

Establishing the B.E.S.T. Scale Score for the FAST and B.E.S.T. EOC Assessments Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Why are the score ranges for the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) and Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) End-of-Course (EOC) assessments changing?

When new standards and assessments are implemented, standard setting must be conducted to set Achievement Levels on a new score scale, and those proposed levels must be adopted by the State Board of Education. Because the assessments were implemented in the 2022–23 school year and standard setting/adoption took place in the summer and fall of 2023, scores for assessments taken prior to Winter 2023 were reported on a provisional scale linked to the previous assessment system (the Florida Standards Assessment [FSA]). Scores for assessments taken in Winter 2023 and beyond will be reported on the B.E.S.T. score scales.

2. What is standard setting?

Standard setting is the process whereby groups of educators, experts, and community members “draw the lines” that separate the test scores into various Achievement Levels, and it is a process that is required when implementing new standards and new assessments. Once standards are set, test scores can be used to group students into meaningful Achievement Levels.

For more information on the standard setting process, please visit the [Standard Setting page](#) on the FDOE website.

3. The scores on the B.E.S.T. scale are lower than the scores on the FSA scale. Why?

When a new scale is established, typically the number ranges in the scale change from the previous scale to help distinguish between the two scales. The actual number ranges selected for a scale are arbitrary; the meaning attached to them is established when Achievement Levels and cut scores are established at standard setting. So, for example, the FSA passing score for Algebra 1 was 497 on a scale score range of 425–575, and the B.E.S.T. passing score for Algebra 1 is 400 on a scale score range of 325–475. This does not mean that the test got easier or that the standard was lowered. The new score is simply placed on a new range of numbers (325–475) vs. the FSA range (425–575).

4. Does the new scale set higher expectations for students?

Yes. Higher expectations were established with the adoption of the B.E.S.T. Standards, which are more rigorous than the previous standards, the Florida Standards. The adopted cut scores for the FAST assessments and B.E.S.T. EOC assessments set higher expectations that bring us a step closer to ensuring all our students are prepared for postsecondary success.

5. How can I compare the FSA and the B.E.S.T. scales?

Because the two scales were established for two different assessment systems aligned to different standards and the B.E.S.T. Standards are more rigorous than the Florida Standards, performance comparisons should not be made.

6. Did the reported provisional scores for students who took a FAST or B.E.S.T. assessment prior to Winter 2023 change after the new scale was adopted?

No. The provisional scores that were reported are the official scores for students. However, once the new scale was adopted, the department “retrofitted” the provisional scores on the B.E.S.T. scale for informational purposes only so school districts could see how students would have performed on the new scale. See Question #11 for more information about access to the retrofitted scores.

7. Could a student’s achievement level change after the provisional scores were retrofitted?

It is possible that a student who scored near the cut score (the low or high end of an achievement level score range) on the provisional scale could be placed in a new Achievement Level on the B.E.S.T. scale.

For example, the score scale ranges for each Achievement Level on the B.E.S.T. scale and provisional scale used prior to Winter 2023 are provided below. Here are two scenarios based on these score ranges:

Scenario 1: A student participated in Spring 2023 FAST Grade 10 ELA Reading PM3 and earned a score of **351** in **Level 3** (close to the Level 2/3 cut) on the provisional scale. However, this student’s retrofitted score is **245** in **Level 2** on the B.E.S.T. scale.

Scenario 2: A student participated in the Fall 2023 FAST ELA Reading Retake and earned a score of **348** in **Level 2** (close to the Level 2/3 cut) on the provisional scale. However, this student’s retrofitted score is **247** in **Level 3** on the B.E.S.T. scale.

FAST Grade 10 ELA Reading Achievement Levels – Provisional Scale				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
284–333	334–349	350* –361	362–377	378–412

FAST Grade 10 ELA Reading Achievement Levels – B.E.S.T. Scale				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
179–229	230–246	247* –257	258–270	271–308

*Passing score

Because the conversion between the two scales is not one-to-one matching, these scenarios are possible.

8. Does a change in Achievement Level change a student’s passing status for a graduation assessment?

The passing score for statewide assessments is always the lowest score possible in Achievement Level 3. In the two scenarios presented in question #7, the student in scenario 1 earned a provisional score in Level 3 (passing) but has a retrofitted score in Level 2 (not passing). **This student’s passing status DOES NOT change.** The student has satisfied the grade 10 ELA graduation requirement by earning the passing provisional score.

