

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District School Superintendents

**FROM:** Pam Stewart

**DATE:** May 22, 2012

**SUBJECT: Public Review of Draft FCAT 2.0 Science and Biology 1 and Geometry End-of-Course Assessments Achievement Level Descriptions**

The Department is in the process of taking the necessary steps for establishing Achievement Levels for FCAT 2.0 Science and the Biology 1 and Geometry End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. This process includes several steps that must occur prior to the standard-setting meetings that will take place in September 2012. The basic steps for setting standards are as follows:

1. Develop a policy definition describing the meaning of each Achievement Level.
2. Develop Achievement Level Descriptions (ALDs).
3. Convene a standard-setting panel composed of educators.
4. Conduct the standard-setting process to propose cut scores for the Achievement Levels.
5. Convene a business and policy leader reactor panel to review the proposed cut scores.
6. Obtain State Board of Education approval of cut scores with public input.

Policy definitions provide a general statement of the policy goals for each Achievement Level and are aligned with the purpose of the assessment and the statutory requirements related to Achievement Levels. Rather than detailing content-specific information about what a student should know, policy definitions encompass student performance goals at each Achievement Level for all grade levels and subject areas. The table on page two provides the established policy definitions for all FCAT 2.0 and Florida EOC Assessment subject areas.

PAM STEWART  
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FCAT 2.0 and Florida EOC Assessments Achievement Level Policy Definitions	
<b>Level 5</b>	Students at this level demonstrate mastery of the most challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
<b>Level 4</b>	Students at this level demonstrate an above satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
<b>Level 3</b>	Students at this level demonstrate a satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
<b>Level 2</b>	Students at this level demonstrate a below satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
<b>Level 1</b>	Students at this level demonstrate an inadequate level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .

Because policy definitions are very general statements that do not include information about subject-area content, the creation of ALDs enables the translation of policy definitions into detailed descriptions of the knowledge and skills that a student needs to be able to achieve at each level. Whereas the policy definitions apply to all grade levels and subject areas, the ALDs are grade-level and subject-matter specific.

The Department convened groups of Florida educators last September to draft the new ALDs for FCAT 2.0 Science and the Biology 1 and Geometry EOC Assessments. The process for producing these drafts included a thorough review of the assessed *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* (NGSSS) and the *Test Item Specifications* for relevant grade levels and subject areas. The committees then developed descriptions of the knowledge and skills of students at each Achievement Level, aligned to the policy definitions, and worked to show progressions across levels within each grade and subject area. Their drafts were then compiled by the Department and revised for consistency in format across subjects.

Given the extremely critical role that ALDs will serve in the standard-setting process, the Department has posted the draft ALDs at <http://app2.fldoe.org/Assessment/fcatEOC/> for public review and comment. I encourage you, your staff members, and other interested stakeholders to review the draft ALDs and provide input to help ensure that the ALDs produced are as precise, accurate, and comprehensive as possible. The 30-day public review period will end on June 21, 2012.

Once the public review period is over, all public feedback will be considered as the Department finalizes the ALDs for use in the September 2012 standard-setting meetings. During these meetings, the committees will use the policy definitions and ALDs along with other information to recommend cut scores on the reporting scale for the new Achievement Levels.

We appreciate the district nominations that we have received for the standard-setting committees and thank you in advance for your valuable input during this next crucial step in the standard-setting process.

PS/JF/sk

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Instruction  
 District Assessment Coordinators  
 District Accountability Coordinators