State of Florida

Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook

for State Grants under Title IX, Part C, Section 9302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 107-110)

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PART I: Summary of Required Elements for State Accountability Systems

Instructions

The following chart is an overview of States' implementation of the critical elements required for approval of their State accountability systems. States must provide detailed implementation information for each of these elements in Part II of this Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook.

For each of the elements listed in the following chart, States should indicate the current implementation status in their State using the following legend:

F: State has a final policy, approved by all the required entities in the State (e.g., State Board of Education, State Legislature), for implementing this element in its accountability system.

P: State has a proposed policy for implementing this element in its accountability system, but must still receive approval by required entities in the State (e.g., State Board of Education, State Legislature).

W: State is still working on formulating a policy to implement this element in its accountability system.

Summary of Implementation Status for Required Elements of State Accountability Systems

Status		State Accountability System Element
Principle 1: All Schools		
F	1.1	Accountability system includes *all schools and districts in the state*.
F	1.2	Accountability system holds *all schools to the same criteria*.
F	1.3	Accountability system incorporates the *academic achievement standards*.
F	1.4	Accountability system provides *information in a timely manner*.
F	1.5	Accountability system includes *report cards*.
F	1.6	Accountability system includes *rewards and sanctions*.
Principle 2: All Students		
F	2.1	The accountability system includes *all students*
F	2.2	The accountability system has a consistent definition of *full academic year*.
F	2.3	The accountability system properly includes *mobile students*.
Principle 3: Method of AYP Determinations		
F	3.1	Accountability system expects *all student subgroups, public schools, and LEAs to reach proficiency by 2013-14*.
F	3.2	Accountability system has a method for determining whether *student subgroups, public schools, and LEAs made adequate yearly progress.*
F	3.2a	Accountability system establishes a *starting point*.
F	3.2b	Accountability system establishes *statewide annual measurable objectives*.
F	3.2c	Accountability system establishes *intermediate goals*.
Principle 4: Annual Decisions		
F	4.1	The accountability system *determines annually the progress* of schools and districts.

STATUS Legend:
F – Final state policy
P – Proposed policy, awaiting State approval
W – Working to formulate policy

Principle 5: Subgroup Accountability

F	5.1	The accountability system *includes all the required student subgroups*.
F	5.2	The accountability system holds *schools and LEAs accountable for the progress of student subgroups*.
F	5.3	The accountability system includes *students with disabilities*.
F	5.4	The accountability system includes *limited English proficient students*.
F	5.5	The State has determined the minimum number of students sufficient to yield statistically reliable information for each purpose for which disaggregated data are used.
F	5.6	The State has strategies to protect the privacy of individual students in reporting achievement results and in determining whether schools and LEAs are making adequate yearly progress on the basis of disaggregated subgroups.

Principle 6: Based on Academic Assessments

F	6.1	Accountability system is based *primarily on academic assessments*.

Principle 7: Additional Indicators

F	7.1	Accountability system includes *graduation rate for high schools*.
F	7.2	Accountability system includes an *additional academic indicator for elementary and middle schools*.
F	7.3	Additional indicators are valid and reliable.

Principle 8: Separate Decisions for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics

F	8.1	Accountability system holds students, schools and districts separately accountable for *reading/language arts* and *mathematics*.

Principle 9: System Validity and Reliability

F	9.1	Accountability system produces *reliable decisions*.
F	9.2	Accountability system produces *valid decisions*.
F	9.3	State has a plan for addressing *changes in assessment and student population*.

Principle 10: Participation Rate

F	10.1	Accountability system has a means for calculating the *rate of participation* in the statewide assessment.
F	10.2	Accountability system has a means for *applying the 95% assessment criteria to student subgroups and small schools.*

STATUS Legend:

F – Final policy
P – Proposed Policy, awaiting State approval
W– Working to formulate policy

PART II: State Response and Activities for Meeting State Accountability System Requirements

Instructions

In Part II of this Workbook, States are to provide detailed information for each of the critical elements required for State accountability systems. States should answer the questions asked about each of the critical elements in the State's accountability system. States that do not have final approval for any of these elements or that have not finalized a decision on these elements by January 31, 2003, should, when completing this section of the Workbook, indicate the status of each element that is not yet official State policy and provide the anticipated date by which the proposed policy will become effective. In each of these cases, States must include a timeline of steps to complete to ensure that such elements are in place by May 1, 2003, and implemented during the 2002-2003 school year. By no later than May 1, 2003, States must submit to the Department final information for all sections of the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook.

PRINCIPLE 1. A single statewide Accountability System applied to all public schools and LEAs.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.1 How does the State Accountability System include every public school and LEA in the State?	Every public school and LEA is required to make adequate yearly progress and is included in the State Accountability System. State has a definition of "public school" and "LEA" for AYP accountability purposes. • The State Accountability System produces AYP decisions for all public schools, including public schools with variant grade configurations (e.g., K-12), public schools that serve special populations (e.g., alternative public schools, juvenile institutions, state public schools for the blind) and public charter schools. It also holds accountable public schools with no grades assessed (e.g., K-2).	A public school or LEA is not required to make adequate yearly progress and is not included in the State Accountability System. State policy systematically excludes certain public schools and/or LEAs.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The State of Florida is submitting a comprehensive and unified plan for accountability that includes all required aspects of NCLB and that relies on and compliments current state assessment and accountability provisions initiated by Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature. All public schools in the state will be included in the NCLB accountability program. Florida statutes do not differentiate between public schools for purposes of accountability.

Florida will adopt a single statewide accountability system for all public schools that includes multiple measures. These are: adequate yearly progress as defined by federal law, school grades as defined by state law, individual student progress towards annual learning targets to reach proficiency, and a return on investment measure that links dollars spent to student achievement. All schools will be rated on each of these measures. Schools meeting all standards will be designated as highly effective and efficient.

Each of these elements informs parents, educators, and the community about different facets of a school's performance. No one element, on its own, can provide a complete picture. If all four elements measured the same performance indicators in the same way, there would be no need for these unique elements. Florida's accountability system has been carefully constructed to ensure that we consider all aspects of a school's performance and therefore, there may be situations in which a school performs poorly in one or more of the elements but demonstrates higher performance in the others. We are designing a comprehensive public information campaign to ensure that all constituents, including parents, understand the four elements of Florida's accountability system and what the data derived from each element represent.

Some schools do not contain grade levels presently assessed by the existing statewide assessment program, such as a K-2 school. In these cases, the school will be assigned the AYP classification of the school to which it sends students.

In addition to Florida's 3,306 schools with an AYP "Yes" or "No" rating for 2007-08, there were 260 active schools with students in the tested grades (3-10) that did not receive a "Yes" or "No" AYP designation. However, only nine (9) of these schools were schools that provided primarily regular instruction (as contrasted with alternative education services for mobile or transitional populations). These nine schools may primarily provide regular instruction to students, but the schools may also shape their curriculum to meet the needs of students who have had difficulty in regular school environments. These types of schools may be subject to greater student mobility (e.g., transfers out after the beginning term) than traditional schools. Note also that the performance and participation rates for students at these schools are rolled up to the district and state levels for inclusion in the AYP designations for the district and state.

For each of these schools, there were no more than ten (10) eligible (full-year-enrolled) students in the tested grades (grades 3-10) with valid test scores in reading and/or mathematics.

A closer examination of Florida's 260 "too small" schools for 2007-08 shows how they are classified based on service type.

Service Type	Count of Schools based on Service Type
Adult Education	2
Alternative Education	202
Superintendent's Office	6
Regular Education	9
Special Education (ESE)	33
Vocational/Technical	8
Total	260

Schools with full-year-enrolled student populations of less than 10 in the testing age range consist primarily of special situations in which one or more students have unique placements based on individual circumstances, e.g., an adult education center or a county jail. Schools with highly mobile populations such as juvenile justice facilities, teen parent programs, and hospital/homebound programs may have ten or fewer students who are in the tested grades and who were enrolled for the full year at the school – in which case such schools would not receive an AYP rating. Alternative education (academic intervention and dropout prevention) schools serve student populations that are often transitional and highly mobile. Students served in at-risk settings are not uncommonly enrolled for less than a full year at an alternative school and then placed back in a traditional school during a later term, or vice versa. Thus, while such schools may serve a substantial number of students at various times during the year, the actual number of students who are served for a full year may be comparatively small. Again, these students' performance and participation rates will roll up to the district and/or state levels. The SEA regularly monitors the existence of separate schools with exceptionally small numbers of students to ensure that it is necessary for such small schools to be classified as "schools" rather than as programs within schools.

Other small schools of any type -- elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, charter schools, special education centers, at-risk centers, and vocational schools – will receive an AYP designation so long as their total tested student population in reading and math is larger than 10.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Sections 1000.03 and 1000.04, F.S. for definitions of public education, public schools, and governance thereof.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.2 How are all public schools and LEAs held to the same criteria when making an AYP determination?	All public schools and LEAs are systematically judged on the basis of the same criteria when making an AYP determination. If applicable, the AYP definition is integrated into the State Accountability System.	Some public schools and LEAs are systematically judged on the basis of alternate criteria when making an AYP determination.
STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS		
All public schools will be judged according to the requirements of NCLB when making AYP decisions, subject to limitations of cell size discussed elsewhere. The AYP decisions will be made on the basis of “status comparisons” required in law. Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendices A and E attached hereto.		

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.3 Does the State have, at a minimum, a definition of *basic*, *proficient* and *advanced* student achievement levels in reading/language arts and mathematics?	State has defined three levels of student achievement: *basic*, *proficient* and *advanced*.[1] Student achievement levels of *proficient* and *advanced* determine how well students are mastering the materials in the State's academic content standards; and the *basic* level of achievement provides complete information about the progress of lower-achieving students toward mastering the *proficient* and *advanced* levels.	Standards do not meet the legislated requirements.

[1] System of State achievement standards will be reviewed by the Standards and Assessments Peer Review. The Accountability Peer Review will determine that achievement levels are used in determining AYP.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

According to Florida law, the Commissioner of Education must designate an FCAT achievement level that represents inadequate performance. This has been done, and Level 1 was so designated. For purposes of implementing *No Child Left Behind*, we designate the following relationships between Florida's achievement levels and the labels specified by NCLB:

Specification of *NCLB* Achievement Standards

FCAT Achievement Levels	No Child Left Behind Achievement Standards
4-5	Above Proficient
3	Proficient
1-2	Below Proficient

Policy definitions of FCAT achievement levels are as follows:

- Level 5: Performance at this level indicates that the student has success with the most challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. A Level 5 student answers most of the test questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.
- Level 4: Performance at this level indicates that the student has success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. A Level 4 student answers most of the questions correctly but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.
- Level 3: Performance at this level indicates that the student has partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards but performance is inconsistent. A Level 3 student answers many of the questions correctly but is generally less successful with questions that are most challenging.
- Level 2: Performance at this level indicates that the student has limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.
- Level 1: Performance at this level indicates that the student has little success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.4 How does the State provide accountability and adequate yearly progress decisions and information in a timely manner?	State provides decisions about adequate yearly progress in time for LEAs to implement the required provisions before the beginning of the next academic year. State allows enough time to notify parents about public school choice or supplemental educational service options, time for parents to make an informed decision, and time to implement public school choice and supplemental educational services.	Timeline does not provide sufficient time for LEAs to fulfill their responsibilities before the beginning of the next academic year.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The FCAT is administered in late February and early March with test results available to schools prior to the end of the school term in May. The data are released in waves with the first release describing district and state summary data and the second wave providing student-by-student test results. To expedite the release of student level data, the Department's test support contractor provides the means whereby districts can access their data electronically from a secure server prior to shipment of the printed reports. State summary data are available in early May and can be used to determine if the state objective targets have been met.

As soon as the final data files have been produced in early May, work can begin on assembling the information with which to determine school and district AYP. The reports will be available in time for parents to make informed "school choice" decisions prior to the beginning of the following school year in August.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix B attached hereto. Also, see Section 1008.22, F.S.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.5 Does the State Accountability System produce an annual State Report Card?	The State Report Card includes all the required data elements [see Appendix A for the list of required data elements]. The State Report Card is available to the public at the beginning of the academic year. The State Report Card is accessible in languages of major populations in the State, to the extent possible. Assessment results and other academic indicators (including graduation rates) are reported by student subgroups	The State Report Card does not include all the required data elements. The State Report Card is not available to the public.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

For many years, Florida has released school, district, and state level student assessment results. Each district is required to prepare an annual report that must include information about student achievement and other relevant information. State, district, and school reports provide data similar to those required by NCLB. Additional required elements will be included to become fully compliant. The Department is committed to the release of a State Report Card that meets the requirements of NCLB. The data elements found in Appendix A of this document will be included, and the report will be available by the beginning of the school academic year.

The state reports will be available through the Department's Internet web site. Districts with substantial Spanish-speaking populations will produce Spanish-language versions of these reports for distribution to parents and/or posting on district web sites.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See chart in Appendix A attached here to. Also, see Section 1008.385, F.S. and the following web site: http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/index.cfm.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
1.6 How does the State Accountability System include rewards and sanctions for public schools and LEAs?[2]	State uses one or more types of rewards and sanctions, where the criteria are: • Set by the State; • Based on adequate yearly progress decisions; and, • Applied uniformly across public schools and LEAs.	State does not implement rewards or sanctions for public schools and LEAs based on adequate yearly progress.

[2] The state must provide rewards and sanctions for all public schools and LEAs for making adequate yearly progress, except that the State is not required to hold schools and LEAs not receiving Title I funds to the requirements of section 1116 of NCLB [§200.12(b)(40)].

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
Florida law provides for various rewards and sanctions, depending on performance results. Section 1002.31, F.S., mandates a “school choice” program for each district. Section 1002.38, F.S., provides “opportunity scholarships” for students attending a school rated “failing” for two years in any four-year period. Parents may choose to enroll these children in other public schools. Section 1008.32, F.S., gives the State Board of Education the authority to monitor educational quality and take firm steps to intervene in any school district, if needed. See also Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC, for a description of actions that can be taken for schools that do not perform well within the A+ Plan. The School Recognition Program recognizes the high quality of many of Florida's public schools. As authorized, the program provides greater autonomy and financial awards to schools that demonstrate sustained or significantly improved student performance. Schools that receive an "A" or schools that improve at least one performance grade category are eligible for school recognition. The 2002 Legislature appropriated funds for the District Lottery and School Recognition Program in Item 4 of the General Appropriations Act. Of the $306,925,000 appropriated for this purpose, $122,770,000 or 40% can be used to fund financial awards for the Florida School Recognition Program. Each eligible school receives $100 per student. Florida will implement the requirements found in Sections 200.32 – 200.34 of the NCLB rules mandating school classifications of “school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.” Title I schools not meeting AYP will be subject to interventions and sanctions defined by federal law. These will not be applied to schools or districts not receiving Title I funds; however, schools not meeting standards for individual student progress toward proficiency and schools falling below the return on investment standard shall be designated as in need of assistance in these areas. Links to Supporting Evidence: See the following web site address: www.bsi.fsu.edu. Also, see Sections 1002.31, 1002.38, 1008.32, 1008.345 and 1008.36, F.S; and Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC, available at https://www.flrules.org/Default.asp. Florida Statutes may be accessed at www.leg.state.fl.us.

PRINCIPLE 2. All students are included in the State Accountability System.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
2.1 How does the State Accountability System include all students in the State?	All students in the State are included in the State Accountability System. The definitions of "public school" and "LEA" account for all students enrolled in the public school district, regardless of program or type of public school.	Public school students exist in the State for whom the State Accountability System makes no provision.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
All students are included in the NCLB accountability system. The vast majority of students take the FCAT in grades 3-10. English language learners (ELLs) who have been enrolled in an approved English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program for 12 months or less for whom it is determined on an individual basis (based on majority decision of the ELL Committee) that the FCAT is not an appropriate measure of academic proficiency are assessed using other measures of academic performance. The Department has implemented a system of locally-developed alternate assessments for those students with disabilities for whom the Sunshine State Standards and participation in the FCAT are not appropriate. Districts report the results of these assessments to the state in terms of students who are at different levels of proficiency. This allows the state to aggregate information about how many students are “Proficient or Above” in terms of the assessments they took. Florida statute requires that school districts operate educational programs for students in juvenile justice centers and programs. Each such program has a unique school number and will be treated as a school. All students shall be assessed and included in the state accountability system. All students who are “mobile,” meaning they attend more than one school during the year, shall be included in the statewide assessment system and included within the district and/or state AYP calculation. In Florida, schools with small populations in the tested grades -- including all elementary, middle, high schools, charter schools, exceptional student education, and vocational schools -- will receive an AYP designation so long as their tested student population is larger than 10. While there are a few “schools” with student populations of less than 10 in the tested grades, these consist primarily of special situations in which one or more students have unique placements based on individual circumstances, e.g., an adult education center or a county jail. Again, these students’ performance and participation rates will roll up to the district and/or state levels. See also pp. 6-7 of this document for additional information on AYP determinations for small schools and/or schools with mobile or transitional student populations. Note also that Florida’s SEA has implemented a process for monitoring more closely the existence of separate schools with exceptionally small numbers of students to ensure that it is necessary for such small schools to exist as separate entities. An advisory group convenes weekly to review school district applications for the assignment of official school numbers in the state system in order to ensure that entities applying for separate school numbers perform the functions of actual schools and meet accountability criteria.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
2.2 How does the State define "full academic year" for identifying students in AYP decisions?	The State has a definition of "full academic year" for determining which students are to be included in decisions about AYP. The definition of full academic year is consistent and applied statewide.	LEAs have varying definitions of "full academic year." The State's definition excludes students who must transfer from one district to another as they advance to the next grade. The definition of full academic year is not applied consistently.
STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS		
For the purposes of calculating school accountability under NCLB, students who are enrolled and in attendance by the fall term as documented in Survey 2 conducted the second week of October and Survey 3 conducted the second week of February will be included in the analyses. Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix E attached hereto.		

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
2.3 How does the State Accountability System determine which students have attended the same public school and/or LEA for a full academic year?	State holds public schools accountable for students who were enrolled at the same public school for a full academic year. State holds LEAs accountable for students who transfer during the full academic year from one public school within the district to another public school within the district.	State definition requires students to attend the same public school for more than a full academic year to be included in public school accountability. State definition requires students to attend school in the same district for more than a full academic year to be included in district accountability. State holds public schools accountable for students who have not attended the same public school for a full academic year.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
For many years, Florida has had a student identification system that assigns a unique number to each student upon initial enrollment. Because the number follows the student throughout his/her academic career, an opportunity is available to analyze achievement data in terms of community demographic variables, school characteristics, staff characteristics, and the enacted curriculum. An individual student often enrolls in one school and then transfers to another school during the school year. These students' data will be used for district AYP but will not be assigned to a given school for school-level AYP unless the student transferred after the March testing window has concluded. Students enrolled in the district during that period, but not at the same school, will be assessed and included in the district calculation of AYP. Students enrolled in the state during that period, but not in the same district will be assessed and included in the state calculation of AYP. Links to Supporting Evidence: See Section 1008.386, F.S., for information about the student identification numbering system.

PRINCIPLE 3. State definition of AYP is based on expectations for growth in student achievement that is continuous and substantial, such that all students are proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than 2013-2014.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
3.1 How does the State's definition of adequate yearly progress require all students to be proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics by the 2013-2014 academic year?	The State has a timeline for ensuring that all students will meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement in reading/language arts[3] and mathematics, not later than 2013-2014.	State definition does not require all students to achieve proficiency by 2013-2014. State extends the timeline past the 2013-2014 academic year.

