



# Setting Unified Academic Performance Standards for Illinois State Assessments

Orientation Meeting

May 20, 2024

# Introductions

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- Welcome
- Please introduce yourself
  - Name
  - Organization
  - Role

# Facilitators: The Center for Assessment

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- A NH-based non-profit technical and policy consulting organization established in 1998 with the mission of improving student learning through improved assessment and accountability practices
- Currently working with 35+ states, districts, and other entities to provide technical and design support for a range of assessment and accountability issues
- Non-partisan and independent of any governmental agency or testing company
- The Center currently works with ISBE to provide a range of technical support, including coordinating the state's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

# Why? Problems of Practice

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**The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is interested in addressing two problems of practice associated with its current definitions of proficiency and performance levels:**

- Current performance expectations are regularly categorizing students as "not proficient" who are successful on many other measures of academic success.
- Current performance expectations were established piecemeal, and so lack coherence and consistency.



**WHERE  
WE  
ARE**

**High cut scores mislabel students who are on track for college or career as “not meeting” proficiency standards.**

**Our accountability system for schools is not criterion-based. The goal posts move every year.**

**Misleading data (e.g., 70% of schools labeled “commendable”) prevent our Statewide System of Support from directing resources to where they are needed most.**

A teacher in a light-colored shirt and glasses stands in a classroom, gesturing towards a group of students seated at desks. The background shows a whiteboard and some posters on the wall.

**More accurate assessment data for students.**

**More actionable accountability designations for schools.**

**A customized system of support that leads to improvement for all districts and schools.**

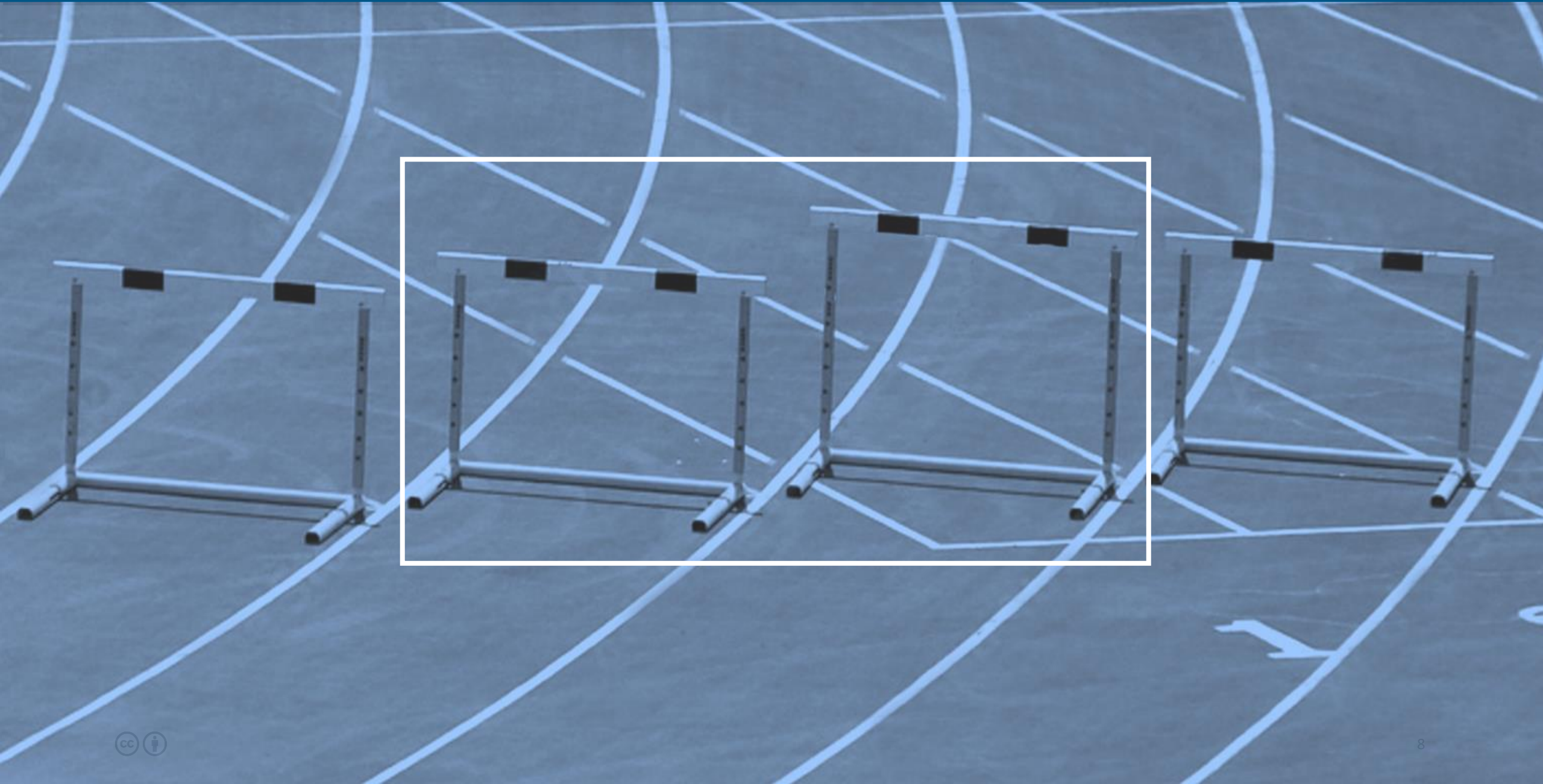
A white silhouette of the state of Illinois is positioned on the right side of the slide. The text 'WHERE WE NEED TO BE' is centered within the map's outline.

