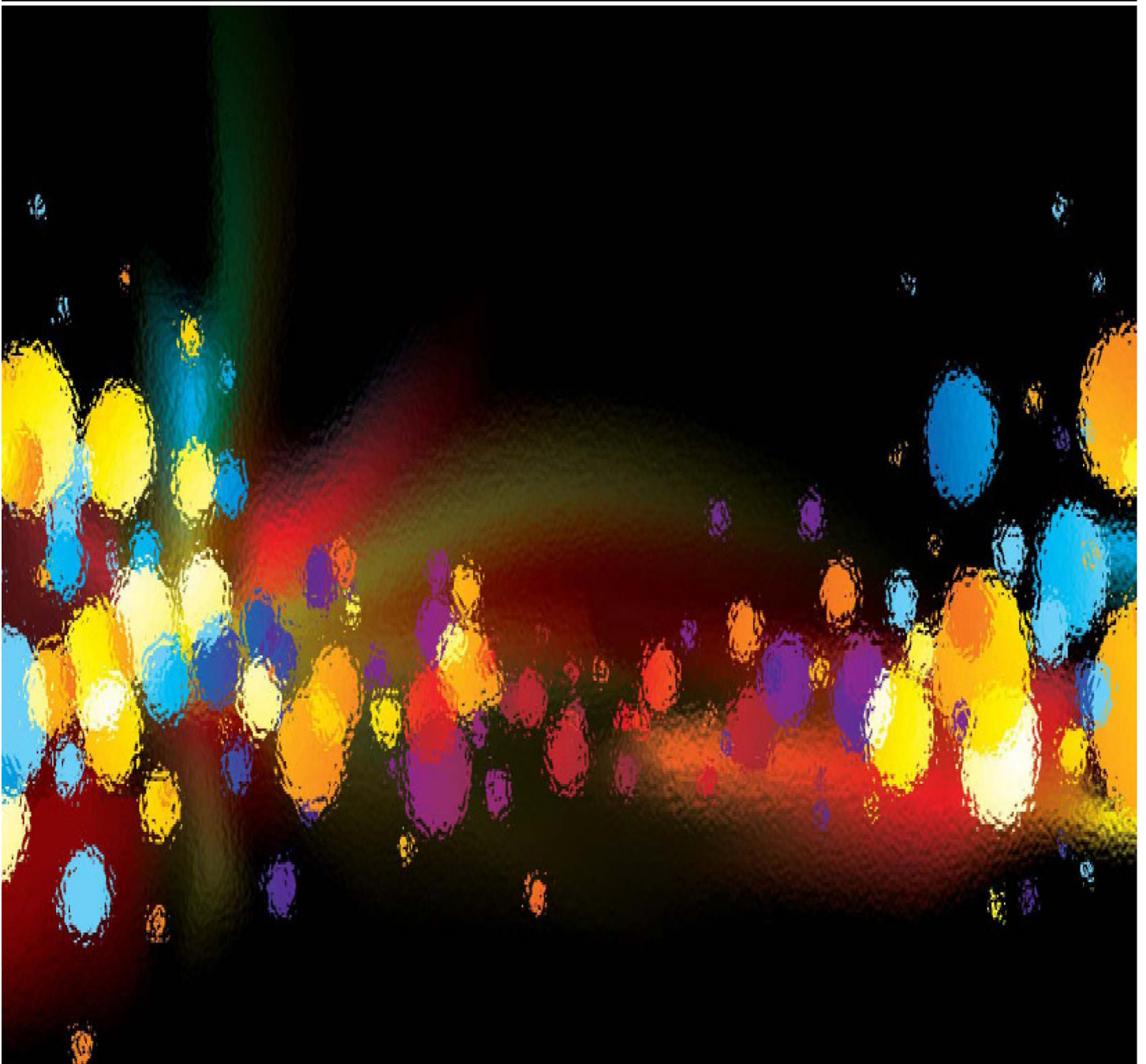


Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities



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Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities



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Florida Department of Education
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INTRODUCTION

This manual updates and replaces *The IEP Team's Guide to FCAT Accommodations* published by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) in 2003. The title was changed to reflect the importance of providing accommodations to all eligible students with disabilities, that is, students who have an individual educational plan (IEP) or a Section 504 plan. Evidence must show that the student has been found eligible for services through one of these plans. The descriptions of the accommodations have been expanded and aligned with information provided in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 (FCAT 2.0) administration manuals.

This document is written to assist school district personnel and parents when making decisions about the use of accommodations by students with disabilities in state and district testing programs.

The first section includes a description of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 and information about the participation of students with disabilities. A list of related Florida Statutes (F. S.) and Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) Rules is provided in the appendix.

The second section presents an explanation of the four major types of accommodations and descriptions of accommodations under each category.

The third section includes a step-by-step process to assist the team when making decisions for individual students with disabilities.

The appendix provides a quick reference guide that links accommodations used in the classroom with accommodations for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, a list of relevant Florida statutes and rules, and website links.

SECTION ONE

Assessment and Accountability for Student Learning

Accountability for the learning of all students is the cornerstone of Florida's system of school improvement. The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test is used to measure the achievement of individual students on the Sunshine State Standards. Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the statewide assessment program will begin transitioning to assessing student understanding of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards through the implementation of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 and the Florida End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. The majority of students with disabilities take the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. The Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) is used to measure the progress of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are working on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Access Points. The results from the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, and FAA are used to assess the progress toward the goal of all students reaching proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and science as required by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; also known as No Child Left Behind).

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 measure knowledge and skills required in the Sunshine State Standards and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards adopted by the State of Florida. These educational standards provide broad statements of what students should know and be able to do. They are divided into smaller units called benchmarks, which describe expectations at each grade level. The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 measure knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

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Beginning in 2010–2011, students in grades 3–10 will take FCAT 2.0 Reading each year, and students in grades 3–8 will take FCAT 2.0 Mathematics each year. The administration of Grade 9 FCAT Mathematics is discontinued in 2010–2011, and the administration of Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics will be discontinued in 2011–2012. If necessary, students may retake Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading and Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics to attempt to earn the passing scores required for graduation with a standard diploma. Currently, students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take FCAT Writing, and students in grades 5, 8, and 11 take FCAT Science. In 2011–2012, FCAT 2.0 Science will be administered to students in grades 5 and 8, and Grade 11 FCAT Science will be discontinued. End-of-Course Assessments will eventually replace the high school FCAT administrations in high school, except for FCAT 2.0 Reading in grades 9 and 10.

Questions and Content

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 use three types of questions to assess student performance. The chart below lists the types of questions by grade level and subject area being assessed. A description of each type of question used on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 follows (Florida Department of Education [FDOE], 2009).

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Question Formats by Grade and Content			
Content	Test Question Format		
	Multiple Choice	Gridded Response	Writing Prompt
Writing			Grades 4, 8, 10
Reading	Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Retake		
Mathematics	Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, Retake	Grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, Retake	
Science	Grades 5, 8, 11	Grades 8, 11	

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Multiple-choice questions are worth 1 point each and appear on FCAT and FCAT 2.0 tests at all grade levels. Students choose the best answer from four possible choices. They mark their answers by filling in the appropriate bubble in the test book or answer document.

Gridded-response questions are worth 1 point each and appear on FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics in grades 4–10 and FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science in grades 8 and 11. The questions require students to solve problems and mark their answers by filling in the appropriate bubbles for the numbers on answer grids. Students must accurately complete the grid to receive credit for their answers.

