

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: August 17, 2012

SUBJECT: Back-to-School Information

Contact Information:
Mary Jane Tappen
Mary.Tappen@fldoe.org
(850) 245-0509
DPS: 2012-139

As the new school year begins, this memorandum provides information and updates regarding student progression, assessment, accountability, and other key topics for 2012–13. It will prepare you to communicate these updates to staff, students, families, and citizens in your district. We look forward to working closely with you to continue to support student success in Florida's public schools.

✓ Student Progression

- House Bill 7059 Memorandum (DPS 2012–111) provides questions and answers to assist with the implementation of new requirements for student progression and the following newly created sections:
 - Section [1002.3105](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), *Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) options*
 - Section [1003.4281](#), F.S., *Early high school graduation*

The memorandum is available at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6465/dps-2012-111.pdf>.

- ACCEL Options

Educational options that provide academically challenging curriculum or accelerated instruction to eligible public school students in kindergarten through grade 12.

PAM STEWART
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Each school **must** offer as ACCEL options: whole-grade and mid-year promotion, subject-matter acceleration, virtual instruction in higher grade-level subjects, and the Credit Acceleration Program under s. [1003.4295](#), F.S.

Schools may also offer options that include, but are not limited to, enriched science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) coursework; enrichment programs; flexible grouping; advanced academic courses; combined classes; self-paced instruction; curriculum compacting; advanced-content instruction; and telescoping curriculum.

- Career and Education Planning Course

The career and education planning course may be taught in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade by any member of the instructional staff and is designed to help students become aware of the relationships that exist between education and career achievement as outlined in s. [1003.4156](#), F.S. Students are introduced to educational alternatives and course options as they prepare for the transition to high school. For more information, visit the Educator's Toolkit on Career and Education Planning at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/ced>.

This year, the career and education planning course must do the following:

- Result in a completed personalized academic and career plan for the student
- Emphasize technology or the application of technology in career fields

The 86 career and education planning courses may be viewed at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/ced/pdf/approved-courses.pdf>.

Although statute does not require each school to hold a parent meeting either in the evening or on a weekend, each school must inform parents about the course curriculum and activities.

- Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC)

The FLVC provides a variety of online services for students from Florida's public high schools, colleges, and universities. The FLVC's academic advising services make it easy for high school students to prepare for college or a career after graduation. Students can monitor their progress by running evaluations against their transcript information and the requirements for high school graduation, college and career readiness, and Bright Futures Scholarships. For more information, visit <http://www.flvc.org>.

- Effective July 1, 2012, students will not be able to utilize the electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) program on FACTS.org to fulfill the requirements of the career and education planning course. The requirement to use the ePEP was stricken from the middle grades promotion statute (s. 1003.4156, F.S.). Students with an existing ePEP may view it in a "read-only" format until January 2013, at the FLVC website, but no changes will be possible.

- Graduation requirements charts by entering ninth-grade cohort are posted online at <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/studentpro/grad-require.asp>.
 - The 2012–13 entering ninth-grade cohort must do the following:
 - Earn a passing score on the Geometry End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment in order to earn course credit
 - Earn course credit in Algebra 2
 - Earn a passing score on the Biology 1 EOC Assessment in order to earn course credit
 - If a student is part of the 2012–13 ninth-grade cohort, and the student took Geometry or Biology 1 for high school credit as a middle-grades student, then the student is exempt from the requirement to earn a passing score on the corresponding EOC assessment in order for credit to be awarded.
 - New provisions to s. [1003.428\(2\)\(c\)](#), F.S., related to the online course graduation requirement, include the following:
 - A school district may not require a student to take the online course outside the school day or in addition to a student’s courses for a given semester.
 - The online course graduation requirement does not apply to a student who has an individual educational plan under s. 1003.57, F.S., which indicates that an online course would be inappropriate, or a student who is enrolled in a Florida high school and has less than one academic year remaining in high school.
 - The *Pathways to Success College and Career Readiness – Middle and High School Planning Guide for Students & Parents* (revised for 2012–13) is available online at <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/studentpro/pdf/PathwaystoSuccess.pdf>. The guide is available in a rich text printable format at <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/studentpro/rtf/PathwaystoSuccess.rtf>.
- U.S. History EOC Assessment

Beginning in the 2012–13 school year, the final course grade for all students enrolled in U.S. History or U.S. History Honors must be calculated using a minimum of 30 percent of the U.S. History EOC Assessment score for all students. This does not apply to students enrolled in Advanced Placement U.S. History or dual enrollment American History (AMH) courses.

- Early Graduation

Students who complete a minimum of 24 credits, achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, and earn a passing score on the statewide assessments required for high school graduation have an option to graduate in fewer than eight semesters (four years) as specified in s. [1003.4281](#), F.S.