**WHERE  
WE  
NEED  
TO BE**

Imagine this is your child...

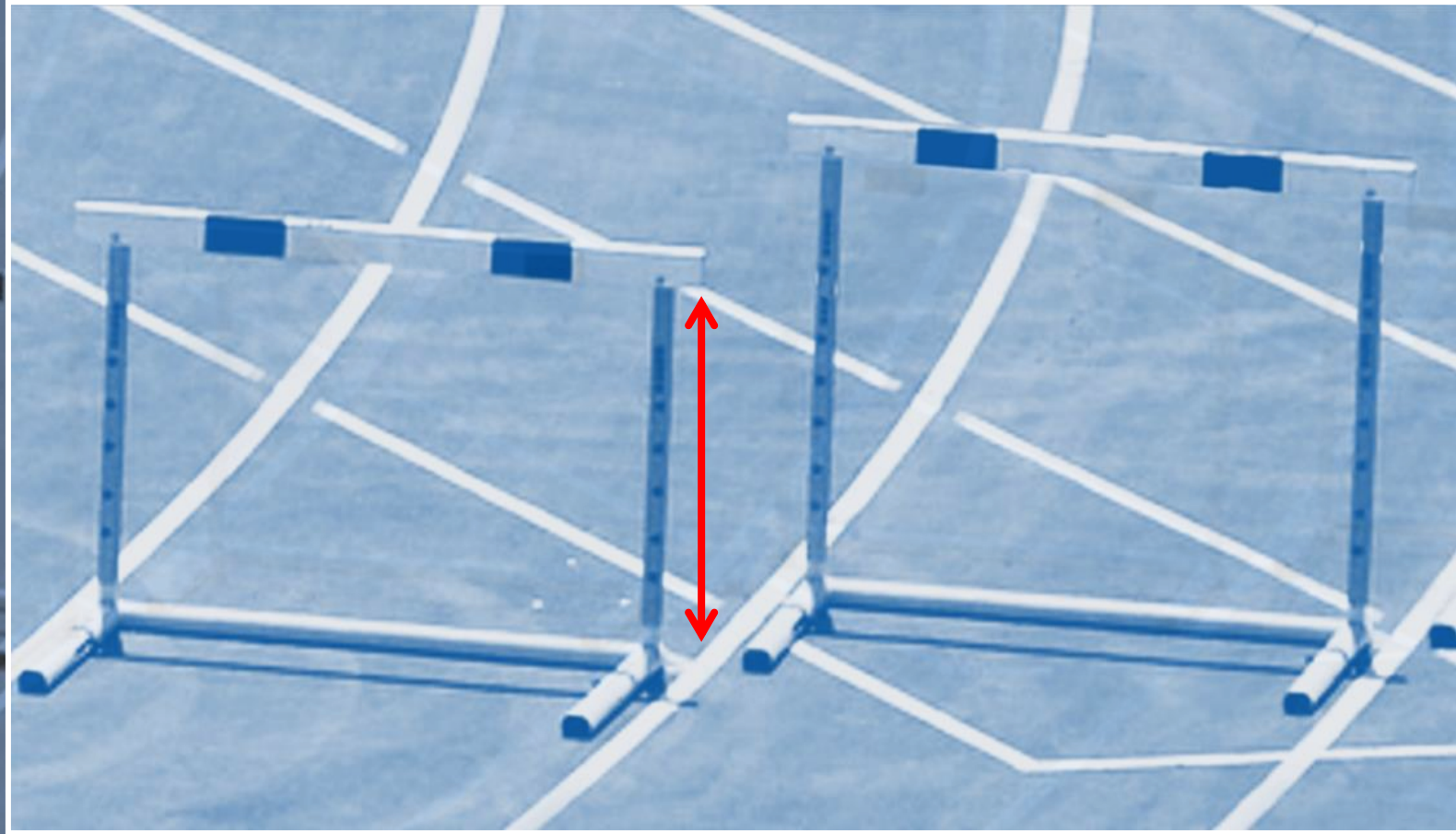


And when you take a closer look at the hurdles...

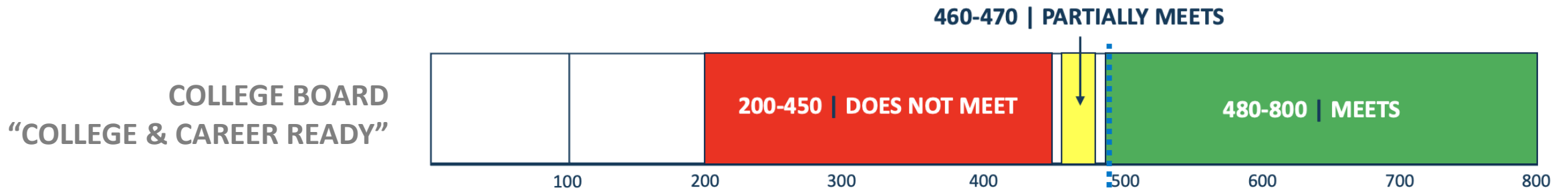




You notice that the hurdles in her lane are higher!