FCAT Writing performance tasks require students to apply their writing skills. Each FCAT Writing prompt has two parts: the writing situation and the directions for writing. The writing situation orients the students to the subject about which they are to write. The directions for writing guide the students to think about the topic before they begin to write.

Grade 4 students write an essay in response to a prompt that asks them to explain (expository writing) or to tell a story (narrative writing). Grade 8 and grade 10 students write an essay in response to a prompt that asks them to explain (expository writing) or to persuade (persuasive writing).

The scoring rubric for FCAT Writing establishes the criteria for each possible score from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest score. The criteria are different for each grade level tested. A 'U' on a student report indicates that the student's essay was unscorable for various reasons, such as refusal to write, illegibility, and writing that is off topic or in a foreign language. Scoring rubrics are available on the Florida Department of Education website (see FCAT Rubrics at <http://fcat.fldoe.org/rubrcpag.asp>).

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Reading passages are drawn from topics in a variety of subject areas, such as social studies, science, health education, physical education, the arts, and the workplace. The tests contain literary

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passages, such as short stories and poems, and informational passages, such as magazine articles and selections from books. Graphic displays and illustrations are included to make the test interesting as well as to help students understand information by giving visual clues. The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 questions incorporate thinking and problem-solving skills that match the complexity of the standards and benchmarks being assessed.

Calculators are provided by the FDOE for students to use on some portions of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, depending on the grade level. Calculators are available for each student in grades 7–10 for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics tests and grades 8 and 11 for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science tests. However, calculators may not be used on the tests in grades 3–6, even as an accommodation.

Rulers are provided with the test materials for items on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics for grades 3 and 4. The rulers measure inches and centimeters.

Reference sheets provide information students may use to answer test questions, such as formulas and the periodic table of the elements. Reference sheets are included with the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics for grades 5–8 and 10 and FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science in grades 8 and 11. Students may refer to the reference sheets at any time during the appropriate test. The test administrator collects all reference sheets at the end of the testing session.

Use of FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Results

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 are summative assessments that are designed to measure student achievement in relation to a set of the Sunshine State Standards and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and benchmarks. The scores summarize the student's achievement for the grade level assessed. For individual students, an overall score (Developmental Scale or Scale) is reported for each subject. For Reading, Mathematics, and Science, Content Scores are reported

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for subcategories and reflect the actual number correct out of the total possible points per category. FCAT and FCAT 2.0 scores for Reading, Mathematics, and Science are also reported in terms of overall achievement levels from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Students scoring a level 3 are considered proficient in grade level skills. Students scoring levels 4 and 5 are considered to have advanced skills. The writing score is based on the rubric previously described on page 5. The FDOE determines passing scores for Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading and Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics, since students must pass these tests for graduation. Students entering the ninth grade beginning in the 2011–2012 school year are also required to pass the Algebra I End-of-Course Assessment to earn credit for graduation. Additional EOC Assessments will be added in subsequent years.

The Florida Department of Education is accountable for the achievement of all students and must accurately report the progress of all students to the parents, schools, districts, and federal government. The scores of students with disabilities on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, and the FAA are included in statewide summary results for Adequate Yearly Progress. Scores of students with disabilities along with other subgroups of students based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and English proficiency (FDOE, 2010, July a) are disaggregated on assessment reports. For the purpose of determining school grades, the learning gains of all students, including students with disabilities and students who are English Language Learners (ELL) who are assessed on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, and FAA are included (FDOE, 2010, July b).

Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessments

Students with disabilities are required to participate in state and district assessments for accountability purposes. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that students with disabilities participate in the statewide testing program and be afforded appropriate accommodations in instruction and

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assessment. All determinations regarding participation in the statewide assessment program and need for accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan, or through evidence that the student has been found eligible for services through one of these plans.

Public school students in grades 3 through 11 are required to take the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. FCAT and FCAT 2.0 are administered in all public schools in Florida, including charter schools. Students with disabilities working on general education standards who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan are assessed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, including students with disabilities enrolled in public schools through the McKay Scholarship Program and students who are placed in residential settings. Students with disabilities who attend a private school through a McKay Scholarship may be given the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 if desired. Students with disabilities, regardless of their learning environment (e.g., public school, private school, hospital/home) or instruction program (Home Education Program, McKay Scholarship Program, or Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program), are eligible for accommodations on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, if documented on the students' IEP or Section 504 plan. The accommodations must be regularly used for instruction and must be allowable on the test. It is important to note that students enrolled in public schools whose parents have declined services through an IEP or Section 504 plan are not eligible for accommodations.

Students with disabilities who have already received a special diploma may remain in high school and work toward a standard diploma based on rigorous standards established by the State of Florida and their local school district. These students are eligible to take the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 to meet the requirements for graduation (passing the Reading and Mathematics portions of the Grade 10 assessments).

Students with disabilities who are unable to achieve the general education standards even with accommodations as a result of a significant cognitive disability may be assessed with the Florida Alternate Assessment. The FAA measures achievement of access points, which are embedded in

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the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and reflect learning expectations with reduced complexity. The IEP team makes the decision to have a student with a significant cognitive disability take the FAA based on the guidelines in Rule 6A-1.0943(4), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The student's past performance, demonstrated cognitive ability, need for direct instruction in the application and transfer of skills, and need for instruction in the access points of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards should guide this decision (FDOE, 2010, July 15) (see *Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities: Technical Assistance Paper and Participation Checklist* at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp>).

Students Classified as Disabled by Section 504

All qualified students with disabilities in Florida's public education system must be provided necessary related aids, services, or accommodations during the administration of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. Districts must ensure that students with disabilities defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are considered for and provided the same test accommodations as students with disabilities who have an IEP.

Students with disabilities who are not classified as exceptional students with an IEP under IDEA may qualify as a person with a disability as defined in Rule 6A-19.001(6), F.A.C.:

“Any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.”

A determination must be made if the student needs related aids, services, or accommodations for instruction and assessment, including the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. Even students with a temporary disability, such as a broken arm, may require accommodations for a limited period of time that is specified on the student's plan. A Section 504 plan may be developed to access accommodations. The specific accommodation must

be used regularly by the student in the instructional setting. For example, the student with an injury that results in the inability to write will need an accommodation for writing in classroom activities as well as for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0.

Procedures for determining Section 504 eligibility are given in the *District Guide for Meeting the Needs of Students: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2005). Questions concerning these requirements should be directed to the district 504 coordinator. Additional assistance related to Section 504 eligibility may be obtained by contacting the Student Support Services Project (850) 245-7851 or the Office of Equal Education Opportunity (850) 245-0509.

Additional Testing Options for Students Who Are English Language Learners

English Language Learners are expected to participate in statewide assessments. A student who has been classified as an ELL is a student who is Limited English Proficient and whose native or home spoken language is other than English. A student who has been classified as ELL within one year of the assessment date must be assessed by the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 or the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) as determined by the specific action of an ELL committee. This applies to students with disabilities who are ELLs. Accommodations for ELLs are described in Section Two.

Special Exemption from Participation in Statewide Assessments

A student with a disability may be allowed a special exemption from participation in the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, or FAA due to extraordinary circumstances. The extraordinary circumstances are defined as events or conditions that prevent the student from physically demonstrating mastery of skills that have been learned and are assessed by these tests.

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They do not include conditions that are solely the result of learning, emotional, behavioral, or significant cognitive disabilities or the receipt of services through the homebound or hospitalized program. The extraordinary circumstances cause the test to reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement. Extraordinary circumstances involve physical conditions that affect a student's ability to communicate in modes deemed acceptable for statewide assessment. This special exemption is authorized in Rule 6A-1.0943(5), F.A.C.

