



Colorado State Board of Education

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION  
DENVER, COLORADO  
August 13, 2014, Part 2

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on August 13, 2014,  
the above-entitled meeting was conducted at the Colorado  
Department of Education, before the following Board  
Members:

Paul Lundeen (R), Chairman  
Marcia Neal (R), Vice Chairman  
Elaine Gantz Berman (D)  
Jane Goff (D)  
Pam Mazanec (R)  
Debora Scheffel (R)  
Angelika Schroeder (D)



1                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: All right, we're back  
2 in order. The next item on the agenda is the adoption of  
3 cut scores for CMAS and CoAlt science and social studies.  
4 Mr. Commissioner?

5                   MR. HAMMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One  
6 of the more important things that we will do is what  
7 you're doing today. And hopefully today, if not, it will  
8 be next month.

9                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: On a procedural note,  
10 we can take unanimous action today, or we've got 30 more  
11 days to chew on this if we choose. Please, go ahead.

12                   UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (indiscernible)

13                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Oh, it does not? So  
14 we can take action today? But we've got the ability to -  
15 - ? Okay, all right.

16                   MR. HAMMOND: The reason why I say it's  
17 important -- when we set -- one of the things -- one of  
18 our core responsibilities as a department is obviously  
19 setting standards, obviously assessments, and obviously  
20 making sure that all of our kids are college and career  
21 ready. And a great part of that is setting up cut scores  
22 for our new assessments. In this case, it's Colorado's  
23 science and social studies assessments. And as we talked  
24 about in the last meeting, and we've made you aware of  
25 this previously, now is the time. We have a group of



1 teachers that have worked very hard in following a  
2 process that the Department has used in the past, and  
3 continues to refine, make sure we get all the info we can  
4 from (indiscernible) and it's very psychometrically  
5 sound. Would that be the word? Okay. But anyway, your  
6 job really is to set the cut scores for our new science  
7 and social studies. Once that's done, then based upon  
8 that, we will advise the field what their scores were in  
9 science and social studies.

10 With that, we have two representatives,  
11 which thank you, from the representative group of  
12 teachers here today, along with Joyce and the  
13 psychometrician from Pearson. So Joyce Sirkowski [ph]  
14 will lead us in the presentation.

15 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thanks, and welcome  
17 all.

18 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Thank you. Before we  
19 start, I would like for our two standard setting  
20 panelists to introduce themselves and just let you know  
21 which panels they sat on during our standard setting cut  
22 score setting process.

23 MR. JOHAN: Good morning, my name is Johan  
24 [name?] and I serve on the eighth grade science panel.

25 MR. DALEY: Good morning, I'm Jack Daley,



1 I served on the eighth grade -- or seventh grade social  
2 studies for CMAS and for CoAlt, both.

3 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Jack also sat on the  
4 vertical articulation panel that we'll talk about as  
5 well, later on in this presentation.

6 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And Johan and Jack,  
7 tell us which districts -- or where you work?

8 MR. JOHAN: I am the Assistant Coordinator  
9 for Poudre School District in Fort Collins.

10 MR. DALEY: And I'm the high school social  
11 studies teachers for High Plains School District, which  
12 is out on the Eastern Plains. It's one of the small  
13 rural ones.

14 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thanks very much.

15 MS. SIRKOWSKI: So the action that is  
16 being requested today, that we had talked about back in  
17 June, is for the board to adopt cut scores and their  
18 associated performance level descriptors for both CMAS,  
19 which is our general assessment, as well as for the  
20 Colorado alternative assessment, which is our assessment  
21 designed for students with significant cognitive  
22 disabilities.

23 During this presentation, I want to put  
24 standard setting within the context of item and the test  
25 development process. We are nearing the end of that



1 development process and I want to make sure that we  
2 understand where we came from. We'll also give you a  
3 high level review of what that standard setting process  
4 looked like, as well as the panelist's recommendations.

5           The Colorado Academic Standards in science  
6 and social studies were adopted by the Board back in  
7 December of 2009. So we are looking at almost five years  
8 ago, and we are now getting to the point where we will be  
9 releasing results for the first time on those standards  
10 that were adopted back in 2009. Today what we're looking  
11 at is setting those cut scores.

12           The start of the entire process for  
13 creating these assessments really does go all the way  
14 back to the development of those content standards.  
15 Colorado engaged in a very intensive process for  
16 developing those standards. The Board, again, adopted  
17 those standards in December of 2009. Following the  
18 adoption of the standards, the Colorado convened a  
19 stakeholder committee and several sub-committees to look  
20 at what the next assessment system should look like for  
21 Colorado. Based on the assessment system attributes  
22 adoption, which occurred in November and December of  
23 2010, we then officially entered the assessment  
24 development process.

25           At that point in time, we engaged our



1 technical advisory committee. Our technical advisory  
2 committee consists of both national and state level  
3 measurement psychometric and assessment development  
4 experts. So they guided us throughout the entire  
5 process, so that in the end we can say that we have a  
6 sound assessment.

7           Based on the recommendations, as well as  
8 the -- sorry, based on the assessment system attributes,  
9 we developed an initial assessment framework that was  
10 developed back in 2010. That is where we identified  
11 specifically the skills and the concepts which would be  
12 assessed on the assessment. That came straight from the  
13 standards. In fact, when we released the frameworks for  
14 comment, one of the most frequent comments was, "Wow,  
15 these really look like the standards." Last time we went  
16 through the process, back with CSAP and TCAP, there was a  
17 great deal of difference between what our standards were,  
18 and then what the assessment framework was.

19           Remember, under our old system, the  
20 standards for great span based. So the first time we had  
21 grade specific information was with the assessment --  
22 that was different this time around. So what we  
23 essentially had to do was look at the standards and  
24 identify those concepts and skills, which were  
25 appropriate for a statewide assessment, and those which



1 were not. Which were removed. So that we have some  
2 standards that talk about being able to debate.  
3 Obviously on a state level assessment, we can't have  
4 students engaging in a debate, and have that assessment  
5 be reasonable in terms of time. Within both social  
6 studies and science, there is extensive research  
7 projects; again, within our state assessment system, we  
8 have to keep that a little bit more limited. Those went  
9 out for public comment. Revisions were made based on the  
10 comment, based on those we took those again, back to our  
11 TAC, got feedback from our TAC in terms of what our item  
12 types need to be and our distribution targets should be.

13 On this next slide, there is a  
14 distribution by standard for grade four, grade seven,  
15 grade five and grade eight. Remember that for social  
16 studies, we do have four standard areas. We have  
17 history, geography, economics and civics. For science,  
18 we have three standard areas; that is physical science,  
19 life science, earth space science. We do also have a  
20 reporting category for science that looks at the nature  
21 of science and scientific inquiry. Also on that side  
22 there is a distribution for the depth of knowledge. When  
23 we're looking at a depth of knowledge one, we're  
24 essentially looking at kids to be able to do a very fact  
25 based answer. As we move up in the depth of knowledge,



1 we would get to more analytical, and more synthesis gets  
2 added in.

3 With our social studies assessments, we  
4 have included what we refer to as performance events.  
5 Essentially, students are asked to respond to a series of  
6 questions based on several different resources. Those  
7 sources can include things like a map, historical  
8 documents, first person experiences, things like that.  
9 So again, with those performance events, students really  
10 are being asked to synthesize across multiple sources.

11 Also in -- for science, for the first  
12 time, we are able to include things like simulations on  
13 our state assessments. And so you can see how much of  
14 the test again is reflected through the performance  
15 events and through the simulations. It's approximately a  
16 third of the test. Also included on that is a split  
17 between the constructed response when students are asked  
18 open-ended items, and they provide their response versus  
19 selected response, where the students are choosing from  
20 answers, or they are engaging with our technology  
21 enhanced items to produce an answer.

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Brief and clarifying.

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: To the right -- the  
24 last two columns to the right -- what is the negative  
25 under standard four? If you had left that blank, it



1 would have made sense, but I don't think that negative  
2 percentages -- in parenthesis.

3 MS. SIRKOWSKI: In -- oh, excuse me --  
4 it's a part of -- those are not negatives -- oh, sorry,  
5 Mr. Chair -- those are in parenthesis because that  
6 represents our nature of science and scientific inquiry,  
7 which is not an explicit standard -- stand alone  
8 standard.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So it's distributed  
10 within the 100 percent that is a above?

11 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Exactly. It is  
12 distributed in the 100 percent that is above. So within  
13 our scientific --

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I found that -- I  
15 found that confusing, personally.

16 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Apologies. Does that  
17 clarify?

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah.

19 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Good.

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thanks.

21 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Sure. Based on that, we  
22 then engaged in actual item development. Remember, for  
23 the first time in Colorado, we are having Colorado  
24 educators participate right at the very beginning of item  
25 development, so we had both Colorado educators engaged in



1 writing, as well as professional item writers engaged in  
2 that activity. Those items were received by the  
3 Department; we reviewed those items, we did fact  
4 checking, we did revising, things like that. Once those  
5 items were clean, they were then sent back to a group of  
6 Colorado educators to review for two different pieces --  
7 both content -- does it match the standards? Does it  
8 match what we have in the framework? As well as for bias  
9 and sensitivity issues.

10 Based on the educator feedback, we again  
11 went back and revised the items, edited the items as  
12 needed. Once we had our pool of items, it was time for  
13 us to move into field testing. Again, as we did that, we  
14 consulted with our technical advisory committee to talk  
15 about how many students do we need, how do we sample,  
16 things like that. Once we completed the field test, we  
17 engaged in preparation for scoring. Because so much of  
18 the Colorado assessment is constructed response, right,  
19 where students are providing their own response, we  
20 needed to identify what does a zero look like? What does  
21 a one look like? What does a two look like? What does a  
22 three look like? And again, that came from Colorado  
23 educators to guide that decision. Those papers were then  
24 used to train the scorers, and to monitor the scoring to  
25 ensure that scoring was reliable and valid.



1                   Following that, again, we actually engaged  
2                   in the scoring. After we had completed the scoring,  
3                   items that were flagged as potentially problematic were  
4                   again taken to a group of educators. Items could be  
5                   flagged as problematic for a number of reasons. One of  
6                   the most common reasons is that we see difference in  
7                   performance across subgroups. So we may have an item  
8                   where we have females disproportionately performing  
9                   better than males, or vice versa. Or we may have issues  
10                  with racial or ethnic subgroups.

11                  We also look at socioeconomic status.  
12                  Educators look at those items; they are specifically  
13                  looking to see -- is there a way or is there a reason  
14                  that this item might be bringing into student  
15                  performance, variables we don't care about? So unfairly  
16                  interesting or disinteresting certain parties -- for  
17                  certain parties to be offended, things like that.  
18                  Educators then again give recommendations about whether  
19                  or not the items can move forward for an operational  
20                  assessment.

21                  The flag itself does not mean that there's  
22                  a problem with the item. The flag just means "take a  
23                  second look". We have had experiences in the past  
24                  looking at math items where 6 plus 8 equals 14, is for  
25                  some reason flagged. And when we look at the item, we



1 look at it and say, there is nothing there in that item  
2 that is particularly problematic. But again, it's a  
3 second check that we do to ensure that our items are not  
4 unfairly benefitting or hurting any sub-group.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So Joyce if you would  
6 back up in the 6 plus illustration. Just -- make that a  
7 social studies illustration for me.

