

New state cut scores raise bar for what is considered proficient

Retroactive MME results drop BHS scores by up to 33 percent

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BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP — The new Common Core State Standards were approved in November, but the slice of humble

pie that comes with them is just now being served up in school districts throughout the state.

Bloomfield Hills Schools Superintendent Rob Glass addressed the new CCSS in a Jan. 10 letter to district parents, explaining the newly

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Variances in two versions of MME 2011 cut scores for current Andover and Lahser Class of 2012 (combined with International Academy results in parenthesis)

| <u>New Cuts</u> | <u>Students Met</u> | <u>Did Not Meet</u> | <u>Percentage Passed</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Math | 224 (529) | 194 (208) | 53.6 (71.8) |
| Reading | 316 (624) | 102 (113) | 75.6 (84.7) |
| Science | 188 (469) | 231 (269) | 44.9 (63.6) |
| Writing | 319 (634) | 100 (104) | 76.1 (85.9) |
| Social Studies | 269 (557) | 150 (181) | 64.2 (75.5) |

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|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Math | 315 (632) | 103 (105) | 75.4 (85.8) |
| Reading | 346 (661) | 72 (76) | 82.8 (89.7) |
| Science | 328 (645) | 91 (93) | 78.3 (87.4) |
| Writing | 319 (634) | 100 (104) | 76.1 (85.9) |
| Social Studies | 365 (684) | 54 (54) | 87.1 (92.7) |

Source: Michigan Department of Education
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_35150_47475--,00.html

raised “cut scores” and how they will affect Michigan Merit Exam and Michigan Education Association Program scores in 2012.

“This year, the Michigan State Board of Education has adopted new standards and raised the cut score that a student must receive in each of the rating categories,” Glass said in the letter. “According to the state, the new cut scores represent a significantly higher standard for student achievement and are intended to more accurately reflect a student’s progress toward college and career readiness.”

According to a Wayne RESA video Glass directed parents to at www.mistreamnet.com/vidflv.php?w=ho=resa121611, the new cut line is the center of a broad and blurry area to determine college readiness. The old cut scores were focused on preparing students for a manufacturing-based economy, where many would go on to factory jobs after high school.

“Michigan is one of only three states in the nation, along with New York and Tennessee, to move into this top tier of test scoring,” Glass said.

BHS has scored among the top districts in Michigan for several years, but all districts will feel the depth of the change when the new scores are released later this year. Although the actual scores will be similar, the cut scores will differ dramatically in proficiency levels with the new standards applied.

“On some tests, students previously could have answered as few as 40 percent of the questions correctly to be considered ‘proficient,’” Glass said.

In order to better allow districts to compare the new scores to past years, the last five years’ scores have

been retroactively presented to show districts and their parents what to expect. And the results, to many, are shocking.

Other subjects, which ranged from 89.7 percent proficiency in reading to 85.8 percent in math, would drop to 84.7 percent and 71.8 percent, respectively. Without International Academy, those scores were 82.8 percent and 75.4 percent, but would drop to 75.6 percent and 53.6 percent proficiency.

One of the most shocking is science. With all three high schools earning 87.4 percent proficiency, 645 met standards and 93 did not. Without the academy, the number already dropped to 78.3 percent with a 328-91 split. However, the new cut drops the three-school proficiency to 63.6 percent with a 469-269 difference. Without IA, it drops to 44.9 percent with a 188-231 difference between those meeting and

not meeting state standards. Under the new cut scores, science came in the lowest in both the two- and three-school analysis.

“While assessment scores show a sharp decline with this change, they still show the academic growth Michigan students have made over the past several years,” Flanagan said in a release. “I have confidence that student growth will continue.”

Glass said raising the bar on the cut scores doesn’t change the dis-

trict’s goal of raising the bar for its students. Various methods to help improve instruction are continually being looked at and considered, he said. He continues to reiterate that a primary focus of the district is to prepare students for a successful life following a college education.

“The BHS community does not want our schools to teach to the test,” Glass said in his letter. “In fact, we continue to see positive results from BHS students on a variety of

measures, with some of the highest ACT scores in the state and most students attending their first choice colleges upon graduation.”

To view past scores and retroactively revised versions of them with the new cuts, visit the Michigan Department of Education website at www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_35150_47475--,00.html.

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“We have to be honest with ourselves about where we are in preparing our kids for the reality of today’s global economy,” state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan said in a release. “These updated scores, while they may be difficult to accept, will help lead Michigan forward. Just looking good is not better than being good.”

The MME for high school juniors lumps the top two proficiency levels together as having met the state standards, while the lower two levels are deemed to have not met state standards.

As a district, the 92.7 percent of 738 students who met the state standards for social studies and are now seniors would drop to 75.5 percent under the new cut scores. If the same subject were looked at with Andover and Lahser included, but not International Academy, which draws students from other districts, then the 87.1 percent of 419 students who were proficient would decrease to 64.2 percent.