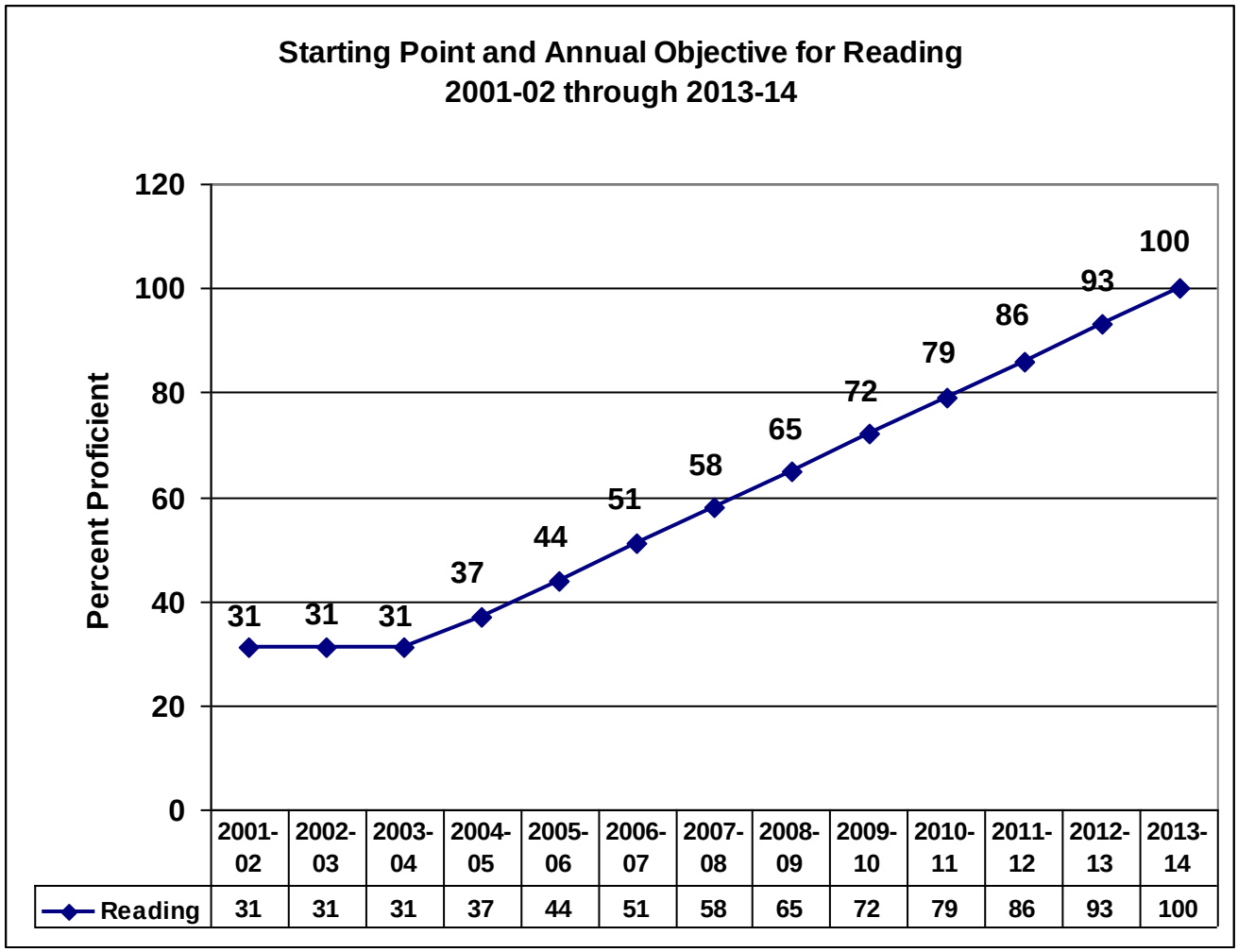
STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Department has prepared a schedule for improvements in academic achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics that begins with the "starting point" and concludes with 100% of the students being "Proficient or Above" at the end of the 2013-14 academic year. See also the response to question 3.2a.

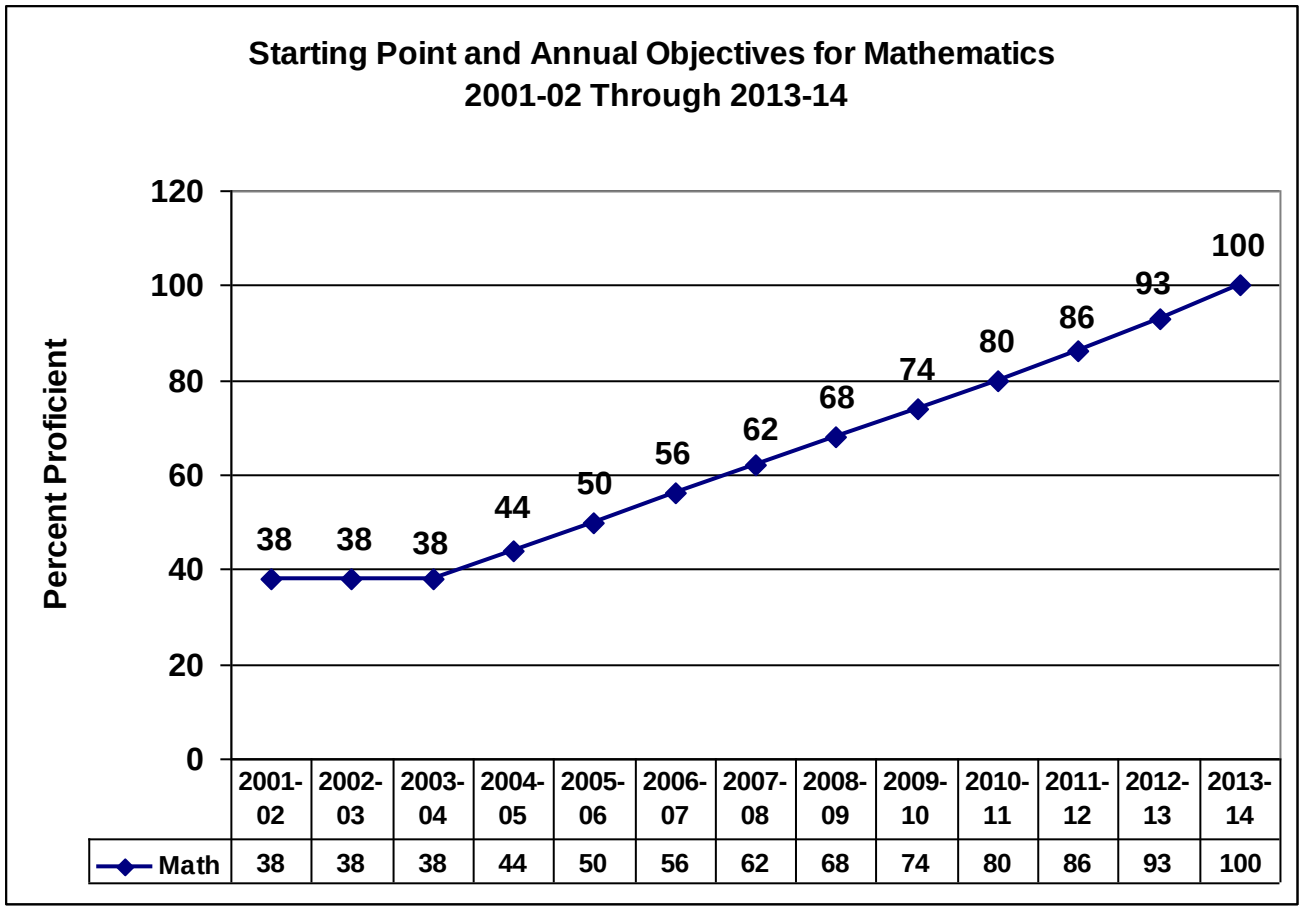
The graphs and source data on the following pages illustrate the starting points and annual objectives.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendices C and D attached hereto.

[3] If the state has separate assessments to cover its language arts standards (e.g., reading and writing), the State must create a method to include scores from all the relevant assessments.



	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Reading	31	31	31	37	44	51	58	65	72	79	86	93	100



	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Math	38	38	38	44	50	56	62	68	74	80	86	93	100

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
3.2 How does the State Accountability System determine whether each student subgroup, public school and LEA makes AYP?	For a public school and LEA to make adequate yearly progress, each student subgroup must meet or exceed the State annual measurable objectives, each student subgroup must have at least a 95% participation rate in the statewide assessments, and the school must meet the State's requirement for other academic indicators. However, if in any particular year the student subgroup does not meet those annual measurable objectives, the public school or LEA may be considered to have made AYP, if the percentage of students in that group who did not meet or exceed the proficient level of academic achievement on the State assessments for that year decreased by 10% of that percentage from the preceding public school year; that group made progress on one or more of the State's academic indicators; and that group had at least 95% participation rate on the statewide assessment.	State uses different method for calculating how public schools and LEAs make AYP.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
The state plan includes the criteria that are part of the NCLB authorization. A school will meet AYP if all of its subgroups meet the state targets in reading and mathematics and attain at least 95% participation in the assessment (FCAT and alternate assessments) and if the school shows an increase in the other indicator(s) of at least 1%. If one or more subgroups do not meet the state measurable objectives in reading or mathematics, the "safe harbor" criteria will be applied. This requires that the school demonstrate that, for each of the subgroups that did not meet the state objectives, the percent of "non proficient" students decreased by 10%. In addition, the subgroup(s) must have made progress of at least one percent increase on the state's "other indicators" and each subgroup must have attained at least 95% participation in the assessment. The participation rate will be calculated by dividing the number of students actually taking the FCAT or alternate assessment by the number of students in membership at the time of the assessment. For example, if School A did not meet the state objectives in reading and if, for example, the percentage of its Hispanic minority students not reaching proficiency decreased from 50% to 45% and if the Hispanic subgroup made improvement of at least 1% in the "other" indicator, it would be classified as meeting AYP. Note: the school would be expected to decrease the percentage of the Hispanic subgroup not reaching proficiency by 5% (10% of the base of 50%), which results in 45% of the students not reaching proficiency (55% reaching proficiency). However, the Florida unified approach includes an additional criterion for a school to meet AYP. Under the terms of the Florida A+ Plan for Education, each school is given a grade ranging from "A" to "F." No school rated within this system as either "D" or "F" will be determined to be meeting AYP. This feature enhances the accountability of the overall program since the Florida A+ Plan includes a measurement of academic growth for students in the lowest 25%. Even the most capable school must show growth of its lowest achieving students within the A+ system. See Appendix F. Under flexibility granted through the growth model pilot programs, schools and districts may also meet annual measurable objectives through a growth model trajectory, in addition to the status model and safe harbor. The growth model is a new AYP calculation where each student within a subgroup with at least two years of assessment data will be included in the denominator for the growth calculation. The numerator will include any student in the subgroup who is proficient or "on track to be proficient" in three years. A school or district will meet AYP for that subgroup if the percentage of students who are proficient or "on track to be proficient" using this calculation meets or exceeds the current state annual measurable objectives (51 percent in reading and 56 percent in mathematics in 2006-07). See Appendix J. Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendices E, F, and J attached hereto.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
3.2a What is the State's starting point for calculating Adequate Yearly Progress?	Using data from the 2001-2002 school year, the State established separate starting points in reading/language arts and mathematics for measuring the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the State's proficient level of academic achievement. Each starting point is based, at a minimum, on the higher of the following percentages of students at the proficient level: (1) the percentage in the State of proficient students in the lowest-achieving student subgroup; or, (2) the percentage of proficient students in a public school at the 20th percentile of the State's total enrollment among all schools ranked by the percentage of students at the proficient level. A State may use these procedures to establish separate starting points by grade span; however, the starting point must be the same for all like schools (e.g., one same starting point for all elementary schools, one same starting point for all middle schools…).	The State Accountability System uses a different method for calculating the starting point (or baseline data).

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Department analyzed the FCAT results from the academic year 2001-02 according to the requirements of NCLB.
Section 1111(b)(2)(E) provides that the starting point shall be, at a minimum, based on the higher of the percentage of students at the proficient level who are in –

"(i) the State's lowest achieving group of students described in subparagraph (C)(v)(II); or

(ii) the school at the 20th percentile in the State, based on enrollment, among all schools ranked by the percentage of students at the proficient level."

Florida's data were analyzed both ways, separately by grade level and subject area (reading and mathematics). The FCAT nationally-normed test (the SAT-9) was not used in this analysis since it is not part of the State's school accountability program. Instead, only the portion of FCAT that is constructed around the Sunshine State Standards was used. (This is commonly identified as the FCAT-SSS.)

The following table presents the results of the analysis method specified in (ii) for reading and mathematics. The percent of students scoring Level 3 and above was calculated for each school, and the schools were ranked. Counting upward from the lowest scoring school, a school containing the 20%-tile of student enrollment was located. This analysis depends on counting the student population within each school without regard to how many grade levels are present in each school. Thus, the population being counted is not the population of students in the tested grade level who earned ratings of "Proficient or Above" but is, instead, the total enrollment of the school itself.

Identification of Starting Points Based on Achievement and School Enrollment

Reading	Mathematics
30.68%	37.54%

NCLB specifies that the starting points will be the HIGHER of the results of the two analyses. Since these starting points are higher than those derived from the first analysis, the starting points will be 31% for reading and 38% for mathematics.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix C attached hereto.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
3.2b What are the State's annual measurable objectives for determining adequate yearly progress?	State has annual measurable objectives that are consistent with a state's intermediate goals and that identify for each year a minimum percentage of students who must meet or exceed the proficient level of academic achievement on the State's academic assessments. The State's annual measurable objectives ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement within the timeline. The State's annual measurable objectives are the same throughout the State for each public school, each LEA, and each subgroup of students.	The State Accountability System uses another method for calculating annual measurable objectives. The State Accountability System does not include annual measurable objectives.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The State's annual objectives for improvement in reading and mathematics are shown in Appendix D. Florida has developed and is implementing a science assessment but the performance standards have not yet been established. Science has not yet been included in the analysis of measurable objectives.

In the event that the Florida Board of Education chooses to adopt higher expectations for the FCAT at one or more grade levels, this schedule may be changed.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix D attached hereto.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
3.2c What are the State's intermediate goals for determining adequate yearly progress?	State has established intermediate goals that increase in equal increments over the period covered by the State timeline. • The first incremental increase takes effect not later than the 2004-2005 academic year. • Each following incremental increase occurs within three years.	The State uses another method for calculating intermediate goals. The State does not include intermediate goals in its definition of adequate yearly progress.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The state plan provides intermediate goals as shown in Critical Element 3.1. These have been designed to permit increases every three years using 2001-02 as the base year. This system provides annual increases leading to the final expectation of 100% proficiency.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix D attached hereto.

PRINCIPLE 4. State makes annual decisions about the achievement of all public schools and LEAs.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
4.1 How does the State Accountability System make an annual determination of whether each public school and LEA in the State made AYP?	AYP decisions for each public school and LEA are made annually.[4]	AYP decisions for public schools and LEAs are not made annually.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

AYP decisions for each public school and school district will be made annually using the system described in Appendix E and the schedule shown in the response to Critical Element 3.2c.

Data will be collected from the FCAT and the alternate assessment systems, combined, and disaggregated. State level, district, and school data will be available. For each school and each school district, the results will be compiled and analyzed in accordance with the AYP plan.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix E attached hereto.

[4] Decisions may be based upon several years of data and data may be averaged across grades within a public school [§1111(b)(2)(J)].

PRINCIPLE 5. All public schools and LEAs are held accountable for the achievement of individual subgroups.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.1 How does the definition of adequate yearly progress include all the required student subgroups?	Identifies subgroups for defining adequate yearly progress: economically disadvantaged, major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. Provides definition and data source of subgroups for adequate yearly progress.	State does not disaggregate data by each required student subgroup.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The two-dimensional matrices provided below illustrate how the definition of adequate yearly progress includes all of the required student subgroups.

Elementary and Middle Schools

	Reading	Reading Participation Rate	Math	Math Participation Rate	Other (Writing)*
All students					
Econ. Disadvantaged					
White					
Black					
Hispanic					
Asian					
Am. Indian					
SWD					
ELL					

*** In accordance with Section 200.19 of the final regulations, the "Other Academic Indicators" will be disaggregated by subgroup for reporting purposes but will not be used for determining AYP.**

Senior High Schools

	Reading	Reading Partici-pation Rate	Math	Math Partici-pation Rate	Other (Gradu-ation Rate)*	Other (Writing)*
All students						
Econ. Disadvantaged						
White						
Black						
Hispanic						
Asian						
Am. Indian						
SWD						
ELL						

* In accordance with Section 200.19 of the final regulations, the "Other Academic Indicators" will be disaggregated by subgroup for reporting purposes but will not be used for determining AYP.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix E attached hereto.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.2 How are public schools and LEAs held accountable for the progress of student subgroups in the determination of adequate yearly progress?	Public schools and LEAs are held accountable for student subgroup achievement: economically disadvantaged, major ethnic and racial groups, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students.	State does not include student subgroups in its State Accountability System.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Department's system for determining AYP requires that progress be made within the specified subgroups for AYP to be achieved at the school and district level. These include:

1. All students
2. Economically disadvantaged students
3. Students with disabilities (SWDs)
4. English language learners (ELLs)
5. White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian students (separately)

Data for the above subgroups will be reported contingent upon group size limitations discussed in Critical Element 5.5.

Students who initially are classified as SWD and who subsequently leave that official classification will no longer be considered as SWD for accountability purposes and will be considered in the total group as well as in their race/ethnic or economically disadvantaged group, if applicable.

A Florida student is classified as an English language learner for AYP purposes if he or she meets one of the following criteria:

- (Code LY) -- The student is classified as limited English proficient and is enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of ELL students, regardless of instructional model/approach.
- (Code LF) -- The student is being followed up for a two-year period after having exited from the ESOL program.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.3 How are students with disabilities included in the State's definition of adequate yearly progress?	All students with disabilities participate in statewide assessments: general assessments with or without accommodations or an alternate assessment based on grade level standards for the grade in which students are enrolled. State demonstrates that students with disabilities are fully included in the State Accountability System.	The State Accountability System or State policy excludes students with disabilities from participating in the statewide assessments. State cannot demonstrate that alternate assessments measure grade-level standards for the grade in which students are enrolled.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
The Florida assessment program, FCAT, emphasizes the participation of ALL students. Students with disabilities are provided a wide variety of accommodations. Students with disabilities who do not participate in FCAT are assessed using the Florida Alternate Assessment, the results of which are merged with the FCAT proficiency ratings. Florida's program expects schools to provide the opportunity to learn for students with disabilities and for ELLs with the intent of preparing them for graduation with a regular diploma. For the 2008-09 school year, in determining AYP results for schools, Florida will not be utilizing the short term flexibility regarding the students with disabilities (SWD) subgroup – that is, the mathematical adjustment to the SWD subgroup proficiency results (for reading and mathematics) that has been authorized by the U. S. Department of Education for states that meet conditions for approval.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.4 How are students with limited English proficiency included in the State's definition of adequate yearly progress?	All LEP students participate in statewide assessments: general assessments with or without accommodations or a native language version of the general assessment based on grade level standards. State demonstrates that LEP students are fully included in the State Accountability System.	LEP students are not fully included in the State Accountability System.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

See also the response to Critical Element 5.3.

The academic achievement of all students classified as English language learners will be measured and reported. ELLs are required to participate in the FCAT assessment program. The scores of ELLs participating in the FCAT are included in the accountability system and affect the calculation of AYP.

A Florida student is classified as an English language learner for AYP purposes if he or she meets one of the following criteria:

- (Code LY) -- The student is classified as limited English proficient and is enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of ELL students, regardless of instructional model/approach.
- (Code LF) -- The student is being followed up for a two-year period after having exited from the ESOL program.

Beginning in 2008-2009, the following requirements will apply to the assessment of ELLs for purposes of calculating and reporting AYP:

Florida school districts must assess English Language Learners (ELLs) on the FCAT in mathematics. ELLs who have been in the United States for at least one year will be assessed on the FCAT in reading. Recently arrived ELLs (those who have been enrolled in school in the United States for less than twelve [12] months) shall be assessed on the annual statewide language proficiency assessment, the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA), which is aligned to the Florida Language Arts Sunshine State Standards; and these students may be exempt for up to one administration of the FCAT in reading. Florida will apply flexibility granted by the U.S. Department of Education with regard to the assessment of ELL students for the AYP calculation. This flexibility allows for recently arrived ELLs assessed on the CELLA to count for participation in reading while being exempted from the reading proficiency calculation for AYP, and also allows for recently arrived ELLs assessed on the FCAT in mathematics to count for participation in mathematics while being exempted from the mathematics proficiency calculation for AYP. For purposes of calculating AYP, Florida will no longer include results of locally administered alternate assessments for ELL students.

Recently arrived ELLs who are assessed on the FCAT in reading in addition to the CELLA will also be counted for participation in reading while being exempted from the reading proficiency calculation for AYP.

For more on the CELLA, see Appendix B (pp. 77-78).

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.5 What is the State's definition of the minimum number of students in a subgroup required for reporting purposes? For accountability purposes?	State defines the number of students required in a subgroup for reporting and accountability purposes, and applies this definition consistently across the State.[5] Definition of subgroup will result in data that are statistically reliable.	State does not define the required number of students in a subgroup for reporting and accountability purposes. Definition is not applied consistently across the State. Definition does not result in data that are statistically reliable.

[5] The minimum number is not required to be the same for reporting and accountability.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Department will utilize the following minimum group sizes.

1 For public reporting purposes, there shall be no fewer than 10 students in a cell.

2 For accountability purposes, the minimum group size shall be at least 30 students and more than15 percent of the total school population or 100 students for the subgroups for performance criteria (not participation).

These values have been in use for many years in reporting statistical data collected by the Department. The value of 30 for group reporting has been incorporated in State Board of Education Rule. See Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC.

Analysis of data indicate that Florida has the largest schools in the nation:

	Primary	**Middle**	**High**
U.S. Average	446	595	752
Florida	694	1,030	4,460

*NCES Statistical Report, September 2001

Florida's student population is very diverse. Of the 2,662,701 students in the prekindergarten through 12th grade membership (Survey 2 Data, October 9-13, 2006), 46.71% were White, 23.15% were Black, 24.24% were Hispanic, 2.31% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.29% were Multiracial, and .30% were American Indian/Alaskan Native (source: Florida statistical brief on student membership at http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/pk-12mbrship.pdf). Students with disabilities represented 14.7% of the population while English language learners (ELLs) represented 11.8% of the population (source: Florida NCLB School Public Accountability Reports at http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/index.cfm).

