

# Just for Parents

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## FCAT 2.0 Writing and Third Grade Reading and Mathematics Results

FCAT Writing 2.0 and Grade 3 FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics results were recently released. I am pleased to share that Florida's eighth and tenth grade students improved upon last year's writing performance. Eighth and tenth grade students with passing scores on the 2014 FCAT 2.0 Writing assessment increased by two percentage points, which displayed increased mastery of more difficult writing expectations. Fifty-six percent of eighth graders and 64 percent of tenth graders earned a writing score of 3.5 or higher compared to 54 percent and 62 percent, respectively, last year.

New to fourth grade assessment requirements this year was expository writing. With expository writing students must explain and display critical thinking. Although student results decreased slightly, performance remained up from 2012. We are very encouraged by this year's fourth grade writing results, which show that teachers are preparing students for new standards and expectations in 2014-15.

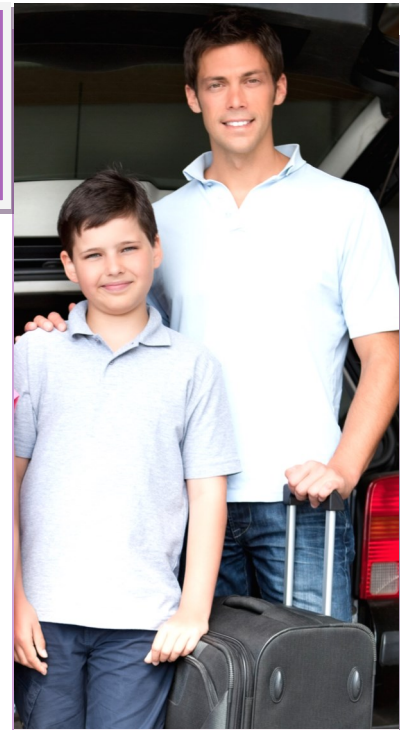
Third grade performance in reading and mathematics remained consistent when compared with 2013 results. Fifty-seven percent of our third graders scored Level 3 or above in reading and 58 percent scored Level 3 or above in mathematics. Although the percentage of third grade students scoring Level 1 on FCAT 2.0 mathematics remained consistent this year, the percentage of students scoring Level 1 in reading increased slightly from 18 percent in 2013 to 19 percent.

As many of you know, this is the last year FCAT 2.0 will be administered. Next year, Florida students will transition to a new assessment based on the more rigorous Florida Standards. The Florida Standards for mathematics and English language arts stress a broader approach for student learning. I am very pleased that our students and teachers are making steady progress. Our students work incredibly hard every day and I am proud of the exceptional work taking place in our state's classrooms.

For more information regarding FCAT 2.0 results, visit the [Florida Department of Education](http://www.floridadepartmentofeducation.com) website.

Sincerely,

Pam Stewart  
Commissioner of Education



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## Videos Starring the Florida Standards



State Farm is partnering with the Florida Education Foundation and the Florida Department of Education to help bring to life a series of videos featuring the Florida Standards.

The video series titled, "We Can Do This, Florida!," will

focus on kindergarten through fifth grade mathematics standards. They are being created as a resource for teachers, parents and postsecondary students in teacher education programs. The short videos will feature students across the state showing how they can successfully master these new Florida Standards.

"These more rigorous Florida Standards are already pushing our students to reach their full potentials today by helping prepare them for the colleges and workplaces of tomorrow," said Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart.

"I want to thank State Farm for this contribution that I know will be a great asset to Florida teachers and students."

The series is expected to be released and distributed in the fall of 2014.

### Education Buzzword: Student Achievement

Whether your child is entering preschool or entering college, it is likely that you have heard the word "student achievement" used by teachers, principals and other education professionals. This term is often used when talking about measuring and explaining a student's success.

In Florida, measuring student achievement includes analyzing students' scores on state assessments such as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT), End-Of-Course Assessments (EOCs) and the Florida Alternative Assessment (FAA). Other measures of student learning include student scores on pre-tests and post-tests and student performance on English language proficiency assessments. These assessments are also used to identify skill strengths and deficiencies, and chart student growth.

Research has shown that increased family engagement, as well as community support and partnerships, have a positive impact on student achievement. Student achievement is a top priority of the Florida Department of Education and families and communities play an important role in making sure the goal of increased student achievement is reached.



## Summer Literacy Adventure kicks off in June

Florida's First Lady Ann Scott and the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! Office proudly announce the 2014 Summer Literacy Adventure. As summer is fast approaching, we encourage schools, students and parents to prepare for the summer break by participating in this fun challenge.

The 2014 Summer Literacy Adventure is geared to help children stay on target, motivated and excited about reading and literacy. The Summer Literacy Adventure invites you to have your students read as many books as possible.

