

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Michael Grego

DATE: August 2, 2011

SUBJECT: **Back-to-School Information**

Contact Information

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information and updates regarding certain requirements related to assessment and accountability for the 2011-12 school year. As teachers and students across the state return to their classrooms, we want to ensure that you are aware of what to expect this year. This will prepare you to effectively communicate these expectations to students, personnel, and other citizens in your district.

✓ Graduation Requirements for Entering Ninth Grade Students

Increased graduation requirements in the Florida Statutes (F.S.) are phased in each year, beginning with last year's ninth grade cohort of students, with additional requirements over a four-year period. The 2011-12 first-time ninth grade student cohort graduation requirements include:

- Earning course credit in at least one course within the 24-credit graduation option through online learning. This requirement is met through an online course offered by the Florida Virtual School, an online course offered by the high school, or an online dual enrollment course offered through a district interinstitutional articulation agreement. A high school course taken online during grades 6 through 8 fulfills this requirement. A student who is enrolled in a full-time or part-time virtual instruction program meets this requirement. Further information may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/>.
- Passing the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment to earn the required course credit. If the student enters ninth grade with Algebra 1 course credit, the student is exempt from this requirement.

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- Earning course credit in Geometry and taking the Geometry EOC Assessment. The results of this EOC assessment must be included as 30% of the student's course average. If the student enters ninth grade with Geometry course credit, the student is exempt from this requirement.
- Earning course credit in Biology 1 and taking the Biology 1 EOC Assessment. The results of this EOC assessment must be included as 30% of the student's course average. If the student enters ninth grade with Biology 1 course credit, the student is exempt from this requirement. If a district chooses, a student who elects to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) Biology without first enrolling in Biology 1 can fulfill this ninth grade cohort's graduation requirement by taking the Biology 1 EOC Assessment. In this case, the results of this EOC assessment must be included as 30% of the student's AP Biology course average.

✓ Statewide Assessments

The following statewide assessments, listed by test window, will be administered during the 2011-12 school year. The schedule below does not include field test administrations. More information, including the scheduling of field tests, can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/schedule.asp>.

Fall 2011 Retakes (October 10 – 21, 2011)

- **FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in reading, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading assessment and who did not receive a passing score in spring 2011. The FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake is a computer-based test (CBT) with paper-based accommodations for students whose Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan indicates the need for them.
- **FCAT Reading Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards in reading, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT Reading assessment and who have not yet achieved a passing score or concordant score. The FCAT Reading Retake is CBT-optional by school.
- **FCAT Mathematics Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards in mathematics, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics assessment and who have not yet achieved a passing score or concordant score. The FCAT Mathematics Retake is a CBT with paper-based accommodations for students whose IEP or 504 Plan indicates the need for them.

Winter 2011-12 Algebra 1 EOC Assessment (December 5 – 16, 2011, or January 9 – 20, 2012)

- The **Algebra 1 EOC Assessment** is based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards course description for Algebra 1, and will be administered to students completing any of the following courses during semester one:
 - Algebra 1 – 1200310
 - Algebra 1 Honors – 1200320
 - Algebra 1B – 1200380
 - Pre-AICE Mathematics 1 – 1209810
 - IB Middle Years Program – Algebra 1 Honors – 1200390

Spring 2012 FCAT Writing (February 28 – March 1, 2012)

- **FCAT Writing** is administered to all students enrolled in grades 4, 8, and 10. You may wish to review communications distributed in July 2011, regarding changes to FCAT Writing. These memos can be found here: <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/k12memo/k12memo-fcat.asp>. As noted in the *Changes to FCAT Writing* memorandum from Deputy Commissioner Kris Ellington on July 5, 2011, examples of student responses that illustrate upcoming changes to Florida's writing assessment are now available. You may access the 2012 FCAT Writing Exemplar Sets at the Test Development Center's SharePoint site here: <http://sharepoint.leon.k12.fl.us/tdc/external/default.aspx>.