The district superintendent must submit a request for consideration of a special exemption to the Commissioner of Education at least 30 days before the test administration. The request must include documentation of the student's disabling condition with evidence that the disability prevents the student from responding to the assessment even with allowable accommodations. This request must be submitted annually and approved by the Commissioner (FDOE 2010, July 15).

Students with disabilities may request a special exemption from the graduation test requirement in extraordinary circumstances. The request may be approved if it is determined that the student's FCAT and FCAT 2.0 scores would reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement. A request may be made for an exemption from any or all sections of the test required for graduation. The school district superintendent must make this request in writing to the Commissioner of Education at least one semester before the anticipated graduation date. The Commissioner will decide whether the exemption shall be granted based upon the documentation the district school superintendent provides, showing that the student has mastered the skills tested on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. The student must meet all other criteria for graduation with a standard diploma. This special exemption is authorized in Rule 6A-1.09431, F.A.C.

Waiver of the FCAT and EOC Graduation Requirements

Students must earn a passing score on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading and FCAT Mathematics tests to graduate with a standard diploma. A waiver of the FCAT graduation requirement may be recommended for students with disabilities who have an IEP. The IEP team must meet to determine whether the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 can accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration allowable accommodations. Students with disabilities with Section 504 plans are not eligible for a waiver or special exemption from the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 (FDOE, 2010, March 12).

To qualify for a waiver, the student must:

- Be identified as a student with a disability (s. 1007.02(2), F.S.)
- Have an IEP
- Have been provided instruction to prepare the student to demonstrate proficiency in the core content knowledge and skills necessary for grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation
- Have taken the Grade 10 FCAT with appropriate, allowable accommodations at least twice (once in the tenth grade and once in the eleventh grade)
- Be progressing toward meeting the state's credit and cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements and any other district requirements for graduation with a standard diploma

Participation in the FCAT or FCAT 2.0 during March of the senior year is recommended to ensure that each student has had every opportunity to pass the test. If all requirements are met, the student may be granted a waiver for the FCAT graduation requirement. Waivers are available for students who have IEPs and are working on the four-year,

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24-credit standard diploma program. Beginning with students entering their first year of high school in the 2007–2008 school year, students with disabilities may also be eligible for the FCAT waiver under section 1003.428(8)(b), F.S., as long as they meet all requirements in section 1003.429, F.S., Accelerated high school graduation options (FDOE, 2010, March 12).

Students with disabilities are expected to participate in the End-of-Course Assessments. Waivers are available for an EOC requirement for students who have IEPs. The IEP team must determine that an EOC assessment cannot accurately measure the student’s abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations. The student may have the EOC assessment results waived for the purpose of determining the student’s course grade and credit.

Students with disabilities with an IEP who are not granted a waiver and who have not passed the required graduation tests are eligible for the provision of a free appropriate public education until their 22nd birthday. This also applies to students who have earned a special diploma. Such students may continue to attend school and work toward a standard diploma or another program of study.

Preparation for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Administration

All stakeholders must be informed and make the necessary preparations to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the statewide testing program.

Assessment coordinators in each school district are responsible for sharing information about FCAT and FCAT 2.0 accommodations for students with disabilities with all personnel responsible for administering the test.

The school assessment coordinator should provide opportunities for test administrators to become familiar with the allowable accommodations and to participate in planning the FCAT and FCAT

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2.0 administration process for students with disabilities prior to the test administration date. The school assessment coordinator will determine what staff will be needed and what facilities will be used. The students' IEPs or Section 504 plans should be reviewed to determine what accommodations are needed. Some IEP forms have one area for classroom accommodations and a different area to list accommodations used in assessments, such as the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. It is important to look at all possible areas on the form to ensure that accommodations are not overlooked. Assessment coordinators will also need to prepare testing schedules that allow for accommodations for students with disabilities. For example, in very limited cases when a student requires additional time for a test session that extends over several days, the test must be segmented for each day's work and arrangements made for securing the documents (Office of Assessment, 2010a). Planning ahead for the implementation of accommodations during the assessment is critical for successful test administration.

Parents should be informed about the use of allowable FCAT and FCAT 2.0 accommodations in general and about the particular accommodations their child may use during testing. Decisions about FCAT and FCAT 2.0 participation and use of accommodations are made as part of the development of the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

Preparing students for the testing situation is as important as selecting the accommodations. Test preparation will provide students with the necessary knowledge and tools to be able to approach the assessment situation with confidence. Students should receive instruction in testing procedures and have opportunities to practice. The teacher may discuss with students how their assessment situation will be different from that of peers and why the accommodations are needed. Students should regularly use the accommodations in instruction and classroom testing situations before taking the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. Before the test, the teacher may need to assist students with relaxation and stress-reduction techniques and use motivation practices, such as verbal encouragement or behavior contingencies, that encourage students to do their best during the actual assessment.

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The student grid on the front of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 answer document captures student demographic information. School personnel are asked to record the primary exceptionality, ELL, Section 504, Exceptional Student Education (ESE)/504 accommodation types, and ELL accommodation types. The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 test administration manual states: “. . . grid the bubble next to the accommodation type used. Do not grid the bubble unless an accommodation is actually used. More than one bubble may be gridded” (Office of Assessment, 2010a, p. 11). Accommodations are gridded by type: presentation, responding, scheduling, setting, or assistive device(s).

Preparation and planning for accommodations can prevent many problems. Sometimes students may refuse to use the accommodation provided for them on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. For example, a student who is visually impaired may not want to be seen using an abacus or geoboard when taking the FCAT Mathematics test. A student with a disability who is allowed extended time may actually finish within the normal time limits and ask to leave the testing situation. In all cases, it is important that the test administrator always offer the accommodations that are documented on the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan. If the student chooses not to use the accommodation, the test administrator should inform the school assessment coordinator and the student’s teacher. This is important information for planning purposes. It may be possible to identify a comparable accommodation that the student is more willing to use.

Test Invalidation

If a student does not receive the accommodations designated in the IEP or Section 504 plan, the test administration may be considered invalid. A statement that reflects that the student’s test was administered without accommodation(s) must be placed in the student’s record. Parents must be notified and given the option of having the test scored or declaring the administration invalid. Regardless of what the parents decide to do,

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the test score may not be used for promotion or retention decisions. The school must follow the procedures identified in their district's student progression plan for the use of other assessment information in promotion and retention, such as portfolio assessment or the SAT 10. Requests for invalidation can be made to the district assessment coordinator or the Bureau of K–12 Assessment in the Department of Education. Additional policies and procedures regarding test invalidation are described in detail in the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 test administration manuals (Office of Assessment, 2010a, pp. 21–23).

Future Directions

End-of-Course Assessments will be computer-based, criterion-referenced assessments that measure the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for specific high school level courses, such as Algebra I, Biology I, Geometry, and U.S. History. The first assessment to begin the transition to End-of-Course testing is the Algebra I EOC, which will be administered for the first time in May 2011.

Potential changes to the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, and End-of-Course Assessments, as well as advances in services for students with disabilities may affect the decisions that are made in regard to accommodations. As changes are implemented, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services and the Bureau of K–12 Assessment will provide technical assistance information.

SECTION TWO

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes or adjustments to standard instruction or assessment procedures or materials that enable students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in educational programs. Accommodations allow students with disabilities to have access to instruction and the opportunity to demonstrate learning. Accommodations used in assessment situations are generally the same as the accommodations the student routinely uses in instruction.