These data support the use of a minimum group size of at least 30 students and more than 15 percent of the total school population or 100 students. When one considers the general size of the schools and of the subgroups it would appear that Florida is better positioned than most states to have subgroups of sufficient size to fairly judge performance consistent with the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC, available at www.flrules.org.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
5.6 How does the State Accountability System protect the privacy of students when reporting results and when determining AYP?	Definition does not reveal personally identifiable information.[6]	Definition reveals personally identifiable information.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Florida educational data system protects the identity of all student information. See Rule 6A-1.0014, FAC, language below:

> **6A-1.0014 Comprehensive Management Information System.**
> (1) Each school district and the Department shall develop and implement an automated information system component which shall be part of, and compatible with, the statewide comprehensive management information system. Each information system component shall contain automated student, staff and finance information systems and shall include procedures for the security, privacy and retention of automated records. The procedures for the security, privacy and retention of automated student records shall be in accordance with the requirements of 20 U.S.C. 1232g(b)(3), 34 C.F.R. Part 99 and Section 1002.22, F.S.

FCAT test results likewise are protected from disclosure to unauthorized persons. Any individual wishing to use Florida student data for research or contract purposes must adhere to the provisions of Florida's statutes and rules related to disclosure of sensitive information.

In addition, performance levels within a reporting cell will be reported only if the performance is greater than 5% and less than 95%. By not specifically reporting very small or very large percentages, student identity is further protected.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Rule 6A-1.0014, FAC, available at www.flrules.org.

[6] The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits an LEA that receives Federal funds from releasing, without the prior written consent of a student's parents, any personally identifiable information contained in a student's education record.

PRINCIPLE 6. State definition of AYP is based primarily on the State's academic assessments.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
6.1 How is the State's definition of adequate yearly progress based primarily on academic assessments?	Formula for AYP shows that decisions are based primarily on assessments.[7] Plan clearly identifies which assessments are included in accountability.	Formula for AYP shows that decisions are based primarily on non-academic indicators or indicators other than the State assessments.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Florida accountability program for NCLB will be based primarily on the results of student academic assessments. Other indicators will be used in accordance with the requirements of NCLB.

See also Appendix E for a discussion of Florida's AYP plan, including assessment results used in the state's AYP calculation as well as the "other indicators." For elementary and middle schools, the results of the statewide writing assessment will be used. For high schools, the grade 10 writing assessment and the high school graduation rate will be used.

[7] State Assessment System will be reviewed by the Standards and Assessments Peer Review Team.

PRINCIPLE 7. State definition of AYP includes graduation rates for public High schools and an additional indicator selected by the State for public Middle and public Elementary schools (such as attendance rates).

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
7.1 What is the State definition for the public high school graduation rate?	State definition of graduation rate: • Calculates the percentage of students, measured from the beginning of the school year, who graduate from public high school with a regular diploma (not including a GED or any other diploma not fully aligned with the state's academic standards) in the standard number of years; or, • Uses another more accurate definition that has been approved by the Secretary; and • Must avoid counting a dropout as a transfer. Graduation rate is included (in the aggregate) for AYP, and disaggregated (as necessary) for use when applying the exception clause[8] to make AYP.	State definition of public high school graduation rate does not meet these criteria.

[8] See USC 6311(b)(2)(I)(i), and 34 C.F.R. 200.20(b)

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
In Florida, the number of graduates from a four-year adjusted cohort is divided by the total number of students in the adjusted cohort. The adjusted cohort (denominator) is determined through a multi-step process in which we subtract from the 9th grade cohort the students who transfer out of the school or are deceased and add the students transferring into the school who, at the time of their enrollment, are on the same schedule to graduate as students from the first group. This definition is more accurate than the definition created by the National Center for Education Statistics. For NCLB, we propose to use the prior year graduation rate for the calculation of AYP and the state report card. This is necessary because many districts graduate students during summer school, and the deadline for AYP calculations and public reporting can occur prior to summer school conclusion for some districts. The NCLB graduation rate will vary slightly from the graduation rate that Florida publishes annually for other state-based reporting purposes because the state's NCLB rate excludes special diploma recipients from the numerator and adult-education GED recipients from the numerator and denominator. At this time, all Florida high school students receiving a GED from the Florida Department of Education as well as special diploma recipients are included in our regular graduation rate calculation. For the purposes of calculating the graduation rate, the classification of students in grade 9 will follow them throughout their high school career. For example, if a student is classified as SWD in grade 9 but then by grade 11 is no longer considered to be SWD, he/she will still be counted as if the classification had not changed. This classification methodology will apply only for the purposes of calculating the graduation rate as stated above, and will not be used for any other NCLB purpose. Florida has five high school graduation and completion options: • Standard Diploma • Certificate of Completion • State of Florida/High School Equivalency Diploma • Special Diploma • Special Certificate of Completion.

Only those students receiving a standard diploma or a State of Florida/High School Equivalency Diploma will be counted in the NCLB graduation rate. The State of Florida/High School Equivalency Diploma differs significantly from the typical adult-education GED program. This exit option is based on an agreement with the American Council on Education and s. 1003.435(4), Florida Statutes. The participants in this program must meet performance standards established by rules of the State Board and pass the GED. All State of Florida diplomas issued under this option have equal status with other high school diplomas for all state purposes including admission to any state university or community college. The performance standards are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and students achieving this diploma are considered to be as proficient as any student receiving a standard diploma.

For Florida high schools to meet the AYP requirement for the graduation rate, the four-year NCLB graduation rate for the school must be 85% or higher, or, if lower than 85%, the school must show annual improvement in the rate of at least 1%. The graduation rate applies only to schools serving students in the grade 9-12 range.

A complete description of Florida's high school graduation and completion options is included as Appendix I.

Links to Supporting Evidence: Section 1003.435(2), (4), and (6), Florida Statutes.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
7.2 What is the State's additional academic indicator for public elementary schools for the definition of AYP? For public middle schools for the definition of AYP?	State defines the additional academic indicators, e.g., additional State or locally administered assessments not included in the State assessment system, grade-to-grade retention rates or attendance rates.[9] An additional academic indicator is included (in the aggregate) for AYP, and disaggregated (as necessary) for use when applying the exception clause to make AYP.	State has not defined an additional academic indicator for elementary and middle schools.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Florida plan will utilize the results of the FCAT writing assessment in grades 4, 8, and 10 as "other indicator." In addition, for grade 10, the high school graduation rate will be an "other indicator."

The FCAT writing assessment is described in Appendix B.

For schools to meet the FCAT writing requirement for AYP, at least 90% of examinees must attain a proficient score of 3.0 or higher on the essay part of the examination, or, if the school falls below 90% scoring at or above 3.0, the school may still meet the writing requirement by showing annual improvement of 1% or more in the percentage of students scoring 3.0 or higher. The essay is scored on a six-point scale.

The AYP graduation rate requirement for Florida's high schools is addressed on the previous page.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendix B attached hereto.

[9] NCLB only lists these indicators as examples.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
7.3 Are the State's academic indicators valid and reliable?	State has defined academic indicators that are valid and reliable. State has defined academic indicators that are consistent with nationally recognized standards, if any.	State has an academic indicator that is not valid and reliable. State has an academic indicator that is not consistent with nationally recognized standards. State has an academic indicator that is not consistent within grade levels.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The statewide assessment tests (FCAT) in reading, writing, and mathematics are reliable and valid instruments. See the web site address shown below for information on test design, scoring, and development of the FCAT for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Test item specification for FCAT subtests in reading, writing, and mathematics are provided in detail at http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatis01.asp. (This site also includes specifications for FCAT science, which is not currently used in Florida's AYP calculation but is included in the state's school grading formula.) In addition, information on classification accuracy may be found in the FCAT Technical Reports at http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatpub2.asp.

Links to Supporting Evidence: FCAT information for educators and researchers is available at http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatpub2.asp. The FCAT Handbook is also available online at http://fcat.fldoe.org/handbk/fcathandbook.asp.

PRINCIPLE 8. AYP is based on reading/language arts and mathematics achievement objectives.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
8.1 Does the state measure achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics separately for determining AYP?	State AYP determination for student subgroups, public schools and LEAs separately measures reading/language arts and mathematics. [10] AYP is a separate calculation for reading/language arts and mathematics for each group, public school, and LEA.	State AYP determination for student subgroups, public schools and LEAs averages or combines achievement across reading/language arts and mathematics.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Reading, writing, and mathematics are separately measured and reported as part of the FCAT system. The data from each of these is used in the AYP calculations. See Appendix E.

Florida also is using its A+ Plan for Education "school grades" as an additional criterion for the "safe harbor." See Critical Element 3.2. The A+ school grading system is described in Appendix F. In the calculation of school grades, a school earns points according to the degree to which students are Proficient or Above in reading, writing, and mathematics in a compensatory fashion. That is, the points are merged and a school can be relatively high or low across the various measures. The results of the A+ Plan are used only as described in Critical Element 3.2.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Appendices E and F.

[10] If the state has more than one assessment to cover its language arts standards, the State must create a method for including scores from all the relevant assessments.

PRINCIPLE 9. State Accountability System is statistically valid and reliable.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
9.1 How do AYP determinations meet the State's standard for acceptable reliability?	State has defined a method for determining an acceptable level of reliability (decision consistency) for AYP decisions. State provides evidence that decision consistency is (1) within the range deemed acceptable to the State, and (2) meets professional standards and practice. State publicly reports the estimate of decision consistency, and incorporates it appropriately into accountability decisions. State updates analysis and reporting of decision consistency at appropriate intervals.	State does not have an acceptable method for determining reliability (decision consistency) of accountability decisions, e.g., it reports only reliability coefficients for its assessments. State has parameters for acceptable reliability; however, the actual reliability (decision consistency) falls outside those parameters. State's evidence regarding accountability reliability (decision consistency) is not updated.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
The Florida assessment and accountability programs take great pains to provide reliable results. The FCAT student tests are annually evaluated for reliability using several different methods. The Department triangulates data quality control so that no data are released unless three independent parties agree on the accuracy of the processing, analysis, and reporting. The A+ school grading system includes various quality control steps as well as a formal appeal process available to each school. Data are not reported for low n-count data cells, and the individual student results are maintained in a secure manner, not subject to inappropriate release. Each student's test score is reported using confidence intervals based on the standard error of measurement. Test answer sheets for grade 12 students who are just a few points from earning passing scores are routinely hand scored in addition to being computer scored. If there are any questions about missing or inaccurate data, the agency immediately investigates the situation and takes corrective action as may be appropriate. Use of the "safe harbor" further provides a safeguard for schools and districts that are making good progress with their students.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
9.2 What is the State's process for making valid AYP determinations?	State has established a process for public schools and LEAs to appeal an accountability decision.	State does not have a system for handling appeals of accountability decisions.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Schools and districts will be evaluated separately for reading and mathematics performance. A school or district could fail to meet its AYP requirements in reading one year, improve in reading the second year, and become deficient in mathematics the second year. If this occurs, the school or district will not be subjected to the requirements of Sections 200.32-200.34 of the NCLB rules because it has not had two consecutive years of poor performance in the same content area. If a school or district fails to meet its AYP requirements in the same content area (e.g., reading) for two consecutive years, it will be subjected to the requirements of Sections 200.3-200.34.

According to the requirements of NCLB, before a school can be identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the school district must provide the school with the opportunity to review the data on which such a decision will be made. Under the law, this responsibility is assigned to districts, not the state agency. The state agency will provide leadership and technical assistance to districts in the creation of appropriate processes whereby schools can appeal decisions about their AYP status.

With regard to its A+ school grading system, the state agency has a process whereby schools and districts can appeal their accountability results. The appeals process is initiated immediately upon receipt of the accountability findings, and the school or district must submit its counter evidence within thirty days. The agency reviews the data, clarifies anything that is not clear, and issues a final finding. Previous experience has shown that appeals are often based on (1) incorrect student identification, (2) inaccurate student classifications, and (3) missing student answer documents.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC, located at: www.flrules.org, for information about the A+ school grading system.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
9.3 **How** has the State planned for incorporating into its definition of AYP anticipated changes in assessments?	State has a plan to maintain continuity in AYP decisions necessary for validity through planned assessment changes, and other changes necessary to comply fully with NCLB.[11] State has a plan for including new public schools in the State Accountability System. State has a plan for periodically reviewing its State Accountability System, so that unforeseen changes can be quickly addressed.	State's transition plan interrupts annual determination of AYP. State does not have a plan for handling changes: e.g., to its assessment system, or the addition of new public schools.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS
As changes to the statewide assessment program are made, the new assessments will be incorporated into the NCLB system in accordance with law, including the identification of cut-scores and documentation of the assessment reliability and score validity. There would be no gap in the annual determination of AYP when the state transitions to new assessments. New public schools are opened annually, and their inclusion will present no difficulties for the overall system. Each school district will be responsible for the performance of students in any new schools, and each individual school will be included in the AYP system as soon as its student assessment data are available. Status information will be available as a result of the first administration of FCAT, and gain information will be available after the second administration.

[11] Several events may occur which necessitate such a plan. For example, (1) the State may need to include additional assessments in grades 3-8 by 2005-2006; (2) the State may revise content and/or academic achievement standards; (3) the State may need to recalculate the starting point with the addition of new assessments; or (4) the State may need to incorporate the graduation rate or other indicators into its State Accountability System. These events may require new calculations of validity and reliability.

PRINCIPLE 10. In order for a public school or LEA to make AYP, the State ensures that it assessed at least 95% of the students enrolled in each subgroup.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
10.1 What is the State's method for calculating participation rates in the State assessments for use in AYP determinations?	State has a procedure to determine the number of absent or untested students (by subgroup and aggregate). State has a procedure to determine the denominator (total enrollment) for the 95% calculation (by subgroup and aggregate). Public schools and LEAs are held accountable for reaching the 95% assessed goal.	The state does not have a procedure for determining the rate of students participating in statewide assessments. Public schools and LEAs are not held accountable for testing at least 95% of their students.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

In the school year 2001-02, Florida implemented a new procedure whereby each student is accounted for at the time the FCAT was administered. With the student identification number and the other information about the subgroup to which an individual student belongs, it will not be difficult to determine the participation rates for each school and district. The State is committed to the goal of assessing all eligible students.

The participation rate will be calculated by dividing the number of students actually taking the FCAT or alternate assessment by the number of students in membership at the time of the assessment.

In accordance with flexibility granted to states by USED, Florida plans to calculate participation rates for NCLB purposes by using two methods: (1) current-year counts for the number of students tested (numerator) and for the number of students in membership (denominator), and (2) current year counts combined with prior year counts for both the numerator and the denominator for a “two-year averaged participation rate.” The school’s participation rate applied in the AYP calculation would reflect the higher of the two percentages derived from the calculations described above.

CRITICAL ELEMENT	EXAMPLES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS	EXAMPLES OF *NOT* MEETING REQUIREMENTS
10.2 What is the State's policy for determining when the 95% assessed requirement should be applied?	State has a policy that implements the regulation regarding the use of 95% allowance when the group is statistically significant according to State rules.	State does not have a procedure for making this determination.

STATE RESPONSE AND STATE ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Department's policy is that 95% participation is required and reported as long as the group size is 30 or more eligible students. For 30 students, 95% is 29, so only one student could miss the assessment activity. For small schools with stable populations of less than 30 but more than 10, the 95% participation rate will be applied to the total school population and any subgroups with more than 10 members.

The participation rate will be calculated by dividing the number of students actually taking the FCAT or alternate assessment by the number of students in membership at the time of the assessment.

The n = 30 policy is in current State Board of Education policy in Rule 6A-1.09881, FAC.

Links to Supporting Evidence: See Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC, at www.flrules.org.

Appendix A

Required Data Elements for State Report Card

Section 1111(h)(1)(C) of No Child Left Behind requires the following information in the State Report Card.

1. Information, in the aggregate, on student achievement at each proficiency level on the State academic assessments (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged) except that such disaggregation shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a category is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

2. Information that provides a comparison between the actual achievement levels of each student subgroup and the State's annual measurable objectives for each such group of students on each of the academic assessments.

3. The percentage of students not tested (disaggregated by the student subgroups), except that such disaggregation shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a category is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

4. The most recent 2-year trend in student achievement in each subject area, and for each grade level, for the required assessments.

5. Aggregate information on any other indicators used by the State to determine the adequate yearly progress of students in achieving State academic achievement standards disaggregated by student subgroups.

6. Graduation rates for secondary school students disaggregated by student subgroups.

7. Information on the performance of local educational agencies in the State regarding making adequate yearly progress, including the number and name of each school identified for school improvement under section 1116.

8. The professional qualifications of teachers in the State, the percentage of such teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, and the percentage of classes in the State not taught by highly qualified teachers, in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low-poverty schools which (for this purpose) means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State.

No Child Left Behind State Report Card Indicators

Indicator	NCLB Required	Included on Florida's NCLB School Public Accountability Reports (http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/index.cfm)
Assessment Results by proficiency level (disaggregated).	√	Yes
Assessment results compared to Florida's annual objectives by (disaggregated).	√	Yes
Percentage of students not tested (disaggregated).	√	Yes
Assessment results compared to the most recent 2-year trend in each subject, for each grade.	√	Yes. Prior-year comparison is currently reported; 2-year trend data is available.
Results of Writing Assessments (disaggregated).	√	Yes
Graduation rates (disaggregated).	√	Yes
AYP, including schools designated for improvement.	√	Yes
The professional qualifications of teachers in the State, the percentage of such teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, and the percentage of classes in the State not taught by highly qualified teachers, in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low-poverty schools which (for this purpose) means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State.	√	Yes Reports include information on the professional qualifications of teachers (teachers by degree level), information on the percentage of teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, the percentage of classes taught by teachers who are in-field teachers, the percentage of classes taught by teachers who are out-of-field teachers, and the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers in the aggregate (for all schools), for high poverty schools, and for low poverty schools.
The most recent state National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results in reading and mathematics (disaggregated as applicable), with participation rates for students with disabilities and English language learners.	√	Yes (beginning with the 2008-09 reports)
Participation rates for science assessment, disaggregated by NCLB subgroup.	√	Yes (beginning with the 2008-09 reports)
High school dropout rate (annual rate for grades 9-12)		Provided as additional state, district, and school-level information, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender.
Number and percentage of teachers and staff new to the school		Provided as additional state, district, and school-level information.
Results of Kindergarten Readiness screening		Provided as additional school, district, and state-level information.
October membership		Provided as additional school, district, and state demographic information – disaggregated for all NCLB subgroups.

NCLB Report Card

Not later than the beginning of the 2002-03 school year and each year thereafter, school districts must disseminate the NCLB State and LEA Report Cards (via the NCLB School Public Accountability Reports) to all schools in the school district and parents in the reported school. To the extent practicable, the information should be made widely available through public means such as the Internet and reported in a language that the parents can understand.

The NCLB School Public Accountability Reports are posted on the Florida Department of Education's website at http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/index.cfm.

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Appendix B

Description of Florida's Assessment System

Section 1111 of H.R.-1 (NCLB) outlines the Congressional requirements for academic standards, assessments, and accountability system. These requirements will not be repeated herein but will be identified by Section numbers throughout the description of Florida's programs for the reader's cross-reference. [Note: As provided in Appendix K, Florida has received Full Approval with Recommendations of its standards and assessment system under the Standards and Assessments Peer Review.]

Challenging Academic Standards (s. 1111(b)(1))

Section 1008.22(3)(a), F.S. (available at www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm) requires the Commissioner of Education to bring to the State Board of Education sets of skills and competencies that will guide instruction in all of the public schools. The specific requirement is stated as follows:

> Submit to the State Board of Education a list that specifies student skills and competencies to which the goals for education specified in the state plan apply, including, but not limited to, reading, writing, science, and mathematics. The skills and competencies must include problem-solving and higher-order skills as appropriate and shall be known as the Sunshine State Standards as defined in Section 1000.21, F.S. The commissioner shall select such skills and competencies after receiving recommendations from educators, citizens, and members of the business community. The commissioner shall submit to the State Board of Education revisions to the list of student skills and competencies in order to maintain continuous progress toward improvements in student proficiency.

The development of Florida's content standards began with creation of curriculum frameworks as a resource and a guide for school districts. The frameworks included the Sunshine State Standards (Standards) that specify the challenging content expected of Florida students.

The development of Florida's Sunshine State Standards was discussed in the Title I Plan for 2001-02 and will not be repeated herein. Of importance, the Standards were developed with the involvement of practicing educators from across Florida, reviewed by various interested parties, including the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), reviewed by all school districts, and adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996.

Grade Level Expectations

The original design of the Standards did not include grade-by-grade expectations for all grade levels. As decisions were made to expand the statewide assessment program to include all grades 3-10 (see following discussion), it became necessary to create "grade level expectations."