## EVIDENCE-BASED READING & WRITING



“PROFICIENCY” IN ILLINOIS = 540+ > COLLEGE BOARD = 480+

# The “Uneven Playing Field” | Misaligned Assessment Data

## MATH

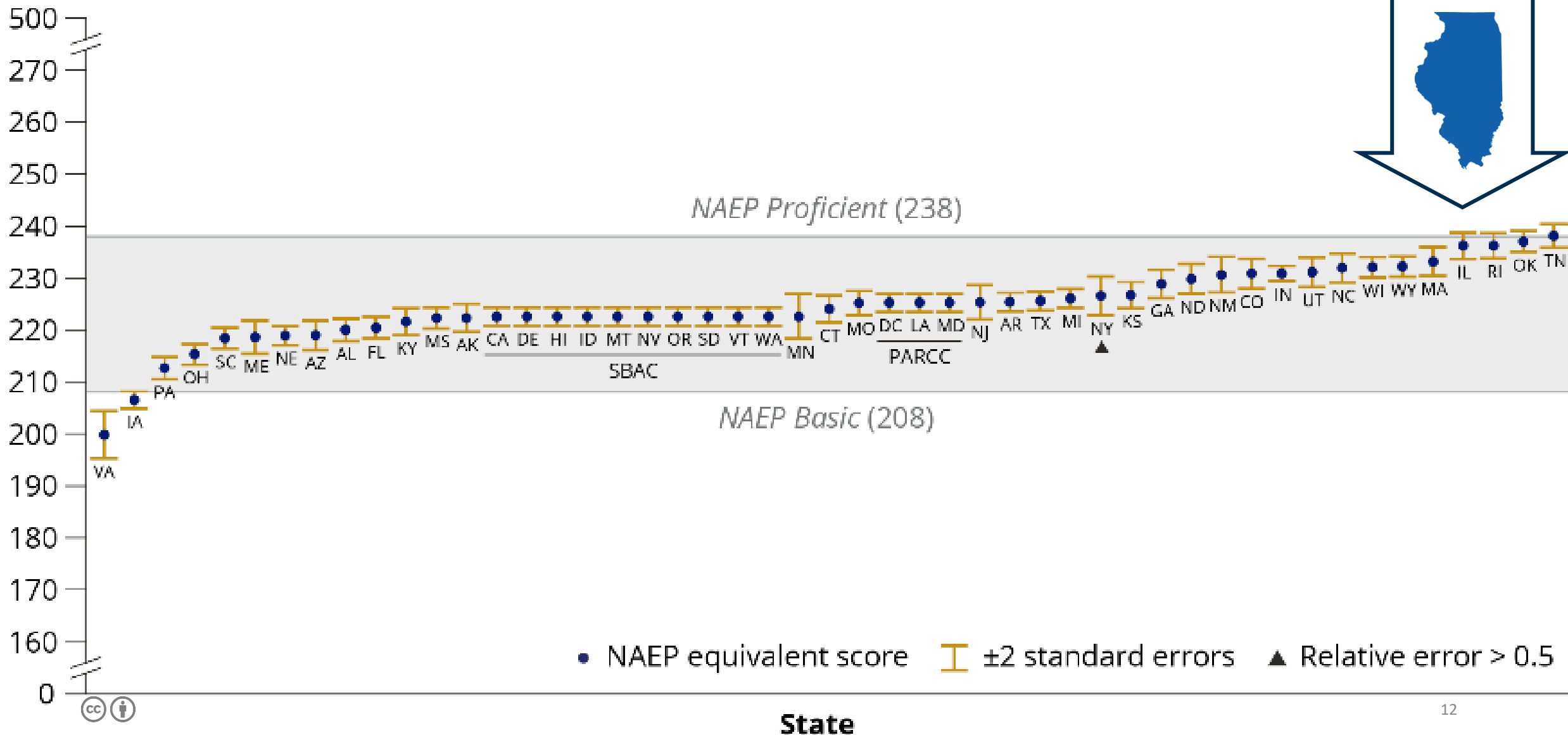
COLLEGE BOARD  
“COLLEGE & CAREER READY”