- A student who graduates from high school midyear may receive an initial Bright Futures Scholarship award during the spring term following the student’s graduation, as long as the student applies for the scholarship award no later than

August 31 of the student's graduation year. For example, if a student plans to graduate midterm in the 2012–13 school year, the student is required to apply for the scholarship award no later than **August 31, 2012**.

✓ **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**

College-bound student athletes will need to meet more rigorous academic rules to receive a scholarship at NCAA Division 1 and 2 colleges or universities. A student who enters a NCAA Division I college or university on or after August 1, 2016 (entered ninth grade 2012–13), will need to meet new academic rules in order to receive athletics aid (scholarship), practice, or compete during their first year. The changes include the following:

- Minimum core-course GPA of 2.300 required
- Change in GPA and test-score index (sliding scale)
- Ten core courses required before the seventh semester of the senior year

A student who enters a NCAA Division II college or university on or after August 1, 2013, (2012–13 high school graduates) will be required to complete 16 core courses instead of the current 14.

For information on the rules, visit

<https://web1.ncaa.org/hportal/exec/links?linksSubmit=ShowActiveLinks>.

✓ **Statewide Assessments**

The following statewide assessments will be administered during the 2012–13 school year. Specific scheduling instructions and make-up day information, by grade level and subject, for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) 2.0 and EOC assessment testing windows, as well as field-test schedules, can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/schedule.asp>.

Retakes

- **Fall 2012 Administration:** October 8–19
- **Spring 2013 Administration:** April 8–19

The following assessments will be offered during the fall and spring retake administrations:

- **FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake** – This assessment will be administered to students who entered in 2009–10 and later and have not yet achieved a passing score on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading assessment to satisfy this portion of their graduation requirement. In addition, because the FCAT Reading Retake is no longer administered, students who entered grade 9 prior to 2009 and have not received a passing score on Grade 10 FCAT Reading will participate in the FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake to satisfy this portion of their high school graduation requirement.

Students who entered grade 9 in 2010–11 and beyond must earn an FCAT 2.0 scale score of **245** to pass the assessment. Students who entered grade 9 in 2009–10 and earlier must earn an FCAT 2.0 scale score of **241**, which is the FCAT equivalent passing score of 300 converted to the new scale.

- **FCAT Mathematics Retake** – This assessment will be administered to students who entered grade 9 in 2009–10 and earlier and have not yet achieved a passing score or concordant score to satisfy this portion of their graduation requirement. The spring 2013 administration will be the last time this assessment is offered. Students who have not achieved a passing score on the FCAT Mathematics Retake by Spring 2013 may participate in the ACT or SAT to achieve a concordant score for high school graduation purposes.

EOC Assessments

- **Winter 2012 Administration:** November 28 – December 19

The following assessments will be offered during the winter administration:

- Biology 1 EOC Assessment
- Algebra 1 EOC Assessment
- Geometry EOC Assessment

- **Spring 2013 Administration:** April 22 – May 24

The following assessments will be offered during the spring administration:

- U.S. History EOC Assessment
- Biology 1 EOC Assessment
- Algebra 1 EOC Assessment
- Geometry EOC Assessment

- **Summer 2013 Administration:** July 22 – August 9

The following assessments will be offered during the summer administration:

- U.S. History EOC Assessment
- Biology 1 EOC Assessment
- Algebra 1 EOC Assessment
- Geometry EOC Assessment

Spring 2013 FCAT 2.0 Writing: February 26 – February 27

- The name of the assessment has been changed to FCAT 2.0 Writing to reflect the following:
 - The expanded scoring expectations implemented in 2012 will continue through spring 2014; however, no changes will be made to the scoring rubrics for FCAT 2.0 Writing.
 - FCAT 2.0 Writing session length will be increased to 60 minutes at all grade levels to allow students more time to respond to the writing prompt.

Spring 2013 FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science: April 15–26

- **FCAT 2.0 Reading**
 - FCAT 2.0 Reading assessments are administered to all students in grades 3–10.
 - Grades 7 and 9 Reading are computer-based assessments for the first time this year, in addition to grades 6 and 10 and retakes.
 - The FCAT 2.0 Reading Test Item Specifications for grades 3–10 will be updated to explain that Benchmark LA 2.2.1 (Text Features) will be assessed under Reporting Category 4: Informational Text/Research Process.
 - **FCAT 2.0 Mathematics**
 - FCAT 2.0 Mathematics assessments are administered to all students in grades 3–10.
 - Grade 5 is a computer-based assessment for the first time this year.
 - **FCAT 2.0 Science**
 - FCAT 2.0 Science assessments are administered to all students in grades 5 and 8.
- ✓ **Setting Achievement Levels for FCAT 2.0 Science, Biology 1 End-of-Course Assessment, and Geometry End-of-Course Assessment**

New FCAT 2.0 Science, Biology 1 End-of-Course Assessment, and Geometry End-of-Course Assessment Achievement Levels will be established this fall based on the recommendations of two groups: 1) a standard-setting committee made up of experienced Florida educators, and 2) a reactor panel made up of Florida superintendents, educators, postsecondary representatives, and business and community leaders. The standard-setting committee of educators will recommend the new Achievement Level cut scores based on their review of the assessments, informed by their experience with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and teaching Florida's students. There will be a standard-setting committee for each grade and subject, with a total of approximately 80 educators participating in the process. The reactor panel will review the standard-setting committee recommendations and provide their recommendations regarding the appropriateness of the suggested cut scores. The Commissioner will consider recommendations of both groups and provide a proposal to the State Board of Education to establish the achievement level standards in State Board rule.