8 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Sure. So we could have an  
9 item that asks students to look at a map and identify the  
10 lake that is on the map. That is probably not going to  
11 be an issue of bias and sensitivity if we see a  
12 difference in performance. Again, the standard is being  
13 able to identify features on a map. If we have certain  
14 historical documents that start talking about past events  
15 in Colorado, and we had something in there that would  
16 talk about flooding; we may have had last year, issues  
17 with kiddos responding who were impacted by the flood,  
18 negatively to that item. Right? And so there is other  
19 ways that we could measure the same objective. So that's  
20 this kind of thing that we're looking for. Does that  
21 help at all?

22 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you. It does,  
23 thank you.

24 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Based on, again, the  
25 recommendations of the educator -- of the educators, we



1 then move forward, creating our forms, following the  
2 specifications that we have identified. Right? So we  
3 get the right distribution of items across standards. We  
4 have the right distribution of item types. We have the  
5 right distribution of depth of knowledge. We make sure  
6 that items aren't cueing each other; things like that.  
7 We then have our first operational assessment. It's  
8 important to note again, that throughout this process,  
9 our technical advisory committee is giving us  
10 recommendations and giving us feedback. So we are not  
11 engaged in this process all on our own.

12 When we are finished that administration,  
13 we then again engaged in item scoring. After all of the  
14 items were scored, we then did what we referred to as  
15 standard setting with the Colorado educators. We are  
16 going to talk about that today. The next step in the  
17 process is going to be what we are asking you to do,  
18 which is actually adopt cut scores and performance level  
19 descriptors. After that we will actually engage in the  
20 final scoring and the final reporting, and then we will  
21 distribute those results to the schools and the  
22 districts.

23 One -- a couple of pieces that are not  
24 included on here is how these results are utilized for  
25 purposes of accountability, educator effectiveness, et



1 cetera, things like that. It's important to keep in mind  
2 that this Board made a decision that for this year, the  
3 science and social studies assessments would be included  
4 in the school performance framework and the district  
5 performance framework for participation only. And it  
6 would not be included for performance.

7 Dr. Owen will correct me or clarify if I  
8 get this next part not quite accurate. This year's SPS  
9 and DPS will essentially be carried forward not just for  
10 this year, but also for the following year. And results  
11 -- performance results will not be reported out as part  
12 of our accountability system until January of 2016 for  
13 informational purposes. Those results can be utilized  
14 during a reconsideration process. But I want folks to  
15 understand that for a while here, in terms of high stakes  
16 accountability for schools and districts, we have some  
17 time.

18 Also for educator effectiveness for this  
19 upcoming year, we have those two different parts of our  
20 education evaluation system, one part being the student  
21 performance/student growth. Schools and districts are  
22 reported to give a rating on that. They determine how  
23 much that rating contributes to the overall evaluation of  
24 our educators. Next year there is additional flexibility  
25 -- or continuing flexibility in that schools and



1 districts -- although we must have the evaluation be  
2 based 50 percent on student performance, they will  
3 determine how much the state assessments contribute to  
4 that.

5                   Communication also isn't on here, and it  
6 should be on here. We have been talking for a couple of  
7 years about this transition to the new standards and to  
8 the new assessments and what the potential impact might  
9 be in terms of scores. And in our old terminology,  
10 percent proficiency. We have new terminology now, and we  
11 have talked about, there could be a drop of up to 20 to  
12 30 percentage points. We've talked, it has been pretty  
13 theoretical up to this point. We are going to see what  
14 we're actually getting in terms of recommendations from  
15 the educators today, and it's pretty consistent with some  
16 of what we had predicted. We are going to need to work  
17 on communication with the field and to help schools and  
18 districts communicate to their communities and to their  
19 parents about how the system has changed, how the  
20 expectations have been raised, because we are going to  
21 see that within the scores.

22                   UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Can I ask a  
23 clarifying question here?

24                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please, go ahead.

25                   UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So Joyce, just so I'm



1 clear, we had science assessments before; we did not have  
2 social studies assessments before?

3 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Correct.

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So the -- the cut  
5 scores for science are based on -- well, we've had the  
6 same science standards, we have new science standards.

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair? So although  
8 we've had a science assessment in the past, the old  
9 science assessment was based on the Colorado model  
10 content standards. Those old standards. This is the  
11 first time we are assessing the Colorado academic  
12 standards that were adopted in December of 2009 in their  
13 full depth and their full breadth.

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Oh, that's terrible.  
15 I mean, it's terrible that it's taken us so long to  
16 develop the new assessments since the new standards have  
17 been in effect since 2009 or 2010. But I'm glad we're  
18 doing it. Okay. So I understand that. And then on the  
19 social studies, this is -- they're -- they're new and  
20 we've not had assessment before, so you're basically  
21 starting from scratch on this this.

22 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair?

23 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

24 MS. SIRKOWSKI: You're absolutely correct.

25 So although there have been social studies standards in



1 the past, this is the first time that Colorado is  
2 including social studies as part of their statewide  
3 assessment system.

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay. I just -- I  
5 think you said it, but I needed to say it again and make  
6 sure I understood it.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Jane, please, go ahead.

8 MS. GOFF: Yes. If you can, and just a --  
9 however briefly is minimally required -- talk a little  
10 bit about the range finding process. Is that -- is that  
11 like performance level indicator discussion that within  
12 this range of performance, or within this realm of  
13 options or possibilities, or different ways kids could  
14 show -- is that what that is? Because -- and then how  
15 will that be presented -- or reflected -- I should say,  
16 in the report? The actual, physical picture on the  
17 screen that people will be able to see, that teachers  
18 will get. How -- how are they going to see that? Will  
19 it be in there at all? Is there an explanation -- a  
20 range finding for that?

21 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair? Range finding  
22 actually applies to item level scoring. So it looks at  
23 individual items and then differentiates between what is  
24 a zero, i.e.: the student was not about to address the  
25 concepts and skills in that item at all -- and I'm



1       oversimplifying here. A 1 being: That student is  
2       starting to demonstrate progress in terms of being able  
3       to demonstrate that concept and skill. A 2 or 3 being:  
4       That student has hit it spot on. That student has  
5       answered that question beautifully. Oversimplified.  
6       Those rubrics can be item dependent, so depending on  
7       whether the question is a geography question or a history  
8       question, there will be variation. When the item is  
9       initially written, there are some general expectations  
10      set for what a 0, 1 and 2 might look like. And then at  
11      range finding, they are actually looking for sample  
12      papers that represent 0, 1 and 2. There may also be some  
13      tweaking of the rubric. What it is scored against. So  
14      if it's not clear enough, they'll clarify at that point  
15      before actual scoring takes place.

16                    So when we release items -- some of our  
17      items this fall, and they'll be available on those EPATs  
18      that we've talked about in the past. We will actually  
19      have some sample items that will have: This is what the  
20      rubric is and here are sample papers of what a 0 looks  
21      like, what a 1 looks like, and what a 2 looks like; to  
22      help people start to understand what expectations are.  
23      In terms of an individual student report, they are not  
24      going to see that rubric, what they will get back are  
25      these performance level information that we're trying to



1 set today, as well as standards information. But it  
2 won't be down to that individual item level. That would  
3 be a very long, long report.

4 So -- again, and I think when we're  
5 talking about communication strategies and helping people  
6 to be able to interpret what these scores mean, I would  
7 encourage schools and districts to also help parents go  
8 and look at some sample items to show them and say: Here,  
9 this is what we're looking at. This is the kind of  
10 performance we want your child to get to. This is  
11 probably where your child actually is, right today.

12 In relationship to scores, there are a  
13 variety of scores that will be included on the individual  
14 student reports, as well as information that goes to  
15 schools and districts. There will be that overall scale  
16 score. Right, that 100 score that says 256, or 634.  
17 There will also be what we refer to as standard scale  
18 scores. So we will provide scale scores for history, for  
19 civics, for economics, for geography. We will provide  
20 scale scores for life science, physical science, earth  
21 space science, as well as scientific inquiry, and the  
22 nature of science. Remember, it's those scale scores  
23 that allow us to compare performance from year to year.

24 We will also have, for the first time, a  
25 selected response and a constructed response scale score,



1 which will allow schools and districts to look at  
2 students changing behavior in terms of how they are able  
3 to respond to different kinds of questions. Again,  
4 Colorado had a large percentage of their tests that comes  
5 from those constructed response questions. And what we  
6 heard from educators is: It would be really important to  
7 us if we could have a measure across years that help us  
8 see how we're dealing, and how we're addressing the need  
9 for students to be able to write to the science  
10 standards, write to those social studies standards;  
11 separate from the selected response items. So that's in  
12 response to that request.

13                   There will be some other information that  
14 we can't compare from one year to a next, but we will be  
15 able to compare from a student to a school level, to  
16 district level, to a state level. So we can look at what  
17 we refer to as "grade level" expectations. That's a  
18 level down from our standards and parents will get  
19 information that says: Your son or daughter was able to  
20 answer 70 percent of the questions within civics. The  
21 average score for your school was 80 percent. The  
22 average for the state was 85 percent. And parents will  
23 be able to do a gauge then in terms of: Oh, so my  
24 student performed slightly better -- or, sorry, slightly  
25 worse than the school or the district. Those cannot be



1 compared across years though and that's again, going to  
2 have to be part of our education in terms of data  
3 interpretation.

4 The most important score for today's  
5 conversation are those performance levels. So how do we  
6 take those 100 scores -- right, 257 and 634, and answer  
7 the question of: What does that mean? We assigned a  
8 performance level that says: This number equates to  
9 distinguished command; this number equates to strong  
10 command; this number equates to moderate command, et  
11 cetera. But it's those levels that we expect people down  
12 the road to kind of be able to make sense of, as opposed  
13 to knowing that 534 -- where that falls.

14 Keep in mind too that with our performance  
15 levels, we are making a shift in terms of our  
16 expectations. Under CSAP, TCAP, we had a "good enough"  
17 kind of an expectation that we had set with our new  
18 standards, which are mastery based and start at college  
19 and career readiness and work their way back. Our level  
20 3 means kids are on track to being college and career  
21 ready. That is very different than what we had under  
22 CSAP and TCAP with our proficiency expectations.

23 So again, why is it that we set these  
24 performance standards? It's really to help with the  
25 interpretation of the results. There are also what we



1 refer to as kind of high-level performance levels and  
2 policy claims. Back in June, I talked to you about the  
3 change in language from our current language with our  
4 levels.

5 We are now going to talk about limited  
6 command, moderate command, strong command and  
7 distinguished command. When we look at those labels for  
8 distinguished command, what that means is that student is  
9 academically well prepared to move on with instruction in  
10 that content area. For strong command, that kid is  
11 academically prepared. They can -- they can move on. For  
12 moderate command, there is a strong likelihood that that  
13 student is going to need academic support moving forward,  
14 in order to master that next level of standards. For a  
15 limited command, there is a high degree of likelihood  
16 that student is going to need extensive instructional  
17 academic support in order to move forward.

18 So for those policy levels, there are  
19 direct instructional implications. Very high level, but  
20 it gives you a hint. If you have students walking into  
21 your science class who scored at distinguished command,  
22 those kids, they are ready to move on. If you have kids  
23 who are walking in under limited command, you are going  
24 to need to be ready to provide extensive support to help  
25 them compensate for what they missed, and move them



1 forward within the standards.