Literacy experts and educators agree that children of all ages need to be read to, read by themselves and talk about the books they have read during the summer. Your child's summer reading and book



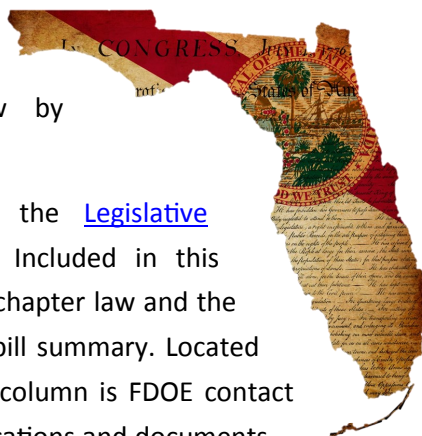
discussions will help maintain reading skills, improve reading fluency and provide the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and concepts. Most importantly, when parents and children enjoy summer reading together, children develop a love of books and reading that lasts a lifetime.

Each student can fill out his or her reading pledge on the Just Read, Florida! website at [www.justreadfamilies.org](http://www.justreadfamilies.org), and by the end of the summer, the department will tally up which schools have the most participants.

## 2014 Legislative updates

The 2014 legislative session took place from March 4 – May 2. Several important education bills were passed, and some have already been signed into law by Governor Rick Scott.

To learn more, please review the [Legislative Implementation Overview Chart](#). Included in this chart is a link to the final bill text/chapter law and the Florida Department of Education bill summary. Located under the Additional Information column is FDOE contact information and other FDOE notifications and documents related to the legislation.



## Upcoming Events and Designations

### June

- **National Children's Awareness Month** is a time set aside to focus on key issues affecting children by bringing together various charitable organizations to address those challenges.
- **National Safety Month** is a time to bring attention to key safety issues. Safety concerns to be highlighted this year will include prescription drug abuse; avoiding slips, trips and falls; awareness of surroundings; distracted driving; and summer safety.

### July

- **Purposeful Parenting Month** gives parents the opportunity to identify the importance of open communication with their adolescents and to support their growing independence. For tips on How to Be a Purposeful Parent, visit [Office of Adolescent Health](#).
- **Park and Recreation Month** is a time to recognize the important role that park and recreation facilities play in providing families with a chance to improve their communities through recreation programs and relaxation activities.

# Summer Wellness in the Sunshine

Just because school is out does not mean education takes a break. Fresh air and outdoor activities are part of a healthy lifestyle that all kids and families should enjoy. Finding ways to be physically active outside as a family creates lasting memories and helps children develop lifelong healthy habits.

Sunburn and dehydration can put children at risk for major health problems. For that reason, it is important to protect your children's skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays and to keep them hydrated by having them drink plenty of water, especially in the summer.

- **Always use sunscreen, even on cloudy days.** UV rays from the sun cause damage and clouds do not block UV rays. All skin types need protection—darker skin will also burn. Most people need to use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15 to 30. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, especially after swimming or sweating.
- **Wear a hat and other protective clothing when outdoors.** Not exposing skin to the sun is the most practical way to avoid sunburn. Hats that shade the face, scalp, ears and neck are easy to

use and give great protection. If kids choose to wear a baseball cap, make sure to apply sunscreen to exposed areas. The same goes for the rest of the body. Skin covered up by a long-sleeved shirt and long pants will be protected, but if that is not practical, keep sunscreen on all exposed body parts.

- **Use sunglasses.** Help your kids pick out some sunglasses that they will want to wear. UV light can cause cataracts later in life, so look for sunglasses that block UV rays.
- **Spend time in the shade.** Staying in the shade protects us from the sun. Make sure kids know to take breaks in the shade of a tree or other covered area. If you are planning a family outing to an area without shade, bring your own, such as a large umbrella or a pop-up tent.
- **Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** The sun's rays are strongest and most harmful during midday. During that time, be extra mindful about seeking shade and using sunscreen.

For ways to talk to your kids about sun safety, visit [Kid's Health "How to Be Safe When You're in the Sun."](#)

## What does water do for my body?

Everyone needs to stay hydrated, especially in the summer. You might think you are all muscle, but about two-thirds of your body is made up of water. Drinking water also helps rinse your mouth and prevent tooth decay. Most tap water contains fluoride, which helps develop strong teeth. Tap water is also inexpensive compared to all other drinks.

### Recommended daily intake of water:

Age	Males	Females
9 - 13	1.6L/day = 6 glasses	1.4L/day = 5 to 6 glasses
14 - 18	1.9L/day = 7 glasses	1.6L/day = 6 glasses
Adults	2.6L/day = 10 glasses	2.1L/day = 8 glasses

To stay up-to-date on all things healthy, visit [FDOE's Healthy Schools](#) webpage: Stay healthy and active all summer long!

### [Living Healthy In Florida](#)

A multi-agency campaign created to provide simple tools to promote healthy lifestyles in our state. It offers free nutritional and physical activity materials for teachers and parents.