

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 21, 2003

SUBJECT: Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approval of the Department of Education's Action Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the December 10, 2002 meeting of the Florida Board of Education, the report of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Accommodations and Access for Students with Disabilities was presented and accepted by the Board. The Department of Education (DOE) is expanding allowable FCAT accommodations for students with disabilities for the March 2003 administration and providing additional information and support to districts, teachers, and parents to implement these changes.

Action Plan

Training

- Five regional meetings (Tallahassee, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, Orlando, and Gainesville) for school district assessment coordinators and directors of exceptional student education will be held from January 28th – February 6th, 2003 to disseminate information on expanded accommodations, procedures for requesting DOE approval of unique accommodations, and procedures for requesting waivers from the graduation test requirement.
- A video on expanded accommodations, procedures for requesting DOE approval of unique accommodations, and procedures for requesting waivers from the graduation test requirement will be disseminated to schools in early February.

Awareness

- Information for parents and teachers about the available diploma options for students with disabilities and their benefits will be distributed statewide following the regional meetings.
- Information for parents and teachers about FCAT accommodations for students with disabilities will be distributed statewide following the regional meetings.

Support

- In December 2002, school districts were notified of the availability of additional federal funds (approximately \$4.5 million) to assist in the provision of remedial instruction to grade 12 students with disabilities who have not passed one or both subtests of the FCAT and are scheduled to graduate with a standard diploma in June 2003.

Policies and Procedures

- An expanded list of test accommodations, for the State Board of Education's approval, has been developed. These accommodations include changes in presentation, responding, scheduling, setting, and the use of assistive devices that do not jeopardize the validity, reliability or security of the FCAT.
- Department staff is revising internal procedures for responding to requests for unique accommodations and waivers from the graduation test requirements to be more responsive.
- Department staff is continuing to review the Blue Ribbon Task Force's Report to identify issues that will require legislative changes; for example, expanding graduation options and access to post-secondary programs for students with disabilities.

Supporting Documentation Included:

Facilitators/Presenters: Shan Goff