

Appendix G

Annual Learning Gain Targets to Proficiency

The FCAT was originally developed to test reading in grades 4, 8, and 10, and mathematics in grades 5, 8, and 10. The test results were reported in terms of a succession of annual “status reports” that revealed the performance of Florida students who were in different cohorts. The data were reported for each subject using a score scale that ranged from 100-500, and each scale was separately computed for each grade level. Progress over time was reported as changes in the performance of each grade level group – i.e., this year’s fourth grade students were compared to last year’s fourth graders to see if the average score changed or, for example, if more students were earning “Level 3” scores.

In 2001, the FCAT program was expanded so that the tests now are being administered in all grades 3-10. This offers the opportunity to make use of a new score scale that links adjacent grades together and permits progress to be tracked over time, based on what is commonly called a “developmental scale.” The effect of this improvement is that student performance across the grades can be tracked across this scale. As a student moves from grade to grade, his/her performance can be monitored and compared to the performance of other students in Florida. Most importantly, the yearly progress of each student can be reported by the change in the developmental scale scores.

Florida will use this new developmental scale to develop a plan with annual learning gain targets for all students below proficiency.

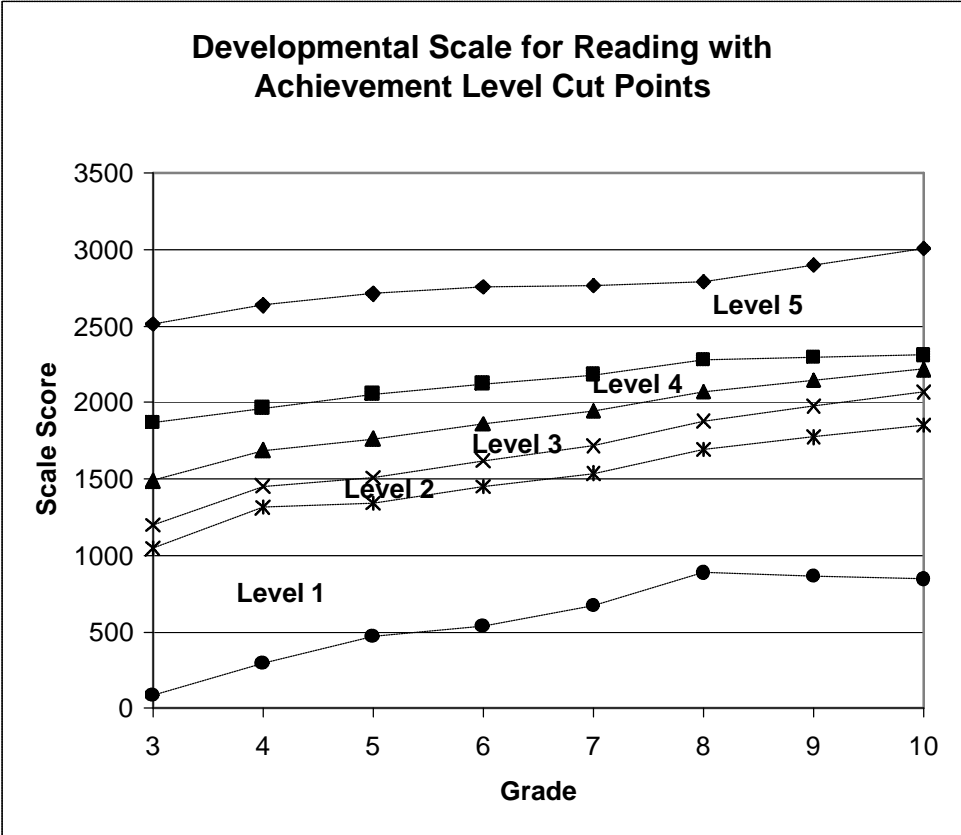
Four-Year Plans

By using the developmental scale, districts and schools can chart their students’ growth as they move across the grade levels. Such charts, or data plots, make it possible to answer the question, “Is this student making adequate progress for each year in school?” and, “If this student keeps making the same amount of progress, is he/she going to be ready for the grade ten graduation testing requirement?” For those students achieving below proficiency, we are able to set annual targets for growth that will set the student on a trajectory to proficiency.

For example, a third-grade student with a FCAT Reading score of 150 would be designated as scoring in Level 1, clearly below proficiency. The Developmental Scale Score (DSS) for this student would be 389 in the conversion to the vertical scale. To bring this student to a level of proficiency by the end of 7th grade, the student would need to have a DSS score of at least 1719 and his/her plan would map out the growth needed each year to reach the goal of proficiency, with identified annual benchmarks. Instructional plans would tie to the content scores on the FCAT Reading test, so that specific strategies link to content areas needing attention.

Example Developmental Scale for Reading

The following chart illustrates the relationship between the developmental scores and the FCAT achievement levels.



Appendix H

The Florida Department of Education Return on Investment (ROI)

Currently the Department of Education has available a multitude of reports which provide information using student, staff and finance data. For the purpose of assessing the quality and efficiency of the various education delivery systems, the Department is in the process of using the available information to develop a comprehensive set of measures for the purpose of comparisons and trend analysis of schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions. By integrating the goals of highest student achievement and quality and efficient services, this effort will establish an accountability system for the use of public education resources for all delivery systems.

A comprehensive system for calculating “return on investment” based on indicators of institutional efficiency and effectiveness is under development. The system will have many benefits, including:

- The use of data to influence decision-making – Good decisions are based on inquiry and analysis. Information technologies are available to make this possible for school-based administrators, as well as external users of education information such as legislators and researchers.
- The use of data to target specific areas for improvement – Timely and accurate data can assist decision makers at all levels in focusing on improvement strategies.
- The use of disaggregated data to examine wide-ranging goals – Disaggregating data for analysis allows for identification of programmatic and/or fiscal inequities and assists in the establishment of baselines for improvement.
- The use of data in rapid program evaluation – In order to have an impact, program evaluation must be timely as well as complete. By compiling and linking program and other data in an accurate and well-designed retrieval system, program evaluation can be effectively and efficiently accomplished.
- The use of data to examine the relationship between cost and program effectiveness.