Evaluation and Review of the Sunshine State Standards

In addition to the review of the emerging standards by McREL as previously described, the Sunshine State Standards were reviewed by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). AFT concluded that Florida's Standards are "clear, specific, and grounded in content." Here are selected statements descriptive of the mathematics, language arts, and science Standards:

Language Arts

> "The **English** standards are clear across all three levels, and the content at the elementary and middle levels is strengthened by the addition of the new *Expectations.* … In addition, the *Florida Writes!* assessment booklets clarify the writing forms at all three levels and include examples of student work that illustrate the quality and complexity of writing expected of students at each of the levels.

Mathematics

> "With the addition of the new *Grade Level Expectations,* the elementary and middle level **mathematics** standards are quite clear and specific. … At the high school level the standards are generally clear and specific, but at times, they are broad."

Science

> "The **science** standards are also clear, specific, and grounded in content. … The *Expectations* help clarify the standards for grades K-8 and illustrate how the standards might look in a classroom."

As recently as 2007, Education Week also conducted a review of the standards and accountability programs across the 50 states. Florida's program was rated "A" in the special publication *Quality Counts*.

The Standards represent what all students should know and be able to do as designated by the State Board of Education. The adoption of the Standards sets policy direction for instruction in Florida's schools. However, the Standards do not limit schools or school districts in what should be taught. Local school systems are completely free to supplement the instructional program with content and objectives beyond those included in the Standards.

Academic Assessments (Section 1111(b)(3))

As early as 1973, Florida showed an understanding of the importance of measuring student achievement, measuring other educational indicators, and reporting to the public. In 1971, Governor Reubin Askew appointed a Citizens' Committee on Education to study education and recommend ways to improve our schools. The report of this committee, *Improving Education in Florida*, included such concepts as citizen participation in the educational process, public reporting of information, state- and district-level assessment programs, and participation in the fledgling National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education, Tallahassee, FL, March 15, 1973).

In 1976, the Florida Legislature enacted an Educational Accountability Act that expanded the statewide assessment program to grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 and introduced the nation's first requirement that students pass a high school competency test to qualify for a regular diploma. The State developed and implemented these tests and subsequently faced two legal challenges. The high school competency test was challenged in *Debra P. v. Turlington* (474 F. Supp. 244 , MD Fla. 1979), and the basic skills tests were challenged in *Love v. Turlington* (1980). The State position prevailed in both situations with the courts ruling that competency tests can be required although the State must assure that the students are afforded due process. These landmark rulings established the precedent for court rulings in other states, including, most recently, a challenge to the TAAS system in Texas (*GI Forum et al v. TEA et al,* 2000).

The Legislature continued to modify and improve the statewide assessment requirements during the 1980s and even extended the concepts to the postsecondary level with creation of certain statewide testing requirements for community college and university students. However, it became apparent that the emphasis on minimum competencies for all students had its limitations. Average and above average students were not being challenged, and the general focus on "minimums" was not producing graduates who could perform in today's employment marketplace.

In the early 1990's, the Florida Legislature created the *Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability* and revised the structure of the state assessment program. Their work contributed to discussions about the importance of challenging educational standards and the need to move away from minimum competency tests and the traditional reliance on multiple-choice test questions. Growing out of the work of the Commission and the Department, a comprehensive assessment plan was adopted for 1996-97 and revised for 1997-98.

By 1992, the statewide assessment program developed and implemented a writing assessment program in grades 4, 8, and 10. In the mid-1990s, the State moved rapidly toward creation and adoption of challenging academic standards, the Sunshine State Standards, as previously described. The Standards and the associated curriculum frameworks defined challenging content in seven subject areas. In 1995, the state began the process of building a statewide assessment program to measure

the Sunshine State Standards. Contracts for development of the new assessment were issued in mid-1996, and the state began the creation of tests that would look much different from the older minimum competency tests.

In 1999, under Governor Jeb Bush, the program was expanded to all grades 3 – 10. The new assessment program would contain both criterion-referenced tests measuring state content and nationally norm-referenced tests. Performance items were to be included to the extent that was practical. Student, school, district, and statewide results would be reported and used as the basis for a school accountability program. See s. 1008.22, F.S., available at http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm.

Under the terms of the new statute, the existing High School Competency Test (HSCT), a minimum competency test required for graduation, would be phased out and students graduating in 2003 would have to earn a passing score on the new grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) to graduate. Students who were enrolled in 9th grade in the Fall of 1999 thus were given advance notification of their graduation requirement vis-à-vis the state test.

The current testing structure is shown in Figure 1 on the following page. Reading and mathematics are tested with both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests at eight grade levels, while writing and science are measured at three grade levels each. This combination permits the achievement of students to be measured against two different dimensions – the State's own challenging content as well as national norms. Although Figure 1 does not show it, Florida also voluntarily participated in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at both the national and state levels since 1969.

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test exceeds the minimum requirements of NCLB. Because the FCAT measures student achievement in reading and mathematics in all grades 3-10 and uses a coordinated vertical score scale, Florida has been able to track student achievement over time from one grade level to another since 2001. This generates powerful information with which to monitor progress as is required by NCLB.

For additional information, the reader may refer to the Department of Education's Assessment and Accountability Briefing Book at http://fcat.fldoe.org/pdf/BriefingBook07web.pdf, which contains a chronology of the development of the state assessment and accountability program from 1963 to the present.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Design

The statewide assessment test, known as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test or FCAT, measures the Sunshine State Standards and directly assesses specific benchmarks that are part of the Standards. Local school districts, of course, may have instructional objectives that supplement or go beyond the Sunshine State Standards, but the FCAT is not intended to measure such content.

Figure 1

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Design

	Sunshine State Standards Assessment Component			Norm-Referenced Testing Component
Grade	FCAT with Performance Tasks	FCAT without Performance Tasks	FCAT Writing+ Test	
3		Reading Mathematics		Reading, Mathematics
4	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Reading, Mathematics
5	Mathematics, Science	Reading		Reading, Mathematics
6		Reading Mathematics		Reading, Mathematics
7		Reading Mathematics		Reading, Mathematics
8	Reading, Mathematics, Science		Writing	Reading, Mathematics
9		Reading Mathematics		Reading, Mathematics
10	Reading, Mathematics		Writing	Reading, Mathematics
11	Science			

The FCAT does not measure everything that is found in the Sunshine State Standards and was not designed to do so. Consider, for example, that students are expected to be able to write a research paper, conduct a scientific experiment, or perform certain physical activities. Measuring such content in a standardized assessment program would be impractical and, therefore, must be omitted. Local schools and districts must determine the extent to which local assessments or classroom evaluation activities will be used to measure these areas.

The FCAT program design identifies those benchmarks that are candidates for inclusion on the test, but because of the practical limits of time, it is not possible to

include all content on any given test form. From year to year, adjustments are made in the content to cycle through the benchmarks while maintaining a core of content needed for stability and equating purposes.

Sample FCAT materials can be found on the Internet at the following location: http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatsmpl.asp. These documents include a count of the benchmarks that exist in the Sunshine State Standards and how they are measured with the FCAT.

FCAT Writing+ assesses the writing elements of focus, organization, support, and conventions, which are integral to the Sunshine State Standards writing benchmarks. It includes both multiple-choice questions and an essay to assess these elements.

FCAT Reading assesses content from two areas of the Reading and Language Arts Standards: (a) Constructs Meaning from Information Text and (b) Constructs Meaning from Literature.

FCAT Mathematics assesses content from five areas: (a) Number Sense, Concepts and Operations, (b) Measurement, (c) Geometry and Spatial Sense, (d) Algebraic Thinking, and (e) Data Analysis and Probability.

FCAT Science assesses content from eight content strands: (a) Nature of Matter, (b) Energy, (c) Force and Motion, (d) Processes that Shape the Earth, (e) Earth and Space, (f) Processes of Life, (g) How Living Things Interact with Their Environment, and (h) Nature of Science.

Scoring and Scaling

The FCAT assessment instruments include both multiple-choice items and performance items. The performance items are of three types: (1) extended response; (2) short response; and (3) gridded response items used only in mathematics and science. The tests are scored and scaled using 2- and 3-parameter IRT analyses. For more complete detail, refer to the FCAT Technical Reports available at http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatpub2.asp and the FCAT Handbook at http://fcat.fldoe.org/handbk/fcathandbook.asp.

The student scores for the reading and mathematics tests are reported on a score scale from 100 to 500 with additional information that indicates his/her achievement level.

The FCAT norm-referenced component, the Stanford Achievement Test Version 10 (SAT-10), generates a national percentile rank based on multiple-choice questions in reading comprehension and mathematics problem-solving.

When the FCAT was administered in March 2001, items were imbedded across grade levels to provide the basis for calculation of a developmental score scale linking all

eight grade level tests together. During June-August 2001, Harcourt Educational Measurement, with its subcontractor HumRRO, performed the analysis needed for the developmental scale. The developmental scale ranges from 0 to 3000 across grades 3 through 10.

The analysis was successful, and the developmental scale was used in the process of creating the FCAT achievement levels for the "new" grade levels that had been added to the FCAT system. The State Board of Education subsequently adopted an administrative rule incorporating the performance standards that defined the FCAT achievement levels in reading and mathematics, coordinated across the existing grade levels and the newly added grade levels. The achievement levels for the FCAT in grades 3-10 are discussed below.

Beginning with the test results from the March 2002 assessment, it is possible to measure a student's growth (gain) across years. Students received an Individual Student Report in May 2002 that revealed whether they gained, stayed the same, or declined in their academic proficiency in terms of the achievement levels. For example, if a student was in Level 3 in 4th grade in 2001 and is in Level 4 in 5th grade in 2002, he would receive a computer printed message stating that he had improved from one year to the next. Florida's A+ school grading system, described elsewhere, uses growth information as one factor in calculating a school's grade.

The Department prepared an Internet web site that permits parents and teachers to key enter a student's scores and generate a graph showing how the student progressed compared to the other students in the state. This analysis is done on the basis of the actual developmental scale score rather than on changes in the Achievement Level. Gain scores provide the educational system with a powerful tool to understand student progress.

Multiple Measures

The FCAT system is a multi-dimensional program and includes separately scored tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. It utilizes machine-scorable items as well as performance items. The grade ten test is used as a high school graduation requirement. The FCAT system also incorporates a national norm-referenced test in reading comprehension and mathematics problem-solving.

Higher-Order Thinking Skills

To understand how the new FCAT measures higher order thinking skills and understanding, reviewers should inspect the Sunshine State Standards, the benchmarks being measured, the item specifications, and the sample exercises. One will immediately see that students are not being asked simple, one-step, minimal skills items. They must think, analyze, and explain, answering questions that require original thought and multiple steps, cast in a framework that crosses all subject areas. In other words, the stimulus material in the mathematics test or the reading test can

come from any appropriate material from any content area (e.g., science). Reading skills and mathematics skills are thereby applied in other content domains.

Alignment of Assessment and Standards

The FCAT is not an off-the-shelf test product; it has been built to measure Florida's content standards and expectations from the first day.

In all cases, the FCAT items and performance exercises are written to match the Department's approved item specifications, which match the designated benchmarks. This linkage has been built into the system and is verified at every stage of the test development process. Both the specifications validation committee and the item validation committees reviewed the given materials in terms of the degree of match to the benchmarks.

The FCAT is developed with the assistance of subject area committees of Florida educators who teach or supervise mathematics, reading, writing, and science. Multiple groups of these practicing classroom teachers and curriculum supervisors assist in approving the overall test design, the benchmarks to be assessed, the test specifications, and the test items annually. Their work guarantees that the tests are aligned with the Standards. It also guarantees that consideration is given to the measurement of content areas not currently included in the test so that changes can be made in future editions of the tests.

The task of alignment is built into the test development system rather than determined by some outside source. In effect, since the initial materials are developed by the test contractor, the Florida-based committees are the outside reviewers and validators. Periodically, external alignment studies are conducted to confirm the judgments of Florida educators.

The FCAT is not a basic skills test, and the items include a range of difficulty. The test measures more complex skills and requires the students to think, solve, and explain.

Information about the Sunshine State Standards, the test specifications, sample items, and the FCAT are available on the Internet and through various printed publications. (See the assessment program's web site at http://www.fldoe.org/asp.) The FCAT item specifications are public documents and are available for use by all school districts, schools, and classroom teachers.

No Child Left Behind requires that the statewide assessment program:

- Specify what children are expected to know and be able to do;
- Contain coherent and rigorous content; and
- Encourage the teaching of advanced skills.

The Florida system meets each of these three criteria. As provided in Appendix K, Florida has received Full Approval with Recommendations of its standards and assessment system under the Standards and Assessment Peer Review.

Individual Student Assessment Reports

The FCAT program is a census-based assessment, although sampling procedures are used for some statistical analyses and for field-testing new items. This design provides complete data reports for each student, school, and district.

A publication titled Understanding FCAT Reports at (http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatUnderstandReports.asp) includes a description of various report forms. The FCAT Individual Student Report provides the usual identification information about the student and then describes the student's performance. The data show the student's total score for each subject area, compare the student against the established performance criteria, compare the student against statewide averages, show how the student performed in each subcontent area, and provide a measure of growth over a two-year period. Beginning with the 2000 assessment, a separate report includes how well the student performed on the national norm-referenced component (the SAT-9, which was supplanted by the SAT-10 in 2005). The individual reports include descriptive information for the parent written in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

Disaggregated Reports

Florida's student assessment program has a long history of providing disaggregated reports of student data. The current FCAT provides a variety of reports of data for subpopulations.

NCLB requires that assessment results be provided by school district, school, racial and ethnic group, English proficiency status, migrant status, gender, students with disabilities compared to non-disabled students, and economically disadvantaged compared to those not economically disadvantaged. Florida is committed to reporting these categories of data. However, it is not possible to produce them in the initial reports of FCAT data because several data files must be merged to generate some of the reports (e.g., economically disadvantaged). These reports are published after the initial releases of data. All required reporting subgroups and reporting specifications are provided. Disaggregated reports are generated for ALL schools, not just Title 1 schools.

Disaggregated data reports from the FCAT are provided directly to each school district as well as administrators within the Department of Education. Each school district provides further dissemination to school administrators, teachers and parents as appropriate. State and district school improvement personnel regularly utilize disaggregated data for planning and achievement monitoring purposes. The Department also maintains an FCAT results website to assist researchers and others

interested in disaggregated student achievement results at http://www.fcatresults.com/demog.

Technical Quality of the FCAT

The FCAT is designed to be reliable, valid, and free from bias. Considerable effort was devoted to and is being devoted to ensuring the technical quality of the assessment program. Ongoing efforts continue to ensure the technical quality annually.

Validity has many dimensions, but in its most fundamental sense, a test is not said to be valid but, instead, one speaks about whether an interpretation of an examinee's score is valid. This is, perhaps, a subtle distinction and not one that the average consumer clearly understands. This is why many people ask, "Is this test valid?"

Validity is not a single judgment but is a conclusion reached by looking at different pieces of evidence. At the same time, the developing agency, in this case the Florida Department of Education, bears a responsibility for stating the intent of the test and how the scores are to be used. The FCAT was designed to be used to measure whether or not students have demonstrated skills and proficiency to meet the State's academic standards. This does not preclude use of FCAT scores in some other ways such as to predict a future performance, but any such uses would have to be individually validated, as they were not part of the original test design.

With the above principle in mind, the development of FCAT is founded on content validity as indicated by the match between the test and the benchmarks the items purport to measure. In other words, the question is, "Do the items match the content that the State desires to measure?"

The content validity of FCAT was built into the developmental process from the very first steps. The item specifications were created by the test development contractor and reviewed, revised, and validated by committees of Florida classroom teachers and curriculum specialists. The overall test blueprint was likewise reviewed, revised, and validated by subject area content committees in Florida. During these reviews, the materials provided by the contractors were heavily edited; items are rejected or modified to make certain they meet the test item specifications. Reviewers use worksheets that track their acceptance or rejection of each item.

Items are pilot-tested on small groups of students and the students are interviewed after each sitting. This permits the test administrator to learn first-hand what difficulties the examinee has with the instructions, the items, or the materials. All test items are field-tested with large random samples of Florida students, accomplished by administering statewide field tests or by imbedding items within operational forms. All items in such field tests are subjected to statistical item analyses and further review by staff of the Department and the contractor. Such analyses routinely include 2- and 3-parameter IRT approaches, calculation of classic psychometric indices, dimensionality

studies, and DIF analyses. Content validity thus is established by a thorough and professional quality control process.

As the FCAT was initially developed in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10, data were gathered to compare student performance on the test with their performance on district norm-referenced tests and grades earned in courses. The data collected in 1998 from a sample of districts revealed a reasonably strong correlation between the Stanford 8 and FCAT scores. In 2000, the FCAT included use of the Stanford 9 (SAT-9) and, thus, the comparisons could be done by the Department as soon as the results were available. These studies generally show that the FCAT-SSS and the FCAT-NRT are correlated at about the 0.83 level. See the Assessment and Accountability Briefing Book at http://fcat.fldoe.org/pdf/BriefingBook07web.pdf for more information.

Comparing grades earned in courses is more problematic since teachers are known to assign grades for reasons other than academic proficiency. Furthermore, students have many different course selection possibilities and a simple correlation between FCAT and grade point average is often indistinct. In a few studies of the relationship between grades and FCAT scores conducted by the Department, the results generally show that low scores on the FCAT are associated with poor performance in courses and vice versa.

Another important dimension of interest is that of "instructional validity," the degree to which the content measured by the test is being taught. The State is obligated to consider instructional validity as one important dimension of the provision of due process to students. (See the findings of the *Debra P. v. Turlington* case.)

Florida districts and schools have been on notice for many years about the development and, later, the adoption of the Sunshine State Standards. The Standards were adopted by the State Board of Education after public hearings and much discussion and review. Various memoranda were sent to district superintendents and other educators about the importance of teaching the content defined by the Standards. Publications and other informational and educational tools have been developed to assist districts in adopting the Standards.

The State conducted an instructional validity study in the 2000-01 school year to guarantee that all students are having the opportunity to learn the desired content. This was particularly important because the 10th grade students of 2000-01 were the first class to be required to pass the FCAT for graduation. The results showed that Florida school districts have implemented the Sunshine State Standards into the instructional program.

The consequential aspects of validity require long-term review and consideration. Certain impressions are available at this time. First, the test results are improving over time. This may be interpreted as schools spending more time emphasizing the benchmarks being measured by FCAT. Since the test is secure and is not released and since the tested content is broad, rather than narrow as in older minimum competency days, it may be reasonably concluded that students are making good

progress toward the challenging standards adopted by the State Board of Education. Second, comments from instructional leaders and supervisors across the state articulate their beliefs that the FCAT, with its reach into higher content and its use of performance items, is moving the instructional program in the directions they desire. Third, there are always those who complain that the state assessment tests are unnecessary and are an undesirable intrusion into the daily classroom life. Teachers object that they have to "cease their normal activities and teach FCAT." The response to this is that "FCAT-prep" activities are not needed and are not desirable since the Sunshine State Standards are to be woven into the curriculum and instructional program in a seamless manner. In summary, based on immediate information, the program appears to be working as designed and results are being obtained.

Reliability of the FCAT is also a matter of psychometric concern and interest annually. The technical data describing the FCAT are shown in the FCAT Technical Reports at http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatpub2.asp. These reports include a description of the standard errors of measurement and the rater consistency for the performance items. In regard to the latter, while the performance scoring is being conducted, the Department receives daily statistical reports showing rater consistency for each performance item. Other data show the consistency of each individual rater. If a rater is not performing up to the established standards, the individual is retrained or discharged.

Florida places great emphasis on good test administration procedures, test security, and ethical behavior of students and test administrators. Readers should pay particular attention to the extracted pages from the 2007 FCAT Test Administrator's Manual, provided as an Attachment, which includes copies of test security statutes and description of accommodations. It is expected and demanded that Department staff, contractor staff, advisory committees, content committees, and district educators follow instructions relative to maintenance of test security. Procedures are in place to investigate any allegation of a breach in test security. This includes criminal prosecution and referrals to the Professional Practices Commission for action against the professional license. In addition, a paper on ethical behavior in the administration of assessment tests has been prepared and given wide circulation. See the Department's web site at http://www.fldoe.org/asp/pdf/ethics.pdf.

The Department's Office of Assessment convenes a committee of district test administrators each year to debrief following each annual assessment cycle. At the same time, feedback is gathered from participants concerning the program and problems occurring during test administration. Each test administrator with every school completes a feedback form to describe any difficulties with test administration and suggestions for improvement. This feedback is analyzed by the test support contractor and given to the Department.

In addition, the Office of Assessment statistical analysis staff provides intense quality control over the processing of test answer sheets by the test support contractor. There is an independent audit of each step of the contractor's work and approximately

40 separate computer programs are run against the various computer files provided by the contractor to identify errors of various types.

Equating and calibration analyses are separately run by two and sometimes three or four groups to triangulate results and confirm accuracy. No test results can be reported by the contractor until the quality control staff agrees that there are absolutely no errors present. This process requires about ten calendar days to complete. In addition, staff members are present at each site where answer documents are processed and performance items are being scored. They monitor activities, provide guidance, participate in training, and solve problems as they occur. This requires that staff members be on-site from four to six weeks in out-of-state locations.

