



Proficiency Guidance on New State Summative Assessments from NWEA

Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) computer adaptive interim assessments serve many purposes, from informing instruction to identifying students for intervention to projecting proficiency on state accountability assessments. To make sure its flagship product does the latter, Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™) routinely conducts studies that provide estimates of how MAP RIT scores correspond to “proficient” and other performance levels on summative state accountability assessments. These studies provide schools and districts using MAP assessments with tools to predict whether students will demonstrate adequate reading and mathematics achievement on their state accountability assessments, and allow them to adjust instructional plans accordingly.

In recent months, many school districts have requested that NWEA provide similar studies to estimate how MAP RIT scores correspond to “college and career readiness” as it will be measured by various tests. These include the two upcoming Common Core consortia tests—Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)—as well as other non-consortia tests aligned to the Common Core standards.

To be clear: NWEA will conduct new studies. However, Smarter Balanced and PARCC have not yet finalized their proficiency level cut scores. Smarter Balanced did release **preliminary threshold scale scores** in November of 2014, but final cut score values will not be verified and adopted for either assessment until the summer of 2015 (**PARCC timeline**, **Smarter Balanced timeline**). This information is critical in conducting a linking study, since students’ observed scores on both tests are examined to understand how one test predicts performance on the other.



Helping MAP Districts Now

How, then, can school districts use 2014-15 MAP RIT scores to predict whether students will demonstrate “college and career readiness” on Smarter Balanced or PARCC? Users of the Smarter Balanced assessment can reference the [preliminary MAP RIT cut score estimates derived from the November Smarter Balanced Report](#). However, it is not yet possible to predict student performance on PARCC. Not yet, that is. No third party test can predict the percentage of students likely to meet an as-yet-undefined performance level threshold. It’s like trying to predict the odds of winning the lottery before knowing how many numbers to choose.

Early Indicators Help Point the Way

While nobody currently knows what college and career readiness scores on PARCC will eventually be, we can make educated guesses, and some states have already done so. New York, Illinois, and Kentucky have all implemented changes in their state proficiency benchmarks in anticipation of more rigorous standards. Furthermore, the preliminary threshold scale scores released by Smarter Balanced may provide additional insight into what “college readiness” might look like on PARCC once its performance standards have been set. These studies provide a preliminary indication of what college and career readiness may look like for MAP users in other states that align their tests to new standards.

In New York, the cut scores associated with “meeting standards” were elevated on the New York State (NYS) assessment in 2013 in anticipation that PARCC’s college and career readiness standards will be more difficult. Illinois made similar adjustments to the cut scores of the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT), increasing the difficulty in order to prepare students, families, and schools for the expected difficulty of PARCC cut scores. Kentucky took similar action with its Common Core-aligned accountability assessment (K-PREP), increasing the cut scores to reflect performance levels deemed to be consistent with college and career readiness. Reports of the MAP RIT cut scores corresponding to the more rigorous proficiency standards now used in these states can be found in the [Your State Standards/Standards Alignment](#) section of NWEA.org; as mentioned above, NWEA also has [initial estimates for Smarter Balanced based on its preliminary standard setting](#). Additionally, a summary of these reading and math cut scores is shown in Appendix 1.

What Can Educators Do Now?

But the question remains: What can school districts that use MAP RIT scores do right now to understand whether students are on track to meet college and career readiness performance standards? One approach is to use cut scores that do currently exist from the New York, Illinois, and Kentucky tests, or from the initial estimates for Smarter Balanced, and relate them to MAP RIT cut scores. It's important to note that these state cut scores will not coincide precisely with the college and career readiness values that PARCC or other states will eventually adopt, but they may provide a guide during the interim.

The tables and figures shown in the appendix may be used as rough guidelines.

Table 1, for example, shows the MAP RIT cut scores associated with being on track to “meet standards” in mathematics during the fall of eighth grade mathematics in New York, Kentucky, and Illinois and the new Smarter Balanced estimate range from about 227 to 240 with associated percentile ranks ranging from 43rd to 72nd percentiles. This is a very large range, of course, which illustrates how much the standards still differ across states and assessments. Schools and districts can reference any of these sets of benchmarks for making predictions about likely student performance, or else establish their own benchmark, perhaps somewhere within the range defined by these tables. When PARCC and other new state accountability assessments finalize their cut scores, NWEA will begin the important work of establishing MAP RIT scores that correspond to these values.

