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MEMORANDUM

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DPS: 2014-11

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: February 14, 2014

SUBJECT: **Public Review of Draft Civics End-of-Course Assessment Achievement Level Descriptions**

The department is in the process of taking the necessary steps to establish Achievement Levels for the Civics End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment. Part of this process is developing *Achievement Level Descriptions* that define the knowledge and skills students need to achieve at each level. Due to the importance of the *Achievement Level Descriptions* in the standard-setting process, the department has posted the draft *Civics EOC Assessment Achievement Level Descriptions* at http://app2.fldoe.org/Assessment/fcatEOC/ for public review and comment. The 30-day public review period will end on **March 17, 2014**. I encourage you, your staff members and other interested stakeholders to review the draft *Achievement Level Descriptions* and to provide input to help ensure that they are as precise, accurate and comprehensive as possible.

The standard-setting process includes some steps that must occur prior to the standard-setting meetings that will take place in summer 2014. The basic steps for setting standards are as follows:

1. Develop a policy definition describing the meaning of each Achievement Level;
2. Develop *Achievement Level Descriptions*;
3. Convene a standard-setting panel composed of educators (educator panel) to propose cut scores for the Achievement Levels;
4. Convene a standard-setting panel composed of business and policy leaders (reactor panel) to review the proposed cut scores;
5. Solicit public input;
6. Recommend a proposed rule and solicit legislative input; and
7. Obtain State Board of Education approval of cut scores.

Policy definitions provide a general statement of the policy goals for each Achievement Level and are aligned with the purpose of the assessment and the statutory requirements related to Achievement Levels. Rather than detailing content-specific information about what a student should know, policy definitions encompass student performance goals at each Achievement Level for all grade levels and subject areas. The table below provides the established policy definitions for all Florida EOC Assessment subject areas.

Florida EOC Assessments Achievement Level Policy Definitions	
Level 5	Students at this level demonstrate mastery of the most challenging content of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.
Level 4	Students at this level demonstrate an above satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.
Level 3	Students at this level demonstrate a satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.
Level 2	Students at this level demonstrate a below satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.
Level 1	Students at this level demonstrate an inadequate level of success with the challenging content of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.

Because policy definitions are very general statements that do not include information about subject-area content, the creation of *Achievement Level Descriptions* enables the translation of policy definitions into detailed descriptions of the knowledge and skills that a student needs to achieve at each level. Whereas the policy definitions apply to all subject areas, the *Achievement Level Descriptions* are subject-matter specific.

The department convened a group of Florida educators last August to draft the new *Achievement Level Descriptions* for the Civics EOC Assessment. The process for producing these drafts included a thorough review of the assessed *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* and the *Test Item Specifications* for this subject area. The committee then developed descriptions of the knowledge and skills of students at each Achievement Level aligned to the policy definitions and worked to show progressions across levels within the subject area. Their draft was then compiled by the department and revised for consistency in format.

After the public review period closes on March 17, 2014, all public feedback will be considered as the department finalizes the *Achievement Level Descriptions* for use in the summer 2014 standard-setting meetings. During these meetings, the committees will use the policy definitions and *Achievement Level Descriptions* along with other information to recommend cut scores on the reporting scale for the new Civics EOC Assessment Achievement Levels.

We appreciate the district nominations that we have received for the Civics EOC Assessment standard-setting committee and thank you in advance for your valuable input during this next crucial step in the standard-setting process.

PS/jtk

cc: School District Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
School District Assessment and Accountability Coordinators