The new Achievement Levels will be applied to results reported beginning in this 2012–13 school year. The general timeline is provided below.

*Timeline for Establishment of Achievement Levels for
 FCAT 2.0 Science, Biology 1 EOC Assessment, and Geometry EOC Assessment*

Event	Date
Post Notice of Rule Development for State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C.	August 2012
Conduct Standard-Setting Committee Meetings – Tallahassee, FL	September 18–21, 2012
Conduct Reactor Panel Meeting – Tallahassee, FL	September 27–28, 2012
Conduct Rule-Development Workshops	October 8–10, 2012
Advertise Proposed State Board of Education FCAT Rule	October 2012
State Board of Education Action on revised Rule 6A-1.09422, F.A.C. – Approval of New Achievement Levels for FCAT 2.0 Science, Biology 1 EOC Assessment, and Geometry EOC Assessment	November 2012

✓ **Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE)**

The State Board of Education has approved the following new passing scores for seven FTCEs. These percentages represent correct items needed to pass. These newly-adopted passing scores will be effective September 1, 2012.

- Biology 6–12 (70% out of 119)
- Chemistry 6–12 (71% out of 100)
- Middle Grades General Science 5–9 (70% out of 120)
- Earth-Space Science 6–12 (69% out of 120)
- Physics 6–12 (67% out of 90)
- Physical Education K–12 (71% out of 120)
- Health K–12 (69% out of 120)

The Department is seeking exemplary K–12 educators for participation in upcoming FTCE test development activities for the Mathematics 5–9, Mathematics 6–12, Prekindergarten/Primary PK–3, English 5–9, English 6–12, Elementary Education K–6, and General Knowledge examinations.

For more information about test development and to nominate outstanding educators, please see the following link: <http://www.floridacertexam.nesinc.com>.

✓ **Revisions to Florida’s School Grading System**

In 2012, Florida’s school grading system was revised to accommodate a number of changes resulting from statutory requirements, Florida’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver application, scheduled changes in rule, and policy-based changes adopted by the State Board of Education to smooth Florida’s transition to a more rigorous accountability system.

The revised school grading system is based on increasing expectations for student performance as we move toward full implementation of Common Core State Standards and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in 2014–15. More information on changes to Florida’s school grading system is available from the Bureau of Accountability Reporting (<http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation>) at (850) 245-0411 or evalnprt@fldoe.org. Preliminary 2011–12 school grades for elementary, middle, and combination schools serving middle and elementary school grades are available in a downloadable Excel file posted at <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org>. Final grades for these schools will be posted after the Department provides decisions on appeals. The appeals submission period is currently open and will close on August 31, 2012. Preliminary high school grades for 2011–12 are expected to be reported in December 2012.

Please note that annual data processing for high school grades will be occurring this fall to prepare the 2011–12 measures for graduation rates, accelerated participation and performance, and college readiness. A key date to remember for these processes is **October 12, 2012**, which is the last day on which districts will be able to submit revised graduation rate cohort files and amendments to Survey 5 data (end-of-year reporting for 2011–12) for use in the 2011–12 high school grades calculation.

Any Survey 5 data submissions reported after October 12, 2012, will not be included in the 2011–12 high school grading process. Changes to cohort graduation rate files for 2011–12 will not be accepted after October 12, 2012. Additional details on graduation rate data review and data processing for high school grades will be provided to district contacts in the coming weeks. At the Department of Education, graduation rate data processing is overseen by Education Information and Accountability Services (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias>), and data processing for high school grades is overseen by the Bureau of Accountability Reporting (<http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation>).

Please note that the federal graduation rate will be used for high school grading.

The due date for data for the *five-year modified graduation rate* as a follow-up to the four-year federal rate is September 28, 2012.

✓ **Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) in 2012–13**

Spring 2012 marked the initial administration of Florida’s Postsecondary Education Readiness Test in Florida’s high schools. As a strategy for improving college and career readiness, PERT supports the improvement of the alignment of high schools with college and career expectations and assists with moving students to levels of proficiency needed to be successful in higher education and to attain careers of their choice. The objective is to increase the number and percentage of students scoring “college ready” in mathematics and language arts on approved postsecondary readiness assessments (ACT, SAT, Accuplacer/CPT, or PERT) as cited in Rule 6A-10.0315, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.; amended January 2012).