“The goal of assessment accommodations is to remove causes of irrelevant variance in each student’s test performance, thereby producing a measure of each student’s knowledge and skills that is valid” (Thurlow, Christensen, & Lail, 2008, p. 9).

Categories of Accommodations

Accommodations described in this document are organized in five categories: presentation, responding, scheduling, setting, and assistive technology.

- **Presentation**—Use specialized formats, including large print, braille, sign language, or oral presentation, and use assistive devices and other presentation supports to access information
- **Responding**—Respond to questions or prompts on the assessments in alternate modes, including dictation, sign language, and the use of assistive devices and other response supports
- **Scheduling**—Increase the length of time to complete instruction and assessment or change the way the time is organized

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- **Setting**—Change the location in which instruction and assessment are given or change the conditions of the instruction and assessment setting
- **Assistive Technology**—Use assistive technology to access information or respond to questions or prompts

In this section, each accommodation category is defined in the context of the required format or procedures used in the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 and includes descriptions of possible accommodations. The categories and descriptions align with Appendix A in the test administration manuals for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 (Office of Assessment, 2010a, 2010b).

Students may use the accommodations included in this document in both instructional and assessment situations. However, these accommodations do not represent the complete range of accommodations that students might require in the classroom. Other standardized tests used by districts and schools to measure student academic progress may or may not allow the same assessment accommodations as the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. The district should consult the test administration manual or the test publisher for a complete description of allowable accommodations.

Unique Accommodations

Some students with disabilities need unique or unusual accommodations for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. Unique accommodations generally involve alterations to test materials, such as fewer items per page or increased space between items. The unique accommodation must be one that the student regularly uses for classroom instruction and must not alter the concepts or skills being assessed. Unique accommodations require special approval from the Commissioner of Education or designee.

Written requests for unique accommodations must be submitted using the FCAT Unique Accommodations Request Form with accompanying documentation to the Office of Assessment and Student Performance in the FDOE. These requests must be reviewed and require the

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signature of both the district assessment coordinator and the district exceptional student education director before submission to the FDOE. A copy of the current IEP or Section 504 plan with the requested unique accommodation documented under both classroom and testing accommodations sections must accompany the FCAT Unique Accommodations Request Form. Staff at the Florida Department of Education will notify the district whether the request is approved for use on the assessment (Bureau of K–12 Assessment, 2010, July 19).

Accommodations Not Allowed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0

Some accommodations that are used in the classroom are not allowed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. These accommodations are not permissible because they negatively affect the test's validity and reliability. Non-allowed accommodations are included within the description of each category in this section. Examples include:

- Reduced number of test questions or answer options
- Use of spelling or grammar check in a word processor for responses to performance tasks
- Use of graphic organizers or software to assist in preparing responses
- Oral or sign language presentation or use of text-to-speech software for passages and items that test reading

Evidence of what the student needs to make progress in the curriculum should drive accommodation decisions. For example, a student may use software with spelling and grammar check in the classroom to facilitate the completion of assignments, or the student may use audiobooks to listen to required novels for English classes. Although these accommodations are functional for some areas of curriculum, their use should not substitute for instruction in spelling, writing, or reading skills.

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If accommodations not permitted on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 are recommended for a student for classroom instruction or testing, the parent must be notified. The parent must give his or her signed consent for the use of those accommodations in the classroom and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the possible future consequences of using accommodations in the classroom that are not permitted on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0.

If a student used accommodations that are not allowed when taking the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, a report describing the situation should be placed in the student's permanent record. A description of the accommodations or changes made during testing with an explanation of their purpose should be included in the report. Any testing irregularity must be reported to the district assessment coordinator or the Bureau of K–12 Assessment.

Presentation

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 test items are provided in written text and graphics. The readability level and complexity of the text and graphic information align with the grade level of the test. Students are expected to read the test passages and questions for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science items independently, as well as interpret illustrations and graphics. The prompt (topic) for the FCAT Writing Test is also provided in print. The student must read passages and questions used in the FCAT 2.0 Reading independently through visual or tactile means. FCAT 2.0 Reading may not be presented through sign language, orally, or through text-to-speech technology. However, FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics items, FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science items, and FCAT Writing prompts may be provided in specialized formats.

Directions for all FCAT and FCAT 2.0 assessments are given orally using the script provided in the test administration manuals. Students listen to the directions to find out how to respond to test items.

Presentation accommodations allow students to access instruction and assessments in specialized formats, including visual (large print or sign

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language), tactile (braille), auditory, and a combination of auditory and visual (follow a written script while listening to directions). Specialized formats are a subset of accessible instructional materials. The content or complexity is not altered by the specialized format (FDOE, 2010, May 19). In addition, presentation supports may be provided that help the student access and use the text and graphics presented in the test booklets.

Specialized Presentation Formats

- Braille
During production of the braille test documents, some items may be altered in format or deleted if the items have no application for the braille reader (as authorized by the FDOE). Students who are using a braille version of the test must have a test administrator who is fluent in braille, such as a teacher of the visually impaired. Modifications for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 scripts for administration of braille or large print versions are provided with the test materials. The braille version always matches the first form of the test series, such as Form I, A, or AA.
- Large print
The large print version always matches the first form of the test series, such as Form I, A, or AA.
- Oral presentation of test items and answer choices on FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics and Science and the prompt for FCAT Writing
For FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics and Science, the questions and answer choices may not be reworded, summarized, or simplified. Items may be repeated as many times as the student requests.
- Oral presentation of directions of any FCAT and FCAT 2.0 assessment
- Text-to-speech technology that communicates directions and test items other than reading passages and items will be available for

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computer-based administrations of select FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics tests and all EOC Assessments.

- Sign language presentation of test items and answer choices on FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics and Science and the topic (prompt) for FCAT Writing
- Sign language presentation of directions of any FCAT and FCAT 2.0 assessment
- English/sign or sign/English translation dictionary for students who use sign language as their primary means of communication
The dictionary must be similar to one used in the instructional setting and may not contain definitions of words. The dictionary may contain the sign picture, the word, synonyms, and an index.

Presentation Supports

- Magnification devices, such as video magnifiers, reading loupes, or hand-held magnifiers
- Straightedge to maintain or enhance visual attention to test items
- Blank card to mask portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered item
- Positioning tool, such as a book stand or page holder
- Colored transparencies or overlays
- Test books secured to the work area
If necessary, scannable documents may also be secured with adhesives, as long as responses are transferred to another answer document.
- Real coins to access the print representation of the coin for visually impaired students
A real coin may be provided when a coin is pictured in the test booklet. Coins may not be used as manipulatives for counting.

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- Access to a copy of the directions from the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 administration script as the test administrator reads it aloud
- Repeated, clarified, or summarized test directions
- Opportunity for student to repeat or paraphrase directions to demonstrate understanding
- Opportunity for student to read test passages and questions aloud to themselves
Students should be tested in an individual setting to prevent disturbing other students.
- Highlighter to mark key words or phrases in directions, items, and passages
If a highlighter is used at grade levels where the test questions and answers are in the same booklet, the answers must be transferred into another test booklet. At all other grade levels, the answer documents must be carefully monitored for stray marks. If any highlighting marks are found in an answer document, the student's answers must be transferred. If highlighter tape has been used, the answers must be transferred because the tape leaves a residue on the paper that could affect scoring.
- Verbal encouragement (e.g., “keep working,” “make sure to answer every question”)
Encouragement may not be used to cue a student regarding correct/incorrect responses.