2 Who participated in the CMAS standard  
3 setting meetings? There were 47 educator panelists. The  
4 biggest criteria for participation really was their  
5 knowledge of the concepts and skills that are reflected  
6 in the Colorado Academic Standards. We engaged in the  
7 standard setting process that is content based. Meaning,  
8 in the end, we're going to have standards that connect to  
9 performance level descriptors, that connect to cut  
10 scores. So we had to make sure that our panelists knew  
11 those standards; they had a solid understanding of those.  
12 They also had to be knowledgeable about a range of  
13 characteristics in the population tested, so we had folks  
14 who worked with our English learners, as well as students  
15 with disabilities. And they also had to have some  
16 interest in the results of the standard setting process  
17 and the consequences associated with the results.

18 Again, this was a content-based decision,  
19 not a policy decision. A content-based decision. But we  
20 needed to make sure that folks were invested, and took  
21 the task seriously as they engaged in this very critical  
22 process. They were selected through an open-recruitment  
23 process by Pearson and CDE. When we look at the  
24 composition of the panel's -- again, we had content  
25 experts, we did have some administrators who



1 participated, as well as our special (indiscernible)  
2 folks who work with students with -- sorry -- work with  
3 students with disabilities, and our English learners.  
4 You can see that distribution on page 16. We also knew  
5 that it was important, frankly, from a policy point of  
6 view, that we did not just have everybody come from one  
7 city. So we did look at where folks were located, and on  
8 slide number 17, you can see the distribution of rural  
9 suburban, urban. We reached out big time to our rural  
10 folks to make sure that they were represented, and that  
11 they were engaged in this process.

12 Slide number 18 shows that the  
13 distribution of our charter and innovation school  
14 representatives versus our non-charter and non-innovation  
15 school representatives, as well as district level.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: District level would be  
17 administrators? Or --

18 MS. SIRKOWSKI: District level can be our  
19 content experts at the district level, so the social  
20 studies content expert for the district who goes and  
21 advises the actual educators could also be principals.  
22 We did not have any (indiscernible) --

23 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: I just don't understand  
24 why there is a third column. Isn't that individually,  
25 they are associated with a charter and innovation school



1 or a non-charter and a non-innovation school?

2 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, the districts  
3 actually, in a lot of cases, they have both charter  
4 schools and regular schools within their districts.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, I see. I  
6 understand why you broke it down. Thank you.

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: On slide number 19, you  
8 have the break-out by the regions within Colorado, as  
9 well as a break-out by district size. Facilitating the  
10 meetings, this really fell to Pearson to do the heavy  
11 lift in terms of facilitation. We did have CDE staff on  
12 site, and that was both assessment staff and content  
13 staff who are available to provide clarification, so  
14 should a question come up about the Colorado Academic  
15 Standards, not the place for Pearson to answer that, that  
16 we wanted coming from CDE.

17 The psychometricians led the meeting, the  
18 data analysts collected the ratings, ran analysis,  
19 generated the feedback reports, and the content experts,  
20 as I indicated, answered content related questions. The  
21 methodology that was used is referred to as the "bookmark  
22 method". It is one of the most widely used content based  
23 procedures to set cut scores for large scale state  
24 assessments. The goal is to set a cut for the just  
25 barely over the line kinds of kids. So as we look at a



1 student who was moving from moderate command to strong  
2 command, our question was -- is -- who's that kid who's  
3 at the bottom of the strong command? Right? What's my  
4 threshold kid? Again, you have our four performance  
5 levels and just a reminder that for a strong command and  
6 a distinguished command, those are students who are on  
7 track towards being ready for college and career. Two  
8 pieces to this methodology is that we used an online  
9 ordered item booklet -- I will talk more about that in a  
10 second - and again, it's focused on the threshold  
11 students. And again, we're assuming students who have  
12 been exposed to the standards, using locally determined  
13 methods and curriculum.

14 The ordered item booklet basically takes  
15 all the items that were on the test and puts them in  
16 order from easiest item to most difficult item. And then  
17 what they panel has to do is essentially set that cut --  
18 at what point have we shifted from kids that we would  
19 expect to know at a moderate command level, versus  
20 students who now we're expecting to know this at a strong  
21 command level.

22 Slide 23 has a visual representation of  
23 those threshold students and again, we had to constantly  
24 go back to that with our panelists. We are not looking  
25 for typical strong, we're looking for right over the edge



1 strong, as we set these cuts. For day one -- and again,  
2 this is very consistent with what we talked about back in  
3 June. We started off with a general session, looked very  
4 much a part of what we just looked at in terms of where  
5 we are within the whole process. There were four grade  
6 level specific panels -- fourth grade and seventh grade  
7 for social studies -- fifth and eighth grade for science.  
8 Groups were allowed, or encouraged to introduce  
9 themselves so that everyone could understand, oh, you're  
10 the content expert, you're the special (indiscernible)  
11 expert, you're an administrator. We did also have, for  
12 our fourth and fifth grade, we had grade up folks. For  
13 our seventh and eighth grade, we grade up and grade down  
14 folks.

15                   Again, our goal was to make sure that in  
16 the end we set cuts that make sense between fourth and  
17 seventh grade social studies, and fifth and eighth grade  
18 science. And folks could talk about -- I'm sending kids  
19 under this expectation, and I'm receiving kids under this  
20 expectation. They reviewed the performance level  
21 descriptors.

22                   You have in your packet two sets of  
23 performance level descriptors. One is for the CMAS  
24 assessments, and one is for the CoAlt. Panelists were  
25 allowed to make some revisions to those performance level



1 descriptors. They clarified some of the verbs in terms  
2 of what they would expect from each level of students.  
3 They then engaged in developing descriptions of threshold  
4 students. They then reviewed the items of the test.  
5 They were trained in the process, they also practiced the  
6 process, they had a complete readiness survey that says:  
7 I get it, I know what I'm being asked to do, I know how  
8 to do it. Let me go. And until the panelists indicated  
9 yes, we have a thorough understanding, we kept working.  
10 They then did their round one ratings. They went home.  
11 The data analysts took those ratings and they did some  
12 work overnight, so that when the panelists came back the  
13 next day, the groups could look at what the round one  
14 recommendations looked like.

15 Remember, those were all done  
16 independently, so now suddenly they could look and say,  
17 oh, this is how I did this, but this is how Johan did  
18 this. This is how Jack did this. And they could have  
19 their conversations and express what their rationale was.  
20 Why did you land there? I landed here, et cetera.  
21 Things like that. They were also given what we refer to  
22 as the Item Difficulty Report, and what is included on  
23 there is basically the percentage of kids who got the  
24 item right. An actual performance. To also guide some  
25 of their conversation.



1                   They again were asked to complete a  
2                   readiness survey -- do you understand what you're being  
3                   asked to do? When they indicated that they were ready,  
4                   they did Round 2 ratings. Following that, they were  
5                   giving -- given what we refer to as "impact" and  
6                   "external" data. With the impact data, this is the first  
7                   time that they see the outcome of their recommendations  
8                   in terms of distribution across the performance levels.  
9                   So this is when they get to see, based on the cuts that  
10                  you recommended, based on content, based on the  
11                  standards, this is the percentage of kids who fall into  
12                  each of the four categories.

13                 Where possible, they were also given  
14                 external data. So for science we had things like our old  
15                 TCAP scores to look at and take into consideration,  
16                 keeping in mind TCAP; different expectations, different  
17                 content. They had NAPE, they also had (indiscernible)  
18                 results. For social studies, we've never had a social  
19                 studies test before, but what we did provide for them was  
20                 some of our reading and writing information of the past.  
21                 We know that there is some relationship between those.

22                 Based on that, again, lots of  
23                 conversation, lots of heartfelt conversation. Lots of  
24                 debating and struggling. Folks then did their Round 3  
25                 ratings, which resulted in their final recommendations.



1 They completed a questionnaire. Included on that  
2 questionnaire were questions that related to the process.  
3 You know, was this an open process, were people  
4 encouraged to speak? Were people able to engage in  
5 conversation openly and honestly? Was the role of the  
6 facilitator clear? Did they not, you know, force any  
7 kind of cut score? Were they just there for process? As  
8 well as, how strongly do you support these cuts scores?  
9 Do you believe they are appropriate? Do you believe they  
10 are a little too high? Way too high? A little too low?  
11 Way too low? So that we could not just get a sense of,  
12 here's a number, but we also understood the level of  
13 support of each one of those panelists in relationship to  
14 that recommended cut.

15 For Day 3, we now brought together the  
16 panel's -- sorry, selected members of the panels, from  
17 fourth grade and seventh grade, to have a cross grade  
18 conversation. Fifth and eighth grade to have a  
19 conversation. To make sure that elementary and middle  
20 school made sense together. Did not mean that the cuts  
21 had to be identical or result in the same percentage of  
22 kids in each level, it just meant that here was an  
23 opportunity to talk and if you saw differences, explain  
24 what those differences may be due to. And folks could  
25 have a lot of different rationales for why performance



1 looks very different in middle school than in elementary  
2 school. But again, but we want to make sure that we look  
3 at that for sense making.

4 Panelists recommendations. What I have  
5 provided for you in Slide number 28, are the median  
6 ratings for each one of those rounds, so that you can see  
7 how panelist recommendations changed across each one of  
8 those rounds. You have that for grade four for social  
9 studies; you have that for grade seven as well for social  
10 studies. You'll see that there's a relatively high level  
11 of consistency between round one and round two. You will  
12 see that for some of the cuts, there was a change in the  
13 cut between round two and round three. Remember, this is  
14 when they are starting to see that impact data and some  
15 of that external data. So folks adjusted in some cases  
16 their cuts and made them actually lower.

17 For the final cuts, you will see that when  
18 we brought grade four and seven together, there was no  
19 change for the recommended cuts for grade four and grade  
20 seven. They had conversation, but in the end they said:  
21 We have made the right decision based on content, based  
22 on standards. These are the accurate scores. For grade  
23 five and grade eight, again, we did see some reducing of  
24 scores between round two and round three for moderate  
25 command and strong command. Very little movement in



1 terms of that distinguished command, that highest level.  
2 And the only time that we -- sorry, the only area that we  
3 saw a change, when we brought the two groups together,  
4 was in grade eight for strong command.

5           What's interesting to note about grade  
6 eight is they had lots of conversation in that room when  
7 they were just a grade eight panel, and there was a --  
8 what I will refer to kind of as the split in the room.  
9 They really struggled between a higher cut score and a  
10 lower cut score. And in the end, that panel had said:  
11 We're going with the higher cut score. When they got  
12 together with the fifth grade panel and they looked and  
13 they said: Does this make sense across our grades?  
14 Let's look at that impact data again. Let's have more  
15 conversation. They made a decision and said: It makes  
16 more sense for us to bring that cut down. They looked  
17 again at that ordered item booklet. Very quickly they  
18 pointed and said: This is it, this is where we see a  
19 shift in expectations for these items. This is where the  
20 cut should be. Again, that's the only one that made a  
21 shift once we brought the two grade levels together.

22           So what does it look like in terms of  
23 impact? Your first (indiscernible) is for social  
24 studies, grade four. We have 32 percent of the students  
25 who are falling at that limited command, 51 percent who



1 are at moderate command, 15 percent at strong command,  
2 and two percent at distinguished command. Also, looking  
3 at grade seven: 45 percent at limited command, 39  
4 percent at moderate command, 12 percent at strong  
5 command, and four percent at distinguished command. It's  
6 important to keep in mind that these panelists saw this  
7 impact data. They looked again and they said, based on  
8 content, based on the expectations of the standards, this  
9 is an accurate reflection. Our cuts are the cuts that we  
10 recommend from a content point of view. And if we vary  
11 off of that, we will no longer be honoring the standards.