High schools will administer PERT, or equivalent tests, during the 2012–13 school year to those eleventh grade students as required by s. 1008.30(3), F.S. High school students who

score a Level 2 or 3 on the 2012 Grade 10 FCAT Reading 2.0 or score a Level 2, 3, or 4 on the 2012 Algebra 1 EOC as tenth graders and have not otherwise demonstrated college readiness will be required to take the PERT or an approved alternative assessment in the eleventh grade.

District entitlement grants will be available for purchasing test units in reading, writing, and mathematics. Your district has a PERT contact or designee who was trained last year by McCann Associates, the test vendor, as the Institutional Administrator who is responsible for ordering, setting up, and overseeing test administration at each high school, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) site, and hospital/homebound setting. Training opportunities for district contacts will be provided this fall from a variety of sources.

Each district will be able to set its own testing window between August and May for these computer-based and paper and pencil tests. Testing accommodations are available for students with documentation in their individual educational plans (IEP) or 504 plans. English language learner (ELL) students may use heritage language-to-English or English-to-heritage language dictionaries. Student study guides, college-ready cut scores, and the five course descriptions for required Postsecondary Preparatory Instructional Placement are available on the PERT websites:

- <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/CommonPlacementTesting.asp>
- <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/pert.asp>
- Sample tests in each of the three subject areas are available online to practice the PERT computer-based tests at <https://college.measuredsuccess.com/mscollege>

✓ **Dual Enrollment**

House Bill 7059 changes all references from the Interinstitutional Articulation Agreement (IAA) to the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement and amends s. [1007.271](#), F.S., *Dual enrollment programs*, to do the following, in part:

- For initial eligibility, students must have a 3.0 unweighted high school GPA to enroll in college-credit dual enrollment courses, and a 2.0 unweighted high school GPA to enroll in non-college-credit certificate courses. Students must also demonstrate readiness through a minimum score on a college placement test.
- To continue participation in college-credit dual enrollment, students must maintain a 3.0 unweighted high school GPA and the minimum postsecondary GPA established by the postsecondary institution for college-credit courses. To continue participation in career certificate dual enrollment courses, students must maintain a 2.0 unweighted high school GPA.
- Regardless of meeting student eligibility requirements for continued enrollment, a student may lose the opportunity to participate in a dual enrollment course if the student is disruptive to the learning process such that the progress of other students or the efficient administration of the course is hindered.
- Dual enrollment courses taught on the high school campus may not be combined with any non-college-credit high school course.

The updated [2012–13 Dual Enrollment Course – High School Subject Area Equivalency List](#) includes 22 additional courses identified as practical arts. For information on this and the 2012–13 Dual Enrollment Course – High School Subject Area Equivalency List, please review the [memorandum](#) (dated August 1, 2012).

✓ **Virtual Instruction**

House Bill 7063 revised statutes related to virtual instruction programs to provide student and parental rights relating to the eligibility of Florida Virtual School full-time students to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities at certain public schools and other provisions. Information on these changes is presented in the [Florida Public Virtual Schools Questions and Answers \(2012–13\)](#). Additional resources are available online at the Virtual Instruction webpage (<http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools>) and questions may be submitted to VirtualEducation@fldoe.org.

Contacts and Resources by Memorandum Topic

Topic	Contact	Email	Resources
Student Progression	Helen Lancashire	Helen.Lancashire@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/BII/StudentPro/resources.asp
Statewide Assessment Schedule	Victoria Ash	Victoria.Ash@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/asp/schedule.asp
FCAT 2.0/EOC Achievement Level Standards Setting	Sharon Koon	Sharon.Koon@fldoe.org	http://fcats.fldoe.org/fcat2/ http://fcats.fldoe.org/eoc/
Revisions to Florida's School Grading System	Ed Croft	Ed.Croft@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation/
Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT)	Sandra Dilger Cassandra Brown	Sandra.Dilger@fldoe.org Cassandra.Brown@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/CommonPlacementTesting.asp http://www.fldoe.org/cc/pert.asp https://college.measuredsuccess.com
Dual Enrollment	Matthew Bouck	Matthew.Bouck@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/
Virtual Instruction	Sally Roberts	Sally.Roberts@fldoe.org	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/

District School Superintendents

August 17, 2012

Page 12

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cc: Gerard Robinson, Commissioner
Randy Hanna, Chancellor, The Florida College System
Jane Fletcher, Deputy Commissioner, Accountability, Research, and Measurement
Julie Alexander, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Division of Florida
Colleges
Dr. Sharon Koon, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Accountability, Research and
Measurement
Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services
Matthew Bouck, Director, Office of Articulation