ATTACHMENT A

2006-07 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PAPER

PSAT AND PLAN STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Florida Legislature has appropriated funds to support the administration of the PSAT or PLAN pre-college entrance examinations to Grade 10 students in the Fall 2006. The purpose of this Technical Assistance Paper is to provide additional information based on questions received from districts.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Do all students have to take the PSAT or PLAN?**
   No, it is not mandatory for students to take the PSAT or PLAN, but schools should encourage all students to participate.

2. **What about students in special education programs?**
   Students should not be denied access to the PSAT or PLAN; however, each student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) should address whether or not participation is appropriate.

3. **Do schools have to notify parents of the opportunity to exempt their child from PSAT or PLAN testing?**
   Yes, the law is specific on this point and states, "…a written notice shall be provided to each parent that shall include the opportunity to exempt his or her child from taking the PSAT/NMSQT or PLAN."

4. **If a student takes the PSAT in 10th grade, may he/she participate in the National Merit Scholarship program?**
   Yes, however, in order to enter the National Merit Scholarship Corporation competition, the student must take the test again in Grade 11.

5. **Will the Department provide a standard "written notice" for all schools to use?**
   No, based on individual district circumstances and preferences, it will be the responsibility of each district to determine the method by which it will inform parents of this opportunity. The written notice should include the purpose and benefits of the PSAT/PLAN program such as:

   - Grade 10 pre-college testing provides a basis to increase college participation, as it is an indicator for performance on the SAT or ACT.
   - PSAT includes verbal, mathematics, and writing components; it is used as a diagnostic tool to measure strengths and weaknesses for both students and curriculum.
   - PLAN includes four curriculum-based achievement tests: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning, along with other components providing a way to link academic performance to educational and career planning.
   - The program is instrumental in identifying the untapped potential in each student.
   - Test results will provide high school guidance counselors with information to help identify students who are ready or need additional work in order to enroll and be successful in Advanced Placement and other college preparatory courses.
   - Test results can also open up discussion about future education plans that may not have otherwise occurred.

6. **How will districts inform the Department of the test selection and projected total enrollment of Grade 10 students to be tested?**
   Florida Pre-College Entrance Examination Program Selection Form (Attachment B) requires a district to identify its test selection and the projected Fall 2006 enrollment of Grade 10 students in its district.

In addition, we request that you complete and submit the EXCEL spreadsheet on this form containing the following seven data elements in the specified columns:

1. Florida District Name (Column A)
2. Florida District Number (Column B)
3. Florida School Name (Column C)
4. Florida School Number (Column D)
5. College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) code (Column E)
6. Fall 2006 Grade 10 projected enrollment (Column F)
7. Estimated Grade 10 students to participate in PSAT or PLAN (Column G)

Districts may submit their selection form and Excel spreadsheet (Attachment B) no later than Monday, June 30, 2006 in an email message to Kira.Sullivan@fldoe.org.

7. By filling out Attachment B, does it mean that I have ordered my materials?
No. Attachment B is a form that provides an estimate to be used by the Department for procurement purposes. Schools will order through the appropriate website based on the test selected by the district.

8. How do schools register with ACT or The College Board?
Schools will separately submit an order to the selected testing organization(s) to receive test materials. If there are any questions about registration details, please contact the appropriate person below:

PLAN – Mary Hendrix, ACT (850) 878-2729

PSAT – Linda Owens, The College Board (850) 521-4918

9. Will the state pay for the administration of the PSAT or PLAN to students enrolled in grade levels other than Grade 10?
No, schools will be responsible for fees associated with the administration of PSAT or PLAN for students in grades other than Grade 10, and also those Grade 10 students who grid improperly.

The testing organizations will track the number of students who are actually tested and will invoice the Department of Education accordingly. **Please be aware that schools are responsible for the cost of testing students who are not in Grade 10. Districts have the responsibility of cooperating with the testing organizations to arrange for test registration and administration.**

10. Do Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities have to participate in the PSAT or PLAN program?
Yes, the law is specific and states, "each public high school, including, but not limited to, schools and alternative sites and centers of the DJJ, shall provide for the administration of the PSAT or PLAN to all enrolled 10th grade students."

11. Is there a "percent tested" requirement for Grade 10 students?
No; however, the intent of the law is to ensure that as many students as possible are given access to the PSAT/PLAN program and the services that result. The Department of Education will publish participation rates by school and district.

12. How does this program affect individual students who take the PSAT or PLAN on their own?
Students can take the PSAT or PLAN as part of this program or register to take either exam at a time of their own choosing. Testing multiple times permits students to become familiar with college placement testing.