“PROFICIENCY” IN ILLINOIS = 540+ > COLLEGE BOARD = 530+

# Illinois students face a similar “uneven playing field”

## NAEP equivalent score



# Student Example | Buffalo Grove High School



## 2022 High School Graduate

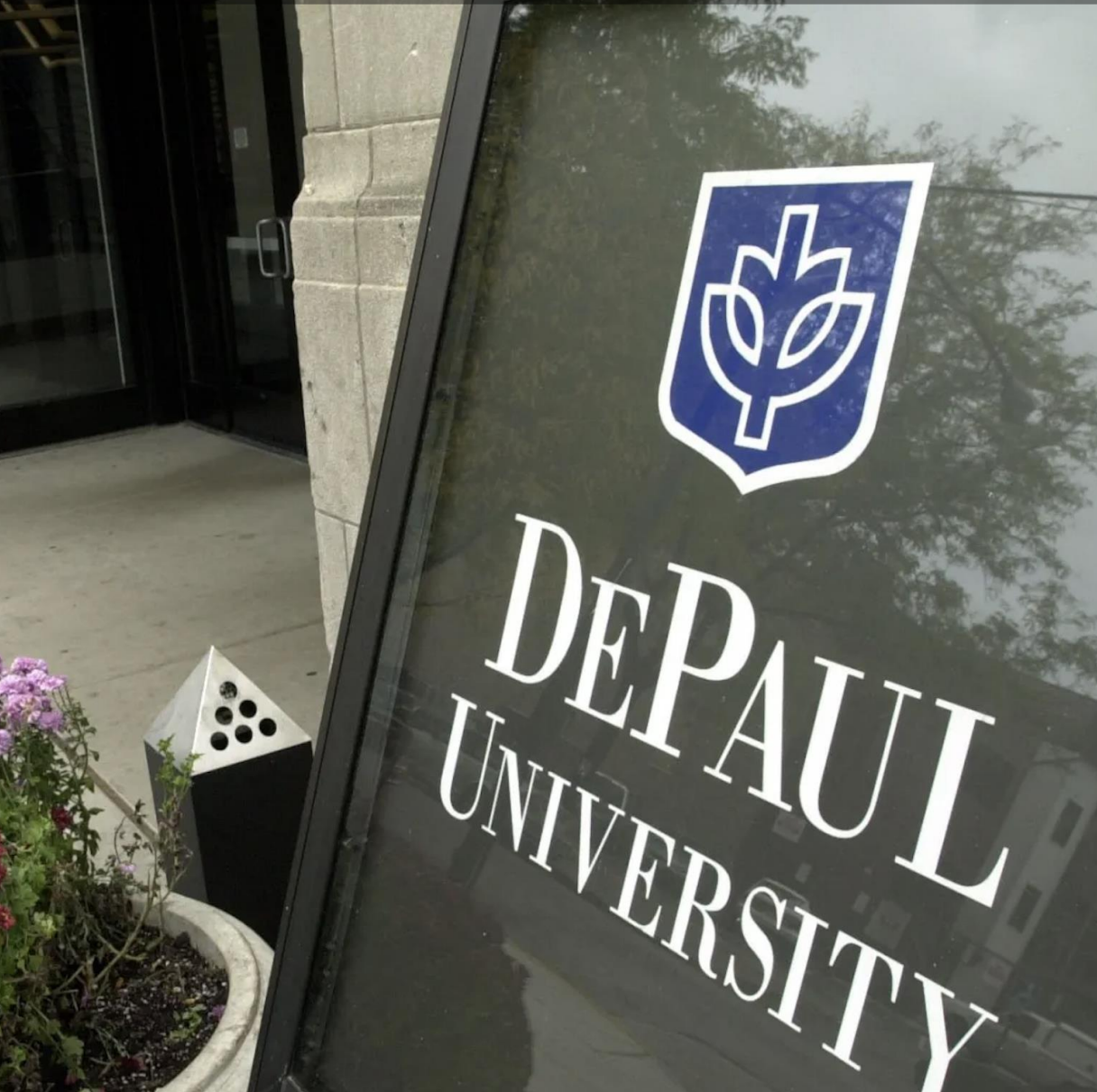
- Performance Data
  - ❑ Evidence-Based Reading & Writing: 460 (*does not meet*)
  - ❑ Math: 440 (*does not meet*)
  - ❑ GPA: 3.666
- Major: History/Special Education
- AP Courses (4)
- Dual Credit Courses (7)
- Industry Certifications and Work-Based Learning (3)
- Activities: Swimming & Diving, DECA, Educators Rising