Unique Presentation Accommodations

The Florida Department of Education must pre-approve unique accommodations.

- Increased spacing between test items
- Fewer items placed on each page, such as one item per page for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science

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- Auditory presentation of reading items for students with both visual and tactile disabilities who are not able to physically access print, large print, or braille materials
The Request for Auditory Presentation of State Reading Assessments must be attached to the FCAT Unique Accommodation Request Form along with requested documentation.
- Other unusual circumstances

Non-allowed Presentation Accommodations

- Use of text-to-speech technology or oral presentation for FCAT 2.0 Reading passages, test items, and answer choices
The student must read FCAT 2.0 Reading passages and items independently through visual or tactile means (regular print, large print, or braille).
- Translation into sign language of reading passages and test items
- English language dictionaries
- Manipulative materials, such as counters, base-10 blocks, clock faces, or geometric shapes

Responding

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 includes questions that require different types of responses. Answers to multiple-choice items are recorded by filling in the appropriate bubble in the test booklet or in a separate answer document. Numerical answers to gridded response items on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics and Science are recorded by filling in the bubbles of the digits in the correct sequence on a grid. Students use their own handwriting to write answers to respond to the FCAT Writing prompt. Students must limit their responses to the space provided in the answer booklet. Answers are scored based on their completeness and correctness using rubrics developed for each grade level. Errors in handwriting, spelling, grammar, or mechanics are not penalized unless the

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content is not legible or cannot be understood. Students may not use scratch paper to organize thoughts. They may use blank space in the test book as a workspace (Office of Assessment, 2010b).

The configuration of test documents changes by grade level and type of test. At certain grade levels the test questions and answers are in the same booklet, whereas separate answer documents are provided for other grade levels.

Response accommodations allow students to respond to the test items in different ways, including the use of assistive devices. Students may use alternate modes to respond to the test, including signed and verbal or dictated responses. Students who are able to provide a handwritten response to the test items may require response supports, such as a writing guide and adapted writing tools.

Written responses may include the use of devices, such as a Graphic Aid for Mathematics (American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.), Math Window® (Wolf Products, Inc.), or a geoboard for students who are visually impaired. A test administrator or proctor must transcribe student responses into the answer document using the test's required format, except for large print and braille. If the student provides a response in a large print answer document or on braille paper, the test contractor will transcribe the student's response.

If a student provides oral responses or uses sign language, the student must be told the amount of space in which the response would be written. School personnel must record responses in the space provided on the student's answer document. These responses must be made without any edits, changes, or corrections to the student's responses. Signed responses must be recorded as signed. The test administrator must ask the student to indicate punctuation and the spelling of words that the test administrator is not completely certain that the child can spell, such as words not on the Dolch word list for the grade level tested or words of two or more syllables. The student may review the written material and direct the test administrator on editing.

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Alternate Response Modes

- Dictated responses to the test proctor*
- Dictated responses to an audio recorder*
Students may listen to their recorded responses to review their work.
- Signed responses to an interpreter or test administrator*
- Braille responses on a separate answer form*
- Speech-to-text technology to record answers*
- Talking word processor*
- Computer switch, computer, alternative keyboard, or other communication device to indicate answers*
- Pointing device to indicate answers*
- Abacus, geoboard, Graphic Aid for Mathematics, or Math Window*
Students who have visual impairments may use these devices. They are approved substitutes for paper and pencil computation.

Response Supports

- Answers entered directly in the test booklet, if a separate answer sheet is used*
- Periodic monitoring by the test administrator to ensure that the answers are marked in the proper spaces
- Writing guide for handwriting
- Special paper with raised lines, shaded lines, or color-coded lines*
- One piece of paper for each paragraph for FCAT Writing*
- Special large writing paper, if the disability prevents the student from writing small enough to respond in the answer booklet*
- Mathematical grids/guides to organize mathematical computation

Note: For accommodations marked with an asterisk (*), the test administrator or test contractor must record or transcribe responses in the student answer book.

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Non-allowed Response Accommodations

- Preprinted or electronic graphic organizer for FCAT Writing
- Access to the spelling and/or grammar checking feature in word processing software or assistive device

Calculators

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 have explicit requirements concerning the use of calculators. No student may use calculators for basic computation tested on FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics or Science in grades 3–6.

The FDOE provides calculators for all students on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics in grades 7, 8, and 10 and the FCAT Science in grades 8 and 11. Calculators may not be used as an accommodation in grades 3–6.

Students with visual impairments may use the FCAT large key/large display calculators or FCAT talking calculators supplied for tests in grades 7–10. If schools do not have sufficient FCAT large key/large display or FCAT talking calculators, students with visual impairments may use comparable calculators that are regularly used in their classrooms. These calculators must be basic, four-function models and must not have functions unavailable on the FCAT calculators.

Rulers

The FCAT 2.0 Mathematics tests for grades 3 and 4 include items that require students to use a ruler to measure centimeters and inches. A braille ruler is provided with the braille version of the test materials. Students may need adapted rulers, such as a ruler with a grip for holding. The ruler should be comparable to the FCAT ruler and regularly used by the student in the classroom.

Scheduling

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 must be given in the State's established time frame. The school district determines the scheduling of the specific times

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for sessions of the test. Students are expected to complete a session of the test within a certain period of time. Test administrators are required to provide all of the allotted time in each test session and should not end a test session early. The FCAT Writing assessment must be completed within one school day.

Scheduling accommodations involve changes to the date or time when the test is given or the amount of time allowed for individual test sessions. Scheduling accommodations may also change the way the time is organized. Some students with disabilities require extra time because they process information very slowly or use assistive technology or equipment that requires more time. Other students with disabilities may need breaks because they have difficulty concentrating for extended periods of time or are easily frustrated or anxious. Changes in the test schedule may also be required due to the effects of medication or impact of health-related disabilities.

Extended Time

Decisions to extend time should be based on the student's performance on similar tasks in the classroom. Students who are tested with braille or large print versions generally require extended time because of the reduced reading speed typically associated with the use of these formats. Test administrators should carefully monitor the student's use of time. Extended time may prolong anxiety for some students.

Extended time for the student to complete the test must be offered in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. It is important to note that extended time is not unlimited time. The team must consider what is appropriate for each student based on evidence of the need for extended time during classroom assessments. Extended time should align with the accommodation used regularly in the student's classroom instruction and assessment activities. The amount of extended time may be specified in the IEP or Section 504 plan. However, the student is not required to use all of the extended time that is allowed and may end the testing session prior to the expiration of the extended time.

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Adjusted Schedule

The student may take a session of the test during a particular time of day that differs from the regular schedule. Alterations to the schedule are permitted as long as all of the required sessions are completed within the State's allowed time frame.

The student may need to take the test in several brief sessions, allowing frequent breaks during the session, within specifications provided in the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 administration manuals. For students who need scheduling accommodations, the test administrator must carefully monitor student progress upon completion of each test session. The student must not be allowed to go back to completed sections of the test to change answers. A student with the accommodation of extended time must complete one session before going on to the next session.

In very limited cases, a student with disabilities may not be able to complete a session of the FCAT or FCAT 2.0 in one day. In these cases, the student may be tested over more than one day as long as the following conditions are maintained to ensure the validity of the test:

- The student is not be permitted to change responses to items completed on a previous day.
- The test administrator must closely supervise the administration of the test to ensure that the answers from the previous day are not changed and to make sure that the student does not preview parts of the test to be answered on the following day.
- The test administrator must secure all test books at the end of each testing day. The administrator must use a paper clip or binder clip to secure the answer books and prevent the student from reviewing answers from the previous day. The clips must be removed after testing is complete. Staples or tape should not be used on books containing student answers.
- The student must complete one session of the test before continuing on to the next session of the test.

Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Setting

The setting of FCAT and FCAT 2.0 administrations is determined at the district or school level. Students may take the test in their classrooms or in a separate area in the school. The FCAT test administration manual suggests that “the test be administered in a room that has comfortable seating, good lighting, and sufficient workspace . . . There must be sufficient space (at least three feet) between students to prevent cheating” (Office of Assessment, 2010a, p. 24).

Setting accommodations involve changes to the location or changes to the conditions of the setting where the student takes the test. Students who are easily distracted and who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting may need setting accommodations. Students who receive certain accommodations, such as a reader, use of equipment, or frequent breaks that might distract other students, may also require setting accommodations. Students with physical or sensory disabilities may need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

Alternate Settings

- Individual or small group setting
The size of the small group is comparable to the normal instruction group indicated on the student’s IEP.
- A familiar place with test proctor present or a familiar person who has been appropriately trained to administer the test
Procedures for test security must be followed and precautions taken to ensure that the test remains secure.
- Increased or decreased opportunity for movement
- Environment with reduced stimuli (study carrel, desk cleared of extraneous items)

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Adapted Conditions

- White noise (sound machines) or approved music to reduce auditory distractions
- Special lighting
- Special acoustics, such as FM systems to enhance sound or special rooms to decrease auditory distractions
- Adaptive or special furniture

Assistive Devices

Assistive technology may be used to provide specialized presentation formats or alternate ways of responding. Students may use the same assistive devices that they typically use in classroom instruction and assessment activities when taking the FCAT and FCAT 2.0.

Communication devices used with the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 should be word-, phrase-, and/or letter-based. Communication devices in which pictures represent complete sentences may not be used to respond to the FCAT writing prompt. Communication devices that serve as alternative keyboards are also allowed within the limits noted elsewhere regarding word prediction and spell checking.

Talking word processors may be used on the FCAT Writing. The spelling and grammar check feature must be turned off. Examples of talking word processors include Write: OutLoud and SOLO Literacy Suite (Don Johnston, Inc.).

This description of assistive technology is not exhaustive. Other assistive technology the student typically uses in classroom instruction may be used, provided the purpose of the testing is not violated. However, it must be ensured that test responses are the independent work of the student. The Commissioner of Education or designee must pre-approve the use of unique accommodations, including some assistive devices, in unusual circumstances (Bureau of K–12 Assessment, 2010, July 19).

Accommodations for Students Who Are English Language Learners

Students with disabilities who are ELLs and are currently receiving services in a program operated in accordance with an approved district ELL plan may also have accommodations approved for ELL students. Many of the allowable accommodations for ELL students are similar to those that students with disabilities use.

Flexible setting—Testing in a separate room with the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) or heritage language teacher acting as test administrator. Parents must be informed of this option for students who are not of legal age and shall be given the opportunity to select the preferred method of test administration.

Flexible scheduling—Taking a session of the test during several brief periods within one school day. However, a session must be completed within one school day.

Additional time—Additional time to complete each test section. The entire test may be administered over one or more days. A session of the test must be completed within one school day.

Assistance in the heritage language—For FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, Science, and Writing, ELLs may be provided limited assistance from the ESOL or heritage language teacher using the student’s heritage language. The teacher may answer student inquiries related to any directions. The teacher may answer specific questions about a word or phrase that is confusing the student because of limited English proficiency. A student’s questions may not be answered in a way that would lead the student to infer the correct answer to an item. Questions of clarification from individual students must be answered on an individual basis.

For FCAT 2.0 Reading, the ESOL or heritage language teacher may answer student questions about the general test directions in the student’s heritage language. The teacher may not read words to the

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student from the passages, test items, and performance tasks, and may not answer student questions about the reading passages, test items, or performance tasks.

Access to an approved English-to-heritage language and/or heritage language-to-English dictionary, such as those typically used in instructional settings, is allowed. A dictionary with definitions written exclusively in the heritage language or English shall not be allowed. Electronic dictionaries are strictly prohibited and may be cause for invalidation of the test results.

SECTION THREE

Making Decisions about FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations

The team developing the IEP or Section 504 plan makes decisions about accommodations for an individual student when they evaluate the impact of the student's disability on participation in instruction and assessment activities in the classroom and on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. The selection of accommodations must be based on evidence of the needs of the individual student, not solely on the student's exceptionality, educational placement, or grade level. Students may need certain accommodations on some sections of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, but not on others. For example, a student may need extra time and testing in a small group situation to complete FCAT Writing, but can take a test with multiple-choice questions without accommodations.

Teams should use the following guidelines when making decisions about accommodations. These guidelines support good decision-making practices and result in the selection of accommodations that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities (Thompson, Morse, Sharp, & Hall, 2005).

GUIDELINES

1. Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do.
2. Accommodations should not provide the student with an unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test. Accommodations must not change the underlying skills that the test measures.

GUIDELINES, cont.

3. Accommodations for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 must be the same or nearly the same as those the student uses in completing classroom instruction and assessment activities.
4. Accommodations must be necessary for enabling the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery (Office of Assessment, 2010a, 2010b).

Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins by gathering and reviewing information about the effect of the student's disability and the present level of performance in relation to State academic standards and local requirements. The IEP or Section 504 plan team members must determine how the child's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. Accommodations are used to reduce the impact of the disability. Most IEP forms have specific places to record accommodations needed to participate in the classroom and on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. In addition, accommodations may also be listed in the IEP in Annual Goals, Special Education, Related Services, or Supplementary Aids and Services. Section 504 plans include a place to record required accommodations.

A Process for Decision Making

Decisions about accommodations for an individual student should be made with careful consideration of the following questions:

1) What knowledge and skills does the student need to know and be able to do? How will they be assessed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0?

To answer this question, the team developing the IEP or Section 504 plan must first consider the knowledge and skills the student is expected to learn. A review of the Sunshine State Standards and Next Generation

Making Decisions about Accommodations

Sunshine State Standards should guide this inquiry. For more detailed information, including the test item specifications for the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, visit the Department of Education website at <http://www.fldoe.org> and the Florida Standards database at <http://www.floridastandards.org>.

In addition to the standards being tested, the planning team should become familiar with the format of the content and questions on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0, the expected types of responses, and state and local policies affecting the setting and schedule of the test. Information about the format and questions is briefly described in this document and in a variety of publications issued by the Florida Department of Education. Information about specific setting and scheduling policies can be obtained from the assessment coordinator in the local school district.

2) How does the disability affect the student's ability to learn the targeted knowledge and skills and perform on the assessments?

The need for accommodations should be based on information obtained from the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance. In the student's IEP, the present level statement describes how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as nondisabled children. In addition, the IEP must include a statement of any appropriate accommodations in the administration of state or district assessments of student achievement that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student on the assessments (Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(h), F.A.C.).

For a Section 504 plan, the team considers the impact of the disability that substantially interferes with the student's ability to access school programs. The team determines which accommodations the student needs.

3) What accommodations does the student regularly use in instruction and testing situations? Were these accommodations effective?