Spring 2012 Retakes (April 9 – 20, 2012)

- **FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in reading, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading assessment and who did not receive a passing score in spring or fall 2011. The FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake is a computer-based test with paper-based accommodations for students whose IEP or 504 Plan indicates the need for them.
- **FCAT Reading Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards in reading, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT Reading assessment and who have not yet achieved a passing score or concordant score. The FCAT Reading Retake is CBT-optional by school.
- **FCAT Mathematics Retake** – this assessment is based on the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards in mathematics, and will be administered to students whose graduation requirement is the Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics assessment and who have not yet achieved a passing score or concordant score. The FCAT Mathematics Retake is a CBT with paper-based accommodations for students whose IEP or 504 Plan indicates the need for them.

Spring 2012 FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science (April 16 – 27, 2012)

- **FCAT 2.0 Reading** tests are based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in reading and will be administered to students in grades 3 through 10. Grade 3 students are required to achieve a Level 2 or above to be promoted to grade 4. Grade 10 students must achieve a passing score as one of the requirements for graduation. The Grades 6 and 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading tests are computer-based tests with paper-based accommodations for students whose IEP or 504 Plan indicates the need for them.
- **FCAT 2.0 Mathematics** tests are based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in mathematics and will be administered to students in grades 3 through 8.
- **FCAT 2.0 Science** tests are based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in science and will be administered to students in grades 5 and 8. With the addition of the Biology 1 EOC Assessment, a comprehensive science assessment in grade 11 will no longer be administered. There are no gridded-response items on the Grades 5 and 8 FCAT 2.0 Science assessments, and students will receive a *Periodic Table of the Elements* to use during testing, but no reference sheet. Student performance on the FCAT 2.0 Science in 2012 will be linked to the existing FCAT Science score scale through the equipercntile linking method. By this method, 2012 FCAT 2.0 Science scores will be linked to 2011 FCAT Science scores at the same percentile rank, allowing the 2012 FCAT 2.0 Science scores to be reported as FCAT Equivalent Scale Scores, which range from 100-500.

Spring 2012 End-of-Course Assessments (April 23 – June 1, 2012)

All EOC assessments are computer-based tests with paper-based accommodations for students whose IEP indicates the need for them.

- The **Algebra 1 EOC Assessment** is based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards course description for Algebra 1 and its equivalent courses, and must be administered to students completing the following courses:
 - Algebra 1 – 1200310
 - Algebra 1 Honors – 1200320
 - Algebra 1B – 1200380
 - Pre-AICE Mathematics 1 – 1209810
 - IB Middle Years Program – Algebra 1 Honors – 1200390
- The **Biology 1 EOC Assessment** is based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards course description for Biology 1 and its equivalent courses, and must be administered to students completing the following courses:
 - Biology 1 – 2000310
 - Biology 1 Honors – 2000320
 - Pre-AICE Biology – 2000322
 - Biology Technology – 2000430
 - Biology 1 PreIB – 2000800
 - IB Middle Years Program Biology Honors – 2000850
 - Integrated Science 3 – 2002440
 - Integrated Science 3 Honors – 2002450
- The **Geometry EOC Assessment** is based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards course description for Geometry and its equivalent courses, and must be administered to students completing the following courses:
 - Geometry – 1206310
 - Geometry Honors – 1206320
 - IB Middle Years Program Geometry Honors – 1206810
 - Pre-AICE Mathematics 2 – 120982

For both the 2012 Biology 1 and Geometry EOC Assessments, students will receive a score on a scale of 20-80. This scale, which will only be used for the first statewide test administration of these EOC assessments, is a special scale known as a T-score scale and was used in reporting Algebra 1 EOC Assessment results in June 2011. On the T-score scale, a score of 50 is at the statewide average and all interpretations are norm-referenced interpretations. For example, on this scale, scores around 60 could be considered above average, and scores around 40 could be considered below average. Similarly, scores around 70 could be considered superior, and scores around 30 could be considered inferior. Individual Student Reports (ISRs) indicate whether the student's score falls within the high, middle, or low levels as compared to other students in Florida.

✓ Setting Achievement Levels for FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics and Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment

New FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment Achievement Levels will be established this fall based on the recommendations of two committees: 1) a standard-setting committee made up of experienced Florida educators, and 2) a "reactor" committee made up of Florida

superintendents and business/community leaders. The standard-setting committee of educators will recommend the new Achievement Level cut scores based on their review of the assessments, informed by their experience with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and teaching Florida's students. There will be a standard-setting committee for each grade and subject, with a total of approximately 300 educators participating in the process. The reactor committee will review the standard-setting committees' recommendations and provide their recommendations of the appropriateness of the recommended cut scores. The recommendations of both committees will be presented to the State Board of Education to codify the final set of cut scores in rule. The new Achievement Levels will be applied to results reported beginning in this 2011-12 school year. The general timeline is provided below.

