

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION – TOPIC SUMMARY****Topic: First Reading**—Essential Skills Achievement Standard on ACT Writing**Date:** January 21, 2016**Staff/Office:** Derek Brown, Cristen McLean, Office of Learning**Action Requested:**  Informational Only  Adoption Later  Adoption  Adoption/Consent Agenda

**ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD:** To adopt the Essential Skills achievement standards for Writing on the ACT English and revised ACT Writing assessments.

**BACKGROUND:****AESRP ROLE**

The Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel (AESRP) has the responsibility of recommending to the State Board of Education the achievement standards (commonly referred to as cut scores) to be used for demonstrating proficiency in the Essential Skills and the State Board of Education has the responsibility of determining whether to adopt the Panel’s recommendations (OAR 581-22-0615).

The Essential Skills graduation requirements were adopted by the State Board of Education in June 2008. The first three Essential Skills (Reading, Writing, and Math) were adopted and applied to students based on when they first enter high school, referred to as the “cohort year,” and are applied to students earning a regular or modified diploma. The specific implementation plan for Essential Skills is based on a staggered approach:

- 2008-2009 Cohort – Reading
- 2009-2010 Cohort – Reading and Writing
- 2010-2011 Cohort – Reading, Writing, and Math

In addition to the staggered implementation plan, the State Board of Education has also adopted three primary assessment options by which students can demonstrate proficiency in each of the Essential Skills:

- 1) State test;
- 2) Other standardized tests (such as SAT, ACT, etc.); and
- 3) Work samples (local performance assessments scored using the official state scoring guides).

**ACT Writing Revision**

In September of 2015 the revised Writing portion of the SAT was first administered. Revisions to the Writing test include a broader range of subject matter, prompts offer more diverse perspectives, writing builds other perspectives into the argumentation, and there is more guidance for planning and rewriting. Students have 40 minutes to plan and complete their essay whereas they previously had 30 minutes.

Scoring and reporting for the ACT writing test have also been updated. Instead of one holistic score, students will receive four domain scores (Ideas and Analysis, Development and Support, Organization, and Language Use and Conventions), each reflecting a key dimension of writing competency. They will also receive a subject-level Writing Score and an English Language Arts (ELA) Score on the familiar 1–36 scale. This allows for more precise evaluation of student writing and a more detailed score report.

**ACT Score Reporting**

The State Board of Education approved the use of the ACT Combined English/Writing score of 19 for the ACT assessments as an option for demonstrating proficiency in the Writing Essential Skill. In September 2015, ACT introduced changes to the ACT writing test and is no longer offering the Combined English/Writing scores. Both English and Writing are now reported independently. Therefore, in order for students to be able to use the ACT for

demonstrating proficiency on the Writing Essential Skill, combinations of scores from the ACT English test and the revised ACT writing test that are equivalent to the Combined English/Writing score of 19 must be identified.

The Combined English/Writing scores were determined by both the English and former writing scores. **Table 1** contains the Combined English/Writing scores. As shown in Table 1, highlighted in yellow, multiple combinations of English and writing scores could lead to a Combined English/Writing score of 19. For example, an English score of 18 and a writing score of 8 would result in a Combined English/Writing score of 19.

A special concordance study was conducted by ACT in fall 2014 to link the former ACT writing and current writing scores. **Table 2** has the former ACT writing scores and concordant current ACT writing scores. The concordant current writing score could be applied along with the English score to get an equivalent score of 19 on the former Combined English/Writing.

**Table 3** shows such combinations of English and concordant current writing scores that may be equivalent to the former Combined English/Writing score of 19.

**Table 1. ACT Combined English/Writing Score**

English Test Score	Writing Score										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	11
3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
4	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
5	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	13
6	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13	14	15	16
10	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
12	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
13	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	19
14	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	21
17	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
18	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
19	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24
21	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27

24	18	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27
25	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
26	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
27	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	28	29
28	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
29	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	31	32
32	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
33	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
34	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
35	26	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35
36	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

[http://www.actstudent.org/writing/combined.html?\\_ga=1.239804676.62015923.1441917644](http://www.actstudent.org/writing/combined.html?_ga=1.239804676.62015923.1441917644)

Table 2. Concordance of Former ACT Writing to Current ACT Writing

Former ACT Writing Score	Concordant Current ACT Writing Score
2	1
3	7
4	10
5	12
6	16
7	19
8	23
9	30
10	32
11	34
12	36

<http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/ACTWritingConcordance.pdf>

Table 3. Combination of English and Current ACT Writing Scores Corresponding to a Combined English/Writing Score of 19.

English	Writing
12	36
13	36
14	34

15	32
16	30
17	30
18	23
19	19
20	16
21	16
22	12
23	10
24	7
25	7
26	1

### **Caution about Concordance Table**

ACT explained that the concordance table should be used with caution because the sample of students included in the concordance analysis might not be representative of all ACT writing test-takers, and a concordant score is not a substitute for actual performance on the assessment. ACT recommended that the State Board of Education monitor the results to determine if such implementation meets the needs of evaluating students' writing essential skill.

### **AESRP Recommendation**

In January of 2016 the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) held an AESRP meeting during which panelists reviewed the changes in the ACT Writing assessment and Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. AESRP developed a recommendation regarding the Writing Essential Skills achievement standard on the ACT English and revised ACT Writing assessment for demonstrating proficiency in the Essential Skills graduation requirement. AESRP recommends adoption of the English and Writing test score combinations in Table 3 as the achievement standard for the purpose of demonstrating proficiency on the Essential Skill of Writing. AESRP recommended continued evaluation of this achievement standard during the 2016-17 school year.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

ODE staff recommends adoption of the score combinations in Table 3 as the Writing achievement standard for ACT as recommended by the Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel.

**EFFECT OF YES VOTE:** If the board adopts the score combinations in Table 3, students will continue to have ACT as an assessment option for demonstrating proficiency in the writing Essential Skill.

**EFFECT OF NO VOTE:** If the board does not adopt the score combinations in Table 3, ODE will need to conduct additional analyses of the ACT score combinations that are comparable to the writing Essential Skill achievement standard on other assessments drawing upon Oregon student data.