12                   They also had a lot of honest  
13 conversation about what is happening from an  
14 instructional point of view with social studies, and  
15 historically what has happened with instruction in the  
16 area of social studies.

17                   Science; grade five is your first bar,  
18 grade eight is your second. We have 28 percent of the  
19 students at limited command, 38 percent at moderate  
20 command, 30 at strong, three at distinguished. Similar  
21 at eight -- similarly at eighth grade; 31 percent at  
22 limited, 36 at moderate, 30 at strong and two at  
23 distinguished.

24                   Remember I told you that as part of the  
25 process, we asked people how strongly are you able to



1 support the cuts that are coming out of this committee?  
2 For social studies, 100 percent of the panelists said  
3 that they could strongly or moderately support the cuts  
4 that were coming out of the panels. For science --

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Say that again. Say  
6 that again.

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: A hundred percent of them  
8 said that they could moderately to strongly support the  
9 cuts that were coming out.

10 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And who are the  
11 "them"?

12 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Sorry, these are our --

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: (Indiscernible).

14 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, these are the  
15 panelists who participated in the process.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay, thank you.

17 MS. SIRKOWSKI: For science, you don't see  
18 that 100 percent. In most cases, we are still at 90  
19 percent. At distinguished command, you see that that  
20 drops for grade five to 70 percent, and for distinguished  
21 command for eighth grade, it's down to 80 percent.  
22 Looking more closely at those particular cuts, remember  
23 another one of the questions we asked was, how  
24 appropriate do you think this cut is? Do you think it's  
25 a appropriate? A little too low? A little too high?



1 Way too low or way too high? Again, in most cases what  
2 we have is 80 percent of the panelists indicating these  
3 are the appropriate cuts. There are for some of the cuts  
4 20 to 30 percent of the panelists that said: Yeah, I  
5 think this is a big high. No one indicated they thought  
6 it was way too high.

7 So there was not that 100 percent  
8 agreement that this is hitting it spot on. There were  
9 some folks that were concerned that maybe it was still a  
10 little too high. If that would be raised to make it  
11 lower -- I'm sorry, if it would be lowered, keep in mind  
12 that what you would end up having is you would have those  
13 20 to 30 percent of the people maybe being supportive,  
14 but you would have 70 to 80 percent of the people now  
15 saying, I think you're too low.

16 Grade at -- again, in grade eight was the  
17 area that we had the most external comparisons available  
18 to us. What we have for CMAS in terms of the recommended  
19 strong and distinguished command is that we have 32  
20 percent of the students falling into that category.  
21 Under TCAP we had 52 percent. So there is that 20  
22 percent drop. Again, one of the things that we've been  
23 talking about for a couple of years now was, be prepared  
24 for a 20 to 30 percent drop; so not completely  
25 unexpected. For NAPE, that sits at 42 percent, TIM is at



1 48, and then for ACT, the college readiness benchmark on  
2 the Colorado ACT, we have 31 percent of our students who  
3 meet that ACT college readiness benchmark. So very  
4 consistent with that. Again, different grade level,  
5 different content, but again it just gives you some  
6 information in terms of -- hmm -- how does this compare  
7 to some other stuff?

8 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Angelika?

9 MS. SCHROEDER: Just real quickly -- just  
10 real quickly, the TCAP proficient seems to me to align a  
11 whole lot more with moderate. Does it not? How close  
12 are we with that?

13 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Let me go look. Mr.  
14 Chair.

15 MS. SCHROEDER: Because I think that's  
16 analogous or not? I mean, we've said that proficient is  
17 not college ready. Historically.

18 MS. SIRKOWSKI: So under our old system,  
19 we had proficient, which is a level three, and advanced  
20 which was a level four. We now have strong at a level  
21 three and distinguished at a level four. Strong still  
22 means you are on track to be in college and career ready.  
23 When we look at TCAP at the 52 percent, right now with  
24 the CMAS we are at about 32 to 33 with the top two  
25 levels; if we add on that moderate command, we are now at



1 closer to 63. So TCAP is kind of following in-between  
2 those two.

3 MS. SCHROEDER: Which suggests the  
4 argument that what we've been calling "proficient" is not  
5 our goal. Is not the goal that we as a Board, and as a  
6 state, have adopted, which is college and career ready,  
7 as opposed to sort of minimal standard. I'm thinking  
8 about how to explain this, because I'm very uncomfortable  
9 with it. And it's -- how we talk about it is going to be  
10 critical to giving this any kind of meaning.

11 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

13 MS. SIRKOWSKI: I -- I think your  
14 interpretation is a very fair interpretation. Going all  
15 the way back to the standards, there was definitely a  
16 change in terms of what the expectations would be under  
17 the Colorado Academic Standards. That concept of our  
18 expectation for all kids is that they are going to be  
19 college and career ready, is very different than what our  
20 expectation has been historically. Communication, like I  
21 mentioned earlier, is going to be key in all of this, and  
22 I do think that we have a responsibility to help our  
23 districts and schools to the extent they want help, with  
24 communicating this to their communities. Again, the  
25 panelist recommendations are based on content and based



1 on the standards, and they believe that these are the  
2 right cuts based on what the expectations are in our  
3 standards.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So let's -- let's --  
5 because we are running out of time on this, and we're  
6 going to have a lot of questions. So why don't you wrap  
7 up the presentation; if you were going to bring your  
8 other panelists into your presentation, please do so, and  
9 then we'll come back and I'm sure we'll have more than  
10 enough questions.

11 MS. SIRKOWSKI: So Mr. Chair, I would like  
12 to go and talk about the Colorado Alternate Assessment,  
13 because that's the other test that we're talking about  
14 today. This I'm not going to go into in as much detail  
15 in terms of all of the process. It was a similar  
16 process, it had to be adjusted due to student  
17 characteristics, due to the test, due to the limited  
18 number of items on the test, so that there were some  
19 changes and differences, and all of that will be  
20 reflected once we make it all the way through this  
21 standard setting process in a final report.

22 We did have an additional meeting on  
23 August 11<sup>th</sup> that we were not originally intending on  
24 having. So I want to talk a little bit about why we held  
25 that meeting. When the Department received the original



1 recommendations of the panel, we looked at those next to  
2 the increased rigor of the standards next to the  
3 perceptions of item writers and item reviewers that, wow,  
4 our expectations have really been raised with these new  
5 standards. These are hard. We put that next to the CMAS  
6 recommendations for cut scores, and we put it next to our  
7 CoAlt science cut scores of the past. And it didn't  
8 quite all meld nicely together. What we actually saw  
9 with those original recommendations is that we had more  
10 kids passing the science test under these new higher  
11 standards than we did under the old standards.

12 So we took a look deeper and asked  
13 ourselves, hmm, what happened here? Are these right?  
14 Are these not right? And we decided that we needed to  
15 have another conversation with the panelists and just  
16 make sure that this is really where they want these cut  
17 scores to be. During that conversation we did a reminder  
18 that this is content-based test and for this particular  
19 population, that is a shift a little bit. Remember,  
20 these are our students with really significant cognitive  
21 disabilities. But as we moved from one level to the next  
22 level, those decisions should be based on content  
23 changed, not other changes, but content changes.

24 We also talked about really -- the test  
25 construction and the item construction. These items are



1 very different than what we have on a regular assessment.  
2 Scoring is very different. So students receive a certain  
3 number of points if they can answer the question  
4 independently. They receive a point lower if they can  
5 answer it correctly with a prompt -- with some hints.  
6 They receive a point lower than that if they can give the  
7 answer after the answer has been modeled for them. They  
8 can get a point if they answer anything at all.

9                   So there is a lot of points on this test,  
10 but a lot of this test looks at what we refer to as  
11 entry-level skills; does the student know how to respond  
12 consistently? That when a question is asked, you answer  
13 a question. Does the student know how to mimic a  
14 response so that when a teacher says: This is the right  
15 answer. Can the student give the answer? Those are  
16 critical, critical skills for this population. Makes a  
17 huge difference. And we value that, and we believe it  
18 should be measured on the test. But it needs to be  
19 measured at the lower end of this test, because  
20 ultimately this is a content based test. Our question  
21 is: Does the student know science? Does the student  
22 know social studies?

23                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Context. Percentage of  
24 overall student population we're talking about in this  
25 narrow window you're discussing?



1 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, there's about  
2 one percent of the total population that takes this  
3 assessment.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you. Please  
5 proceed.

6 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Sure. Again, we followed  
7 a similar -- overall a similar procedure. What is  
8 important to note here is obviously we had a strong  
9 emphasis on making sure that we had special educators who  
10 knew this population intimately, at the table. So we  
11 actually split that out between the teachers we referred  
12 to as "significant support" teachers, who tend to work  
13 with the students with the most significant cognitive  
14 disabilities, special ed teachers; we also had to make  
15 sure that content folks were present to get that balance  
16 between knowing kids, knowing content. Right? We need to  
17 have those two pieces come together.

18 We also looked to get representation from  
19 rural, from suburban, and from urban. You will notice  
20 that we are heavily suburban and urban. Keep in mind  
21 that for these types of kids, they don't always stay  
22 within their local school or within their local district.  
23 These are kiddoes who will be sent to regional programs.  
24 Also, parents seeking additional services for these kids,  
25 whether that be educational services or medical services,



1 oftentimes tend towards more urban and suburban kinds of  
2 areas.

3 Charter school, non-charter school  
4 district level. You'll notice that our charter and  
5 innovation school representation is lower. Again, this  
6 is consistent with the population. Most of these kids do  
7 not end up in charter schools. They need to have those  
8 really intensive special education services that they  
9 find, frankly, at the typical public school.

10 Region -- I talked a little bit about  
11 district size. Information is provided as well. Then  
12 what we have on slide number 41 is again what the cuts  
13 were during each one of the rounds. Social studies for  
14 grade four, and social studies for grade seven, you will  
15 see that there was a high level of consistency between  
16 round one, round two, round three. Folks kind of set  
17 their mind in round one, and they stuck to it. When we  
18 had the follow-up conversation on August 11<sup>th</sup>, they  
19 changed their cut score recommendations. And they did so  
20 unanimously. And you'll see the increase across all of  
21 the levels, aside from novice level, which was already  
22 fairly high in both grades.

23 For science you also have the cuts for  
24 round one, two, three, and four. For science we had two  
25 groups; we were not able to come to consensus. We are



1 providing you both of their recommendations. We are also  
2 indicating that as a department, we are in support of  
3 group 2's recommended cuts. So when we're looking at  
4 science grade five, at the emerging level, one group  
5 wanted the cut to be at 41, the other groups said 45. We  
6 are recommending 45. At the developing, they were  
7 closer. The group 1 wanted it at a 59; group 2 at 61.  
8 They were in agreement at that novice level. This is  
9 interesting that across both tests and both content  
10 areas, folks really held a very, very high standard for  
11 that last level.

12 For grade eight, group 1 wanted an  
13 emerging cut of 61; group 2, 67. Developing 91, group 2,  
14 95. For novice, group 1 was 101, group 2 was 103.  
15 Again, the Department's recommendation is that you go  
16 with group 2. Group 2 did have slightly more support  
17 than group 1. When we look at the resulting  
18 distribution, for social studies we have 24 percent of  
19 the kids at exploring, 35 percent at emerging, 37 percent  
20 at developing, four percent at novice.