Appendix 1. College Readiness Cut scores by Assessment, Season and Subject

Table 1. Fall Math Cut Scores

Grade	New York		Kentucky		Illinois		Smarter Balanced (Level 3)	
	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank
2	180	56	181	59	178	49	181	61
3	194	56	195	59	192	50	195	61
4	210	68	208	63	199	39	208	63
5	224	78	217	61	208	36	219	67
6	226	66	220	51	216	41	226	67
7	236	73	229	58	221	39	233	67
8	240	72	230	50	227	43	238	68

Figure 1. Fall MAP RIT Cut Scores: Math

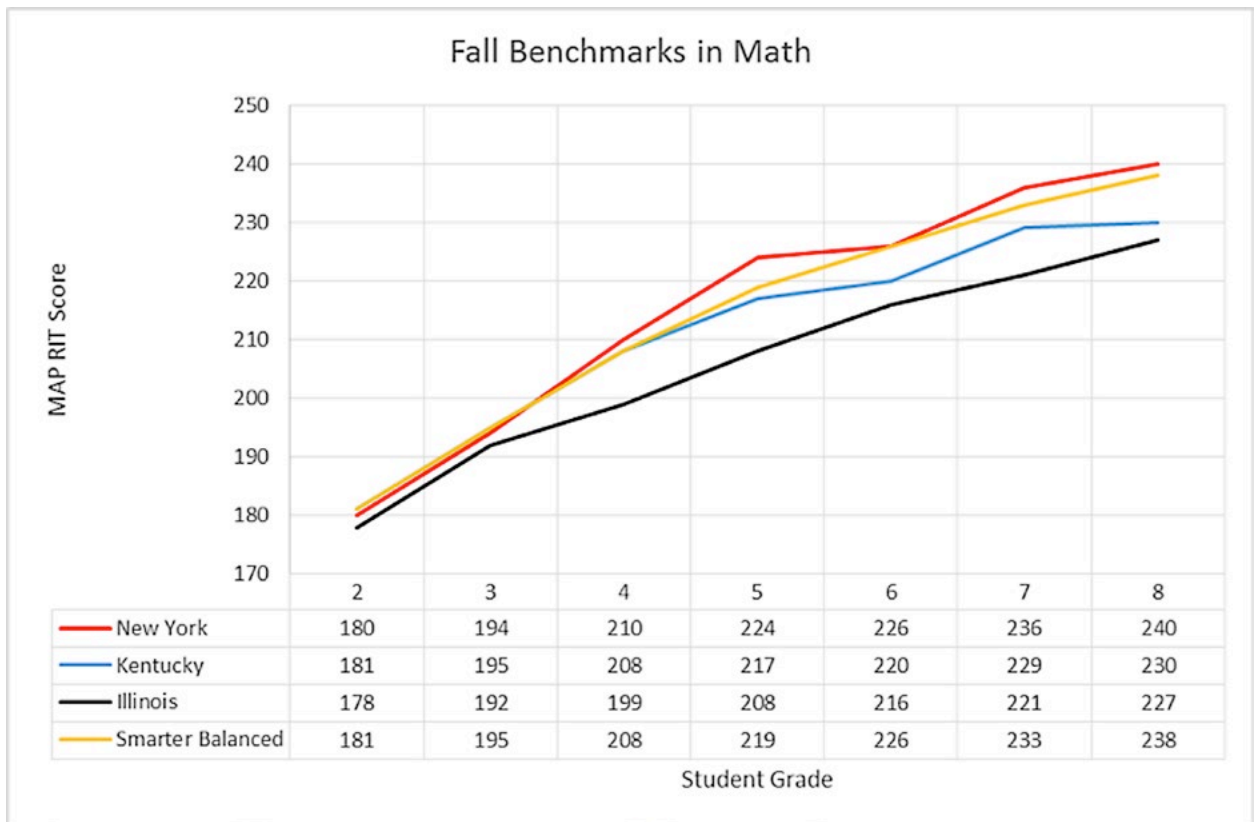


Table 2. Spring Math Cut Scores

Grade	New York		Kentucky		Illinois		Smarter Balanced (Level 3)	
	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank
2	193	56	194	59	191	50	194	61
3	205	56	206	59	203	50	206	61
4	219	68	217	63	208	37	217	63
5	233	79	225	61	216	37	227	67
6	232	66	227	53	222	41	232	67
7	242	74	234	58	226	40	238	67
8	245	72	235	51	232	44	243	68