The State has a formal and regular operation to maintain a high quality assessment program through analyses and input from various external sources. There are technical advisory committees, curriculum content committees, and external *ad hoc* committees of advisors. These groups either are convened to review and update the assessment instruments or they are convened to solve a particular problem or critique some aspect of the assessment. Between 500 and 700 Florida educators are involved in these processes annually. The test support and development contracts include thousands of dollars in resource money to provide travel and consultant fees where needed. Research projects are routinely commissioned with state universities to explore issues related to scaling, dimensionality, IRT questions, plans for vertical scaling, etc. The program and its tests are reviewed and evaluated every year and are in a constant process of improvement.

We believe that Florida's extensive quality control process excels among the various state assessment programs.

Additional explanatory information about the FCAT program including a chronology of development, sample items, test specifications, and other documents can be found on the web at the following address: http://fcat.fldoe.org. See also http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatpub2.asp and http://fcat.fldoe.org/handbk/fcathandbook.asp.

National Assessment of Educational Progress

Historically, Florida has voluntarily participated in the state-level administrations of the NAEP tests, with one exception, 2000, when the first version of FCAT was being implemented. In fact, Florida has statutes in place requiring participation of schools in this program (s. 1008.22[2], Florida Statutes).

Challenging Student Academic Achievement Standards

No Child Left Behind requires all states to adopt challenging academic achievement standards for the tests in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science. This has been accomplished in Florida for all state assessments, although, in Florida, such

standards are referred to as FCAT achievement levels. Their development and current status is described in the section below.

The Department of Education created policy definitions for five achievement levels that would be the basis for describing student performance on the FCAT. The definitions are shown below in Figure 2. Florida deliberately did not use value-laden words to describe its achievement levels because of the lessons learned in the *Debra P. v. Turlington* case. The original high school competency test was called a "functional literacy test," and so it was easy for someone to mistakenly assume that a failing score labeled a student as being "functionally illiterate." It has, therefore, been decided to use only numbers to identify the five different levels describing performance on the FCAT.

Figure 2

Definitions of the FCAT Achievement Levels

Level 5: Performance at this level indicates that the student has success with the most challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. A Level 5 student answers most of the test questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.

Level 4: Performance at this level indicates that the student has success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. A Level 4 student answers most of the questions correctly but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.

Level 3: Performance at this level indicates that the student has partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards but performance is inconsistent. A Level 3 student answers many of the questions correctly but is generally less successful with questions that are most challenging.

Level 2: Performance at this level indicates that the student has limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

Level 1: Performance at this level indicates that the student has little success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

To operationalize the five definitions, it was necessary to select performance standards or "cut-scores" for each level and have them adopted by the State Board of Education as administrative rule. The Department has, at this time, engaged in two separate standard-setting operations in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. The standards are included in State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422, FCAT Requirements (see https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?ID=6A-1.09422).

The first standard setting exercise was implemented for the initial tests in reading (grades 4, 8, and 10) and mathematics (grades 5, 8, and 11). In the fall of 1998, a statewide committee of practicing teachers and curriculum leaders was designated for the purpose of advising the State on the selection of achievement levels (i.e., performance standards). This committee of about 80 people was divided into elementary, middle, and senior high working groups. They were convened at a location near Tampa, Florida, for a four-day working session.

The participants engaged in a five-step process built around the "bookmark" standard-setting procedure suggested by CTB/McGraw-Hill, the first FCAT development contractor. Participants were given workbooks containing over 100 items that represented the range of difficulty of FCAT items. At the earliest stage, each person reviewed the items and selected the location where a "bookmark" or standard was to be defined. At each subsequent stage, the participant was provided more information and opportunity for discussion. Five votes were taken before the conclusion of the meeting.

Department staff then took the proposals for achievement levels to other groups for review. Three committees were convened – one of business leaders, one of citizens, and one of educators other than classroom teachers and curriculum specialists. Further reviews were conducted within the agency, and in December 1998, the State Board of Education adopted cut-scores for tested grades and subjects.

In the fall of 2001, it was necessary for the Department to initiate development of recommendations for achievement levels for the new grades in 3-10 that had been added to the assessment program. With the assistance of the new test development contractor, Harcourt Educational Measurement, the Department again implemented a process involving committees of teachers, curriculum leaders, business leaders, parents, and citizens. The "bookmark procedure" was used as in 1998; however, it was possible to add a new dimension to the standard-setting procedure since the Department had successfully completed a vertical scaling analysis for the assessment tests. Since the 100-500 FCAT scale could be converted to a continuous developmental scale spanning grades 3-10, it was possible for corrections to be made in the specification of the cut-scores to smooth out the achievement levels and make them more consistent across the grades.

In December 2001, the State Board of Education considered the issue of passing standards for the new grade levels. The Board adopted the recommended cut-scores. Tables 1-2 display FCAT developmental scale scores and regular FCAT scale scores defining FCAT achievement levels as adopted by the Board.

Table 1

FCAT Reading , Grades 3-10

FCAT Reading Developmental Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	86 - 1045	1046 - 1197	1198 - 1488	1489 - 1865	1866 - 2514
4	295 - 1314	1315 - 1455	1456 - 1689	1690 - 1964	1965 - 2638
5	474 - 1341	1342 - 1509	1510 - 1761	1762 - 2058	2059 - 2713
6	539 - 1449	1450 - 1621	1622 - 1859	1860 - 2125	2126 - 2758
7	671 - 1541	1542 - 1714	1715 - 1944	1945 - 2180	2181 - 2767
8	886 - 1695	1696 - 1881	1882 - 2072	2073 - 2281	2282 - 2790
9	772 - 1771	1772 - 1971	1972 - 2145	2146 - 2297	2298 - 2943
10	844 - 1851	1852 - 2067	2068 - 2218	2219 - 2310	2311 - 3008
FCAT Reading Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	100 - 258	259 - 283	284 - 331	332 - 393	394 - 500
4	100 - 274	275 - 298	299 - 338	339 - 385	386 - 500
5	100 - 255	256 - 285	286 - 330	331 - 383	384 - 500
6	100 - 264	265 - 295	296 - 338	339 - 386	387 - 500
7	100 - 266	267 - 299	300 - 343	344 - 388	389 - 500
8	100 - 270	271 - 309	310 - 349	350 - 393	394 - 500
9	100 - 284	285 - 321	322 - 353	354 - 381	382 - 500
10	100 - 286	287 - 326	327 - 354	355 - 371	372 - 500

Table 2

FCAT Mathematics, Grades 3-10

FCAT Mathematics Developmental Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	375 - 1078	1079 - 1268	1269 - 1508	1509 - 1749	1750 - 2225
4	581 - 1276	1277 - 1443	1444 - 1657	1658 - 1862	1863 - 2330
5	569 - 1451	1452 - 1631	1632 - 1768	1769 - 1956	1957 - 2456
6	770 - 1553	1554 - 1691	1692 - 1859	1860 - 2018	2019 - 2492
7	958 - 1660	1661 - 1785	1786 - 1938	1939 - 2079	2080 - 2572
8	1025 - 1732	1733 - 1850	1851 - 1997	1998 - 2091	2092 - 2605
9	1238 - 1781	1782 - 1900	1901 - 2022	2023 - 2141	2142 - 2596
10	1068 - 1831	1832 - 1946	1947 - 2049	2050 - 2192	2193 - 2709
FCAT Mathematics Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	100 - 252	253 - 293	294 - 345	346 - 397	398 - 500
4	100 - 259	260 - 297	298 - 346	347 - 393	394 - 500
5	100 - 287	288 - 325	326 - 354	355 - 394	395 - 500
6	100 - 282	283 - 314	315 - 353	354 - 390	391 - 500
7	100 - 274	275 - 305	306 - 343	344 - 378	379 - 500
8	100 - 279	280 - 309	310 - 346	347 - 370	371 - 500
9	100 - 260	261 - 295	296 - 331	332 - 366	367 - 500
10	100 - 286	287 - 314	315 - 339	340 - 374	375 - 500

The grade 10 FCAT passing scores adopted by the State Board of Education in December 2001 specified two levels. For students tested in March and October 2001, the passing scores would be 287 in reading and 295 in mathematics. Beginning in March 2002, all 10th graders who are initially taking the FCAT for graduation were required to earn scores of 300 in reading and mathematics to meet requirements for high school graduation with a standard diploma. The Commissioner of Education is required to review FCAT performance data after each test administration and make a recommendation about any adjustments in the passing scores.

The Department began work on the FCAT Science achievement levels for grades 5, 8, and 11, in late 2004. Again, the Department implemented the "bookmark procedure" with the involvement of teachers, curriculum leaders, business leaders, parents, and citizens. Meetings with stakeholder groups were held in 2005, with the recommendations presented to the State Board of Education for final approval in February 2006. Table 3 provides the scale scores defining the FCAT achievement levels in Science adopted by the Board. The Spring 2006 FCAT administration marked the first time FCAT SSS Science scores were reported by achievement levels.

Table 3

FCAT Science, Grades 5, 8, and 11

FCAT Science Scale Scores					
Grade	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**
5	100 - 272	273 - 322	323 - 376	377 - 416	417 - 500
8	100 - 269	270 - 324	325 - 386	387 - 431	432 - 500
11	100 - 278	279 - 323	324 - 379	380 - 424	425 - 500

In the fall of 2006, the Department began work on setting the FCAT Writing+ achievement levels for grades 4, 8, and 10, as well as the graduation standard. Committees of teachers, curriculum leaders, business leaders, parents, and citizens used the "body of work" procedure to provide recommended cut points for the achievement levels and for the graduation standard. After receiving public input from Florida's stakeholder groups, the State Board of Education approved the achievement levels on January 16, 2007. The approved achievement levels are provided in Table 4 below. The Spring 2007 FCAT administration marked the first time FCAT SSS Writing+ performance was reported by achievement levels based on scale scores.

Table 4

FCAT Writing+, Grades 4, 8, and 10

FCAT Writing+ Scale Scores					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	100-239	240-289	290-364	365-426	427-500
8	100-249	250-298	299-355	356-415	416-500
10	100-249	250-299	300-341	342-402	403-500

For FCAT Writing+, students receive a whole-test score between 100 and 500 as well as a sub-score on a rubric of one to six for the essay.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) utilizes the labels of "Advanced," "Proficient," and "Basic." There has been considerable discussion about these labels and whether another category of "Below Basic" should be added. In these discussions, Florida has reviewed both the percentage of students attaining various achievement levels for grades 4 and 8 in reading and mathematics (see http://www.fldoe.org/asp/naep/naep2007.asp for the most recent results) and the percentage of students in each of the five achievement levels of FCAT (see http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcatscor.asp for the most recent results).

Based on this research, and in accordance with Florida statutes, the Commissioner of Education must designate an FCAT achievement level that represents inadequate performance. This has been done, and Level 1 was so designated. For purposes of implementing *No Child Left Behind*, we designate the following relationships shown in Table 5 between Florida's Achievement levels and the labels specified by *NCLB*:

Table 5

Specification of *NCLB* Achievement Standards

FCAT Achievement Levels	No Child Left Behind Achievement Standards
4-5	Above Proficient
3	Proficient
1-2	Below Proficient

Levels 1 and 2 will be considered to be "Below Proficient." FCAT Level 3 will be considered "Proficient," and Levels 4 and 5 will be "Above Proficient." However, the labels used in *No Child Left Behind* **will not be used** in Florida's FCAT reports and publications in order to avoid inadvertent misinterpretations of the labels.

FCAT Inclusion Policies and Procedures

Federal requirements in NCLB clearly expect states to develop ways to include all students in the academic assessment program. Florida accepts this philosophic orientation and has taken steps to foster such inclusion. Indeed, this orientation can be seen in several Department publications. Our emphasis is one of inclusion both in the instructional programs and the student assessment programs.

The FCAT Test Administrator's Manual reinforces this theme by stating, "In general, all students enrolled in the grade levels being tested should participate in the FCAT administration. Students must be administered the test for the grade level in which they are enrolled." The Manual also says that English language learners are expected to be tested, as are students with disabilities. Pages from the 2007 manual have been extracted and provided as an attachment.

The following information describes Florida's policies with regard to the testing of students with disabilities and English language learners.

Students with Disabilities

Some students need accommodations to enable them to adequately access the assessment tests. The FCAT Test Administrator's Manual contains specific instructions on determining the allowable accommodations for ESE students. Each such decision must be made on an individual basis. The student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the beginning point for such decisions, although the Department of Education provides school officials with guidelines and parameters for making these decisions. The Department's current policy would not allow an accommodation that threatened the security of the test (e.g., student taking the test at home without supervision) or changed the construct being measured (e.g., reading the reading test).

In certain circumstances, a student may be excluded from taking the FCAT. If a student is excluded, the IEP must document why the assessment is not appropriate and what alternate assessment procedure will be used.

State Board of Education rule 6A-1.09431 specifies policies and procedures for special exemption from the required high school graduation test. This rule describes the conditions under which a student can be given an exemption from the test as the vehicle for demonstration of proficiency in reading and mathematics required for award of a diploma and may be seen at https://www.flrules.org/default.asp.

To make certain the Department's policies and procedures relative to accommodations for test administration are current and appropriate, Governor Jeb Bush issued Executive Order #02-108 on April 3, 2002, to convene a special committee to study the matter and make recommendations for changes and improvements. The committee's

recommendations were available in the fall of 2002 and were addressed by the Department. For current information on the participation rates for students with disabilities, see the Databook at http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp.

English Language Learners

In Florida, there are 215,777 students classified as English language learners and being served. These students speak 207 different languages and come from 257 different countries. The four largest language groups are Spanish, Haitian-Creole, French and Portuguese. See 2000-2001 ESOL Annual Report, State Synopsis for a listing of all native languages represented in Florida's K-12 educational system in 2000-01, available via the Internet at http://www.fldoe.org/aala/0001esol/default.asp.

As described in Principle 5.4, all ELLs are to be assessed. An ELL may be exempted only when he/she has been receiving services in a program operated in accordance with an approved ESOL program for 12 months or less and a majority decision is made by an ELL committee, on an individual student basis, to exempt him/her. In this context, the term "ELL committee" is defined in Rule 6A-6.0902, F.A.C., as follows:

> "...LEP [ELL] committee means a group composed of ESOL teachers and home language teachers, and an administrator or designee plus guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists or other educators as appropriate for the situation. The parent(s) would also be invited to attend any committee meetings."

The ELL committee, in making its decision, shall consider the following factors: (1) level of mastery of basic competencies and skills in English and home language according to appropriate local, state and national criterion-referenced standards; (2) grades from the current or previous years; or (3) other test results. (See Rule 6A-1.09432, FAC, available via the Internet at https://www.flrules.org.)

Rule 6A-6.09091, F.A.C., Accommodations of the Statewide Assessment Program Instruments and Procedures for Limited English Proficient Students, ensures accommodations in the administration of the FCAT to LEP students. (See Rule 6A-6.09091, FAC, available at https://www.flrules.org.) The FCAT Administration Manual contains the complete description of the accommodations for ELLs.

For school year 2002-2003, assessment results for all ELLs will be collected, analyzed and reported. The scores of ELLs participating in FCAT and those assessed by other methods shall be used in the calculation of AYP. The scores for ELLs who did not participate in the FCAT will be collected and reported by the number scoring proficient and those not scoring proficient.

A comprehensive plan has been developed for both assessment of academic progress and English language proficiency. The June 2002 FDOE submission of the NCLB Consolidated Application describes in detail the process and reporting of results for English language proficiency and for academic achievement of all ELLs.

Implementation of the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA)

Florida's State Board of Education (SBE) adopted two rules on April 15, 2008, regarding the assessment of ELL students. State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0903, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), establishes the standards for determining whether ELLs have attained sufficient English proficiency to exit the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The standards include cut scores on the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA). SBE Rule 6A-6.0902, F.A.C., establishes the English language proficiency levels for Oral Skills (listening and speaking), Reading, and Writing on the CELLA for use in the annual assessment of ELL students. Florida has finalized the annual measurable achievement objective (AMAO) definitions which will include the use of both CELLA and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) data.

AMAOs for English Language Learners Assessed on the CELLA

AMAO 1 (**Progress** toward English Language Acquisition): Percent of K-12 students making gains (moving up at least one proficiency level or maintaining a proficient level) in each of the CELLA three domains: Listening/Speaking, Writing, and Reading. All English Language Learners that have been assessed on CELLA in the current and prior year are included in the AMAO 1 calculation.

	Listening/Speaking (K-12)	Writing (K-12)	Reading (K-12)
2008-09	70	54	56
2009-10	72	56	58
2010-11	74	58	60
2011-12	75	59	61
2012-13	77	61	63
2013-14	79	63	65

AMAO 2 (English Language Acquisition **Proficiency**): Percent of each grade cluster of students (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) who score proficient in all three of the CELLA domains: Listening/Speaking, Writing, and Reading.

Grades K-2

Years in ESOL	More than 3 Years in ESOL
2008-09	23
2009-10	24
2010-11	26
2011-12	27
2012-13	29
2013-14	30

Grades 3-5

Years in ESOL	More than 3 Years in ESOL
2008-09	8
2009-10	11
2010-11	14
2011-12	16
2012-13	19
2013-14	22

AMAO2 (continued)

Grades 6-8

Years in ESOL	More than 3 Years in ESOL
2008-09	7
2009-10	10
2010-11	13
2011-12	17
2012-13	20
2013-14	23

Grades 9-12

Years in ESOL	More than 3 Years in ESOL
2008-09	7
2009-10	9
2010-11	11
2011-12	14
2012-13	16
2013-14	18

AMAO 3: English Language Learners meeting AYP targets in reading and mathematics:

For AYP reporting, the AMAOs for ELLs in reading and math will be the same as for all other subgroups included in AYP reporting. These annual objectives are described in Appendix D (pp. 95-96).

The ELL PK-12 category in each student record is used to define the ELL subgroup for the purposes of AYP. Students who are currently being served in an ESOL program as well as students who have attained English proficiency for up to two years after exiting the ESOL program are included in the ELL subgroup. These are students classified as "LY" or “LF” on their student record prior to testing.

Exit Criteria for ELLs from ESOL Programs

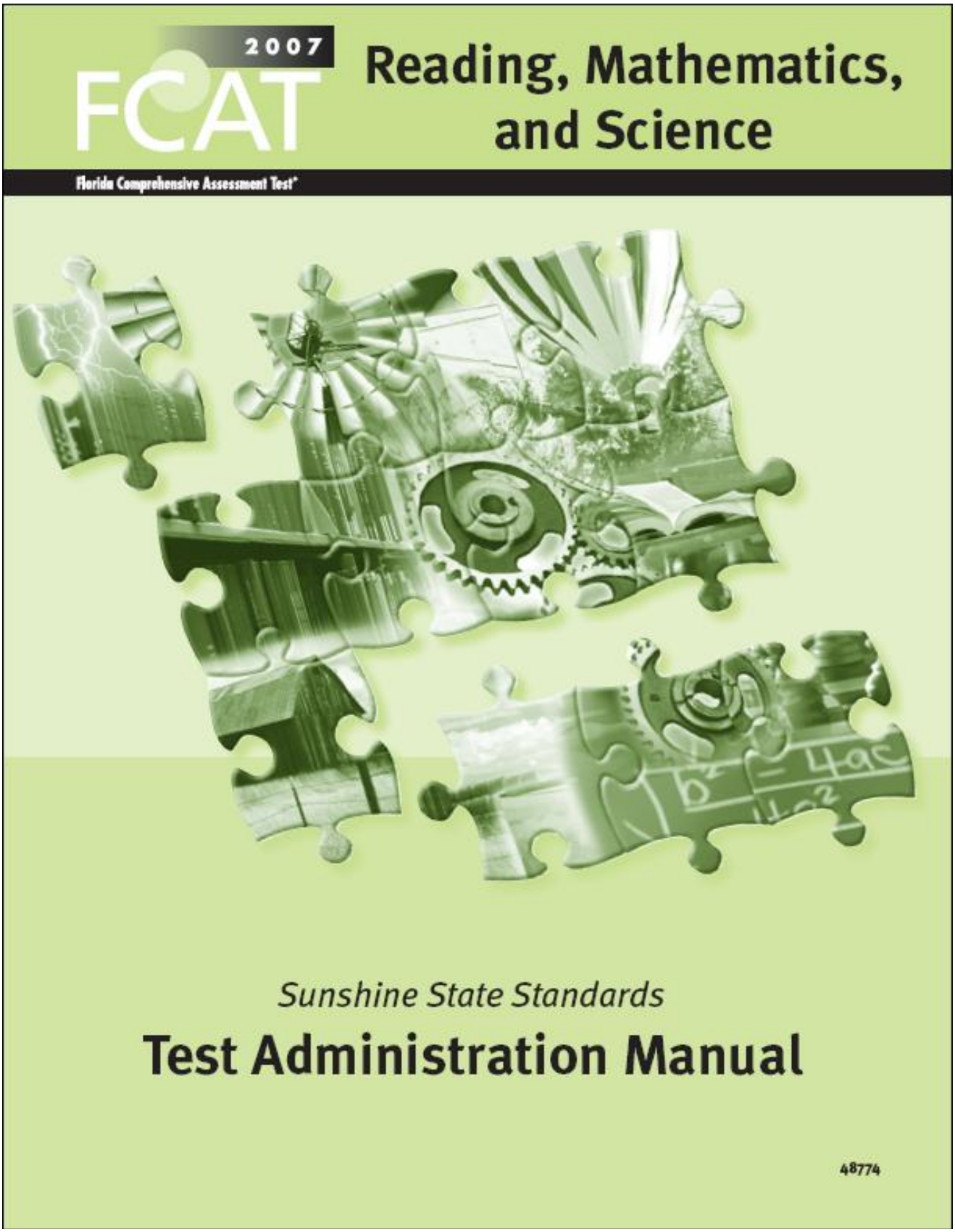
Statewide standards for student exit from ESOL programs are described in detail in Florida Administrative Code Rule 6A-6.0903, and require that students must meet at least two of the following criteria for exit:

- A minimum composite grade level score on the CELLA examination as defined in rule 6A-6.0903.
- A score at or above the proficient level on an SEA approved listening and speaking assessment or above the publisher’s cut score on an aural and oral assessment. For students in grades 3 through 12, the second measure must be an assessment in reading and writing.
- A score at or above the 33rd percentile on the reading comprehension and writing or language usage subtests on a nationally norm referenced test. The second measure shall be a listening and speaking or aural and oral assessment.
- An FCAT score at Level 3 or higher (or equivalent developmental scale score) in reading. The second measure shall be an assessment in listening and speaking or aural and oral, and writing.
- An FCAT score of 3.0 or higher on the writing subtest. The second measure shall be an assessment in listening and speaking or aural and oral, and reading.

