

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Commissioner of Education



July 15, 2008

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Superintendents

**FROM:** Dr. Eric J. Smith

**SUBJECT:** Florida Alternate Assessment and ESEA, Title I Grant Award

On June 11, 2008, I received a letter regarding the continuing recent review of the new Florida Alternate Assessment by the United States Department of Education (USDE). As you are aware, the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) is an integral part of Florida's standards and assessment system under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). It is based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

The letter states the following: "Because the FAA is being administered for the first time in spring 2008, we know that Florida is unable to provide additional evidence regarding the compliance of the FAA with ESEA requirements. Therefore, we are not assigning an approval status to Florida's assessment system at this time. Because the FAA has not fully met the ESEA requirements, however, we will place a condition on your fiscal year 2008 Title I, Part A grant award."

**Please be advised that the condition on the state's Title 1, Part A award will not impact districts. The condition is that we will continue working with USDE to submit additional evidence, including technical data and documentation, within the next eight months.**

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Given that Florida's comprehensive assessment system was approved in 2006-07 and the state has previously demonstrated its ability to meet all standards and assessment requirements, Florida remains eligible to participate in national pilot efforts including the use of the Growth Model and Differentiated Accountability. Further, student participation and performance on the FAA will be an important part of our calculations of Adequate Yearly Progress this year. Rest assured that we are committed to working with USDE to ensure that the state's assessment system as administered in 2008-09 is recognized as being fully compliant with the ESEA requirements.

EJS:blp

cc: District Exceptional Student Education Administrators  
District Student Services Administrators  
District Title I Directors  
Linda Champion  
Jay Pfeiffer

Frances Haithcock  
Iris Wilson  
Mary Jane Tappen  
Martha Asbury