Figure 2. Spring MAP RIT Cut Scores: Math

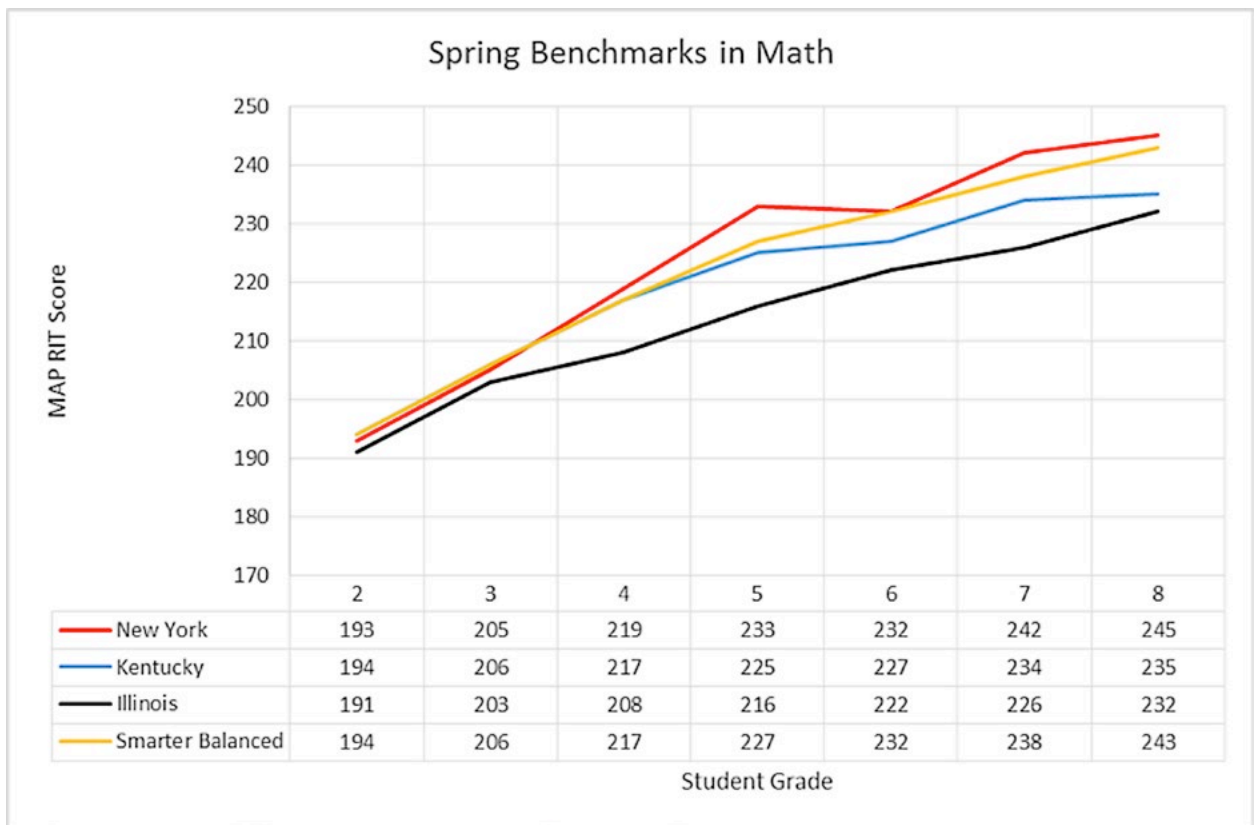


Table 3. Fall Reading Cut Scores

Grade	New York		Kentucky		Illinois		Smarter Balanced (Level 3)	
	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank
2	187	77	179	58	175	48	180	62
3	201	76	193	58	189	48	194	62
4	208	72	203	59	198	45	203	59
5	216	73	210	58	205	44	209	56
6	220	70	213	52	211	46	215	59
7	224	71	218	55	214	44	220	62
8	226	67	222	57	220	52	222	59

