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November 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

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

RE: Changes to FCAT Concordant Scores for High School Graduation

For those of you that followed the 2009 legislative issues, you may recall that there was much discussion regarding the use of FCAT concordant scores for high school graduation. A driving force for these legislative discussions was the impact of the elimination of summer FCAT retakes on the feasibility of allowing concordant score use only after three times failing.

In preparation for this year's session, I requested that staff review the current use of FCAT concordant scores in light of the potential legislative changes and our plans to transition to FCAT-2 in the near future. The goal of this review was to ensure that the scores continue to serve as equivalent measures of the current level of performance expected on the Grade 10 FCAT-1.

To complete this review, an updated concordance study was conducted. As a reminder, a concordance study is a statistical linking procedure for converting scores from one standardized test to another. Using this procedure, two tests are linked together through an analysis of student test results based on students who have taken both tests. Scores are considered concordant if they have equal, or close to equal, percentile ranks.

In our review, we found that the most precise alignment to the Grade 10 FCAT does require a change from the current concordant scores. In the case of the SAT, the changes result from the revised content of the SAT and from a more recent and much larger sample of students. With regard to the ACT, where no content changes have been made, the changes appear to result from the more recent and larger sample of students. As you can see in Table 1, there are both increases and decreases in the identified concordant score since the 2003 study.

Table 1: New FCAT Concordant Scores for 2011 Graduates					
Reading			**Mathematics**		
	Old (2003)	New (2009)		Old (2003)	New (2009)
FCAT-DSS	1926	1926	FCAT-DSS	1889	1889
FCAT-SSS	300	300	FCAT-SSS	300	300
SAT	410	420	SAT	370	340
ACT	15	18	ACT	15	15

The content changes made to SAT Mathematics resulted in a more challenging test for the students in the sample; therefore, the concordant SAT Mathematics score is now 340. On the other hand, the content changes to SAT Reading resulted in a less difficult test for students in the sample, so that an FCAT Reading scale score of 300 is now concordant to an SAT Reading score of 420.

In the updated analysis, an ACT Reading score of 18 was identified as the concordant score for an FCAT Reading scale score of 300. The results of the analysis yielded no changes in the ACT Mathematics concordant score.

The new FCAT concordant scores provided in Table 1 will be in effect beginning with students scheduled to graduate in 2011. Most of these students are currently enrolled in grade 11 and have sufficient time to participate in SAT or ACT testing, if needed. Please take the appropriate steps to ensure that this new information is included in the information and guidance that your school district provides to students who have yet to meet the graduation testing requirement. Please feel free to use the attached document, "*FCAT Graduation Requirements*," in your communications. This document also is available at http://fcat.fldoe.org/pdf/fcatpass.pdf.

All students who have not passed one or more sections of the Grade 10 FCAT should participate in every retake opportunity until a passing score is achieved. To be eligible to use a concordant score for high school graduation, statute still requires students to have taken and failed to pass the Grade 10 FCAT at least three times.

Unless required otherwise, these changes will be in effect until FCAT-2 is in place and we are able to conduct new concordance studies based on new passing standards. It is anticipated that these analyses would occur no earlier than the summer of 2012. As always, we will provide to you sufficient notice of the change in concordant scores so that affected students have sufficient time to prepare.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kris Ellington, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Accountability, Research, and Measurement, or Sharon Koon, Policy Coordinator, Office of Assessment, at (850) 245-0513.

EJS/ke

Attachment

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction
District Assessment Coordinators
Dr. Frances Haithcock
Jeff Sellers