See Appendix L (p. 123) for more specific information on CELLA proficiency scores.

Test Accommodations

Test accommodations for ELLs and students with disabilities, as well as procedures relating to test security, are described in detail on the following pages excerpted from the FCAT Sunshine State Standards Test Administration Manual.


2007
FCAT
Reading, Mathematics, and Science
Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®
Sunshine State Standards
Test Administration Manual
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Appendix A

Test Accommodations

Test Accommodations

This appendix lists accommodations to the testing procedures that are permissible for administering the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The accommodations are divided into three sections: accommodations for students with disabilities with current IEPs, accommodations for students with current 504 plans, and accommodations for limited English proficient (ELLs) students. Care must be taken to provide a student with only the accommodations permitted for that student. In addition, students with disabilities must be provided the opportunity to participate in practice activities for the FCAT with appropriate accommodations to the same degree as their non-disabled peers.

Determination of appropriate accommodations in assessment situations for students with disabilities shall be based on the individual needs of each student. Decisions on accommodations shall be made by the IEP or 504 team and recorded on the IEP or 504 plan. Students with disabilities should be oriented to any test situation through test-taking instruction designed to familiarize them with testing format and procedures. This orientation should take place near the time of testing. Guidelines recommended for making accommodation decisions include:

1. Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do.
2. Accommodations should not provide the student with an unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of a test; accommodations must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test.
3. Accommodations must be the same or nearly the same as those needed and used by the student in completing classroom instruction and assessment activities.
4. Accommodations must be necessary for enabling the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery.

For further information, please refer to the following technical assistance documents: *Planning FCAT Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* (product #309603), *Descriptions of FCAT Accommodations* (product #311930), and the *IEP Team's Guide to FCAT Accommodations* (product #312494). These documents are available from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services Clearinghouse Information Center at (850) 245-0477 or may be downloaded from the following website: www.firn.edu/doe/bin00014/fcatasd.htm.

In 2003, each district testing coordinator, ESE director, and FDLRS center received the FCAT Accommodations Tool Kit. This kit contained the following items:

- color transparencies or overlays
- reading stand
- reading guide
- page tabs
- highlighter tape
- alternative keyboard
- digital voice or tape recorder
- raised line, shaded line, and color-coded paper
- talking calculator
- math grids
- adapted grip ruler
- writing guides or templates
- visual magnifier

Materials for additional tool kits may be ordered from:

Onion Mountain Technology, Inc.
74 Sextons Hollow Road
Canton, CT 06019-2102
Tel (860) 693-2683
Fax (860) 693-9433
http://www.onionmountaintech.com

FCAT Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), as amended February 1984, permits test accommodations for any student with a disability who has a current IEP. In addition to the accommodations listed in the rule, expanded accommodations were approved by the State Board of Education on January 21, 2003. These expanded accommodations were in response to issues raised regarding the provision of reasonable accommodations on the FCAT. Listed below are the allowable accommodations on the FCAT for students with disabilities.

Unique Accommodations

In accordance with Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC, school districts may request unique accommodations for individual students with disabilities. Unique accommodations usually involve alterations of existing test materials. In addition, they must be regularly used by the student for classroom instruction and must not alter the underlying content of the assessment. Each unique accommodation must be approved by the Commissioner of Education prior to its use. Written requests for unique accommodations must be submitted by using the *FCAT Unique Accommodation Request Form*. Accommodation requests must be reviewed by district level staff before being sent to the FDOE. In addition, the signatures of both the District ESE Coordinator and the District Coordinator of Assessment are required.

Documenting Test Accommodations

The category of accommodations provided for each test session must be gridded on the student grid sheet. More than one category may be indicated for a student. Each category should be gridded only if the student received an allowable accommodation in that category on the FCAT.

Allowable Accommodations on the FCAT for Students With Disabilities

Examples of unique accommodations are identified by an asterisk (*). Transcription of student responses must be completed at the school/district level and the answer document submitted for scoring; however, large print and braille materials **must** be transcribed by contractor staff only.

A. Presentation:

- Students may use magnification devices (e.g., CCTV, reading loops, hand-held magnifiers).
- The district test coordinators may request large print versions.
- A braille version may be requested for a student who uses braille materials. Some test items may be altered in format for braille versions of the test as authorized by the Department. Test items that have no application for the braille reader will be deleted as authorized by the Department. Student performance standards that cannot be assessed in the braille format will be deleted according to the requirements of Section 1008.22, Florida Statutes.
- A student may use means to maintain or enhance visual attention to test items.

- A student may be provided with a copy of directions from the FCAT administration script that is read by the teacher.
- Portions of the test may be masked to direct attention to uncovered item(s).
- Colored transparencies/overlays may be used.
- Papers may be secured to work area if no adhesives are used on the scannable document. A scannable document may be secured with adhesives and responses transferred to another document.
- Spacing may be increased between test items.*
- Fewer items may be placed on each page.*
- Positioning tools, such as a reading stand, may be used.
- A student may highlight key words or phrases in directions, items, and passages.

  If a student uses a highlighter regularly in classroom instruction and it is noted on the IEP, a student may highlight key words and phrases in the directions, items, and passages. The use of a highlighter must be closely monitored. The use of a highlighter on a TO BE SCORED document can negatively impact a student's score. If a highlighter is used at grade levels at which the test items and answers are in the same book, the answers must be transcribed into a separate book. At all other grade levels, the answer documents must be carefully monitored for stray marks. If any highlighting marks are found on an answer document, it must be transcribed.
- Signed or oral presentation may be provided for all directions and items other than reading passages and items. Reading passages and items must be read by the student through visual or tactile means. On the reading test, only directions can be read for the student; passages, test items, and answer choices must not be read.
- Test directions may be repeated, clarified, or summarized.
- A student may be allowed to demonstrate understanding of directions to ensure understanding (i.e., repeating or paraphrasing).
- A student may use text-to-speech technology to communicate directions and items other than reading items.
- Verbal encouragement (e.g., "keep working," "make sure to answer every question") may be provided; however, it may not be used to cue a student regarding correct/incorrect responses.
- White noise (sound machines) may be used to reduce auditory distractions.

Other considerations for **Presentation** accommodations when administering the FCAT to students with disabilities include:

- **Writing Prompt and Items:** The test administrator may sign or orally present the writing prompt (topic), items, and answer choices on the writing test. When reading answer choices, be very careful not to use voice inflection that might lead a student to the correct/incorrect responses.
- **Mathematics and Science Items:** The test administrator may sign or read all mathematics and science items and answer choices. These test items may not be reworded, summarized, or simplified. When reading answer choices, be very careful not to use voice inflection that might lead a student to the correct/incorrect responses.

B. Responding:

- The student may use varied methods to respond to the test, including written, signed, and verbal responses. Written responses may include the use of mechanical and electronic devices, such as the Graphic Aid for Mathematics or the geoboard. A test administrator or proctor may transcribe student responses to the format required by the test, except where noted in the large print and braille instructions. Recorded responses must accurately reflect the response of the student, without addition or edification by the test administrator or proctor.
- A student may dictate responses to a proctor.
- A student may use speech-to-text technology to indicate answers.

- A student may use computer switch to indicate answers.
- A student may use computer/alternative keyboard to indicate answers.
- A student may use pointing device to indicate answers.
- A student may use other communication devices to indicate answers.
- A student may enter answers directly into a test book (would require that responses are then transcribed by school/district personnel).
- A student may sign responses to an interpreter.
- A student may dictate responses into a tape recorder (would require that responses are then transcribed by school/district personnel and original tape destroyed after testing is completed). This does **not** apply to students using large print or braille materials that will be transcribed by contractor staff.
- A student may use special paper such as raised line, shaded line, or color-coded for long- or short-response items (would require that responses are then transcribed by school/district personnel).
- A student may use mathematics grids/guides to organize mathematical computation.
- A student may use writing guides to produce legible answers.
- Test administrators may check periodically to be sure that students are marking in the correct spaces.
- A student with visual impairments may use an abacus at all grade levels.

Other considerations for **Responding** accommodations when administering the FCAT to students with disabilities include:

- If the student is providing **typed** responses, the responses must be transcribed by appropriate school personnel into the answer document assigned to the student. Students must be told the amount of space in which the response must be transcribed. Student responses **must not** be edited or changed in any way when transcribed. In the event that a student provides a typed response in a native language, the response must be transcribed exactly as written by the student. The transcriber **must not** translate the response. A transcribed response must fit in the answer space provided in a regular print answer document and may not continue on to additional pages.
- If the student is providing a response on **braille paper** or in a **large print** answer document, the response will be transcribed by the test administration contractor. The braille or large print answer documents containing the original student work must be returned according to the Large Print and Braille Materials Instructions, pages 243–267. For the prompt portion, the student should be informed of the amount of space into which the response must be transcribed.
- If a student is providing oral responses or signed responses, the student must be told the amount of space in which the response must be written. All responses must be written by the appropriate school personnel in the space provided on a regular print answer document. These responses must be made without any edits, changes, or corrections to the student's responses. If a student gives an oral response, the proctor must ask the student to indicate punctuation and the spelling of words that the proctor is not completely certain that the child can spell (i.e., words not on the Dolch word list for the grade level tested). The student may review the written material and direct the proctor on editing.
- Devices designed to check grammar or spelling must not be used.
- If the student types responses on a computer or records responses in some other manner at the school, all copies must be erased or destroyed after the responses have been transcribed into a regular print answer document by school/district personnel.
- For mathematics tests, calculators are allowed for all students in Grades 7 through 10. For Grades 3 through 6, a calculator may not be used even as an accommodation for students with disabilities. For the science test, calculators are allowed for students in Grades 8 and 11 only. Note that an abacus, the Graphic Aid for Mathematics, and a geoboard may be used at all grade levels for students with visual impairments. These devices are approved substitutes for paper and pencil computation.

C. Scheduling:

- A student may be administered a test during several brief sessions, allowing frequent breaks during the testing sessions, within specifications of the test administration manual.
- A student may use a specific time of the day for specific sessions.
- A student may be provided additional time for the administration of the test.
- A student must complete testing in one session before continuing to the next session. At no time is it appropriate to instruct a student to move on to a new session before the allotted time and then return to an earlier session.

Other considerations for **Scheduling** accommodations when administering the FCAT to students with disabilities include:

- At Grades 4, 8, and 10, the session containing the Writing+ prompt should be completed within one school day (applies only to the portion of the test containing the prompt).
- In limited cases, a student with a disability(s) may not be able to complete a reading, mathematics, or science session OR one of the multiple-choice sessions of the Writing+ test in one day. In these cases, the student may be tested over more than one day in a session, as long as the following conditions are maintained to ensure the validity of the test administration across days:
  - The student may not be permitted to change his or her responses to items that were completed on a previous day.
  - The test administrator must closely supervise the administration of the test on an individual basis to ensure that answers from the previous day are not changed and that the student does not preview parts of the test to be answered the following day.
  - The test administrator must secure all test documents without student answers at the end of each testing day to prevent the student from looking at any portion of the book completed on a previous day. The test administrator must use a paper clip or binder clip to secure the answer documents and prevent the student from reviewing his or her answers from the previous day. ALL CLIPS MUST BE REMOVED AFTER TESTING. Staples or tape should NOT be used on books containing student answers.

D. Setting:

- A student may be administered a test individually or in a small group setting.
- A student may use special lighting.
- A student may use adaptive or special furniture.
- Special acoustics, such as FM systems, may be used to enhance sound or special rooms may be used to decrease auditory distractions.
- Increase or decrease the opportunity for movement.
- Reduce stimuli (e.g., limit the number of items on desk).
- Other specialized settings.*
- Administer the test in a familiar place such as the home with a test proctor present and/or by a familiar person who has been provided with appropriate training on the administration of the test. Procedures for test security must also be followed and precautions taken in order to ensure that the test remains secure.

E. Assistive Devices:

- Visual magnification and auditory amplification devices may be used. For students with visual impairments, an abacus and the Graphic Aid for Mathematics may be used.
- Manipulative materials, including, but not limited to, counters, base-10 blocks, clock faces, or geometric shapes are not allowed to be used by any student during the administration of the FCAT.
  - Real coins may be used.

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- Technology may be used without accessing spelling or grammar-checking applications for any assessment involving the writing process and without using speech output programs for reading items assessed. Other assistive technology typically used by the student in classroom instruction may be used provided the purpose of the testing is not violated. Implementation of assistive devices must ensure that test responses are the independent work of the student.
- Students who use sign language as their primary means of communication may use an English/sign or sign/English translation dictionary. The dictionary must be similar to one used in the instructional setting and may **not** contain definitions of words. The dictionary may contain the sign picture, the word, synonyms, and an index.

Test Accommodations for Students With Disabilities as Defined by Section 504

To assure that all eligible students in our public education system are provided necessary related aids, services, or accommodations during the administration of the FCAT, districts will ensure that students with disabilities as defined by Section 504 be considered for and, if appropriate, provided the same test accommodations listed on the previous pages.

Those students who are not classified as exceptional students with active IEPs may qualify as "handicapped persons" as defined in Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC, which defines a "handicapped person" as

(6) Any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

(a) Physical or mental impairment.

1. Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organ; cardiovascular; reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary, hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or

2. Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

(b) Major life activities. Functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

(c) Has a record of such an impairment. Has a history of, or has been incorrectly classified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(d) Is regarded as having such an impairment.

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by an institution as constituting such a limitation;

2. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others and, therefore, is treated by an institution as having such an impairment.

Procedures for determining eligibility under these requirements are given in the publication "*District Guide for Meeting the Needs of Students: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*" (Product #7671). This document is available from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services Clearinghouse Information Center at 850-245-0477 or may be downloaded from www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/pub-home.htm.

Clearinghouse Information Center
325 W. Gaines St., Suite 628
Turlington Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
850-245-0477 phone
850-245-0987 fax
cicbiscs@fldoe.org

Questions concerning these requirements or determination of eligibility under Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC, should be directed to the district local 504 Coordinator. Additional assistance may be obtained by contacting the Student Services and Shared Services Network, 850-922-3727 or SunCom 292-3727, or the Office of Equity and Access, 850-245-0511, SunCom 205-0511.

(continued)

Test Accommodations for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

Districts are required to offer accommodations to LEP students who are currently receiving services in a program operated in accordance with an approved district LEP Plan. Permissible accommodations for these LEP students are listed below. The test may be administered with any one of these modifications or a combination of accommodations that are determined to be appropriate for the particular needs of the LEP student. However all testing, with or without accommodations, must be completed during the prescribed testing dates shown on the inside front cover of this manual.

Instruct test administrators to follow the testing procedures outlined in the rest of this manual and to give special assistance only to students who are eligible for assistance as stated in this appendix.

Flexible Setting. LEP students may be offered the opportunity to be tested in a separate room with the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or heritage language teacher acting as test administrator. Parents must be informed of this option for students not of legal age and shall be given the opportunity to select the preferred method of test administration.

Flexible Scheduling. LEP students may take a session of the test during several brief periods within one school day; however, a session of the test must be completed within one school day.

Additional Time. LEP students may be provided additional time; however, a session must be completed within one school day.

Assistance in Heritage Language. For the mathematics and science tests and the multiple-choice portion of the writing test, LEP students may be provided limited assistance by an ESOL or heritage language teacher using the student's heritage language. The teacher may answer specific questions about a word or phrase that is confusing the student because of limited English proficiency, but is prohibited from giving assistance that will help the student solve mathematics problems and answer writing and science test items. A student's questions must not be answered in a way that would lead the student to infer the correct answer to an item. If the FCAT is administered to a group of students, the teacher may answer questions about directions for the benefit of the group; questions of clarification from individual students must be answered on an individual basis without disturbing other students.

For the reading test, the ESOL or heritage language teacher may answer student questions about the general test directions in a way that the student would not be led to infer the correct answer to any of the items. The teacher is prohibited from reading words to the student from the passages, test items, and performance tasks, and from answering student questions about the passages, test items, and performance tasks.

In addition to the language above, the ESOL or heritage language teacher may answer student questions about the general test directions in their heritage language. The teacher may answer specific inquiries concerning a word or phrase in a writing assessment prompt that is confusing the student because of limited English proficiency. In no case shall assistance be given to the student in responding to the writing assessment prompt. The teacher is prohibited from reading the prompt to the student. **All student responses must be written in English.** Responses written in languages other than English will not be scored.

Approved Dictionary. LEP students must have access to an English-to-heritage language translation dictionary and/or heritage language-to-English translation dictionary, such as those made available to LEP students in an instructional setting. However, a dictionary providing definitions written exclusively in the heritage language or in English may not be provided. Use of electronic dictionaries is strictly prohibited and may be cause for invalidation.

Florida Test Security Statute

1008.24 Test Security

(1) It is unlawful for anyone knowingly and willfully to violate test security rules adopted by the State Board of Education for mandatory tests administered by or through the State Board of Education to students, educators, or applicants for certification or administered by school districts pursuant to s. 1008.22, or the Commissioner of Education, or, with respect to any such tests, knowingly and willfully to:

(a) Give examinees access to test items prior to testing;

(b) Copy, reproduce, or use in any manner inconsistent with test security rules all or any portion of any secure test book;

(c) Coach examinees during testing or alter or interfere with examinees' responses in any way;

(d) Make answer keys available to examinees;

(e) Fail to follow security rules for distribution and return of secure test materials as directed, or fail to account for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing;

(f) Fail to follow test administration directions specified in the test administration manuals; or

(g) Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist in, or encourage any of the acts prohibited in this section.

(2) Any person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s.775.082 or s.775.083.

(3) A district school superintendent, a president of a postsecondary educational institution, or a president of a non-public postsecondary educational institution shall cooperate with the Commissioner of Education in any investigation concerning the administration of a test administered pursuant to state statute or rule.

Florida State Board of Education Test Security Rule

6A-10.042 Maintenance of Test Security

(1) Tests implemented in accordance with the requirements of ss.1001.02(2)(d), 1008.22, 1012.56, 1004.93(7), 1008.29(8), and 1008.30, Florida Statutes, shall be maintained and administered in a secure manner such that the integrity of the tests shall be preserved.

(a) Test items shall be preserved in a secure manner by individuals who are developing and validating the tests. Such individuals shall not reveal in any manner, verbally or in writing, the test items under development.

(b) Tests or individual test items shall not be revealed, copied, or otherwise reproduced by persons who are involved in the administration, proctoring, or scoring of any test.

(c) Examinees shall not be assisted in answering test items by any means by persons administering or proctoring the administration of any test.

(d) Examinees' answers to items shall not be interfered with in any way by persons administering, proctoring, or scoring the examinations.

(e) Examinees shall not be given answer keys by any person.

(f) Persons who are involved in administering or proctoring the tests or persons who teach or otherwise prepare examinees for the tests shall not participate, direct, aid, counsel in, or encourage any activity which could result in the inaccurate measurement or reporting of the examinees' achievement.

(g) Each person who has access to tests or test items during the development, printing, administration, or scoring of the tests shall be informed of specifications for maintaining test security, the provisions in statute and rule governing test security, and a description of the penalties for breaches of test security.

(h) During each test administration, school district and institutional test administration coordinators and contractors employing test administrators and proctors shall ensure that required test procedures are being followed at all test administration sites. Officials from the Department are authorized to conduct unannounced observations of test administration procedures at any test administration site to ensure the testing procedures are being correctly followed.

