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February 15, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED STUDENTS FROM HAITI – WAIVER OF THE SPRING ADMINISTRATION OF FCAT

This communication is intended to provide further clarification regarding waiver of the spring administration of the FCAT for students who have emigrated from Haiti since the recent earthquake disaster. The Commissioner of Education has authority to grant exceptions for participation in administration of the FCAT; however, the Commissioner does not have authority to waive promotion or graduation requirements.

Haitian students who have arrived in Florida since the disaster and are identified as third grade student transfers may elect not to take the spring 2010 Grade 3 FCAT. Such students would be viewed the same as any transfer student who enrolls in Florida's public school system after the spring FCAT administration. Students may still be promoted if they qualify for a good cause exemption pursuant to Section 1008.25(6), Florida Statutes. Good cause exemptions can be granted based on acceptable performance on an approved alternate assessment, demonstration of proficiency through a student portfolio, or if the student has been assessed as a Limited English Proficient (LEP) student and has been provided less than two years of ESOL instruction.

Haitian students who have arrived in Florida since the disaster and are identified as sophomore, junior or senior transfers may elect not to participate in the spring Grade 10 FCAT. Juniors who will become seniors for the 2010-11 school year will have two more attempts in their senior year.

DR. FRANCES HAITHCOCK
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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A student who transfers into the Florida public school system for the first time in Grade 12 is not required to take and fail the reading and mathematics Grade 10 FCAT three times in order to use a passing concordant score in lieu of a passing FCAT score. Therefore, for students in Grade 12, a concordant score may be used to fulfill the requirements for a regular diploma.

Students are encouraged to participate in the Spring 2010 FCAT Administration but are not required to do so. If a student elects to not participate in the statewide assessment, statute requires that the district provide the student's parent or guardian with information on the implications of that decision on promotion or graduation decisions.

FH/cy