure such as parallel construction, subordination, transitions, and coherence *(scale scores: 599 to 630 @ Grade 4; 640 to 668 @ Grade 8; 667 to 692 @ Grade 10)*
Minimal Performance	Demonstrates limited achievement in writing strategies, editing skills, and sentence or paragraph structure. Evidence of major misconceptions or gaps in the knowledge and skills tested. *(scale scores: 598 and below @ Grade 4, 639 and below @ Grade 8; 666 and below @ Grade 10)*

Note: The nature and difficulty of the text (e.g., stimulus narratives and/or test questions) becomes increasingly more demanding as grade levels progress. However, skills measured on the tests remain constant.