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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



February 29, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Clarification regarding requirements for completion of a middle school career and education planning course required by s.1033.4156(1)(a)5, F.S. and students with disabilities

The Florida Department of Education is pleased to provide clarification regarding the career and education planning course requirement of Section 1003.4156(1)(a)5, Florida Statutes, General requirements for middle grades promotion and the applicability to students with disabilities.

Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes, states:

- (1) Beginning with students entering grade 6 in the 2006-2007 school year, promotion from a school composed of middle grades 6, 7, and 8 requires that:
 - (a) The student must successfully complete academic courses as follows: ...
 5. One course in career and education planning to be completed in 7th or 8th grade. The course may be taught by any member of the instructional staff; must include career exploration using CHOICES for the 21st Century or a comparable cost-effective program; must include educational planning using the online student advising system known as Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students at the internet website www.FACTS.org; and shall result in the completion of a personalized academic and career plan.

The statute does not provide for an exception for students with disabilities for the career and education planning course or for any of the other course requirements stipulated in the statute. Therefore, every middle school student is required to take the course and complete the electronic Personalized Education Planner (ePEP) on FACTS.org in order to be promoted into high school. Students with disabilities can elect to complete an ePEP related to the requirements for a standard high school diploma ePEP or a special diploma plan, but they must complete an ePEP to be promoted. Plans may be changed once students transition into high school. Parents of students with disabilities should be encouraged to consult with the student's individual educational plan (IEP) team regarding these decisions.

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
Exceptional Student Education Directors