## 2022 High School Graduate

- Performance Data
  - Evidence-Based Reading & Writing: 490 (*does not meet*)
  - Math: 500 (*does not meet*)
  - GPA: 3.66
- Major: History/Special Education
- AP Courses (7)
- Dual Credit Courses (3)
- Industry Certifications and Work-Based Learning (2)
- Activities: Basketball, Competitive Marching Band



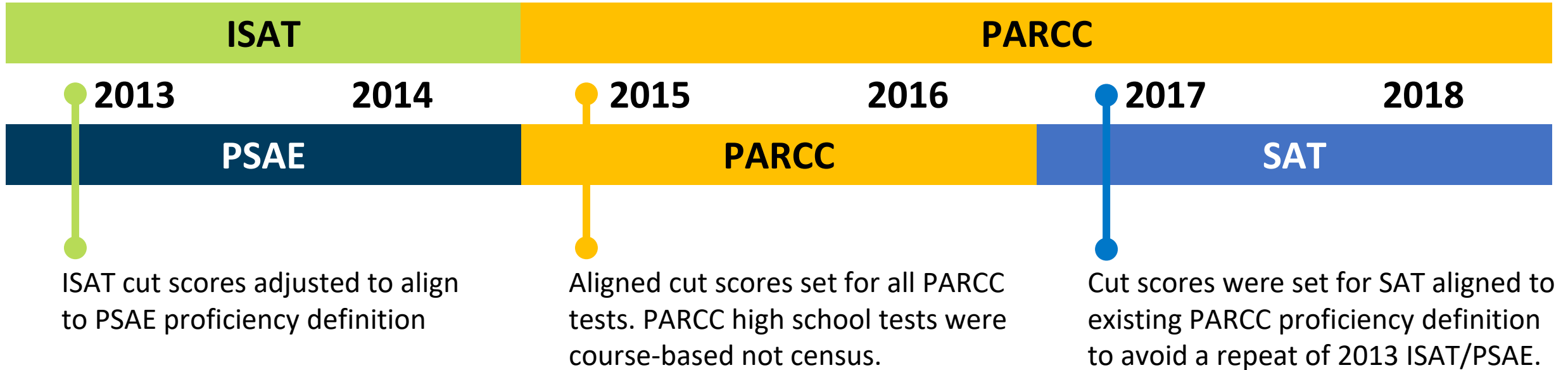


## 2022 High School Graduate

- Performance Data
  - ❑ Evidence-Based Reading & Writing: 440 (*does not meet*)
  - ❑ Math: 490 (*does not meet*)
  - ❑ GPA: 3.15
- Major: Pre-Law/Psychology
- AP Courses (2)
- Dual Credit Courses (3)
- Industry Certifications and Work-Based Learning (1)
- Activities: Senior Leaders



