Purpose of Agenda Item
This information is a follow-up to a question posed at the August Board meeting regarding cut scores on the state assessments.

Outcomes
The Board will gain an understanding of the history and process of cut score setting on the state tests.

Background
At the August Board meeting, a brief discussion took place on the issue of cut scores or scale scores regarding state tests.

IGAP Cut Scores
The Board set individual student cut scores for tests in the Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) in 1992 in reading, writing and math, 1993 for science and social science, and 1994 for fine arts and for physical development/health. Those scores stood until the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) replaced IGAP in the 1998-99 school year.
ISAT Cut Scores
In 1999, the Board set cut scores for reading, writing and mathematics; in 2000, for science and social science; and in 2001 for fine arts and for physical development/health. At the request of the Board, cut scores for ISAT in science were reexamined by fourth grade science teachers (going through the standards setting process in an abbreviated fashion upon special request) and re-set in 2001 for the dividing line between the Academic Warning and Below Standards levels (the two lowest levels.) All other cut points remained the same. There was no change in the percent of students in the combined bottom two performance categories (Academic Warning and Below) or in the combined top two performance categories (Meets and Exceeds).

PSAE Cut Scores
In 2001, the Board set cut scores for all components of the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE).

A summary of all ISAT and PSAE cut scores is attached.

The Board based its adoption of the cut scores for the ISAT and PSAE on recommendations that emerged from ISBE's standards setting process, delineated in Performance Levels for the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests and the Performance Levels for the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests: Science and Social Science, and in Setting Standards on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (see attachments).

The cut scores will remain the same until standards are reset. Maintaining cut scores (usually for 5-7 years) ensures that longitudinal trends can be maintained for a reasonable amount of time and progress in any given year is measured against the same standard.

Policy Implications
Changing cut scores has major policy implications for maintaining trend lines to measure student achievement. In addition, the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act stipulate that the state use the standards as of 2002 as a baseline to document Adequate Yearly Progress.

Superintendent’s Recommendation
The Board should refer the issue of cut score setting to the Superintendent’s Assessment and Accountability Task Force, for consideration in the broader context of refining and improving the state testing process. The Task Force recommendations will come to the Board at a future meeting.

Next Steps
Post the cut score setting documentation on the ISBE website for public information.