

## Good Cause Exemptions—Use of Student Portfolios

### Background

It is the goal of the Florida Legislature that every student read at or above grade level. The statewide public school student progression law eliminating social promotion includes new requirements regarding promotion from third grade that focus on each student's reading proficiency. Under this new student progression law, students who scored at Level 1 on the third grade reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) may be promoted to fourth grade if the student meets one of six good cause exemptions. One of the exemptions requires that the student demonstrate through a student portfolio that they are reading on grade level as evidenced by mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the FCAT.

At the January 21st meeting in Miami, the State Board of Education adopted guidelines for the student portfolio. School districts are providing assistance and guidance to teachers and principals to ensure each portfolio is of high quality and represents consistency across the school district.

### Questions and Answers


#### General

**1. What are the requirements for a student portfolio that is used for a good cause exemption for promotion from the third grade?**

On January 21, 2003, the State Board of Education approved the criteria for the use of a student portfolio (see attachment). The purpose of the portfolio is to document the student's mastery of the grade 3 reading Sunshine State Standards. The Board's policy requires the collection of at least five examples of student work graded at a level "C" or above for each of the eight reading benchmarks.

**2. What students are good candidates for the use of a student portfolio?**

Data from the 2002 Grade 3 Reading Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) indicate that approximately 14 percent of students who scored Level 1 had scores in the range of 251-258 (a score of 259 = Level 2). It is assumed that these students may be good candidates for the use of the portfolio.

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<p>April 2003 Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services</p>		
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The data also indicate that approximately 57 percent of the students who scored Level 1 had scores in the range of 201 – 250. Some of these students may also be good candidates for the use of the portfolio. (It is assumed that the performance of 2003 third graders would be similar to the 2002 data presented above.)

**3. For students scoring Level 1 on the FCAT, are districts required to give the alternate assessment (SAT-9) and complete a student portfolio?**

No. For most students, one or the other is appropriate. However, a review of the student's performance on the Norm-Referenced Test (NRT) portion of the FCAT may be helpful in determining which good cause exemption is more appropriate. The use of the alternate assessment may be most beneficial after intensive remediation during the summer and prior to the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year.

***Selection of Student Work***

**4. Should school districts identify examples of appropriate student work from their district-adopted third grade reading series, such as chapter or end of unit tests?**

Yes, such an activity would help schools and ensure increased consistency across the district's schools. Additionally, most reading series include a crosswalk of the benchmarks assessed on the chapter or unit tests.

**5. Can one example of student work be used to demonstrate mastery of more than one of the grade 3 reading benchmarks?**

Yes. However, the purpose of multiple examples for each benchmark is to ensure that the student has demonstrated mastery of the skill.

**6. Can student work completed before the FCAT test date be used in a student portfolio?**

Yes.

**7. Can student work that is completed after the FCAT test date and/or during summer remediation be used in a student portfolio?**

Yes.

## **ATTACHMENT**

### **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

January 21, 2003

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**SUBJECT:** Third Grade Reading/Promotion – Use of a Student Portfolio to Demonstrate Mastery of the Grade 3 Reading Sunshine State Standards for Promotion to Grade 4

### **PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

Approval of criteria for use of a student portfolio to demonstrate mastery of the grade 3 Reading Sunshine State Standards for promotion to grade 4.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under the statewide public school student progression law eliminating social promotion, students who score a Level 1 on the grade 3 reading Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) may be promoted to grade 4 if the student demonstrates, through a student portfolio, that they are reading on grade level as evidenced by demonstration of mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the FCAT.

To be accepted as meeting the portfolio option for demonstrating mastery of the required reading skills, this student portfolio must:

- be selected by the student's teacher.
- be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom.
- include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 reading FCAT have been met. This includes multiple choice items and passages that are approximately 60% literary text and 40% information text, and that are between 100-700 words with an average of 350 words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards.
- be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the Sunshine State Standard Benchmarks for Language Arts that are assessed by the grade 3 reading FCAT (see appendix). For each benchmark, there must be at least five examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or above.
- be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

The Department of Education shall, upon analysis of school assessment and promotion information, identify and audit a sample of schools to determine their level of compliance with Section 1008.25(6)(b)4, Florida Statutes.

### **Effects of the Policy**

The above policy provides the appropriate criteria for a student portfolio for use as evidence of the student's mastery of the grade 3 reading Sunshine State Standards for promotion to grade 4 that is consistent with the legislative intent of ending social promotion.

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** Appendix: Grade 3 Reading Sunshine State Standards to Be Demonstrated As Mastered

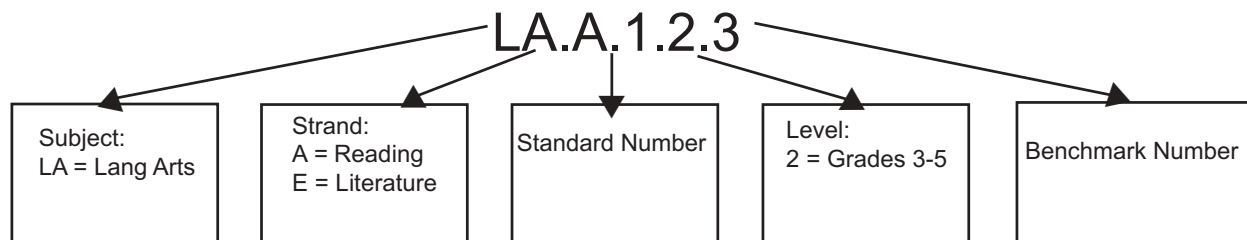
**Facilitators/Presenters:**

## Appendix

Florida Department of Education

### Grade 3 Reading Sunshine State Standards Assessed by FCAT

<b>SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD BENCHMARKS – GRADE 3 READING</b>	
LA.A.1.2.3	Uses simple strategies to determine meaning and increase vocabulary for reading, including the use of prefixes, suffixes, root words, multiple meanings, antonyms, synonyms, and word relationships.
LA.A.2.2.1	Reads text and determines the main idea or essential message, identifies relevant supporting details and facts, and arranges events in chronological order.
LA.A.2.2.2	Identifies the author's purpose in a simple text. (Includes LA.A.2.2.3 Recognizes when a text is primarily intended to persuade.)
LA.A.2.2.7	Recognizes the use of comparison and contrast in a text.
LA.A.2.2.8	Selects and uses a variety of appropriate reference materials, including multiple representations of information such as maps, charts, and photos, to gather information for research projects. (Includes LA.A.2.2.5 Reads and organizes information for a variety of purposes, including making a report, conducting interviews, taking a test, and performing an authentic task.)
LA.E.1.2.2	Understands the development of plot and how conflicts are resolved in a story.
LA.E.1.2.3	Knows the similarities and differences among the characters, settings, and events presented in various texts.
LA.E.2.2.1	Recognizes cause-and-effect relationships in literary texts. [Applies to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.]



Source: FCAT Test Item and Performance Task Specifications  
([www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatis01.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatis01.htm))