# A Brief History of Proficiency Levels in Illinois



It's time to have a unified proficiency definition aligned across all grades and subjects





# How? The Process

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# The Big Picture

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**Phase I – Develop  
Policy Definitions and  
Guidance**

Spring-Summer 2024

**Phase II – Develop  
Performance Level  
Descriptors**

Fall 2024- Spring 2025

**Phase III – Standard  
Setting**

Summer 2025

# Phase I – Policy Definitions and Guidance

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- This advisory group is charged with helping ISBE develop draft Policy Definitions (PD) and guidance for the Performance Level Descriptors (PLD)
- PDs are high-level descriptions of each performance level, intended primarily to guide the development of grade- and content-specific achievement level descriptions
- Our meetings



# Phase II – Develop Performance Level Descriptors

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- ISBE will work with its assessment experts and other partners to develop PLDs
- PLDs are more detailed descriptions of the knowledge skills and abilities associated with each performance level (e.g., Exceeded Expectations, Met Expectations, etc.)
- Different types of PLDs are often developed
  - **Range** PLDs: Descriptions of performance often used on reports for students, teachers, parents, etc. to describe the spread of knowledge & skills within & across levels.
  - **Content** PLDs: Detailed descriptions of knowledge & skills within & across levels for each content standard.
  - **Threshold** (or Target) PLDs: Describes minimum performance expectations (e.g., performance for students who just barely meet expectations). Threshold PLDs are important for standard setting.

# Phase III – Standard Setting

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- ISBE will work with its vendors and other partners to establish cut scores for state assessments
- Standard setting brings together educators and other experts to make recommendations for the cut scores based on test content and the threshold PLDs.
- These recommendations are reviewed and approved by the Board of Education.
- They are also submitted for peer review by the US Department of Education.

# Policy Definitions

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# Policy Definitions

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- Policy definitions (PD) are a critical part of a strong process since they influence the performance level descriptors and, ultimately, the cutscores.
- PDs establish the vision for student achievement in Illinois and may address or be influenced by factors such as expectations for post-secondary readiness or on-track to readiness.
- Current IAR for *Meets Expectations* in ELA

*Students performing at this level meet academic expectations for the knowledge, skills, and practices contained in the English language arts/literacy standards assessed at grade 11. They are very likely to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition, Literature, and technical courses requiring college-level reading and writing*

# Building on the PDs

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- Public-facing policy definitions are often very succinct and may lack the detail to provide a strong foundation for PLD development and standard setting.
- Therefore, we envision creating both public-facing PDs and a brief report that describes:
  - Policy vision and rationale
  - Criteria for rigor, including relationship to other variables
  - Guidance to make performance expectations more clear, coherent, and useful for constituents in Illinois
- You are an important part of this process!



# Policy Definition Workshop

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# Proposed Agenda for the June Workshop

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- Educational Vision in Illinois - Guidance from ISBE
- Purpose and Intended Outcomes
- Taking Stock: What problem(s) are we trying to solve?
  - Acknowledge concerns with current PLDs
- Constructing Policy Definitions
  - Review sample PDs and develop a draft
- Discuss criteria for rigor
- Discuss guidance to make performance levels clear and useful

# How can you prepare?

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Here are some important questions we'll discuss at the June workshop. Please come ready to share your ideas.

- *What evidence supports the claim that students in Illinois have the academic knowledge and skills to succeed in post-secondary pursuits (e.g., college, career, citizenship)?*
- *What are the most important external benchmarks that should influence our understanding of performance in Illinois?*
- *How can we most effectively communicate information about performance expectations to a variety of constituents?*

# Logistics

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- Meeting Location:  
ISBE Offices at 100 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Springfield, 62777
  - 4<sup>th</sup> floor rooms 4 A & B
- We will start at 9am and conclude by 3pm
- Lunch will be provided (with gluten free & vegetarian options)
  - Other dietary considerations – please email [ahyde@isbe.net](mailto:ahyde@isbe.net)

# Feedback

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Do you have any  
questions or  
comments?





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