Effective accommodations enable students with disabilities to fully participate in instruction and assessment activities. It is important for the planning team to monitor the impact of accommodations provided in the past. In addition, students should be included in making decisions about accommodations. This becomes increasingly important when students reach adolescence. Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most useful to them. The team should evaluate the effectiveness of current and future accommodations. A list of sample questions follows:

- Did the student actually use the accommodation(s)?
For example, a student may be allowed extended time as an accommodation yet finishes work or tests within the normal time limits. A student may be unwilling to use an assistive device because it makes him/her look different from peers.
- Did the student achieve the intended learning outcomes when using the accommodation?
For example, a student uses an audio version of a science book to compensate for low reading ability and is able to pass the science course. A student with visual impairments reads braille versions of instructional materials and uses a braille writer for classwork, resulting in successful performance on written assignments and assessments.
- Did the student experience any difficulties when using accommodations?
- Should the student continue to use a particular accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?
- Can accommodations be combined to increase their impact?

Making Decisions about Accommodations

4) What accommodations should be provided for the student for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 testing?

Accommodations used on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 should be the same or similar to what the student typically uses to learn and perform tasks in the classroom setting. The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations: Quick Reference Guide in the Appendices of this manual can help answer these questions:

- Does the student need a different type of presentation?
- Does the student need a different way to respond?
- Does the student need a different schedule?
- Does the student need a special setting?
- Does the student use assistive technology?

Documentation Requirements

Once accommodations have been selected, notations are made on the student's IEP or Section 504 plan to document the decisions. Accommodations may not legally be provided during FCAT and FCAT 2.0 testing to any student without an appropriate plan in place (Office of Assessment, 2010a, 2010b). It is important to keep the plan updated as the student's need for and use of accommodations change over time.

APPENDICES

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations: Quick Reference Guide

Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations Quick Reference Guide

To assist IEP teams or Section 504 plan teams in making decisions about FCAT and FCAT 2.0 accommodations for an individual student, this guide includes brief descriptions of:

- The content assessed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0
- Allowable accommodations grouped by category

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Content

The content assessed on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 has been selected to measure student progress on the knowledge and skills of the Sunshine State Standards and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The table on the next page identifies broad categories of content assessed at each grade level. For more specific information, consult FCAT and FCAT 2.0 information materials, test items, and performance specifications available on the Department of Education website: <http://fcat.fldoe.org/>

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Content Assessed on FCAT and FCAT 2.0

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Content	Grade Levels
Reading —Words and phrases in context; main idea, plot, and purpose; comparisons and cause/ effect; reference and research	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, Retake
Mathematics —Number sense, concepts, and operations; measurement; geometry and spatial sense; algebraic thinking; data analysis and probability	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10, Retake Note: Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics discontinued in 2011–2012, except for Retake
Writing —Writing on an assigned topic (prompt); emphasis on focus, organization, support, and conventions Grade 4 using an expository (explain) or narrative (tell a story) structure Grades 8 and 10 using an expository (explain) or persuasive (persuade) structure	4, 8, and 10
Science —Physical and chemical sciences, earth and space sciences, life and environmental sciences, and scientific thinking	5, 8, and 11 Note: Grade 11 FCAT Science discontinued in 2011–2012

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations Quick Reference Guide

Does the student need a different type of presentation?

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 assessments are presented in a print format with written questions and passages, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations. Versions of the test materials are available in large print and braille format from the Florida Department of Education for students with visual impairments.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student uses large print or braille with embossed graphics in the classroom.	<p>Large print version of test books, answer documents, mathematics and science reference sheets, and gridded response instruction sheets</p> <p>Braille versions of test books and mathematics and science reference sheets with embossed graphics</p> <p>Real coins to access the print representation of the coins</p>
The student has information in written instructional materials read aloud.	<p>Oral presentation of mathematics and science test items and the writing prompt</p> <p>Note: Oral presentation may not be used for passages or test questions for FCAT 2.0 Reading.</p>
The student has written instructional materials presented by sign language.	<p>Sign language presentation of mathematics and science test items and the writing prompt</p> <p>Sign language for directions on all FCAT and FCAT 2.0 tests</p> <p>Note: Sign language may not be used for passages or test questions for FCAT 2.0 Reading.</p>
The student uses text-to-speech technology to read written materials.	<p>Text-to-speech technology (screen reader) will be available for computer-based administrations of select FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics tests and all EOC Assessments.</p> <p>Note: Text-to-speech technology may not be used except as directed by the FDOE and may not be used for reading passages or items that assess reading skills.</p>
The student cannot physically access print, large print, or braille materials.	<p>Auditory presentation of materials is permitted for students who cannot physically access print, large print, or braille materials. This requires prior approval from the Commissioner of Education or designee.</p>

Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Does the student need presentation support?

Some students with disabilities need supports for presentation to enable them to access the visual and print format of the test documents. Supports include tools that help to focus attention, assist with test directions, and maintain effort.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
<p>The student uses special tools to help focus attention on print materials.</p>	<p>Magnification devices, such as video magnifiers, reading loupes, and hand-held magnifiers</p> <p>Straightedge or blank card</p> <p>Positioning tools (book stand or page holder)</p> <p>Colored transparencies or overlays</p> <p>Test materials secured to the work area</p> <p>Highlighter to mark key words or phrases</p>
<p>The student needs assistance to be able to understand and follow oral directions.</p>	<p>Copy of directions from the FCAT or FCAT 2.0 test administration script to follow as directions are read aloud</p> <p>Test directions repeated, summarized, or clarified</p> <p>Opportunity for student to paraphrase or repeat directions to demonstrate understanding</p> <p>Sign language interpreter to interpret oral directions</p>
<p>The student needs assistance maintaining attention and effort in written assignments.</p>	<p>Verbal encouragement (“keep working,” “make sure to answer every question”)</p> <p>Note: Verbal encouragement may not be used to cue a student regarding correct or incorrect responses.</p>
<p>The student uses specially formatted materials for assignments and assessments.</p>	<p>Specially formatted test materials are considered unique accommodations that require prior approval from the Commissioner of Education or designee.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased spacing between test items Fewer test items placed on each page

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations Quick Reference Guide

Does the student need a different way to respond?

The test items determine the type of response required on the FCAT and FCAT 2.0. The student responds to multiple-choice questions by filling in the selected answer bubble in the test booklet or on a separate answer form. The student responds to the FCAT Writing prompt by writing in the Writing Folder. Students who are unable to use their own handwriting as a means of responding may use alternate response modes.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student dictates responses for written assignments and assessments.	Dictation of responses to a test administrator/proctor Dictation of responses to an audio recorder Note: For FCAT Writing, the student must indicate punctuation and spell unfamiliar words.
The student uses sign language to respond to written assignments and assessments.	Sign language responses to a sign language interpreter for transcription by the test administrator/proctor
The student uses speech-to-text technology to respond to written assignments and assessments.	Speech-to-text technology for FCAT Writing Note: The spell check and grammar check must be inactive.
The student uses assistive technology, such as word processing software, braillewriter, or other communication device, to respond to written assignments and assessments.	Braillewriter Computer switch or alternative keyboard Communication device Word processor Note: The spell check and grammar check must be inactive.

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Does the student need support for responding?