(2) Test materials, including all test booklets and other materials containing secure test items, answer keys, and student responses, shall be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the examination program administration manuals and other communications provided by the Department. Such procedures shall include but not be limited to the following:

(a) All test materials shall be kept in secure, locked storage prior to and after administration of any test.

(b) All test materials shall be precisely accounted for and written documentation kept by test administrators and proctors for each point at which test materials are distributed and returned.

(c) Any discrepancies noted in the number or serial numbers of test materials received from contractors shall be reported to the Department by designated institutional or school district personnel prior to the administration of the test.

(d) In the event that test materials are determined to be missing while in the possession of an institution or school district, designated institutional or school district personnel shall investigate the cause of the discrepancy and provide the Department with a report of the investigation within thirty (30) calendar days of the initiation of the investigation. At a minimum, the report shall include the nature of the situation, the time and place of occurrence, and the names of persons involved in or witness to the occurrence. Officials from the Department are authorized to conduct additional investigations.

(e) In those cases where the responsibility for secure destruction of certain test materials is assigned by the Department to designated institutional or school district personnel, the responsible institutional or school district representative shall certify in writing that such destruction was accomplished in a secure manner.

(f) In those cases where test materials are permitted by the Department to be maintained in an institution or school district, the test materials shall be maintained in a secure manner as specified by the instructions provided by the Department. Access to the materials shall be limited to the individuals and purposes specified by the Department.

(3) In those situations where an employee of the educational institution, school district, or contractor, or an employee of the Department suspects a student of cheating on a test or suspects other violations of the provisions of this rule, a report shall be made to the Department or test support contractor, as specified in the test administration procedures, within ten (10) calendar days. The report shall include a description of the incident, the names of the persons involved in or witness to the incident, and other information as appropriate. Officials from the Department are authorized to conduct additional investigations.

(4) Violations of test security provisions shall be subject to penalties provided in statute and State Board Rules.

Specific Authority 120.53(1)(b), 1008.24, 1001.02(2)(d) FS. Law Implemented 120.53(1)(b), 1008.24, 1001.02(2)(d), 1008.22, 1012.56, 1004.93, 1008.29, and 1008.30 FS. History-New 7-5-87, Amended 10-26-94.

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Appendix C

Discussion of NCLB "Starting Point"

Section 1111(b)(2)(B) of NCLB requires each state to create an accountability program to ensure that all schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP). Each state has the flexibility to define how it will approach this task and hold schools responsible for the progress of the students.

The law sets forth various requirements that will not be quoted herein. Instead, the discussion that follows will provide Florida's solutions and will include a discussion of all relevant points.

Florida's student assessment tests measure the same high standards for all students, are valid and reliable instruments, seek continuous improvement of students' educational attainments, measure all schools against the established standards, and report disaggregated test results for all groups required by NCLB. The discussion that follows will address (1) the starting point for measuring progress, (2) the timelines for improvement, (3) other indicators that will be used, (4) annual measurable objectives, and intermediate goals for improvement.

Since the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test has been in place for several years, the Department of Education has complete information on the current status of student achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 3-10 and writing achievement in grades 4, 8, and 10. Information on student achievement in science will not be available until after the spring 2003 assessment has been conducted.

Because Florida has not established different levels of performance for the writing assessment as is required by NCLB, this test will not be used to meet the requirements of Section 1111(b)(3)(C)(v)(I) or (II). The writing assessment results will be used as an additional indicator as required by Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vii). See the discussion in the following pages about "other indicators."

The Department analyzed the results of the FCAT administered in the spring 2002 and the results are presented in the following discussion. In considering what should be the starting point for AYP, the FCAT data could be presented in several ways: (1) as mean scale scores on the FCAT 100-500 scale, (2) as mean scale scores on the FCAT 0-3000 vertical scale, or (3) as percents of students in the "Proficient and Above" category. Since the latter is considered to be the easiest to understand and is consistent with the overall objective of getting students to be Proficient or better, the "starting point" data were analyzed and are presented as percentages. This does not preclude the Department from using the student performance in terms of the vertical scale for the purpose of tracking progress over time.

Section 1111(b)(2)(E) provides that the starting point shall be, at a minimum, based on the higher of the percentage of students at the proficient level who are in –

"(i) the State's lowest achieving group of students described in subparagraph (C)(v)(II); or
(ii) the school at the 20th percentile in the State, based on enrollment, among all schools ranked by the percentage of students at the proficient level."

Florida's data were analyzed both ways, separately by grade level and subject area (reading and mathematics). The FCAT nationally-normed test (the SAT-9) was not used in this analysis since it is not part of the State's school accountability program. Instead, only the portion of FCAT that is constructed around the Sunshine State Standards was used. (This is commonly identified as the FCAT-SSS.)

Table 7 presents the results of the analysis method specified in (ii) for reading and mathematics. The percent of students scoring Level 3 and above was calculated for each school, and the schools were ranked. Counting upward from the lowest scoring school, a school containing the 20%-tile of student enrollment was located. This analysis depends on counting the student population within each school without regard to how many grade levels are present in each school. Thus, the population being counted is not the population of students in the tested grade level who earned ratings of "Proficient or Above" but is, instead, the total enrollment of the school itself.

Table 7

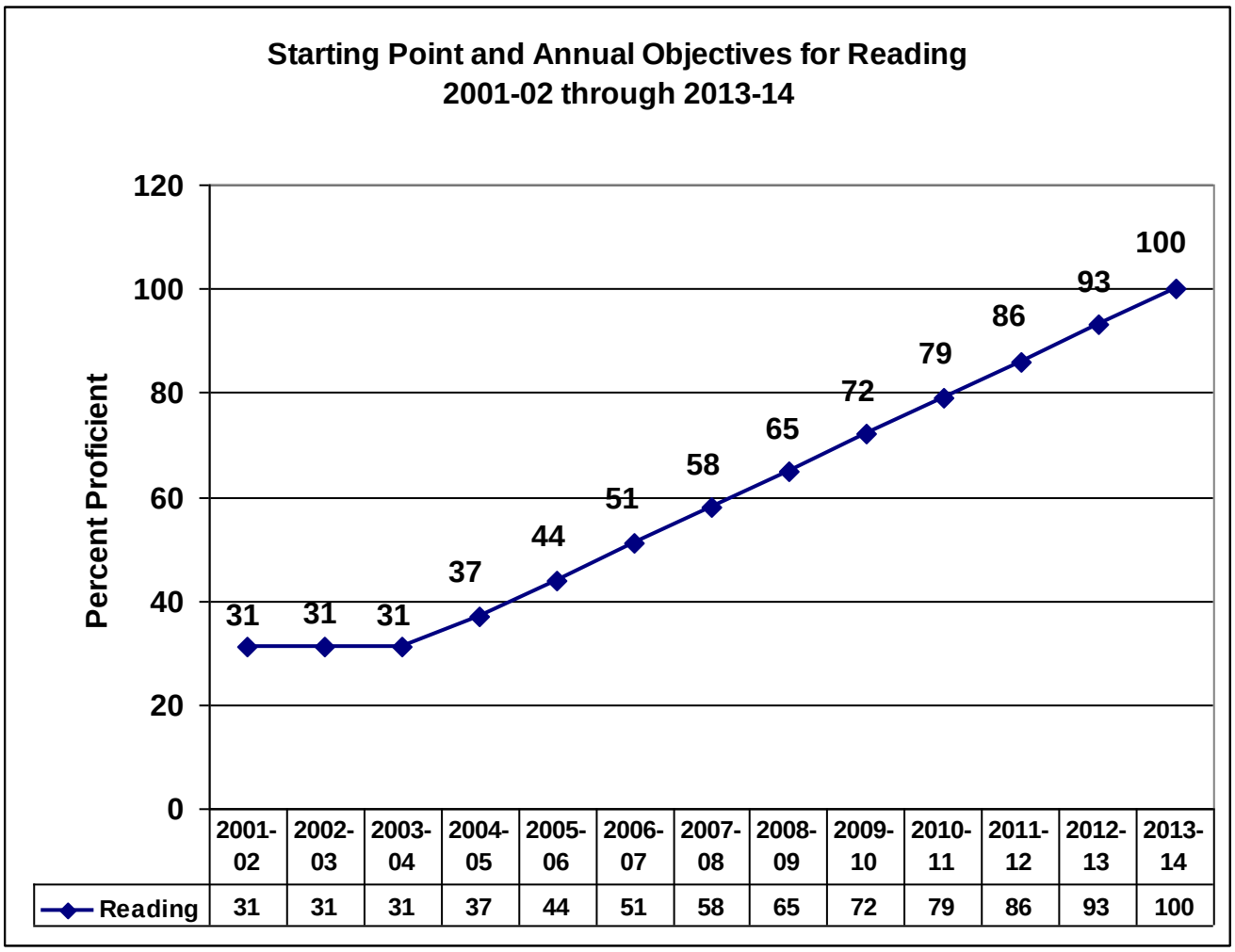
Identification of Starting Points Based on Achievement and School Enrollment

Reading	Mathematics
30.68%	37.54%

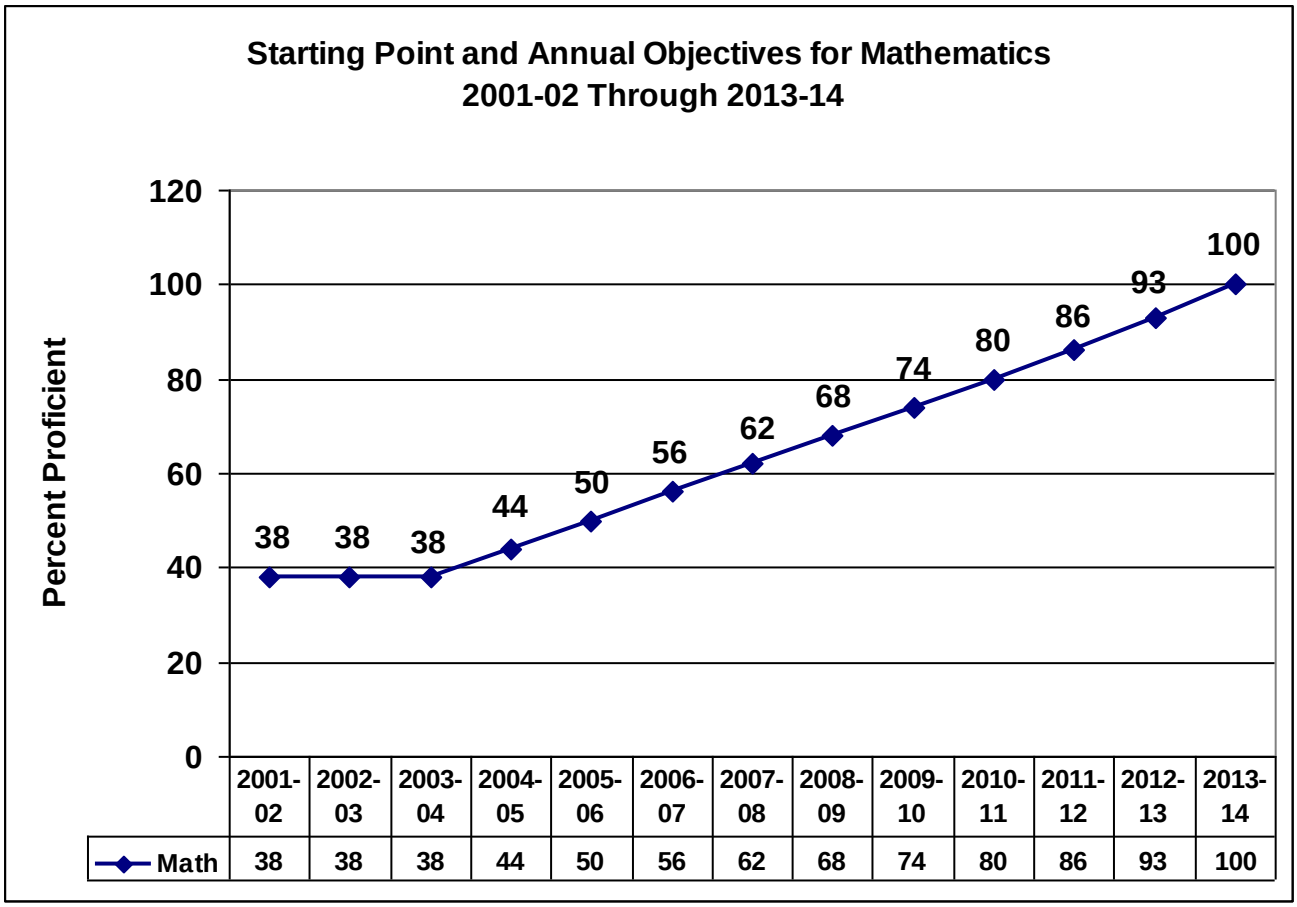
NCLB specifies that the starting points will be the HIGHER of the results of the two analyses. Since these starting points are higher than those derived from the first analysis, the starting points will be those shown in Table 7: 31% for reading and 38% for mathematics.

Appendix D

Annual Progress Objectives



NOTE: Year 1 = 2001-02 base year.



NOTE: Year 1 = 2001-02 base year.

Appendix E

Florida's AYP Plan

As an introduction to Florida's AYP proposal, first consider how the NCLB requirements for accountability are structured. As Congress and the President planned for NCLB, they faced a dilemma in that the 50 states and territories have different academic standards and student assessment programs which are not equivalent, interchangeable, measure the same content, administered at the same grade levels, given to students at the same time of year, generate the same kind of information, or have the same impact. Indeed, some states prefer not to emphasize centralized testing programs and assign that responsibility to each district. This is a direct result of the provisions in the Constitution that give states the responsibility of implementing a public education system.

Congress sought an effective way to measure the success of the Title I provisions in NCLB given the realities of such a diverse national system. A good evaluation system would try to accumulate information across all of the states, districts, and schools to provide the means of making sensible comparisons among the various delivery agents. For years, however, Congress has had little success in gathering such common information.

To illustrate the approaches used by Congress in its attempts to gather meaningful common data, consider the "anchor test study" and the "NCE" units approach. In the former, an attempt was made to link together several different commercially available norm-referenced tests in reading. The attempt proved to be extremely difficult and was abandoned by the mid-1970's. The latter approach tried to create a type of single scale that could be used in place of a single test administered in all schools. The Normal Curve Equivalent scores were useful but did not solve the problems associated with different instructional programs, different curriculum expectations, and differences in content being assessed.

As Congress created the language for NCLB, it was faced with the task of requiring improvement in student achievement while not imposing a national testing program or a national student identification number to track progress over time. The model that evolved, therefore, is basically the same approach as has been used in the past—a "status" model rather than a "growth" model. Student achievement within a school, district, or state is to be measured during the current academic year and the results compared to the achievement in the following year. In other words, fifth grade students in 2002-03 will be compared to fifth grade students in 2003-04 even though the students are not the same! The assumption is that one year's group of students is not significantly different than the next year's group of students, an idea that is extremely tenuous in these days of high family mobility. It is further exacerbated in a state like Florida where

there is tremendous in-migration of students every year, making each year's class different in many ways than the one last year.

Now consider what NCLB requires each state to do in measuring AYP. The following five concepts summarize the important steps.

1. Starting points are determined based on 2001-02 reading/language arts and mathematics achievement data. With the goal of 100% "Proficient or Above" in 12 years, each state stipulates annual measurable objectives (growth targets). One or more "other indicators" are selected for measurement.

2. Each state gathers assessment information (including other indicators) and reports the % "Proficient and Above" for: all students, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, and five categories of race/ethnicity (white, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan). This is a status measurement at a point in time in which current performance is compared to the growth targets.

3. Each school's performance is compared to the state measurable objectives. Each subgroup in #2 above must meet or exceed the objectives. However, if one or more subgroups do not meet the objectives, the school will meet AYP if the percentage of students in those subgroups not reaching proficiency decreases by 10% compared to the previous year and if those subgroups made progress on one or more of the other indicators and if not less than 95% of each subgroup of students participated in the assessment. While the first comparison is one of status, the second could be either a status measurement comparison or a growth comparison for a cohort of students because the law does not prescribe which it will be.

4. Each district's performance is compared to the state measurable objectives. Each subgroup in #2 above must meet or exceed the objectives.

   However, if one or more subgroups does not meet the objectives, the district will meet AYP if the percentage of students in those subgroups not reaching proficiency decreases by 10% compared to the previous year and if those subgroups made progress on one or more of the other indicators and if not less than 95% of each subgroup of students participated in the assessment. While the first comparison is one of status, the second can be either a status measurement comparison or a growth comparison for a cohort of students.

5. Compare the state's performance to the measurable objectives. Each subgroup in #2 above must meet or exceed the objectives.

   In addition, the state must meet its objectives relating to the development and attainment of English proficiency for LEP students.

Assuming that these steps have been completed, the results of the assessments will be displayed for the public and the educational community. The conditions for meeting AYP under NCLB are challenging in that the school and district must meet the state targets in each of several separate comparisons. This can be illustrated by the following table.

The data display would appear as shown below for elementary, middle, and senior high schools.

Elementary and Middle Schools

	Reading	Reading Participation Rate	Math	Math Participation Rate	Other (Writing)*
All students					
Econ. Disadvantaged					
White					
Black					
Hispanic					
Asian					
Am. Indian					
SWD					
LEP					

* In accordance with Section 200.19 of the final regulations, the "Other Academic Indicators" will be disaggregated by subgroup for reporting purposes but will not be used for determining AYP.

Senior High Schools

	Reading	Reading Partici-pation Rate	Math	Math Partici-pation Rate	Other (Gradu-ation Rate)*	Other (Writing) *
All students						
Econ. Disadvantaged						
White						
Black						
Hispanic						
Asian						
Am. Indian						
SWD						
LEP						

* In accordance with Section 200.19 of the final regulations, the "Other Academic Indicators" will be disaggregated by subgroup for reporting purposes but will not be used for determining AYP.

For a senior high school to meet all of its targets requires a number of separate Yes/No conjunctive decisions. Scoring relatively higher in reading will not compensate for low scores in mathematics as would happen in a compensatory model.

The reporting of assessment information in the previous tables is subject to the following conditions:

1. The cells in the above table will be reported subject to the limitations on cell sizes previously described.

2. The school's values in each cell of the above table will be the current year's performance.

3. Students who take an alternate assessment will have their results reported in categorical classifications that include the designation of "Proficient," thereby making it possible for their performance to be counted with those of other students.

4. Any school that is in its first year of operation will be included in the system but with only one year of data to report. Schools that include K-2 and do not take the statewide assessment (FCAT) will be assigned the proficiency ratings earned by the school their students attend in grade 3.

5. In the event that a school district selects additional indicators with which to determine a school's AYP, as is authorized in Section 1116 of HR-1 (NCLB authorization), the district shall provide these data to the Department of Education for use with the State Report Cards required by law.

6. The required NCLB data analyses and reports will be prepared for each school regardless of the grade level configurations. That is, a K-5 school will generate data displayed as shown on the previous page as well as a grades 9-12 high school or a K-12 school. Each can be reported in terms of the percent of students who are "Proficient or Above" in reading and in mathematics. At the district level, the data will be reported for all students in the district who are "Proficient or Above" in reading and mathematics without regard for school-by-school distinctions.

NCLB includes several important concepts such as the following.

(1) All students must be held to the same, challenging standards;
(2) All students are to be assessed;
(3) The progress of students is to be consistent and forward-looking with the goal of moving all students to at least the Proficient level within 12 years;
(4) Assessment results are to be aggregated and reported to parents annually;
(5) Assessment and accountability results are to be disaggregated by seven major subgroups and
(6) Student progress is monitored annually and improvement is noted when performance improves with a specific grade level(s) over time. This is a "status system" on a very large scale.

While these principles are admirable, the NCLB model can be improved in those states that have launched an effort to implement "value-added achievement monitoring" in which the progress of individual students is monitored across time. If Johnny's reading achievement is measured in fourth grade and he is measured again in fifth grade with a test that has been vertically linked across the grade levels, his absolute growth, or lack thereof, can be measured and reported. The keys to such a system are: (1) a student testing program in all grade levels, (2) test content keyed to an established set of curriculum expectations, (3) a vertical measurement scale that allows student scores to be reported from the least grade to the highest, and (4) a student identification system that assigns a unique number to a student through his/her lifetime within the public school system. All of these elements are found in the existing Florida public school assessment and accountability system.

The existing Florida school accountability program produces school grades based on student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics. Special attention is paid to students who are in the lowest 25% of students in FCAT

Levels 1, 2, and 3 in each school. Further, the program features the measurement of academic growth of individual students through the FCAT vertical score scale in reading and mathematics.

Florida proposes to fully implement NCLB in all schools and deliver analyses and results exactly as the law specifies. However, in order to link the NCLB status system to Florida's existing status and gain system, it is proposed that no school will be allowed to be designated as meeting AYP if it has been graded "D" or "F" under the A+ school grading system.

Under the terms of the system Florida is proposing, all of these objectives will be met with a system that is more challenging than the NCLB requirements. Congress enacted a law that meets the constraints posed by the vast majority of states who do not have the student assessment and accountability traditions found in Florida. If Florida changes its A+ system to serve as the NCLB accountability system, it actually will cause our system to regress, not move forward with its measurement of individual student learning gains.