Figure 3. Fall MAP RIT Cut Scores: Reading

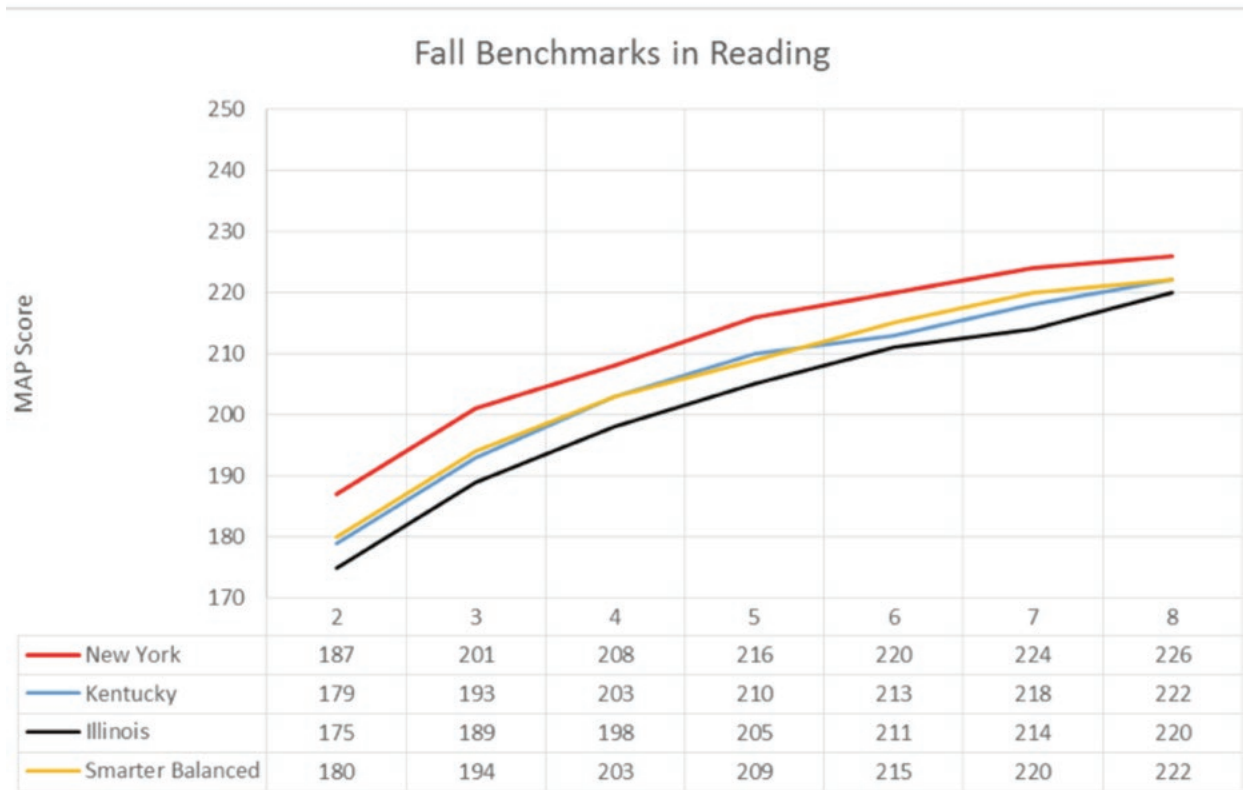
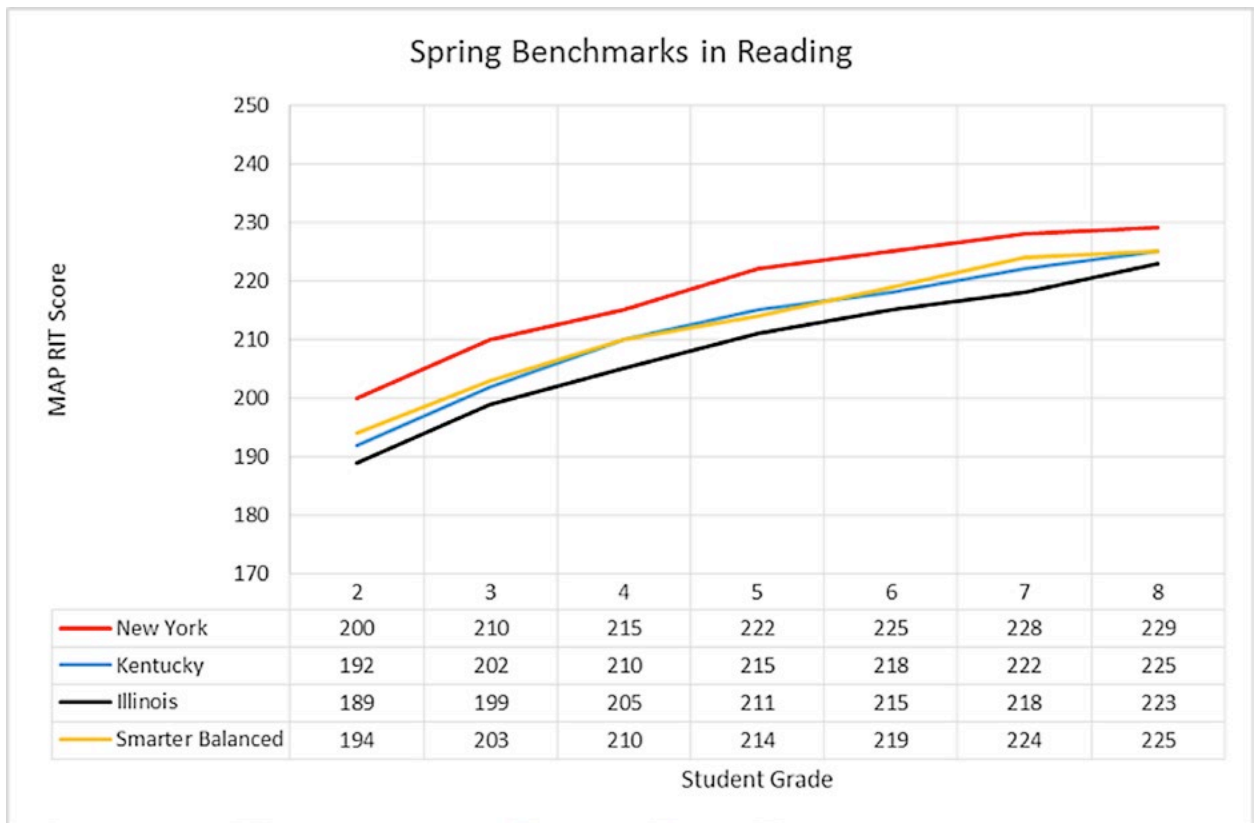


