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Commissioner of Education



Memorandum Number 08-14

October 22, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community College Presidents
District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Eric J. Smith

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 1908

Senate Bill 1908, passed by the 2008 Florida Legislature and signed into law by the Governor on June 30, 2008, is a comprehensive education reform initiative which encompasses several separate, but related actions that require your attention. Chapter Number 2008-235, General Laws of Florida, includes revisions to section 1008.30, Florida Statutes, relating to common placement testing for postsecondary education and extending opportunities for remediation to high school seniors. Specifically, this legislation that requires cross-sector (secondary-postsecondary) cooperative efforts calls for expanded college/career readiness testing of 11th grade students who express postsecondary intent, and further collaborative efforts to make postsecondary remediation available to 12th grade students who demonstrate a need for and interest in additional preparation. Important goals of this law are to: 1) increase the number and percentage of students who graduate from high school "college and career ready"; 2) better communicate with 11th grade students and their parents the requirements and opportunities for enrollment in college-credit courses without a need for remediation, and; 3) to provide students, whose test scores in Reading, Writing and/or Mathematics indicate any gaps, an opportunity to attain needed competencies in 12th grade prior to high school graduation. Ultimately, this legislation will help us to graduate better prepared students, increase access to postsecondary opportunities, enhance career success, and promote student retention and completion in college.

While I am aware of the budget and logistical challenges both the K-12 system and community colleges are facing, and your concerns regarding implementation of these requirements in 2008-09, it is incumbent upon each community college and their feeder high schools to begin taking the necessary steps to move forward with compliance. Per State Board Rule 6A-10.0315(11), "...the administration of the placement test will be under the control and supervision of the community college." District high schools and

community colleges should locally determine how to best accommodate 11th grade testing of eligible students using the computerized Accuplacer or paper and pencil Florida Entry-Level Placement Exam, and incorporate these policies into their Interinstitutional Articulation Agreement. Alternatively, SAT and ACT scores may also be used for decisions regarding enrollment in the 12th grade postsecondary readiness elective courses under development. State recognized common cut scores shall be used for all placement determinations (refer to State Board Rule 6A-10.0315(3) for CPT and 6A-10.0315(7) for ACT and SAT scores). Attached you will find information detailing additional funding made available to the community colleges to help defray the cost of test materials and administration for the 2008-09 academic year. Very shortly, community college presidents will be receiving a Department of Education (DOE) form to complete which will authorize distribution of funds.

The Department of Education's Division of Public Schools and Division of Community Colleges have already begun communicating the referenced requirements to school/college operational administrators, and providing support which will help facilitate implementation. By December 1, 2008, a secondary-postsecondary readiness math course which is equivalent to remedial Elementary Algebra, MAT 0024, taught at the community colleges, will be approved for delivery as a high school semester-long math elective for 12th grade students. Once approved, the course information will be added to the High School Course Code Directory and be available for use statewide. By December 2008, similar postsecondary "mirror" courses in Reading and Writing will also be available for high school delivery. Per current statute, these courses when offered at the colleges require a state-approved end-of-course exam to validate successful mastery of competencies. Department of Education staff is currently working on procedures for making existing end-of-course test bank items and the corresponding test blueprint available for K-12 use. I have further requested that Vice Chancellor Judith Bilsky work with the community colleges to establish a common statewide end-of-course exit test score for postsecondary readiness courses. *My expectation is that 12th grade students will have access to the same course curriculum and be evaluated and placed using the same standards which are used for evaluating and placing "regularly" admitted college students in postsecondary coursework.* I strongly urge close collaboration between high schools and colleges not only on administration of placement assessments, but also in faculty-to-faculty communication, whereby college faculty with experience in successful delivery of remedial courses can share curriculum information with their secondary colleagues.

Please share and communicate this information as appropriate with principals and campus administrators. Ms. Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services, is the Division of Public Schools contact for this initiative and can be reached at mary.tappen@fldoe.org and Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor for the Florida College System, can be reached at judith.bilsky@fldoe.org. I encourage you to contact them with questions regarding the requirements detailed above. Thank you for your cooperation.

EJC/jbb

Attachment

c: Dr. Frances Haithcock, Chancellor, Public Schools
Dr. Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor, Community Colleges
Ms. Lucy Hadi, Chancellor, Workforce Education
Ms. Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor, Public Schools
Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor, Community Colleges
Dr. Heather R. Sherry, Director, Articulation
Dr. Cornelia S. Orr, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Assessment and School Performance