

Defining Benchmarks in Star Assessments

Smarter screening of students includes attention to the benchmark. A benchmark is a standard against which you measure the achievement of a student, grade, school, or district. It is the lowest level of performance that is considered acceptable. Renaissance Star Assessments allows administrators to decide what that benchmark is so the achievement data it provides is meaningful to each user. In addition, Star Assessments lets administrators define levels of proficiency using cut scores. That way, student data can be displayed on some reports in categories, which enables data teams to better identify students who need help.





Star Assessments has three types of benchmark settings, all of which can be modified by someone with administrator access. Each type of benchmark can have different values. For example, state benchmarks may be higher than district benchmarks. Which benchmark you choose depends on the lens from which you want to look at your screening data.

District and school benchmark settings

Based on a review of proficiency cut scores from several state assessments and guidance from RTI experts, Renaissance uses the 40th percentile as the default screening benchmark—the minimum expected student performance or achievement level—for district and school benchmarks. Students below the benchmark generally require some form of intervention to accelerate their growth and bring them into benchmark range.

Most experts and state assessments consider performance around the 40th to 50th percentile to be a proxy for “working at grade level.” While the 40th percentile is the software default for each of these benchmark types, they can be altered by educators to fit local needs. However, experts caution against lowering the benchmark below the 40th percentile.

Default benchmarks for Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, and Star Math

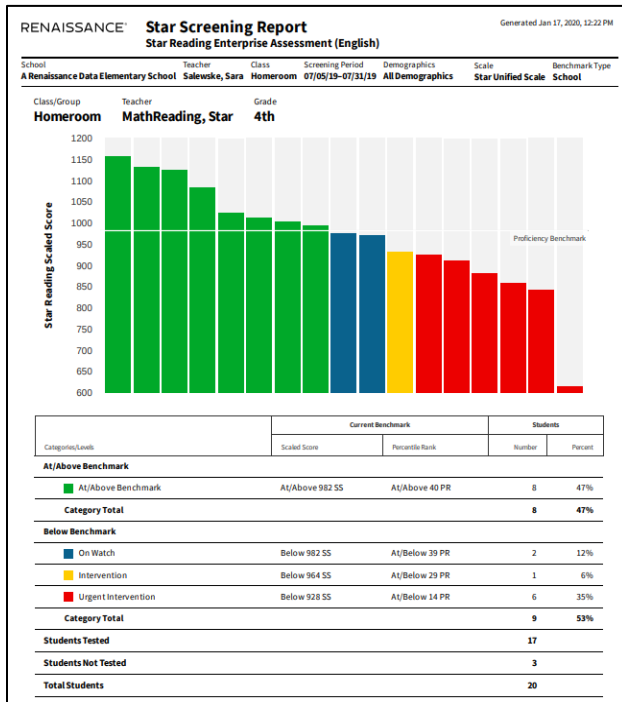
Category	Description	Default cut score
 At/Above Benchmark (green)	Students meeting or exceeding the benchmark score	At/Above 40 PR
 On Watch (blue)	Students slightly below the benchmark score	Automatically calculated range between At/Above Benchmark and Intervention
 Intervention (yellow)	Students below the benchmark score	Below 25 PR
 Urgent Intervention (red)	Students far below the benchmark score	Below 10 PR

State benchmark settings

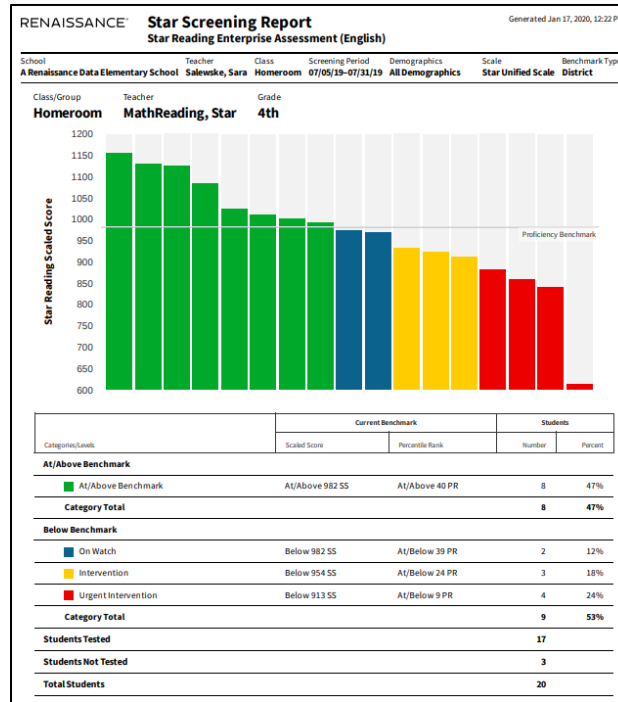
State benchmarks are generally more rigorous than the default settings for school and district benchmarks. They are determined by linking the Star scale with your state test’s scale to determine which Star scaled scores fall into each proficiency category at the time of the state test. State benchmark linking is not available for every grade level because sufficient data is not available for some grades (K–2, 9–12). When a direct link is not available, recommended cut scores are derived from the linked scores for other grades.

Viewing screening data through different lenses

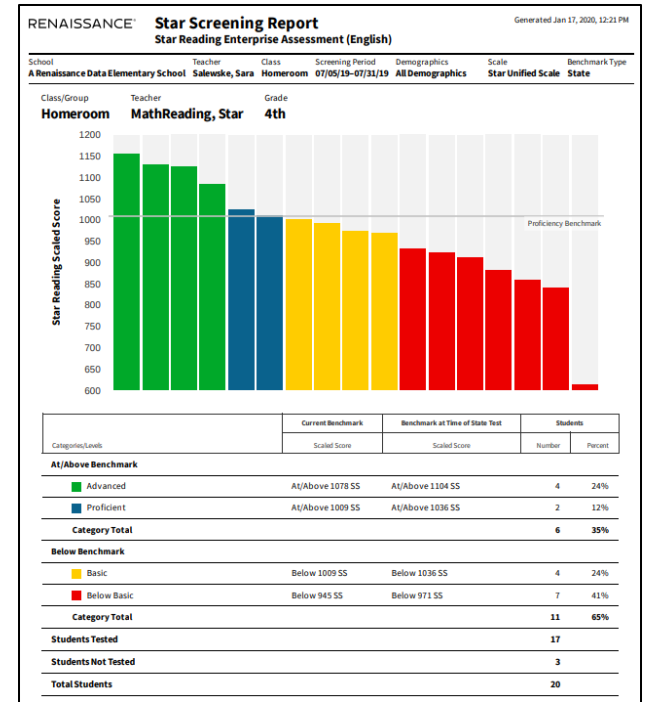
When you change the benchmark through which you look at your screening data, the picture of student performance changes.



School benchmark (adjusted)



District benchmark (default)



State benchmark

Note: When viewing screening data with school or district benchmarks, the different colors represent the Renaissance proficiency categories of At/Above Benchmark, On Watch, Intervention, and Urgent Intervention. When viewing screening data with the state benchmark, the different colors represent the proficiency levels as defined on your state's test.

Who can adjust the benchmarks?

- School benchmarks—School and district-level administrators can change these values within the software.
- District benchmarks—District-level administrators can change these values within the software.
- State benchmarks—District-level administrators can change values for non-linked grades within the software.