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Just Read, Florida!

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Jim Horne

CC: Directors of Assessment
Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
Assistant Superintendents for Student Services
ESE Directors
Public Information Officers

DATE: May 8, 2003

SUBJECT: FCAT Grade 10 Passing Score for Graduating Seniors

Please be advised that all current year seniors are required to meet the *original* passing scores on the tenth grade FCAT. Rather than some seniors having to meet the current passing score of 300 in both subjects, all class of 2003 seniors must have a score of at least 287 in reading and 295 in mathematics to meet the FCAT requirement for graduation.

When the current passing scores were adopted, neither the State Board of Education nor the Legislature intended that seniors in the same class would be required to meet different passing scores. On the contrary, in the 2002 Legislative Session, language was adopted to clarify State Board of Education policy that was interpreted as requiring students to meet a higher passing score for subsequent administrations of the FCAT.

However, while this language was intended to include all students in the graduating class of 2003, it did not explicitly address retained students who are promoted two grade levels or first-time 11th and 12th grade transfer students. Further, many have adhered to a strictly literal

interpretation of this language, and this has again resulted in the interpretation that the passing score requirement for the tenth grade FCAT varies among current graduating seniors.

The Governor and Legislature agree that the intent of the action last year was to maintain the same cut score for all students in the same graduating class. This interpretation will positively affect approximately 1,000 graduating seniors this year that will earn a standard high school diploma if the original passing score is accepted.

This interpretation will affect students in this cohort whether or not they graduate this year. Students entering adult education or staying in school another year will still meet the original cut score. All future class cohorts will adhere to the same passing score requirement.

Listed below are the key policy elements resulting from this modified interpretation.

- All of the 2003 graduating seniors are permitted to use the original passing scores of 287 in reading and 295 in mathematics obtained in this or any prior administration. Developmental score equivalents are 1856 in reading and 1868 in mathematics.
- The original passing scores will be applied to all students classified as 12th and 13th year students for the March 2003 FCAT administration and students who were in the ninth grade class of 1999-2000.
- The grandfather provision will continue to apply for known students with the original passing score as long as they take the test. The Department has in place a process by which school districts can identify students who have not had the correct standard applied (usually a result of a miscoded student identification number on a test booklet). This process will continue as long as it is needed.
- Beginning with FCAT administrations in June 2003 and beyond, all students will be required to earn scores of 300, except those identified as part of the graduating class of 2003 cohort, i.e., 9th graders in 1999-2000 and/or 12th graders in 2002-2003.

This information should be shared immediately with all high school administration and faculty to ensure that the appropriate information is provided to those who inquire. Please also inform them the Department will launch a new online resource specifically geared to 12th graders who need information about their options. The website will be available on Friday, May 9, 2003. The website address is www.12thgradeoptions.org. Interested parties may also call the Department's toll free line, called *12th Grade Options*, at 1-800-315-0833.

First and foremost, please identify all 12th grade students with a score of 287 to 299 in reading or 295 to 299 in mathematics. These students should immediately be informed that they meet this requirement for graduation. If they meet all other graduation requirements, the district may proceed with awarding these students a standard high school diploma.

The Department will automatically track students from the current cohort who did not pass. These students will automatically be identified and coded for future test administrations. If miscoding results in students being incorrectly identified, then districts should follow existing procedures for identifying these students appropriately. Please direct any procedural questions to the Assessment Office at (850) 488-8198.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to our students.

JH:jlw