21 Grade seven, 17 percent at exploring, 45  
22 percent at emerging, 32 percent at novice -- sorry, 32  
23 percent at developing, six percent at novice. For  
24 science, I have given you the distributions for both  
25 grade -- for both group 1 and for group 2. For grade



1 five, for group 1, the distribution is 11, 36, 42, and 11  
2 at the top. For group 2 it is 17, 39, 33 and 11. For  
3 group 8, group 1 was at 12, 32, 45, and 11. For group 2  
4 -- 13, 46, 36 and 5 at the top level. Again, our  
5 recommendation is that you go with group 2. It would  
6 appear to be more reflective of the actual content, as  
7 opposed to some of those other skills that folks were  
8 looking at.

9 The action that is being requested, again,  
10 in terms of these, is that the State Board adopts both  
11 the science and the social studies -- what I'm going to  
12 refer to as group 2, and the Department recommended cut  
13 scores, and their associated performance level  
14 descriptors for the Colorado alternate assessment.

15 Next steps: Once we have these cut scores  
16 and their associated level descriptors, we can move  
17 forward with reporting the spring 2014 results. Any  
18 delay in making a decision, which obviously is within  
19 your purview, is going to be a delay in getting results  
20 to schools and districts.

21 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay. Questions?  
22 We'll allow five seconds per Board Member.

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That was a phenomenal  
24 presentation. Take a breath and a sip of water.

25 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Thank you.



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: She's drinking  
2 caffeine.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I'm in awe. I worry  
4 about a lot of this. Fundamentally -- by the way, these  
5 are not Common Core, so if anyone is listening, these  
6 have nothing to do with the Common Core. These are  
7 strictly Colorado standards that were worked on over two  
8 years, adopted -- you said December --

9 MS. SIRKOWSKI: 2009.

10 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: 2009. Which means  
11 the implementation of those really would have started the  
12 following fall, which is 2010. I worry whether there's  
13 been enough time and enough resources for teachers in the  
14 implementation of these new standards, for them to feel  
15 that these challenging cut scores feel fair at this time.  
16 I think it's critical that we explain that these will not  
17 be part of their evaluations. That the scores themselves  
18 -- there is more time and there is more time for the kids  
19 who were in first grade back in the fall of 2010, to  
20 actually have had this kind of curriculum and these kind  
21 -- these kind of high standards.

22 I want to emphasize -- I -- I appreciate  
23 your suggestion that we support districts in  
24 communicating, but they only have about 25 percent of the  
25 population. I think our job is much more important, that



1 for the membership of the state of Colorado, that we  
2 explain this. Not just for the school districts. And I  
3 recognize that that puts responsibility on us, and we are  
4 not a communication organization. But we're not going to  
5 -- we're not going to get it if we just ask school  
6 districts to communicate this with the parents. That's -  
7 -

8 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair?

9 MR. HAMMOND: Mr. Chair, I will just say -  
10 - and you bring up a very good point. What -- we have  
11 realized that being out there, that people didn't realize  
12 that science and social studies, they really had another  
13 year talking through everything else. And so we --

14 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Clarify that. What do  
15 you mean, they had another year?

16 MR. HAMMOND: Go ahead, you clarify a lot  
17 better than I have, okay? Because this year only counts  
18 for participation.

19 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Participation.

20 MR. HAMMOND: Right? And then we go into  
21 our new assessments. So the ratings that they get this  
22 year will be held, in fact, for another year, if you want  
23 to talk about that. I mean, it affects science and  
24 social studies as well, but --

25 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, I think this



1 goes back to the -- what we talked about earlier in the  
2 presentation in terms of what's happening with the  
3 accountability system, and what's happening with those  
4 school and district performance frameworks. So for this  
5 year, science and social studies is contributing strictly  
6 from a participation point of view. Those frameworks are  
7 essentially kind of carried over into the following year  
8 as well. And it's not until about January of 2016 that  
9 schools and districts will be provided information from  
10 an accountability kind of perspective, for informational  
11 purposes only, again, in January 2016. So there is some  
12 time before there is accountability impact of performance  
13 from a school and district perspective.

14 MR. HAMMOND: It's -- it's a combination  
15 of we didn't count on participation only, and then you  
16 add to it the shift and the new assessments, and the  
17 delay.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So this is critical,  
19 because otherwise it does not -- to me, it does not feel  
20 fair.

21 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair? I think it is  
22 fair to say that as our panelists were exposed to that  
23 impact data, and although they did not give on the  
24 expectation -- they -- they held firm to those content-  
25 based expectations. They did have conversations about,



1 you know, how do we communicate this to schools and  
2 districts and educators --

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And public.

4 MS. SIRKOWSKI: -- and making sure --

5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And the  
6 (indiscernible).

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: -- and what they said was,  
8 what's really going to be important is media. How do we  
9 get the media to understand these shifts? And to  
10 interpret these scores fairly in terms of where we are?

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We need to remind  
12 that public that when we talk about college and career  
13 ready, we are not talking about college ready. We are  
14 talking in a large part about what our business community  
15 asked for, which is why the standards are so high. So I  
16 serve on the PEBC Board, which is half corporate and half  
17 superintendents, and a couple of us oddballs. And we  
18 just had a discussion at this month's meeting that was --  
19 that was pretty much run by the representatives of the  
20 businesses, telling us that our graduates are not ready  
21 to come to work for them at all. and so that's from  
22 where these high standards come; not from our higher ed  
23 folks, to a very, very large extent.

24 I am wondering if we can have a  
25 conversation -- when we talk about -- I hope I have the



1 words right -- the moderate and limited?

2 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Uh-huh.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Proficiency? Are  
4 those the right words?

5 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Yes.

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: For those folks, the  
7 idea is that they are going to need more. So what is  
8 that more? Are we going to require that the teachers do  
9 all of that? Are there opportunities for parents to  
10 become a part of that? It's not remediation, but it's  
11 about helping those kids come up to a higher level. And  
12 I don't think it's going to be helpful to have that  
13 category without talking about what can we do for those  
14 kids. Especially if we have a huge number of moderately  
15 prepared kids. And yet, you're saying they want more --  
16 but what's that more? Who is going to prepare it? How  
17 do we support it financially? How do we support it  
18 timewise?

19 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair?

20 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

21 MS. SIRKOWSKI: I'm going to start and I'm  
22 going to look at Jill, because there has been  
23 conversations about, you know, what is the appropriate  
24 role for the state to play in helping districts and  
25 schools and educators kind of get amped up for these new



1 standards? We are still very much a local control state,  
2 you know, so we have to walk the line very carefully in  
3 terms of what we provide as guidance, suggestions. But I  
4 do think it's fair for me to share with you that from our  
5 panelist's perspectives, they were eager for the  
6 Department to take on a more viewable leadership role in  
7 terms of, what does implementation of these new standards  
8 look like?

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Sure, Mr. Chair? And  
10 I might also just -- to kind of clarify on an earlier  
11 question, sometimes it helps to just think in years. So  
12 the -- the tests that we're looking at right now are  
13 spring of 2014. And you could think of those as sort of  
14 baseline. And as was stated, those only count for  
15 participation. Then this spring scores will not count in  
16 terms of accountability either. So this -- so it's not  
17 until the spring of 2016 that the performance results  
18 will be fed into our accountability frameworks. I think  
19 it just helps to see that, because it does give you more  
20 of a two year horizon; for people to see the scores,  
21 understand them, understand how the reports work and dig  
22 in.

23 So there's a couple things to build then  
24 on what Joyce was just mentioning. One is that we will  
25 be sharing with you, in our annual strategic plan update



1 of our priorities, which will happen in -- usually it  
2 happens in October when we come to you and share. A big  
3 focus for this year, our priority focus area, is on  
4 standards implementation supports for districts. And  
5 particularly getting down to the teacher level.

6 So we have a variety of strategies that  
7 we'll share with you that we're working on, to do  
8 supports for teachers on understanding the instructional  
9 shifts that are in the standards. Because that's exactly  
10 the nature of the conversation we're having here. We've  
11 been focused on before a proficiency kind of mindset;  
12 we're focused now on a college/career ready, and having  
13 kids achieve that strong command. It's a different level  
14 of expectation. It's a different level of types of tasks  
15 and skills that kids -- we're trying to really see kids  
16 demonstrate. So it does require changes and instruction.

17 So we'll be doing a variety of activities  
18 this year to try to get down to; one, being clear about  
19 defining those instructional shifts in each of the sets  
20 of standards, so teachers really see. We might have  
21 stopped here in the past, now we're trying to take kids  
22 here. What does that look like? How does that require  
23 you to design tasks, activities, use resources  
24 differently than you might have in the past. That's a  
25 real focus of our supports that we'll be doing in terms



1 of outreach in very targeted ways, but also in some broad  
2 ways over the course of this year.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So finally -- this is  
4 second number five. I want you to think about, as you're  
5 helping teachers -- help teachers help parents and  
6 grandparents. When my kid's only limited or moderate,  
7 what can I do? What should I do? What should I think  
8 about this? Because I think that's going to be very,  
9 very important to families. And it's -- I'm not -- I  
10 don't know if we're the right ones at CDE. I just think  
11 that somewhere that's got to -- it's got to come from --  
12 ideally it would come from the teachers, to help them in  
13 their own minds think about what is it that they need to  
14 do in the classroom, but what is it that they can tell  
15 parents to help their own kids? Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Ms. Jane?

17 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That was five  
18 seconds, right?

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Yeah.

20 MS. GOFF: Follow-up on some level, but I  
21 would like to talk -- ask Mr. Daley, because this topic  
22 is -- where is -- where are -- where are teachers -- and  
23 I know we're just fresh off summer, so you haven't had  
24 recent conversation probably with your peers, but maybe  
25 some. Where are they with this -- the forewarning that



1 has been around a while, about the drop and how important  
2 it's going to be for everybody to understand that this is  
3 not the same start context as we've ever had. Where are  
4 teachers on that? And are they -- where are they on  
5 that? Do they -- are they aware of that? Have they had  
6 any time to process what this is going to look like for a  
7 while? And really, the impact it will have on their --  
8 their public life within their schools?

9 And then tied in with that as well is the  
10 idea of the messaging. You know, I think it's -- I think  
11 it's -- I think it's good, and there are some examples of  
12 other -- where other states have -- how they have  
13 navigated their way through that -- the new PR situation.  
14 It's not us though. I think we all have to keep in mind  
15 we're all unique.

16 So what goes on in other states is based  
17 on diff -- sometimes very different circumstances and  
18 situations from the beginning of implementation. But I  
19 do think we all need to go elbow to elbow, because the  
20 districts -- districts need to feel secure in that there  
21 are resources and that there's help. And that it's okay  
22 to say: I need some help. Or ask some good questions.  
23 Give themselves permission to join up in doing this. We  
24 don't know on a daily basis who is taking up the charge  
25 and going with it, and who's not. It's -- it's -- it's a



1 precarious situation sometimes to know what -- how much  
2 do we take over the leadership of -- of this. Us, the  
3 department, and so forth. It's hard to know where --  
4 where do you stop and where do you push a little harder?

5 But you have a wonderful -- you are at a  
6 great place in our state to talk about what -- how is it  
7 out there with teachers' receptiveness to this and their  
8 perception and understanding of what's got to happen  
9 here. And without going too -- without worrying too much  
10 about -- so now my entire classroom is going to have to  
11 be disrupted again. And how do we -- and if you want to  
12 answer, fine, this is not a rhetorical -- and -- five  
13 seconds? I did it, didn't I?

14 (Indiscernible -- many speaking at once)

15 MS. GOFF: Really trying to keep the  
16 teaching head always. I can't help it. But how does  
17 that happen with your colleagues? And is it okay, so  
18 far?