*Timeline for Establishment of Achievement Levels for
 FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics and Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment*

Event	Date
Post Notice of Rule Development for State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)	August 2011
Conduct Standard-Setting Committee Meetings – Orlando, FL	September 19 – 23, 2011
Conduct Reactor Panel Meeting – Tallahassee, FL	September 29 – 30, 2011
Conduct Rule Development Workshops	October 2011
Advertise Proposed State Board of Education FCAT Rule	November 2011
State Board of Education Action on revised Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C. – Approval of New Achievement Levels for FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Algebra 1 EOC Assessment	December 2011*

**Date is approximate and may be affected by external factors such as State Board action or changes in legislation governing programs.*

✓ **Revisions to Florida's System of School Accountability**

Florida law (s. 1008.34, F. S.) requires that new statewide assessments (FCAT 2.0 and Florida EOC Assessments) be integrated into Florida's system for grading schools with new standards in place. The 2011-12 school year is the first in which EOC assessments will become part of school grading. During the planned integration of these new assessments, the state will conduct a review of the school grading system components with stakeholder representatives. The outcome will be a revised system designed to most effectively evaluate the performance of Florida's schools in the coming year and in subsequent years as we move toward full implementation of Common Core State Standards and common assessments in 2014-15.

Timeline for Implementation of 2011-12 School Grades

Event	Date
Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committee (AAAC) Feedback	July 27, 2011
Leadership Policy Advisory Council (LPAC) Feedback	August 18, 2011
District Assessment and Accountability Coordinators Feedback	September 8, 2011
Apply FCAT 2.0/EOC Achievement Level standards to model impact on 2010-11 school grades	Fall 2011
Additional AAAC/LPAC as needed	Fall 2011
Post Notice of Rule Development for State Board of Education Rule	November 2011

6A-1.09981, F.A.C.	
Finalize proposed model for the Next Generation School Accountability System	November 2011*
Conduct Rule Development Workshops	December 2011 – January 2012*
State Board of Education Action on revised Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C.	February 2012*
Release of 2011-12 school grades for non-high-schools and AYP designations for all schools	Summer 2012*
Release of 2011-12 high school grades	December 2012*

* Dates are approximate and may be affected by external factors such as availability of data, State Board action, or changes in legislation governing programs.

✓ **Revision to Florida’s Differentiated Accountability System**

Florida law (s. 1008.33, F. S.) authorizes Differentiated Accountability (DA) as the state system of school improvement. Presently, it is necessary to modify this system based upon the transition to new statewide assessments, modification to the Intervene Entrance/Exit Criteria, possible reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and further clarification regarding the guidelines for external providers (external management companies and/or charter operators). The Department will work through established groups including the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, LPAC, and AAAC to review both the statute (s. 1008.33, F.S.) and rule (6A-1.099811, F.A.C.).

Timeline for Differentiated Accountability System Review

Event	Date
DA Intervene Entrance/Exit Criteria Workgroup Convenes	July 21, 2011
Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committee (AAAC) Feedback	July 27, 2011
Leadership Policy Advisory Council (LPAC) Feedback	August 18, 2011
District Assessment and Accountability Coordinators Feedback	September 8, 2011
Additional AAAC/LPAC as needed	Fall 2011
Finalize proposed model for revision of Differentiated Accountability	November 2011*
Post Notice of Rule Development for State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C.	November – December 2011
Conduct Rule Development Workshops	December 2011 – January 2012*
State Board of Education Action on revised Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C.	February 2012*
Notification to districts regarding any statutory or rule revisions	March 2012*

* Dates are approximate and may be affected by external factors such as availability of data, State Board action, or changes in legislation governing programs.

✓ **Revision to Reading Intervention Requirements**

Please be aware that s. 1003.4156(1)(b), F.S., was revised in 2011 to read, “A middle grades student who scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading but who did not score below Level 3 in the previous 3 years may be granted a 1-year exemption from the reading remediation requirement; however, the student must have an approved academic improvement plan already in place, signed by the appropriate school staff and the student's parent, for the year for which the exemption is granted.” Similarly, s.

