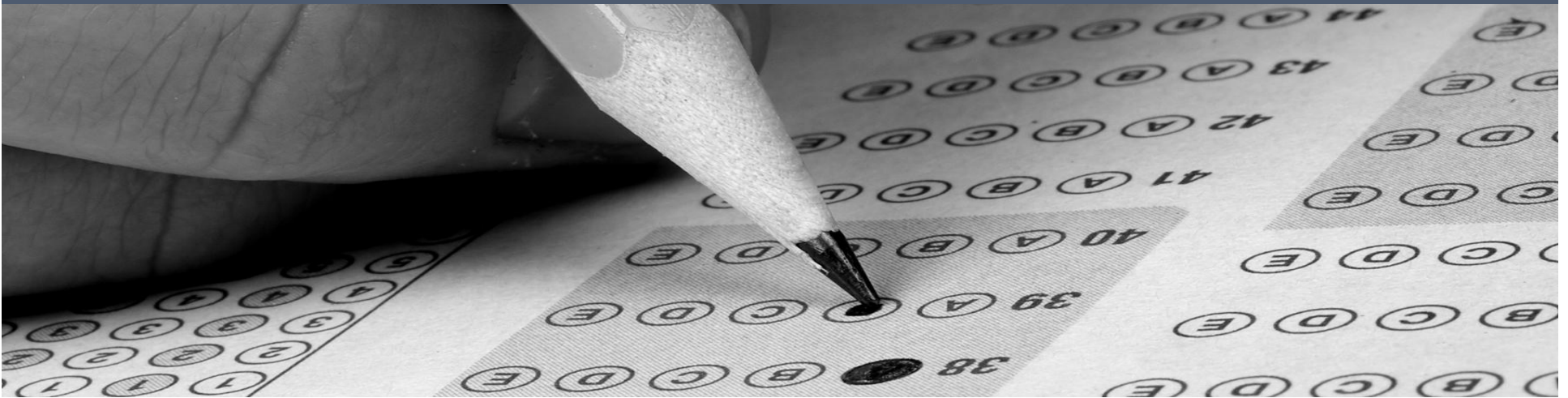


# RAISING EXPECTATIONS

*Understanding and Communicating About*

*New Performance Standards on*

*Michigan's Standardized Tests*



# Background



## Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

- Each year, public school students in grades 3-9 are required to take the MEAP test
- Students are tested in Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies

## Michigan Merit Exam (MME) and American College Test (ACT)

- Eleventh graders take the MME and the ACT with an additional writing component
- The MME assesses students in English Language Arts (reading and writing), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
- These tests are used to track whether students are learning what they need to know in order to be career and college ready

# Background



## Purpose of Standardized Tests

- To assess a student's level of proficiency at the time of the test

## Meaning of Proficient

- Students that meet or exceed Michigan standards on the MEAP and MME meet Michigan's definition of *proficient*

## Meaning of a Cut Score

- A “cut score” is the lowest score a student can achieve on a test (or multiple tests) to be considered “proficient” or “passing” at their respective grade level
- A cut score on a test is the score that separates test takers into various categories, such as advanced proficient, proficient, partially proficient and not proficient

# Michigan's New Performance Standard



## State Board Action

- The State Board recently adopted new, higher MEAP and MME cut scores in Mathematics, Reading, Science and Social Studies
- Previously, Michigan's cut scores were based on whether students showed a basic understanding of what was taught. On some tests, students could have answered as few as 40 percent of the questions correctly to be considered proficient
- The new cut scores represent a significantly higher standard for student achievement and are intended to ensure that all students are on track to be successful in an increasingly "global" economy

# Impact of Cut Score Changes



## In the short term...

- Fewer students will be deemed “proficient” on state tests
- This could result in some criticism of the District’s past efforts or previous standards

## In the long term....

- Higher standards will likely result in improved achievement over time
- Parents will have a more realistic picture of their student’s progress toward career and college readiness
- Students will be more likely to achieve their post-secondary goals
- Michigan schools and students will be better prepared for transition to common state standards and assessments, scheduled for implementation in 2014-15

# District Communication Plan



- Communication to Staff
- Letter to Parents
- “5 Things” List for Parents
- “5 Things” Folder (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
- Newsletter Article
- List of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Communication to Larger Community and Business Leaders

# Key Messages



- The new cut scores are higher and “raise the bar” for our students - they are intended to be a better measure of student progress toward career and college readiness
- The District maintains high standards for our students, and their test scores are consistently among the highest in the state - we anticipate this trend will continue even with the new cut scores
- Any drop in student proficiency will be temporary due to ongoing school improvement efforts and student support
- If a student is reported as “not proficient,” it does not mean that he or she isn't gaining academic skills or is falling behind - it means that on the day of the test, the student was not **yet** proficient on the material being tested
- Several other measures are used in our district throughout the year to ensure that students are making academic progress

# District Efforts to Meet New Standards

- Highlight district efforts

# What Staff Can Do to Help Parents and Students



- Proactively communicate with parents about the change in cut scores
- Use consistent messages when communicating with parents and students
- Express confidence in students' ability to meet higher standards
- Avoid using “education lingo” – keep it simple
- Provide suggestions to parents on how they can help support their child's learning
- Provide reassurance to students if they express concerns
- Use established district protocols and processes for any media inquiries