While it is less likely that a student will score in a higher achievement level after the retrofit, it is possible in some rare cases. The student in scenario 2 earned a provisional score in Level 2 (not passing) but has a retrofitted score in Level 3 (passing). **This student’s passing status DOES**

change. The student has satisfied the grade 10 ELA graduation requirement by earning the passing retrofitted score.

9. What is an Alternate Passing Score (APS)?

As has been the case in previous transitions to new assessment systems, an APS is established for graduation tests after linking has been conducted between the old scale (provisional) and the new scale (B.E.S.T.) when the old passing score links to a score below Level 3 on the new scale. Eligible students may use these scores to satisfy assessment graduation requirements.

APS eligibility criteria is as follows:

- FAST Grade 10 ELA Reading APS eligibility:
 - All students in the 2021–22 Grade 9 cohort (most current juniors)
 - Any student who participated in the assessment in Spring 2023 or Fall 2023 (Retake)
 - Students with an FSA graduation requirement (most current seniors and older cohorts)
- B.E.S.T. Algebra 1 or Geometry EOC APS eligibility:
 - Any student who participated in the assessment in Winter 2022, Spring 2023, Summer 2023, or Fall 2023
 - Students with an FSA graduation requirement

More information about APS scores and student eligibility can be found in the [Graduation Requirements for Florida’s Statewide Assessments](#) document.

10. What if a change in Achievement Level for Spring 2023 FAST PM3 score has implications for other instructional decisions (e.g., grade 3 retention or placement in accelerated courses)?

Because the retrofitted scores are provided for informational purposes only, it is up to local school and district staff to determine how and if to use this information to make decisions for students. There is no requirement for schools to use these scores to enforce state policy (e.g., a grade 3 student moved from a provisional Level 2 score to a Level 1 retrofitted score). Best practice is likely to use more recent information from PM1 and PM2 of the current school year to determine the best course of action for individual students.

In regards to mid-year promotion of retained third graders, [Rule 6A-1.094222](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), requires districts to have a mid-year promotion policy, suggests that promotions should occur during the first semester, and has criteria for promotions on/before November 1 and after November 1. Districts should review that rule, specifically subsection (3), regarding considerations for mid-year promotions after November 1.

11. For students who participated in a FAST or B.E.S.T. assessment prior to Winter 2023, which score (provisional or retrofitted) will appear in the Florida Reporting System (FRS) and Family Portal?

In early 2024, all provisional scores for FAST assessments and B.E.S.T. EOC assessments taken prior to Winter 2023 will be replaced in FRS and the Family Portal with the B.E.S.T. retrofitted scores. The purpose of replacing the provisional scores in these systems is so school staff and families can make apples to apples comparisons of student performance over time. For instance, seeing a student’s Fall 2023 PM1 score on the B.E.S.T. scale allows a teacher to measure growth between PM1 and PM2 more accurately since the scores are both shown on the same scale.

The same is true for comparing year-to-year performance; replacing the Spring 2023 PM3 provisional scores with the retrofitted B.E.S.T. scores will allow an accurate comparison of a student's performance on the end-of-year assessment (PM3 to PM3).

12. In FRS and Family Portal, will student reports indicate whether a student passed a graduation assessment?

No. Since assessment results are available on the same day the student takes the test and the system cannot distinguish which students are eligible for an alternate passing score, passing status is not included on the reports. However, data files delivered to district assessment staff after each testing window closes include passing and APS information for use in local student information systems.

13. Will this process happen each year?

No. Standard setting and the various scoring activities and decisions described in this document only occur when a new assessment system is implemented; for FAST and B.E.S.T. EOC assessments, the activities described in this document (e.g., retrofitting scores) are unique to assessments taken prior to Winter 2023. For Winter 2023 and beyond, all FAST and B.E.S.T. EOC assessments will be reported on the B.E.S.T. score scales.

Helpful Links

[2023–2024 Florida Assessment of Student Thinking \(FAST\) Grades 3–10 Fact Sheet](#)

[Understanding FAST Grades 3–10 ELA and Mathematics and B.E.S.T. Algebra 1 and Geometry EOC Reports for Families](#)

[Understanding FAST Grades 3–10 ELA and Mathematics and B.E.S.T. Algebra 1 and Geometry EOC Reports for Teachers](#)

[Graduation Requirements for Florida's Statewide Assessments](#)

[B.E.S.T. Achievement Levels](#)