Table 4. Spring Reading Cut Scores

Grade	New York		Kentucky		Illinois		Smarter Balanced (Level 3)	
	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank	Cut Score	Percentile Rank
2	200	77	192	58	189	49	194	62
3	210	77	202	58	199	49	203	62
4	215	72	210	59	205	45	210	59
5	222	75	215	58	211	46	214	56
6	225	72	218	54	215	46	219	59
7	228	72	222	56	218	45	224	62
8	229	67	225	57	223	52	225	59

Figure 4. Spring MAP RIT Cut Scores: Reading



It is important to understand that NWEA makes no claim that these MAP RIT cut scores represent college readiness as defined by PARCC or other state tests currently in development. Until cut scores are finalized, no test publisher can truthfully make that claim. The values presented here simply represent an educated guess about what those benchmarks might look like, given that other assessments have defined college readiness similarly. As soon as the new cut scores and performance levels are finalized, NWEA will conduct studies that directly examine the ability of MAP to predict performance on those tests.

APPENDIX: LINKS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Smarter Balanced States Approve Achievement Level Recommendations:

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-states-approve-achievement-level-recommendations>

PARCC timeline:

<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-timeline>

Smarter Balanced timeline:

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/timeline>

Smarter Balanced Preliminary Performance Levels: Estimated MAP Scores Corresponding to the Preliminary Performance Levels of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):

www.nwea.org/resources/smarter-balanced-preliminary-performance-levels

NWEA.org Standards Alignment/"Your State Standards":

<http://www.nwea.org/assessments/standards-alignment/>