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Mr. Daley?

20 MR. DALEY: Thank you. First thing, talk  
21 about -- you asked about our readiness and how we're  
22 going to perceive this test. To be quite honest, I think  
23 a lot of the teachers I've talk to, working through our  
24 BOCES, working through the process with Pearson, are very  
25 excited to have the test. Because social studies, for



1 the most part, because we haven't been tested, has been  
2 pushed aside. And particularly in the elementary level,  
3 it's not being taught very much. I know there is  
4 individual districts that do, but overall, talking to  
5 them, it's not being taught.

6 And so when we looked at these numbers, we  
7 saw -- we saw that it was going to be shocking to the  
8 general public, but it was not surprising to the teachers  
9 in the room. We -- we understood where it was coming  
10 from, and we saw this as a way of hopefully driving at  
11 the district and at the building level, because we are  
12 very much local control, that there needs to be some  
13 importance put back on social studies. For example,  
14 oftentimes the kids are pulled out of classrooms, they  
15 are pulled out during social studies. We're pushed all  
16 the time for cross-curricular, which is very important,  
17 but sometimes to the -- to the detriment of teaching our  
18 social studies. So I see this as putting a much more  
19 emphasis on it that's going to make this a better thing  
20 for us. And I see it as a way that we can definitely  
21 improve the scores once people are teaching to the  
22 standards. Oftentimes teachers had known the standards  
23 were there, but they weren't necessarily taking advantage  
24 of them, because there wasn't much tied to them. And now  
25 that there is something tied to them, you are going to



1 see a lot more teacher teaching to those standards.

2 One of the concerns that I had when I was  
3 in these meetings was the communication part of it. I  
4 can see some parents coming in and asking about it.  
5 Oftentimes parents don't come to the teachers with those,  
6 but I think it's going to be very important for the  
7 district and the administration level to understand what  
8 these mean. Not just to get bombarded with them and see  
9 the scores, but to actually understand what the PLDs and  
10 those things mean. And to help communicate that. And I  
11 think that's where a large portion of that is going to go  
12 to. And the difference between what CSAP or TCAP was,  
13 and what this new abbreviation, CMAS, is. Because  
14 oftentimes that just is overwhelming to our public. And  
15 after a while, it doesn't mean anything. And that we are  
16 asking them -- our kids -- to have different skills, and  
17 actually to do much better at it than what we have in the  
18 past. And to make sure that's communicated better than  
19 it has been.

20 And so I think that's where it needs to go  
21 to. Did I answer --

22 MS. GOFF: Yes, thank you.

23 MR. DALEY: -- most of your question?

24 MS. GOFF: Yes, you did. You did a great  
25 job. Appreciate it.



1 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Marcia?

2 MS. NEAL: Thank you, Jane, you led me  
3 right to my question, which also would have been directed  
4 to Jack. Some of us may remember when we made the  
5 decision to include social studies in the standards, that  
6 was quite a fight. I mean, there was just -- you know,  
7 that we wouldn't do that. And as a social studies  
8 teacher myself and on my current kick of unintended  
9 consequences, nobody ever said, "Don't teach social  
10 studies." But when they didn't test it in the CSAP that  
11 first round -- they didn't. And I would talk to teachers  
12 and they'd say, "Well, I don't have time." And I know --  
13 well, they read social studies and they write about  
14 social studies. So I was very pleased when we got it  
15 back in.

16 But it is, and I think it's really  
17 important that we remember, this is not going to be easy  
18 for many of those elementary schools that you were  
19 talking about, where they have not been focusing or  
20 teaching social studies. I'm so pleased they are, and I  
21 think back to my own education, how many of the -- we --  
22 we're talking you know, about founding documents. I  
23 learned most of those in elementary school, and then you  
24 built on them. But we have kids coming out of elementary  
25 who have no idea what -- so -- but you think they -- they



1 are accepting this and they are not going, oh dear, I  
2 don't have time to do that? Or do you think it's going -  
3 - it will work well?

4 MR. DALEY: Mr. Chairman? You know, I  
5 think the first reaction of course normally is, oh my  
6 gosh, there's more coming out of (indiscernible) --

7 MS. NEAL: Another one.

8 MR. DALEY: But I think as they've taken  
9 some time to start studying the standards, and seeing the  
10 test coming forward, that I've gone down and worked with  
11 our elementary teachers some before this. Because I  
12 luckily have been involved with this process. They're --  
13 they are looking at it as different ways of attacking the  
14 same problems. Rather than focusing more on -- or on  
15 fiction writing, now they are bringing more non-fiction  
16 in, and those type of things. And so I think they're  
17 just adjusting their strategies for it. I think it's  
18 going to be a shock at the beginning. And there is going  
19 to be some of that, I don't -- I can't teach this, or I  
20 don't have time to teach this.

21 Honestly, I don't think it's as much at  
22 the teacher level as -- as at the administration/district  
23 level, as we determine how we're going to spend our time  
24 and our resources. As we determine where those kids are  
25 going to be spending their time of the day. I think the



1 teachers, as they get to have a better grasp of the  
2 standards, will do fine. At the high school level, I  
3 think there's going to be a change there too, because we  
4 don't teach all the same classes to all the same kids.  
5 Depending what district you're in, you may not take  
6 social studies class after your freshman/sophomore year.  
7 The only one that's required to teach is civics. And so  
8 often that's going to be a big shock with the test coming  
9 this fall. Because quite honestly, a lot of those kids  
10 aren't taking the same -- the classes to prepare them for  
11 it. And the districts aren't offering them at the same  
12 time, so -- I think that's going to be a big --

13 MS. NEAL: A big gradual process, I  
14 assume.

15 MR. DALEY: Yes, it is. It's going to  
16 take years.

17 MS. NEAL: Take a while. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Dr. Scheffel? Deb?  
19 Please go ahead.

20 MS. SCHEFFEL: Thanks for the report, it  
21 was very extensive.

22 My question is, as I look at the science  
23 and social studies standards, which are extensive. You  
24 know, about a quarter of inch thick or more, double  
25 sided. I don't know how these distal points end up on



1 the list for which the items have written -- are written  
2 that create (indiscernible). So you look at the  
3 standards book, right? Download it on the internet, read  
4 all of it, which I've done. (indiscernible) and then  
5 it's distilled in the case of fourth grade social  
6 studies, a distinguished command does four things, and  
7 the language sits there. And then Pearson and others  
8 write items to that language, and then from that you have  
9 panelists who've looked at these cut scores.

10 I mean, I guess I disagree with the  
11 valance of those bullets. I don't think they represent  
12 the standards in science and social studies, on these two  
13 pieces of paper here. These PLDs. So that's one problem  
14 I have. The second one is --

15 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Let's take that one.

16 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair?

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

18 MS. SIRKOWSKI: So when we're looking at  
19 the performance level descriptors, they were originally  
20 drafted between CDE and Pearson. Initially taking the  
21 standards and trying to kind of break them down, break  
22 them up, I don't know -- break things up, but kind of  
23 stretch them in both directions, right? Those were  
24 reviewed again by Colorado educators. Those were item  
25 writers, those were also our item reviewers. Again,



1 folks who are intimately aware of the standards, and they  
2 were the ones who articulated, this is how we envisioned  
3 these standards to be operationalized for a strong  
4 command, for a distinguished command, for a moderate  
5 command.

6 MS. SCHEFFEL: May I interrupt? That's  
7 not my question.

8 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Okay, sorry.

9 MS. SCHEFFEL: Actually I have issues  
10 there as well with the levels, but just take the first  
11 one. Distinguished command. Four bullets, that whoever  
12 was on the panel said represented the X number of page  
13 document that represents our social studies standards at  
14 fourth grade. If you put a list -- I mean, I haven't had  
15 time to do it, because this is the first time I've seen  
16 this language, but I've read that book. All right? And  
17 if listed them this way, in a linear fashion, and put  
18 these four bullets across the top, and counted, how many  
19 of these fit into these categories? I don't think they  
20 are representative at all. And so I guess I would  
21 disagree with the panelists that did that work. I can't  
22 imagine what rubric they would have used that would show  
23 evidence that yes, in fact, these four things analyze  
24 primary sources and documents, use geographic tools,  
25 analyze the opportunity costs, and analyze multiple



1 perspectives. I can't imagine how they came up with  
2 those four bullets to distill all the language in our  
3 standards for grade four social studies. So that's one  
4 problem.

5 I don't know if anybody else looked at  
6 that document and tried to match it, but it doesn't match  
7 very well. My second question --

8 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Do you want to engage  
9 that? Jack? Go ahead Mr. Daley.

10 MR. DALEY: I've sat down with the  
11 standards, with these, and looked at them. And the way  
12 that I use them as a teacher is a little different.  
13 Standards used to be different until 2009 and then they  
14 became more grade specific. And I view this PLD as a  
15 grade specific. And so that large document you're  
16 talking about becomes much more manageable because  
17 there's different level standards at each different grade  
18 level. And by doing that, I was able to take them and  
19 break them out, and look at grade four civic standards,  
20 grade four geography standards, grade four history, and  
21 so on and so forth. And that made it a much more  
22 manageable thing. And it made it match up much easier.

23 A lot of this language in this comes  
24 almost directly from each of the EO's and the standard  
25 itself at those ones. And they're pretty well all



1 represented there. They are represented maybe in little  
2 different focus, but based on grade level. If you take  
3 the whole standards, they are not. They are not close,  
4 because they cover eight grade levels plus high school.  
5 But by the grade level, they match up fairly well.  
6 Coming from a teacher's viewpoint. When I took some time  
7 and tried to look at them as writing items.

8 MS. SCHEFFEL: But these four distilled  
9 bullets that are usurped from the standards, and I  
10 recognize the language, are the basis for writing the  
11 items, correct?

12 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair. These are what  
13 are used at a high level to help us write with items.  
14 There's additional information that is provided to our  
15 item writers, again going back to the frameworks. So we  
16 have those frameworks which identify what is accessible  
17 on the state assessment, and that's what we use as the  
18 basis for actually writing the test itself. There are  
19 additional documents that are developed and used by item  
20 writers. They are what we refer to as item  
21 specifications. And that's what guides the actual item  
22 writing.

23 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: So can I just ask a  
24 clarifying --

25 MS. SIRKOWSKI: This is what guides --



1 this is what guides -- oh, sorry, Mr. Chair. This is  
2 what guides the breakout for our performance levels.  
3 This is kind of that -- that end. The other thing to  
4 keep in mind too -- and thank you, Johan, is to keep in  
5 mind that at our distinguished command, those students  
6 are also expected to know everything that came before.  
7 So it's not to say, oh, these four things. There are all  
8 of those other pieces. It's a building a process. Mr.  
9 Chair, I apologize.

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: No, I was just trying  
11 to understand how many -- you know, from standards to  
12 item, you know, it sounds like it goes from multiple  
13 iterations. Different people put their perspective and  
14 influence on the conversation between the standard and  
15 the item. How do you -- I learned early on in my tenure  
16 here that fidelity is a big word in this building. How  
17 do you maintain fidelity with the standards as you walk  
18 through that multiple iterative process?