The student may need supports for responding to the test. Some students have difficulty transferring between the test booklet and the answer document to record their answers to multiple-choice questions. Other students need support, such as the use of special paper for writing extended responses or grids, to assist with mathematics calculation. Adapted calculators may be used for calculations in grades 7, 8, and 10.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student needs assistance to record answers to test questions.	Monitoring by the test administrator or proctor
The student is unable to use a separate answer document and must mark answers next to the questions.	A pointing device to indicate answers Answers marked in the test booklet Note: Responses must be transcribed to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 answer document.
The student uses special paper for written work.	Paper with wide lines Paper with raised or colored lines Paper with math guides (grids) for computation Note: Responses on special paper must be transcribed to the answer document.
The student uses assistive technology for calculation or other mathematical functions.	FCAT large key/large display or talking calculator for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, grades 7, 8, and 10, or FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science, grades 8 and 11 Geoboard, Math Windows, Graphic Aid for Mathematics, or abacus if student is visually impaired (all grades) as a substitute for paper and pencil computation Braille ruler or ruler with raised grip for FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, grades 3 and 4

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations Quick Reference Guide

Does the student need a different schedule?

The FCAT and FCAT 2.0 is given within a set of dates specified by the Florida Department of Education. Districts establish the specific times for each testing session. The total testing session may be broken into segments as an accommodation.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student is only able to work for short periods of time when completing assignments and assessments.	Testing time separated into short sessions Note: The student is prohibited from going back over completed test questions. The student must not be allowed to preview upcoming sections of the test.
The student must have extra time to complete classroom assignments and assessments, even when working continuously.	Extended time Note: Extended time must be offered in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. Extended time is not unlimited time. Extended time should align with the accommodation used regularly in the student's classroom instruction and assessment activities. The student is not required to use all of the extended time that is allowed and may end the testing session prior to the expiration of the extended time period.
The student's performance predictably deteriorates at certain times.	Test taken at a preferred time of day

Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Does the student need a special setting?

The school determines where the tests are given. If a separate setting is required for a student, arrangements must be made in advance to assure the availability of the location and proper staff.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student must be in a small group setting or one-to-one instruction when completing assignments and assessments.	Individual or small group setting Note: The small group is of a size comparable to the normal instruction group indicated in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.
The student must have a distraction-free environment or close monitoring when completing assignments and assessments.	Individual or small group setting Study carrel or partitioned area Close monitoring White noise (sound machine) or calming music to reduce auditory distractions Reduced stimuli (limit items on the desk, study carrel)
The student has special sensory or physical needs and requires special equipment or environmental adaptations.	Environment with special lighting Acoustical treatment Adaptive or special furniture Special acoustics, such as FM systems, or special rooms to decrease auditory distractions
The student must complete assignments and assessments in a familiar environment other than the school setting.	Test administration in a familiar place, such as the home, for students who are hospital/homebound Note: Specialized settings require pre-approval as a unique accommodation. A test proctor and/or a familiar person who has been appropriately trained to administer the test must be present.

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations Quick Reference Guide

Does the student need assistive technology?

Assistive technology the student typically uses in classroom instruction is allowed, provided the purpose of the testing is not violated. The test responses must be the independent work of the student.

Classroom Accommodations	FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations
The student with visual impairments uses assistive technology for calculation.	FCAT large key/large display or talking calculator for FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, grades 7, 8 and 10, or FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Science, grades 8 and 11 Geoboard, Math Windows®, Graphic Aid for Mathematics, or abacus if student is visually impaired (all grades) as a substitute for paper and pencil computation
The student uses assistive technology for communicating or writing.	Alternative keyboards and input devices Word processing software Braillewriter Communication devices
The student uses assistive technology for reading.	Assistive technology for reading test items and prompt allowed for FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, Science, and Writing Note: Assistive technology for reading test passages and items is not allowed for FCAT 2.0 Reading.

Does the student need a unique accommodation?

A unique accommodation is an accommodation that typically requires changes or alterations to the test materials. The student must regularly use the unique accommodation for classroom instruction, and the accommodation must not alter the underlying content of the assessment. The accommodation must not impact the reliability or validity of the test.

The district's assessment coordinator may request a unique accommodation by submitting a written request to the Bureau of K–12 Assessment, Florida Department of Education. The request must include a written description of the student's disabling condition and a specific description of the unique accommodation requested. A copy of the student's most recent IEP/504 plan and a written description of the accommodations or modifications provided in the classroom must accompany the request.

Upon receipt of the written request, the evidence will be reviewed and a recommendation will be made to the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner of Education or designee must approve the use of unique accommodations (Bureau of K–12 Assessment, 2010, July 19).

Technical Assistance

If there is uncertainty about the use of a test accommodation, contact the test coordinator or ESE director in your local school district. Questions may be referred to the Bureau of K–12 Assessment at (850) 245-0513 or to the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services at (850) 245-0475.

Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code

Students with Disabilities

- Rule 6A-6.03028, F.A.C. Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities
- Rule 6A-19.001, F.A.C. Scope, Coverage and Definitions

Standards

- Section 1003.41, F.S. Sunshine State Standards
- Section 1003.428, F.S. General requirements for high school graduation; revised
- Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C. Student Performance Standards

Assessment and Accommodations

- Section 1008.22(3)(c)6, F.S. Student assessment program for public schools
- Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C. Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and End of Course Assessment Requirements
- Rule 6A-1.09430, F.A.C. Florida Alternate Assessment Requirements
- Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C. Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities
- Rule 6A-1.09431, F.A.C. Procedures for Special Exemption from Graduation Test Requirements for Students with Disabilities Seeking a Standard High School Diploma
- Rule 6A-1.09432, F.A.C. Assessment of English Language Learners
- Rule 6A-6.0909, F.A.C. Exemptions Provided to English Language Learners

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Rule 6A-6.09091, F.A.C. Accommodations of the Statewide Assessment Program
Instruments and Procedures for English Language
Learners

Online Resources

The following list identifies links to FDOE websites to inform educators, parents, and the general public about the educational standards, statewide testing requirements, accommodations for students with disabilities, and Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

Website: <http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx>

Florida's K–12 Statewide Assessment Program

Website: <http://fcats.fldoe.org/>

Florida Alternate Assessment

Website: <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp>

Accommodations Information

Website: <http://www.fldoe.org/eae/fcatisd.asp>

Florida Statutes

Website: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/>

State Board of Education Rules (Florida Administrative Code)

Website: <https://www.flrules.org/default.asp>

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- Florida Department of Education. (2009). *Understanding FCAT reports 2009*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.
- Florida Department of Education. (2010, July 15). *Statewide assessment for students with disabilities* [Technical Assistance Paper DPS: 2010 - 92]. Tallahassee, FL: Author.
- Florida Department of Education. (2010, May 19). *Accessible instructional materials: Questions and answers* [Technical Assistance Paper DPS: 2010 - 70]. Tallahassee, FL: Author.
- Florida Department of Education. (2010, March 12). *Waiver of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) graduation requirement for students with disabilities* [Technical Assistance Paper DPS: 2010 - 24]. Tallahassee, FL: Author.
- Florida Department of Education. (2010, July a). *2010 Guide to calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP)* [Technical Assistance Paper]. Tallahassee, FL: Author.
- Florida Department of Education. (2010 July b). *2010 Guide to calculating school grades* [Technical Assistance Paper]. Tallahassee, FL: Author.
- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test: Information for educators/FCAT rubrics*. Retrieved June 9, 2009, from <http://fcat.fldoe.org/rubrcpag.asp>

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- Office of Assessment. (2010a). *2010 FCAT reading, mathematics, and science test administration manual*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.
- Office of Assessment (2010b). *2010 FCAT writing test administration manual*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.
- Thompson, S. J., Morse, A. B., Sharpe, M., & Hall, S. (2005, August). *Accommodations manual: How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: CCSSO State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Assessing Special Education Students.
- Thurlow, M. L., Christensen, L. L., & Lail, K. E. (2008). *An analysis of accommodations issues from the standards and assessments peer review* (Technical Report No. 51). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

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