1003.428(2)(b)1., F.S., now states, "A high school student who scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading but who did not score below Level 3 in the previous 3 years may be granted a 1-year exemption from the reading remediation requirement; however, the student must have an approved academic improvement plan already in place, signed by the appropriate school staff and the student's parent, for the year for which the exemption is granted."

✓ **Common Placement Testing for 11th Graders in 2011-12**

You received a memorandum from Chancellor Will Holcombe and me on June 20, 2011, providing background and requirements for certain students to be evaluated for college readiness prior to grade 12. In particular, students who scored in Achievement Levels 2 or 3 on FCAT 2.0 Reading or Achievement Levels 2, 3, or 4 on FCAT Mathematics in grade 10 must take the common placement test or its equivalent. Florida's current common placement test administered by Florida College System institutions is the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.). Other assessments that meet the equivalent test requirement are identified in State Board Rule 6A-10.0315, F.A.C.

At this time, the Department has not finalized plans for administration of the common placement test for grade 11 students who are required to take it. However, the legislature has appropriated funds for this purpose and the Department will conduct a competitive procurement process for these services. High schools will administer the P.E.R.T. or its equivalent during the 2011-12 school year to those grade 11 students who are required by statute to take it. It will be a computer-based test with the usual exceptions for students whose IEP indicates paper-based accommodations are required. Information on the P.E.R.T. can be found in *Florida's Postsecondary Education Readiness Test Study Guide* available at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/pdf/PERT-StudentStudyGuide.pdf>. We will maintain communication with your district's P.E.R.T. contact and provide further details as they become available. Your patience as these details are resolved is greatly appreciated.

✓ **Postsecondary Preparatory Instruction for 12th Graders in 2011-12**

The Department will be initiating rule development as required in s. 1008.30, F.S., to identify the *Postsecondary Readiness Competencies* that will be the basis for the required postsecondary preparatory curriculum. Information is forthcoming regarding postsecondary preparatory curriculum and course placement decisions based on common placement test scores.

✓ **Support for Students and Parents**

To support student and parent understanding of middle grades promotion, high school graduation requirements and college, career, and military preparation, the Department has developed the brochure "*Pathways to Success, College and Career Readiness – Middle and High School Planning Guide for Students & Parents.*" This brochure is attached for district use. We encourage you to distribute this as part of your middle school and high school open house and orientation programs.

District School Superintendents

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Finally, my wishes for a smooth launch to the 2011-12 school year for you, your staff, and students as you begin a year of renewed opportunities for Florida's students to learn and perform at levels to ensure they are ready for the next phase of education or career. Thank you for your commitment to their success.

Attachments:

Pathways to Success, College and Career Readiness – Middle and High School Planning Guide for Students & Parents

Contacts and Resources by Memorandum Topic

C: Gerard Robinson, Commissioner

Dr. Will Holcombe, Chancellor, The Florida College System

Kris Ellington, Deputy Commissioner, Accountability, Research, and Measurement

Dr. Sharon Koon, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Accountability, Research, and Measurement

Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor, Division of Florida Colleges

Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services

Matthew Bouck, Director, Office of Articulation

Attachment to Back-to-School Memorandum, August 2, 2011

Contacts and Resources by Memorandum Topic			
Topic	Contact	E-Mail	Resources
Graduation Requirements	Helen Lancashire	Helen.Lancashire@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/BII/StudentPro/resources.asp
Virtual Instruction	Sally Roberts	Sally.Roberts@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/
Statewide Assessment Schedule	Victoria Ash	Victoria.Ash@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/asp/schedule.asp
FCAT 2.0/EOC Achievement Level Standards Setting	Sharon Koon	Sharon.Koon@fldoe.org	http://fcats.fldoe.org/eoc/memo.asp (See March 2011 memoranda)
School Accountability System	Ed Croft	Ed.Croft@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation/
Differentiated Accountability System	Frederick Heid	Frederick.Heid@fldoe.org	http://www.flbsi.org/DA/index.htm
Reading Remediation	Stuart Greenberg	Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org	http://www.justreadflorida.com/
College Readiness Testing and Instruction	Julie Alexander Teresa Sweet	Julie.Alexander@fldoe.org Teresa.Sweet@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/pdf/PERT-StudentStudyGuide.pdf