

Recommendations of the High School Reform Task Force

CHANGE HIGH SCHOOL AS WE KNOW IT

- 1) Upgrade Florida's high school graduation requirements to better prepare students for the 21st century. New graduation requirements:
 - Including rigorous core requirements
 - 4 years of mathematics including algebra and geometry or equivalent courses such as applied and integrated (level 2 or above)
 - Area(s) of specialization
 - Minimum GPA requirements
 - Earning a passing score on the 10th Grade FCAT
- 2) Provide for differentiated levels of proficiency in content areas.
For example recognition obtained in each content area for:
 - Successful completion of courses such as honors, AICE, IB, AP, Dual Enrollment
 - Achievement at this level – GPA in area
 - Non-traditional ways of demonstrating “Outstanding Accomplishments”
- 3) Eliminate grade level retention in high school, with high school graduation being based on proficiency and earning the required credits and GPA.
- 4) Implement smaller learning communities, which may include (1) career clusters/academies in high school that may lead to industry certification or (2) other advanced academic studies.

READING

- 1) Help middle and high schools infuse reading as part of the culture by ensuring Level 1 and Level 2 readers are served with intensive reading instruction, incentivize content area teachers to pursue the reading endorsement, providing engaging and diverse texts in both the media center and classroom libraries, and tying reading to all content area and elective courses. Ensure that literacy benchmarks are a part of all content areas.

INNOVATIONS

- 1) Encourage the development of the opportunities for a high school student to earn a high school diploma and a higher level degree, certification, or competency at the same time.
- 2) The Department will research the implementation of end-of-course exams in other states and Florida districts as a measure of students meeting higher expectations.

A STRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL FOUNDATION

- 1) Increase opportunities at the middle school level for earning high school level course credit by encouraging middle schools to offer a minimum of one high school course for high school credit with an emphasis on Algebra 1.
- 2) To ensure the foundation of academic skills in middle school, require minimum core course completion (required number in core areas) to exit grade 8 or enter high school.
- 3) Provide summer academies that give intensive intervention/remediation between grades 5/6, 6/7, 7/8, 8/9 as needed as a condition for promotion and credit recovery in high school. Particular emphasis must be placed on the transition from grade 8 to 9, with 9th grade summer academies to prepare struggling learners for high school. FCAT retakes should be allowed after the summer academies.
- 4) Require career education consisting of a minimum of 9 weeks in at least one middle level grade: 6, 7 or 8.

HELPING STUDENTS TO FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

- 1) Provide the tools whereby middle grade students can focus on the future by the development of a 5 year educational plan to address high school and postsecondary goals.
- 2) Expand academic advisement and support services in secondary schools. Coordinate all planning with parental involvement and the student's academic and/or career plan (increase use of FACTS.org).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Help teachers meet higher expectations by providing data-driven, student specific, research-based professional development.
- 2) Help administrators meet higher expectations by providing instructional leadership training for principals.

Please visit www.fldoe.org/hsreform for more information on high school reform, including meeting materials and resources.