19 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, it is important  
20 to keep in mind that throughout that process, we are  
21 getting feedback from the Colorado educators. So in the  
22 end, this is representative of what Colorado expects  
23 those standards to be. So we do not change what those  
24 standards are, and in fact, I would suggest that Colorado  
25 has been relatively meticulous about always trying to



1 preserve those standards and not essentially create a  
2 second set of standards that folks should be looking at.  
3 And frankly, as I mentioned earlier, sometimes people  
4 have found that frustrating. So that when we look at the  
5 frameworks and they are identical to the standards, they  
6 were like, but these are the same. And of course that's  
7 what we want them to be. Remember, we have checks  
8 throughout the process, so that we have our educators who  
9 are involved in the item writing and they look to see,  
10 does this connect back to the standards? Not just the  
11 framework, but also back to the standards. We have our  
12 item reviewers who look and say: Is this connecting?

13 And then also keep in mind that we also  
14 have our released items that folks look at, and we get  
15 feedback on. And I am not going to look at you and say  
16 that, by golly, this is perfect. This test is also going  
17 to evolve across time.

18 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay. Dr. Scheffel, I  
19 interrupted your line of inquiry.

20 MS. SCHEFFEL: A follow up. Could you put  
21 language with slides 29 and 30 for the blue categories?  
22 Those are just those graphs (indiscernible) percent of  
23 students at each performance level. What would we say  
24 about 2, or the first bar, and 4 for the second under --  
25 I guess, social studies? What's the narrative? Two



1 percent of, four percent of -- I mean, what is that?  
2 Just give me the narrative that goes with this bar graph.  
3 MS. SIRKOWSKI: So for the two percent and  
4 four percent, those are our students who are at  
5 distinguished command. Those are students who are not  
6 just college and career ready. Those are the kids who  
7 are well prepared for continuing in their instruction in  
8 the content areas. That's how I would operationalize  
9 that.

10 MS. SCHEFFEL: Are you just saying that of  
11 the items that were generated, based on the PLDs, with  
12 the panelists that you used, when they used the rubrics  
13 to determine whether a child falls in one of these four  
14 categories of distinguished, strong, moderate, so forth,  
15 that two percent of the kids ended up being rated  
16 "distinguished"? Is that correct?

17 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair? Yes, that is  
18 correct. So that was that impact data that we had talked  
19 about.

20 MS. SCHEFFEL: So it's a very skewed  
21 distribution if one looks at the slides 29 and 30. And  
22 if one looks at the underpinnings of the item writing,  
23 which is the (indiscernible), it's based on language  
24 density to a huge extent. How are we going to hold kids  
25 accountable and help hold teachers accountable in high



1 stakes testing environment? For helping kids do better  
2 than two percent? I mean, that strikes me as really  
3 discriminatory in many ways. We want, what test  
4 materials are available? Is Pearson writing some test  
5 prep material? Is somebody helping the teachers know?  
6 Hey, the linguistic density of the items in with  
7 distinguished category, for a kid to score well on, they  
8 have to be able to process six sentence stems within the  
9 item itself, in order to be able to score well on it. I  
10 mean, I've looked at these items, and many of you have  
11 too. They are very language dense. There's like 30  
12 words or something in a single question. If this, then  
13 this, compare that, two sources. It's -- talk about ELL  
14 kids, or any kid, and you've got very small number of  
15 kids being able to be ranked that way.

16 Now we can justify in the name of rigor  
17 and difficulty, but I'm saying I would argue that it's  
18 not just rigor and difficulty, it's linguistic density.  
19 But unless you've got explicit teaching techniques for  
20 teachers and kids to figure out how many -- how to get  
21 more kids in this distinguished category, it strikes me  
22 as a very uneven playing field. So I guess I will just  
23 conclude my comments by saying, I -- I feel there's lots  
24 of problem with these cut scores because of the way the  
25 standards themselves were distilled into the PLDs, I



1 don't feel they are representative. Because of the  
2 linguistic density of the items that define how a kid  
3 ends up in of these four categories -- distinguished,  
4 strong, or whatever -- and because of the -- not the  
5 difficulty, kids step up to the plate. But when you're  
6 using language as the operative issue, which is what  
7 largely drives depth of knowledge (indiscernible) those  
8 matrices. And there's no clear unpacking of how those  
9 items are written or scored for parents, teachers and  
10 kids; we're creating a really uneven playing field, and I  
11 don't care that they don't kick in until 2016. I mean,  
12 bad cut scores are bad cut scores. That would just be  
13 thought.

14 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Thank you.

15 MS. SCHEFFEL: Setting them differently  
16 and understanding them much deeper (indiscernible).

17 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, so go ahead. Go  
18 ahead, Elaine. Actually, no, back up. I promised Pam I  
19 would come to her next, and then we'll come to Elaine.

20 MS. MAZANEC: Just a couple questions.  
21 You said that there was 100 percent moderate or full  
22 support on the science.

23 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair. There was for  
24 the social studies. So it's back at --

25 MS. MAZANEC: But on the science, you said



1 there was 100 percent fully or moderate. Can you tell me  
2 how many were actually fully, and how many were moderate?

3 MS. SIRKOWSKI: I'm trying to get back to  
4 the PowerPoint.

5 MS. MAZANEC: I don't know if it shows us.  
6 I'm not --

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: It doesn't, but I'm going  
8 to go back to the slide, Mr. Chair -- I'd like to go back  
9 to the slide, and then I have my guru here who is going  
10 to pick up and pull the breakout there so that we can  
11 look at that breakout. What I do want to show too, while  
12 she's pulling that up, is -- I think it's 31, and I  
13 actually think what I want to go to is -- when I look at  
14 32, which helped us with the folks who were like,  
15 moderately in support. Right? Like, why were  
16 (indiscernible) moderately as opposed to strongly, or  
17 something different? You can see here that we had 80  
18 percent of the folks -- 70 to 80 percent -- are the folks  
19 who are saying, yes, we believe these are appropriate.  
20 We had between 20 and 30 who did say that they thought it  
21 was a bit high. Nobody thought that they were way too  
22 high.

23 And again, I thought that description was  
24 helpful as we were looking at things. I'm completely  
25 putting Dr. (indiscernible) on the spot here by trying to



1 pull this up, so we'll see how we do.

2 MS. MAZANEC: But you gave me percentages  
3 there. I -- I -- you know, I heard you say that, so  
4 that's fine with the percentages. The next question I  
5 have is: You talked about how many of the participants  
6 are eager for CDE to take the leadership role on this. I  
7 would just say, I imagine a few are not so eager too.  
8 But I'm wondering what that -- what that means. When you  
9 talk about instructional shifts, are you talking about  
10 sample curriculums? Curriculum --

11 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Not necessarily.

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Go ahead, Jill.

13 MS. JILL: Mr. Chair. Yeah, and we'll --  
14 we can provide more information. It's actually just  
15 unpacking the standards; going deeper in the standards  
16 and understanding what the standards are asking for. So  
17 it's getting a deeper understanding of the standards. In  
18 terms of the actual curriculum, resources, materials and  
19 tools, that's the purview of the districts in terms of  
20 how they want to then operationalize it. But getting to  
21 that clarity of understanding of what's in the standards  
22 themselves, that's where we were looking at providing some  
23 deeper supports.

24 MS. MAZANEC: But you -- you might provide  
25 some -- some sample lessons to help them have something



1 to work with?

2 MS. JILL: So some of our -- we have been  
3 working with districts through our district sample  
4 curriculum work. Where districts have requested that we  
5 help facilitate a process where they come together and  
6 it's teacher developed, and we actually help facilitate a  
7 district process. So that's the role we play at  
8 providing a template or framework to help support that.  
9 But that's at district request.

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay. Elaine.

11 MS. BERMAN: Okay. Thank you very much,  
12 that was an extraordinarily comprehensive presentation.  
13 I think I -- I -- I need to remind myself and probably my  
14 colleagues that the Board did vote to adopt social  
15 studies standards, and of course the state statute  
16 requires science standards. So we've got -- we've got  
17 both of those in statute and they've -- those standards  
18 have been implemented since 2010 for social studies and  
19 for science since 2010 as well, right? Okay, so that's  
20 number one.

21 Number two is that we also voted and we  
22 have statute behind us to have a assessments for those --  
23 for both those two academic areas. Is that correct? So  
24 that's not up to us. Okay, just -- just to be very clear  
25 about that. The statute requires both the standards and



1 the assessments. So what we're talking about today is  
2 what the cut scores should be for the students in terms  
3 of passing the assessments that we are required to  
4 implement. I am not an expert on this. It sounds to me  
5 like you have assembled a group of experts to determine  
6 the cut scores. It sounds to me like there was  
7 consensus. Maybe not down to the actual individual point  
8 or number, but you got pretty close to consensus on all  
9 of these different cut scores.

10 I did not join this Board to do the kind  
11 of work you're doing. I do not have the expertise to do  
12 this type of work. If other colleagues on the Board want  
13 to do this type of work, I have suggested before perhaps  
14 they join the staff and not be at the policy level. But  
15 to me, our role is to adopt policy and to ask questions  
16 at that level of policy. So I will be voting to support  
17 the cut scores that you have just presented to us,  
18 because I believe, as I said before, you have assembled a  
19 group of experts and have been very, very thoughtful,  
20 conscientious and very detailed about your  
21 recommendation. Will this be a challenge? Absolutely.  
22 But to my colleague Angelika's point, we hear over and  
23 over again from the community that we are not graduating  
24 students with the knowledge and skills in order to enter  
25 the workforce.



1 I cannot tell you how many schools I've  
2 been into -- elementary schools -- where kids cannot  
3 identify where Honduras is on the map. Or Zimbabwe is on  
4 a map. Or even what continent they are in. And it's  
5 very, very, disconcerting. That's on the social studies.  
6 I can't speak too much to the science, because I will  
7 have to admit to my colleagues for the first time that I  
8 failed biology. And I had to take it again. I had to  
9 take it again.

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: But you did take it  
11 again and pass?

12 MS. BERMAN: Thank God.

13 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: All right, so go ahead.  
14 I want to re-engage on some of these issues that Elaine  
15 has just raised.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I just had a comment  
17 to Elaine: I agree with you totally. That was kind of  
18 my point; when you look at bullet 2, under grade four  
19 social studies, it says: Use geographic tools to  
20 investigate and analyze settlement (indiscernible), how  
21 people adapt and modified the physical environment, and  
22 how places in Colorado have changed over time. The could  
23 say how the world has changed over time. Are they going  
24 to learn where Honduras is on the map? I have no idea  
25 based on how the language in our standards was distilled



1 into these bullets. And I guess I think on a policy  
2 level, we have to know what the -- how this has actually  
3 been rendered for item writers in the assessments. So I  
4 agree with you.

5 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And so, let me pick up  
6 from here because I have gotten (indiscernible) questions  
7 and quite frankly, the two issues that have just been  
8 raised kind of speak into the questions that I had on my  
9 page to start with. When I was a cub reporter a thousand  
10 years ago, Morley Safer, in a room I was in, said:  
11 Sometimes the naïve questions are the best questions.  
12 And I discovered over the course of my experience as a  
13 journalist, that I got the best sound bites when I asked  
14 the stupid questions. So I'm going to launch into some  
15 potentially stupid questions.

16 I agree with Elaine completely that  
17 statute requires the assessment. That the character and  
18 the nature of the assessment is our job. And through us  
19 ultimately the staff's job. Several times during the  
20 presentation you talked about how this was a knowledge  
21 assessment. This is -- go ahead.

