

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



JIM HORNE  
Commissioner of Education



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** District School Superintendents

**From:** Jim Horne

**Date:** May 13, 2004

**Subject:** **2004 Legislative Changes Regarding Alternative Assessment Options for Meeting Grade 10 FCAT Graduation Requirement**

The 2004 Legislature passed Committee Substitute for Senate Bill (CS/SB) 364 that amended several requirements for high school graduation, including the provision of additional opportunities and alternatives for students to meet certain high school graduation requirements. The law directs me to approve the use of the SAT and ACT tests as alternative assessments to the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for students graduating in the 2003-04 school year.

The SAT and ACT generally measure the same curriculum areas contained in the Sunshine State Standards for tenth grade, and are widely accepted measures of college preparation by public and private colleges and universities. The Department conducted concordance studies to determine the score relationship between the FCAT and the SAT and ACT. The concordance studies were based on Florida students who had taken the FCAT in the spring of 2000 and 2001 and had also taken one of the two standardized national tests. The studies involved matching score reports for more than 71,000 students who had taken both the FCAT and the SAT and more than 47,000 students who had taken both the FCAT and the ACT.

The studies resulted in the concordant scores shown below. Twelfth grade students scheduled to graduate in the 2003-2004 school year who have attained the SAT or ACT scores concordant with the FCAT passing scores shown below shall satisfy the assessment requirement for a standard high school diploma as provided by Florida law [sections 1003.43(5)(a) (General requirements for high school graduation.--) and 1003.429(6)(a) (Accelerated high school graduation options.--), Florida Statutes]. Please note that CS/SB 364 also requires that a student must take the grade 10 FCAT a total of three times without earning a passing score in

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order to use the scores on an alternative assessment to meet graduation requirements. However, the requirement to take the FCAT three times prior to using alternative assessment scores to satisfy graduation requirements shall not apply to a student who transferred into the Florida public school system in the twelfth grade.

The grade 10 FCAT passing scores of 300 in reading and mathematics apply to all seniors graduating in the 2003-04 school year.

<b>Concordant Scores for 2003-2004</b>			
<b>Reading</b>		<b>Math</b>	
FCAT	300	FCAT	300
SAT	410	SAT	370
ACT	15	ACT	15

School districts are responsible for identifying students who are eligible to use concordant scores on the SAT or ACT to satisfy the assessment requirement for graduation. Districts must document that students using this option have met all other graduation requirements pursuant to sections 1003.43 and 1003.429, Florida Statutes, and provide a process for documenting the concordant SAT and ACT scores. Students who meet all graduation requirements except passing the FCAT and use the SAT or ACT to meet that requirement must be reported in Survey 5 using one of the following Withdrawal Codes:

- WFT – Any student who graduated from school with a standard diploma and satisfied the graduation test requirement through an alternate assessment.
- WFA – Any student who graduated from school with a standard diploma based on an 18-credit college preparatory graduation option and satisfied the graduation test requirement through an alternate assessment.
- WFB – Any student who graduated from school with a standard diploma based on an 18-credit career preparatory graduation option and satisfied the graduation test requirement through an alternate assessment.

The 2004 Legislature authorized the use of concordant standardized test scores as an option only for seniors in the 2003-04 graduating class. This option will not be in effect for students graduating in future school years unless the Legislature authorizes the continued use of an alternative assessment for meeting high school graduation requirements.

If you have questions regarding the use of the alternative assessment option, please contact Mary Jo Butler at (850) 245-0479, Suncom 205-0479, or via email at [maryjo.butler@fldoe.org](mailto:maryjo.butler@fldoe.org).

JH/mjbo

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum  
District Student Services Directors  
District Guidance Supervisors  
District Assessment Coordinators  
District MIS Directors