

PROLOGUE: THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN THE FCAT PROCESS

The *FCAT Handbook—A Resource for Educators (Handbook)* is written primarily for educators, but should be informative for anyone interested in the various aspects of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The *Handbook* can serve as a reference manual for those seeking a more thorough understanding of the FCAT and for those looking only for specific information. The chapters and sections are structured to facilitate reading the *Handbook* from cover to cover; however, the organization also facilitates its use as a reference to other sources of information about the FCAT.



Included throughout the *Handbook* are profiles of people who are involved with the FCAT program. Most are classroom teachers or administrators in Florida's public schools who have served on FCAT committees. Educator involvement in the FCAT development, administration, and scoring processes is identified with an icon like the one displayed to the left.

To ensure that the FCAT is an accurate measure of the *Sunshine State Standards*, Florida educators are encouraged to become familiar with the FCAT process, remain up to date on new developments, and provide feedback via committee participation. This *Handbook* is intended to provide important background information, including further explanations of the role of educators in the FCAT process. News about the program and additional updates are posted regularly on the FCAT web site (www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat.htm).

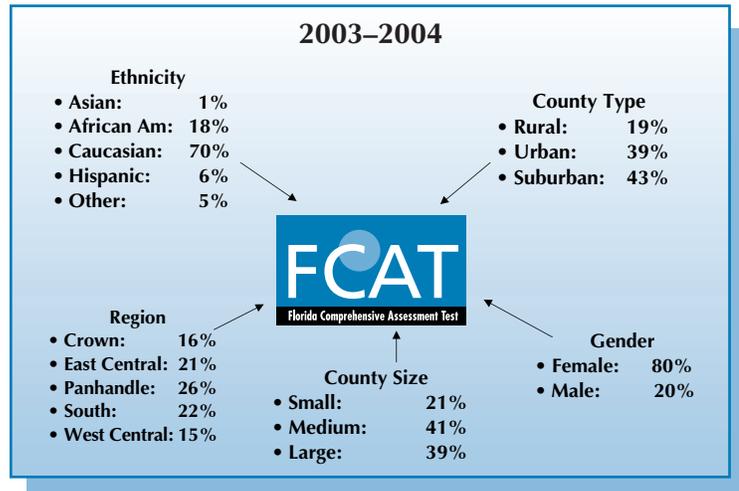
For some Florida educators, much of the information in this *Handbook* may be new; however, the development and implementation of the FCAT have been shaped by the active involvement of thousands of Florida educators serving on FCAT Committees. Since 1995, educators have guided the development of the *Sunshine State Standards (Standards or SSS)*, the determination of which



benchmarks to assess and how to assess them on the FCAT, and how essays as well as other performance tasks should be scored. In addition, all FCAT test items are reviewed and accepted by committees of Florida educators.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the extent to which the FCAT is guided annually by Florida educators. From July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, the Florida Department of Education (the DOE) convened and facilitated 76 different committee meetings involving more than 600 participants, representing 63 of Florida’s 67 counties. A balanced representation on the basis of gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and district size is also considered when forming committees.

Figure 1: FCAT Committee Demographics in 2003–2004



Other committee participants include Florida citizens who share a stake in the education of Florida’s children as well as local and national experts in psychometrics. In this publication, some of the FCAT committee members are featured and quoted.

Figure 2: FCAT Committees in 2003–2004