22 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, it's a content  
23 based assessment --

24 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Content, yeah. Okay,  
25 content -- knowledge of information type of thing. But



1 as I've looked at -- and again this, you know, in my  
2 unsophisticated way, when I look at these exams that  
3 we're rolling out increasingly, they are becoming so  
4 enormously text intensive that I begin to wonder, can you  
5 really get at the content question that's embedded in the  
6 text intensive question, if the student has a text  
7 intensive challenge or problem? And so that's where --  
8 you know, it kind of comes back a little bit to what Dr.  
9 Scheffel was saying. I've seen the same thing in my own  
10 unsophisticated, unschooled way. I look at that and I  
11 begin to wonder, are we really getting at that or not?  
12 And so as I look at this bell curve that you've got which  
13 has an odd distribution -- I mean, it's not a normal bell  
14 curve, it's got a very high backside on it. When I look  
15 at that, I wondered: How does this text intensity -- I  
16 think I just made up a new word -- how does that play  
17 into what's going on, and the cut scores? And I  
18 know completely that this is a conversation about  
19 cut scores, but I'm being to wonder if this conversation  
20 on cut scores is in some ways built on what I might  
21 describe as a -- as a house of sand or certainly other  
22 underlying issues that create challenges to make those  
23 cut scores perhaps not as relevant as we'd like them to  
24 be.

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That's a conversation



1 that's been going on for 50 to 100 years since we've been  
2 (indiscernible).

3 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: I understand, but the  
4 rubber meets the road and I'm the guy with the gavel, and  
5 so I'm trying to figure out what am I signing off on  
6 here?

7 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair. A couple of  
8 different responses and then I'll let my colleagues add  
9 to that if they would like. A couple of things to keep  
10 in mind. First of all is, when we look at the prepared  
11 graduate competencies, especially in social studies, the  
12 very first prepared graduate competencies talks about  
13 students being able to read and write to primary and  
14 secondary sources. So that reading and writing is  
15 directly relevant to the prepared graduate competency in  
16 relationship to social studies. Being able to digest  
17 those primary and secondary sources and make sense of  
18 those and make meaning of those. It also talks about  
19 being able to analyze across those primary and secondary  
20 sources. So it's difficult to separate. It's embedded  
21 within there.

22 Also keep in mind that as part of the bias  
23 and sensitivity review process, we do look at this also  
24 from the perspective of students with disabilities,  
25 English learners -- that's why we very intentionally



1 bring those educators to the table to give us feedback  
2 and to make sure that as we're dealing with language and  
3 load, that it is relevant to what we are trying to  
4 assess. We also have accommodations that are available  
5 for students who may need those. So we may have some  
6 students that frankly, you know what, reading, decoding  
7 them by themselves, and needing to comprehend is a  
8 challenge for them. On this test, they can listen to  
9 those sources being read to them. They do not have to do  
10 the actual decoding themselves. If this was a reading  
11 test, that would be slightly different. But for this  
12 test, we have those accommodations.

13 For our English learners, they have that  
14 accommodation available to them. This one you may not  
15 like as much: For some of our English -- for some of our  
16 English learners who are receiving instruction in  
17 Spanish, they can receive this assessment in Spanish.  
18 They can respond in Spanish.

19 So I am not saying -- again, I will not  
20 claim that this is perfect. I am going to suggest that a  
21 lot of these concerns have been taken into consideration  
22 throughout the development process as well as the  
23 administration process, and it's not like we didn't think  
24 about what are the implications for our English learners,  
25 or what are our implications for our students with



1 disabilities?

2                   And our goal has always been, in the end,  
3 can I get an accurate measure of their science and their  
4 social studies concept and skill knowledge. And in some  
5 cases, embedded within that concept and skill is being  
6 able to access the information that is in writing. And  
7 it is being able to express responses. They are not  
8 separate.

9                   With our standards it is also important to  
10 keep in mind that they are concept and skill based. We  
11 are not asking kids to just rotely regurgitate a year.  
12 It is concept and skill based. It is how do kids access  
13 process and evaluate sources of information? It's  
14 complicated. It is a high expectation.

15                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, so the bell curve  
16 question that you must have thought about why -- I mean,  
17 you accepted the distribution you've created -- what is  
18 the thinking around that? What was the thinking? What  
19 was the conversation?

20                   MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair, so we are not  
21 dealing with a quote, unquote "norm reference test" where  
22 we are trying to replicate a bell curve. What we are  
23 doing with these assessments is going back to what we  
24 refer to as a criterion referenced assessment, and that  
25 criterion is the standards themselves. And the question



1 is: Have our students mastered the standards? And at  
2 what level? And frankly when we looked at our panelists,  
3 they are saying, we don't have a whole bunch of kids who  
4 are way up at that level, and that is the reality. You  
5 could force a normal distribution, but it wouldn't be --

6 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Okay, fair enough. So  
7 final question is: Why -- why the gap in support of  
8 science and social studies -- or social studies versus  
9 science, and why the acceptance of the gap in terms of  
10 the panel? They were relatively unified on the social  
11 studies standards -- or, not standards, but cut scores,  
12 and not as unified on the science. Why -- why -- why and  
13 why was that accepted?

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That's the alternate  
15 primarily, right?

16 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: No, I think -- well, if  
17 I'm remember the graphs right, it was in the standard  
18 test. That you were like 80 percent unified or in  
19 support on this science piece and 100 percent unified on  
20 social studies. Roughly. I mean, I may have my numbers  
21 wrong --

22 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair -- and I may ask  
23 Johan to jump in here, because he was actually on that  
24 eighth grade panel that had that kind of -- a little bit  
25 of a split and had conversations about -- do we go with



1 this higher one, or do we go with this lower one, and how  
2 do we interpret this and how do we look at that? Fifth  
3 grade, much more unified in terms of how they were  
4 looking at things, but eighth grade did have that split,  
5 and it really was being able to distinguish between some  
6 of those concepts and skills and that just barely there  
7 kid, and needing to come to a position of, this is our  
8 understanding.

9 MR. JOHAN: Mr. Chair, I was part of the  
10 discussion. We spent three days -- it was really easy to  
11 (indiscernible) cut score, (indiscernible) we were really  
12 going back and forth, and we can justify why we made that  
13 decision individually and then in a small group, and then  
14 as a large group as a whole. (indiscernible) they do the  
15 vertical (indiscernible), that's when we really started  
16 looking at alignment between fifth grade and eighth grade  
17 and so that's when you will see that the distribution  
18 (indiscernible) more of a line than it had to be.

19 But once again, it was really a  
20 (indiscernible) because you have to make a determination  
21 based on the performance levels of the descriptors, which  
22 are these reasonable and (indiscernible) 66 percent of  
23 the students answered that question at that level,  
24 depending on where they are in terms of moderate or  
25 distinguished or strong. And so yeah, we went back and



1       forth. When we look at the same teachers, just remember  
2       we had 13 people, so two people represent -- you know,  
3       it's easy to say it's 20 percent, so it may be two people  
4       were a different perspective in terms of their  
5       background, coming as a special ed teacher looking at it  
6       from a different perspective. But always coming back to  
7       the (indiscernible) and trying to be with integrity and  
8       authenticity, looking at the (indiscernible) this is  
9       content bias, and following the protocol. And we landed  
10      at the last day, when we said: Let's recalibrate, and we  
11      looked at that cut score for the middle one between  
12      moderate and strong. We just went back to the other  
13      discussions to say: This is where we really looked at  
14      this item, it was a clear cut point between them.

15                   CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Why did -- you didn't  
16      answer the question of why the difference between science  
17      and social studies? People with social studies more --  
18      more -- there were no outliers?

19                   MS. SIRKOWSKI: So, Mr. Chair. Only  
20      because (indiscernible) wasn't part of the social studies  
21      group, so he's not going to be able to answer that.  
22      Social studies, frankly, they didn't have that same issue  
23      as they went through their ordered item booklet. They  
24      came to a spot of mutual agreement very quickly. For  
25      science, there was, for that eighth grade science --



1 should it be here or should it be here? And there was a  
2 lot of debate back and forth. Social studies -- they  
3 didn't have that.

4 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Fair enough.

5 MS. NEAL: Between science and social  
6 studies --

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Other -- other  
8 questions? Comments? Thoughts? Okay, so here's kind of  
9 where we're at. Although I've got some heartburn with  
10 the process overall, it -- it is in the layers beneath  
11 the cut score. You know, as -- if we were to -- if we  
12 choose to delay at this point, we're delaying a response  
13 back to students who've already sat for -- for exams.  
14 And so although I'm a little bit challenged in my own  
15 thinking, it -- really the challenge lies not so much  
16 with this cut score presentation, as how we actually got  
17 here. And that's as -- as you pointed out to me so  
18 aptly, Angelika, that's a -- a long-standing, decades old  
19 conversation that I'm only now joining. So with that, I  
20 would ask we have no further questions, if a motion is to  
21 be offered? Yeah?

22 MS. NEAL: I move to approve the  
23 Department's recommend -- recommended performance level  
24 descriptors and cut scores for CMAS and CoAlt science and  
25 social studies assessments.



1 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: It is a proper motion  
3 and Elaine seconds. Do we want a roll call on this?  
4 Let's have a roll call.

5 MS. MARKEL: Elaine Gantz Berman?

6 MS. BERMAN: Aye.

7 MS. MARKEL: Jane Goff?

8 MS. GOFF: Aye.

9 MS. MARKEL: Paul Lundeen?

10 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Aye.

11 MS. MARKEL: Pam Mazanec?

12 MS. MAZANEC: Can I ask a question? Before  
13 voting? Can we revisit these cut scores later?

14 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Mr. Chair?

15 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Please.

16 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Within our process, and again,  
17 I made mention of, you know, we're all engaging in these  
18 standards for the first time. You know, it's been a while  
19 since they were adopted, but we're all deeply into this for the  
20 time. We have built into our schedule an opportunity to do  
21 what we call "standards validation". So in a couple of years  
22 we're going to revisit and look.

23 MS. MAZANEC: And they could be changed?

24 MS. SIRKOWSKI: And at that point in time,  
25 those could be changed.



1 MS. MAZANEC: Okay, aye.

2 MS. MARKEL: Marcia Neal?

3 MS. NEAL: Aye.

4 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Scheffel?

5 MS. SCHEFFEL: No.

6 MS. MARKEL: Dr. Schroeder?

7 MS. SCHROEDER: Aye.

8 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And the motion carries.

9 MS. NEAL: Thank you for your work.

10 MS. SIRKOWSKI: Thank you very, very much.

11 (Indiscernible -- multiple speakers)

12 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Mr. Daley, and Johan, I'm  
13 just going to go with that, it's so much easier. Please carry  
14 back to your fellow panelists our gratitude for their hard work  
15 on this project. Thank you. We actually have another item  
16 before we get to our noon scheduled executive session. I'm  
17 going to ask staff whether it is time sensitive in any way?

18 MS. MARKEL: It is not.

19 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: Could we push it to  
20 tomorrow? Does that create a -- actually, there are probably a  
21 lot --

22 MS. MARKEL: (Indiscernible) afternoon.

23 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: All right, we'll push it  
24 this afternoon. So with that, we'll need a motion to get into  
25 an executive session here. We need to hang together, because



1 we need a vote. So I'm looking for a motion to convene an  
2 executive session pursuant to 24-64023(b)(1) Colorado revised  
3 statute to discuss personal matters at the request of the  
4 employee receiving the review.

5 MS. NEAL: I so move, Mr. Chair.

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I second.

7 CHAIRMAN LUNDEEN: And moved and seconded.

8 Anyone in opposition? Motion carries. You may now have a  
9 break.

10 (Meeting adjourned)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberly C. McCright, Certified Vendor and Notary, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of April, 2019.

/s/ Kimberly C. McCright

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