Florida already has a tremendous investment in its A+ Plan for Education, and educators and citizens are familiar with it. To make changes would require amendments to existing statutes, administrative rules, computer programs, administrative infrastructure, and information dissemination to all public schools.

The Florida school grading system is illustrated in Appendix F of this Plan. Close inspection demonstrates how the program holds schools accountable for scoring high on the FCAT, specifically, having increasing numbers of students earning FCAT Achievement Level scores previously identified as being the equivalent of "Proficient or Above" as required by NCLB.

The program requires students to make learning gains in reading and mathematics if they presently are earning less than "Proficient." If they already are achieving at the "Proficient or Above" levels, the school earns points to the degree that the students do not regress.

Specific attention is paid to the achievement of those students who are demonstrating the least achievement, below "Proficient." Schools earn points for all students in the lowest 25%-tile who make "adequate progress," defined as gaining in achievement as much as the norm group for the State.

The existing system already incorporates the results of the writing assessment that we have proposed be the "other indicator" for grades 4, 8, and 10.

If a school does not meet its annual growth targets, it can meet AYP under the "safe harbor" provisions of NCLB for improving the performance of students in various subgroups:

1. The percentage of students in that group below the State's proficiency achievement level "decreased by [at least] 10 percent of that percentage from the preceding school year"; and
2. That group made progress on the other indicator of writing or, for high schools, writing and the graduation rate; and
3. Not less than 95% of the students enrolled in each group take the statewide assessment. The participation rate will be calculated by dividing the number of students actually taking the FCAT or alternate assessment by the number of students in membership at the time of the assessment. In accordance with flexibility granted to states by USED, Florida plans to calculate participation rates for NCLB purposes by using two methods: (1) current-year counts for the number of students tested (numerator) and for the number of students in membership (denominator), and (2) current year counts combined with prior year counts for both the numerator and the denominator for a "two-year averaged participation rate." The school's participation rate applied in the AYP calculation would reflect the higher of the two percentages derived from the calculations described above.

Beginning in 2007, under flexibility granted by USED through Florida's approved growth model pilot program, schools and districts may also meet annual measurable objectives through a growth model trajectory, in addition to the status model and safe harbor. The growth model is a new AYP calculation where each student within a subgroup with at least two years of assessment data will be included in the denominator for the growth calculation. The numerator will include any student in the subgroup who is proficient or "on track to be proficient" in three years. A school or district will meet AYP for that subgroup if the percentage of students who are proficient or "on track to be proficient" using this calculation meets or exceeds the current state annual measurable objectives (51 percent in reading and 56 percent in mathematics in 2006-07). See Appendix J.

<u>However, if a school does not meet the State's annual objective growth target for two years in a row or if the school otherwise earns a grade of "D" or "F," it will be designated a school in need of targeted assistance and additional services or sanctions will be identified.</u>

Schools and districts will be evaluated separately for reading and mathematics performance. A school or district could fail to meet its AYP requirements in reading one year, improve in reading the second year, and become deficient in mathematics the second year. If this occurs, the school or district will not be subjected to the requirements of Sections 200.32-200.34 of the NCLB rules because it has not had two consecutive years of poor performance in the <u>same content area</u>. If a school or district fails to meet its AYP requirements in the same content area (e.g., reading) for two consecutive years, it will be subjected to the requirements of Sections 200.3-200.34.

Additional Indicators

In addition to evaluating the participation rate and percent proficient for each of the nine subgroups in reading and math, Florida's AYP calculation includes the school grade criterion as noted above, plus two other schoolwide measures: the graduation rate, which is applicable to schools from which students would be expected to graduate with a standard diploma, and writing proficiency. As noted earlier in this document, the AYP criterion for meeting the graduation rate is a rate of 85% or more, or demonstrated annual improvement in the rate; and the AYP criterion for writing is 90% or more of examinees scoring at 3.0 or higher on the essay component's six-point scale, or demonstrated annual improvement in writing proficiency of at least 1%.

AYP Summary of Components

Under the current AYP system, a school's final AYP status is either "yes" or "no." The school has either made AYP, or it hasn't. If a school fails to meet any one of the 39 component criteria of AYP, then the school's overall AYP status is "No."

The 39 Components of Florida's AYP Calculation

36 Components by Subgroup . . .

	% Tested, Reading	% Tested, Math	% Proficient, Reading	% Proficient, Math
Subgroup	≥ 95%?	≥ 95%?	≥ Annual Objective?	≥ Annual Objective*?
White	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Black	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Hispanic	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Asian	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Am. Indian	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Economically Disadvantaged	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Students with Disabilities	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
English Language Learners	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Total	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N

* Florida's annual measurable objectives (AMOs) are adjusted upward annually.

+ 3 School-wide Measures:

- Graduation Rate (for high schools) = ≥ 85% or shows an increase of at least 1% (rounded) vs. prior year
- Writing Proficiency = ≥ 90% or an increase of at least 1% vs. prior year
- School Grade ≠ D or F

Appendix F

A+ School Grading System

The following charts explain how school grades are calculated for the A+ school grading system.

Grading Florida Public Schools

2006-07

School grades for 2006-07 utilize a point system. Schools are awarded one point for each percent of students who score *high on the FCAT and/or make annual learning gains.*

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JOHN L. WINN, COMMISSIONER

Scoring High on the FCAT

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is the primary measure of students' achievement of the Sunshine State Standards. Student scores are classified into five achievement levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

⇒ Schools earn one point for each percent of students who score in achievement levels 3, 4, or 5 in **reading**, one point for each percent of students who score 3, 4, or 5 in **mathematics**, and one point for each percent of students who score 3, 4, or 5 in **science**. If a school has fewer than 30 students with science scores, the district average for science will be used.

⇒ The **writing** exam is scored by at least two readers on a scale of 1 to 6. Schools earn one point for each percent of students scoring 3.5 or above. If a school has fewer than 30 students with writing scores, the district average for writing will be used.

Making Annual Learning Gains

Since FCAT **reading and mathematics** exams are given in grades 3 – 10, it is possible to monitor how much students learn from one year to the next.

⇒ Schools earn one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in **reading** and one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in **mathematics**. Students can demonstrate learning gains in any one of three ways:

1. Improve achievement levels from 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, or 4-5; **or**
2. Maintain within the relatively high levels of 3, 4, or 5; **or**
3. Demonstrate more than one year's growth within achievement levels 1 or 2 (does not include retained students).

⇒ Special attention is given to the reading and mathematics gains of students in the lowest 25%[1] in levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school. Schools earn one point for each percent of the lowest performing students who make learning gains from the previous year in **reading** and **mathematics**. It takes at least *50%* in both **reading** and **mathematics** to make "adequate progress" for this group.

[1] For schools with fewer than 30 students in the lowest 25%, the 30 lowest performing students will be substituted.

SCHOOL GRADING SCALE

A	B	C	D	F
• 525 points or more • Meet adequate progress of lowest students in reading and mathematics • Test at least 95% of eligible students	• 495-524 points • Meet adequate progress of lowest students in reading and mathematics within two years • Test at least 90% of eligible students	• 435-494 points • Meet adequate progress of lowest students in reading and mathematics within two years • Test at least 90% of eligible students	• 395-434 points • Test at least 90% of eligible students	• Fewer than 395 points OR • Less than 90% of eligible students tested

Which students are included in school grade calculations? As in previous years, only standard curriculum students (including Speech impaired, gifted, hospital/home bound, and English Language Learner students (ELL) with more than two years in an English Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) program) enrolled in the same school in both October and February are included in the components for scoring high on the FCAT. All students, including Students with Disabilities (SWD) and ELL students, are included in the learning gains component of the school grade calculation.

What happens if the lowest students in the school do not make "adequate progress" in reading and mathematics? Schools that do not make adequate progress with their lowest students in reading and mathematics, must develop a School Improvement Plan component that addresses this need. If a school, otherwise graded "A", does not demonstrate adequate progress in the current year, the final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. If a school, otherwise graded "B" or "C", does not demonstrate adequate progress in either the current or prior year, the final grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

Sample School Grade Report for 2007

Percent scoring FCAT level 3 and above

Percent scoring at 3.5 and above

Sunshine Middle School

2007	Reading (Grades 6, 7, 8)	Mathematics (Grades 6, 7, 8)	Science (Grade 8)	Writing (Grade 8)	Grade Points
% Meeting High Standards	63%	59%	65%	74%	261
% of Students Making Learning Gains	66%	68%	_____	_____	134
Adequate Progress of Lowest 25% or Lowest 30 Students in the School?	50% (Yes)	50% (Yes)	_____	_____	100
School Grade Points					495
Percent Tested = 93%					
School Grade					B

1 point for each % meeting high standards in reading, mathematics, science, and writing

1 point for each % making gains in reading and mathematics

1 point for each % of lowest performing students making gains in reading and mathematics

3 ways to make gains:

- Improve FCAT levels
- Maintain Level 3, 4, or 5
- Improve more than one year within level 1 or 2, but not retained

Percent of eligible students tested

Adequate Progress?

"Yes" indicates at least 50% made learning gains in current or prior year.

"No" indicates less than 50% made learning gains in current or prior year.

Based on 3 Things:

1. Total Points
2. Adequate Progress
3. % of Students Tested

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Appendix G

Annual Learning Gain Targets to Proficiency

The FCAT was originally developed to test reading in grades 4, 8, and 10, and mathematics in grades 5, 8, and 10. The test results were reported in terms of a succession of annual "status reports" that revealed the performance of Florida students who were in different cohorts. The data were reported for each subject using a score scale that ranged from 100-500, and each scale was separately computed for each grade level. Progress over time was reported as changes in the performance of each grade level group – i.e., this year's fourth grade students were compared to last year's fourth graders to see if the average score changed or, for example, if more students were earning "Level 3" scores.

In 2001, the FCAT program was expanded so that the tests now are being administered in all grades 3-10. This offers the opportunity to make use of a new score scale that links adjacent grades together and permits progress to be tracked over time, based on what is commonly called a "developmental scale." The effect of this improvement is that student performance across the grades can be tracked across this scale. As a student moves from grade to grade, his/her performance can be monitored and compared to the performance of other students in Florida. Most importantly, the yearly progress of each student can be reported by the change in the developmental scale scores.

Florida will use this new developmental scale to develop a plan with annual learning gain targets for all students below proficiency.

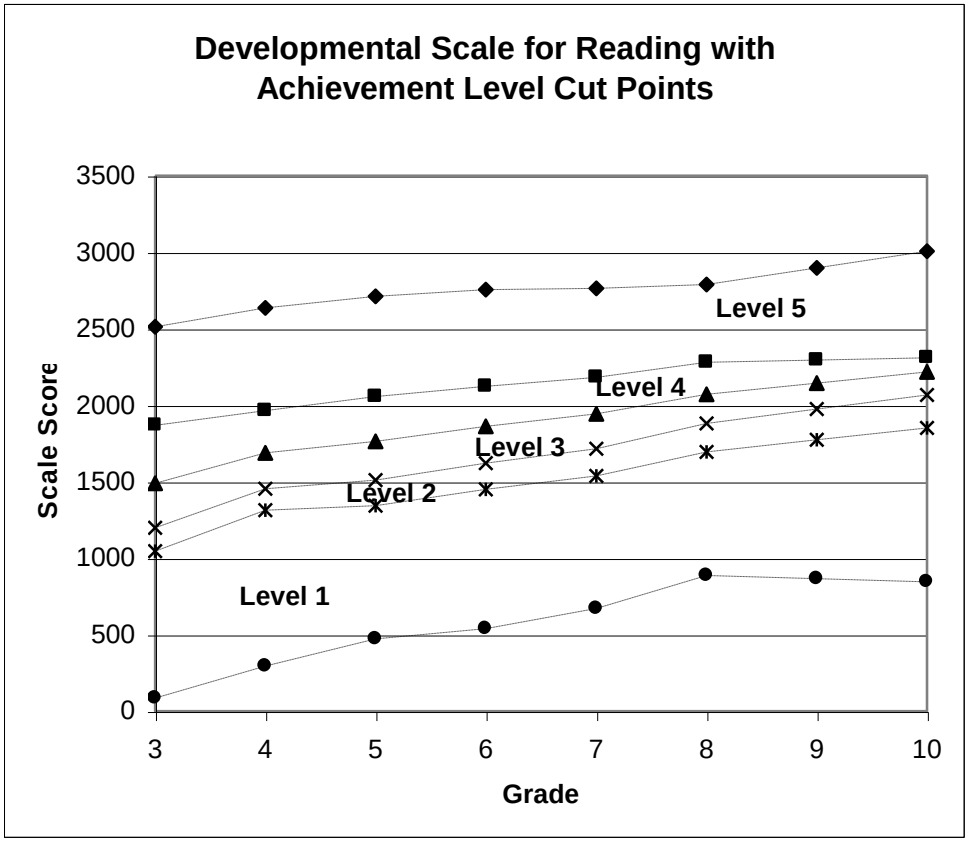
Four-Year Plans

By using the developmental scale, districts and schools can chart their students' growth as they move across the grade levels. Such charts, or data plots, make it possible to answer the question, "Is this student making adequate progress for each year in school?" and, "If this student keeps making the same amount of progress, is he/she going to be ready for the grade ten graduation testing requirement?" For those students achieving below proficiency, we are able to set annual targets for growth that will set the student on a trajectory to proficiency.

For example, a third-grade student with a FCAT Reading score of 150 would be designated as scoring in Level 1, clearly below proficiency. The Developmental Scale Score (DSS) for this student would be 389 in the conversion to the vertical scale. To bring this student to a level of proficiency by the end of 7th grade, the student would need to have a DSS score of at least 1719 and his/her plan would map out the growth needed each year to reach the goal of proficiency, with identified annual benchmarks. Instructional plans would tie to the content scores on the FCAT Reading test, so that specific strategies link to content areas needing attention.

Example Developmental Scale for Reading

The following chart illustrates the relationship between the developmental scores and the FCAT achievement levels.



Appendix H

The Florida Department of Education
Return on Investment (ROI)

Currently the Department of Education has available a multitude of reports which provide information using student, staff and finance data. For the purpose of assessing the quality and efficiency of the various education delivery systems, the Department is in the process of using the available information to develop a comprehensive set of measures for the purpose of comparisons and trend analysis of schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions. By integrating the goals of highest student achievement and quality and efficient services, this effort will establish an accountability system for the use of public education resources for all delivery systems.

A comprehensive system for calculating “return on investment” based on indicators of institutional efficiency and effectiveness is under development. The system will have many benefits, including:

- The use of data to influence decision-making – Good decisions are based on inquiry and analysis. Information technologies are available to make this possible for school-based administrators, as well as external users of education information such as legislators and researchers.

- The use of data to target specific areas for improvement – Timely and accurate data can assist decision makers at all levels in focusing on improvement strategies.

- The use of disaggregated data to examine wide-ranging goals – Disaggregating data for analysis allows for identification of programmatic and/or fiscal inequities and assists in the establishment of baselines for improvement.

- The use of data in rapid program evaluation – In order to have an impact, program evaluation must be timely as well as complete. By compiling and linking program and other data in an accurate and well-designed retrieval system, program evaluation can be effectively and efficiently accomplished.

- The use of data to examine the relationship between cost and program effectiveness.

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Appendix I

Florida's High School Graduation and Completion Options

Standard Diploma

Students who have 2.0 GPA, pass FCAT, earn the required 24 credits and meet any other local graduation requirements receive a standard diploma (s. 1003.43(9) and 1008.22(3)(c)5, F.S.).

Certificate of Completion

Students who have a 2.0 GPA, earn the required credits but do not pass the FCAT receive a "certificate of completion" (s. 1003.43(9), F.S.). These students are counted as high school completers but not as graduates.

State of Florida/High School Equivalency Diploma

Students who are at-risk for not graduating, participate in a General Education Development (GED) Exit program and pass the GED receive a State of Florida diploma (DOE agreement with the American Council on Education and s. 1003.435(4), F.S.).

Candidates, who are at least 18 years of age, unless extraordinary circumstances exist, and who meet performance standards established by rules of the State Board (including passing the GED) receive a high school equivalency diploma 1003.435(2)&(4), F.S.).

All high school equivalency diplomas issued under this law have equal status with other high school diplomas for all state purposes, including admission to any state university or community college (s. 1003.435(6)(a), F.S.).

The State Board is to adopt rules for the award of a standard high school diploma to holders of high school equivalency diplomas who are assessed as meeting designated criteria (s. 1003.435(6)(b), F.S.).

Special Diploma

Certain students with disabilities are eligible to receive a special diploma upon completion of specified standards, which include the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma (see Section 1003.438, Florida Statutes).

Special Certificate of Completion

Certain students with disabilities who do not complete the requirements for a special diploma may be awarded a special certificate of completion (see Section 1003.438, Florida Statutes). These students are counted as completers but not as graduates.

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Appendix J

Florida's Approved Growth Model: Text of USED Approval Letter, and Calculation Overview

I. Text of Approval Letter from USED

(URL: http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/fl/flgmdecltr3.doc)

June 26, 2007

Honorable Jeanine Blomberg
Commissioner
Florida Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1614
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Commissioner Blomberg:

With great pleasure, I am accepting Florida's growth model proposal to be part of the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) pilot project. In my November 9, 2006, letter, I noted that Florida must receive approval of its standards and assessment system by the end of the 2006-07 school year in order to become part of the Department's growth model pilot project. Florida has recently met this condition, receiving Full Approval with Recommendations of its standards and assessment system.

Congratulations for submitting a successful proposal and for receiving approval of the Florida standards and assessment system. We believe that Florida's participation in the pilot will help us consider different ways to measure school accountability, while giving schools credit for improvement over time and measuring individual student progress.

To enable Florida to implement its growth model as part of determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the 2006–07 school year, I am entering into this flexibility agreement with Florida under section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended. This agreement permits Florida to include its growth model as a part of calculating AYP under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA. As part of this flexibility agreement, Florida must agree to the following:

- Florida must provide data comparing the results of determining AYP on the basis of its growth model with the results obtained when AYP is determined under the statutory model;
- Florida must participate in an evaluation of its growth model conducted by the Department; and
- Florida must report information on student growth to parents.

After the first year of implementation, we will discuss with you any modifications that may need to be made to your growth model to continue participating in the pilot.

As required by section 9401(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the ESEA, within 30 days of the date of this letter, Florida must provide notice and information to the public regarding this flexibility agreement in the manner in which it customarily provides similar notice to the public.

Again, I congratulate you on Florida's successful growth model proposal. I look forward to working with you to evaluate the impact of Florida's growth model on ensuring school accountability and measuring student progress.

Sincerely,

/s/

Margaret Spellings

cc: Honorable Charlie Crist
Mr. Jay Pfeiffer, Director, Accountability Research and Measurement
Mr. Juan Coppa, Director, Office of Evaluation and Reporting

II. Florida Growth Model Calculation Overview

A school that has met the requirements for participation as well as the state's other indicators (writing, graduation rate, and school grade) but has not met the reading and/or mathematics proficiency targets through the AYP status model or safe harbor can still make AYP through a provision in NCLB called the Growth Model. The Growth Model applies only to those subgroups that did not meet the reading or mathematics targets through the status model or safe harbor. The state has also set annual objectives for the reading and math proficiency based on the ultimate goal to have 100% of all students proficient in both reading and mathematics by 2013-14. For 2006-07, the state objective for reading is to have at least 51% of all students and each subgroup "on track to be proficient". For 2006-07, the state objective for math is to have at least 56% of all students and each subgroup "on track to be proficient". These criteria reflect the same percentages as those applied to the AYP status model AMOs for reading and for math.

For Florida students in the AYP calculation, the growth model is applied to individuals to determine whether, for the applicable year, the student is "on track" to be proficient by the final year of a three-year projected growth trajectory. For a subgroup to meet the AYP performance criteria under the growth model, the subgroup must have a sufficient percentage of students who are on track to be proficient to meet the applicable annual objectives by subject area.

For most students included in the state's growth model (those with at least two years of assessment data), determining whether the student is on track to be proficient involves the following steps:

a. Identify the student's prior year Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Developmental Scale Score (DSS). The DSS is a continuous scale used from grade 3 through grade 10.

b. Locate the student's baseline score based on the grade levels found in Table Set A (on the next page).

c. Calculate the difference between the student's baseline score and the target year's proficiency found in Table Set B (shown after Table Set A).

d. Determine whether the difference between the baseline and target year has been closed by 33.3% (one third) between the prior year and current year. If so, the student will be included as "on track to be proficient."

Grades and tests used for trajectory growth and the percent of closing needed per year can be found in Table Set A. The annual measurable DSS scores can be found in Table Set B.

Example of Growth Model Application

The following table provides an example of Florida's growth model as applied to a sample fourth-grader in 2007 for whom a three-year projected growth trajectory is established for reading. (The trajectory for math is calculated separately.) Hypothetical scores for the student as a fifth-grader in 2008 and as a sixth-grader in 2009 are included only for purposes of illustration.

Since the student is a fourth grader in 2007, and 2007 is the year in which the student's three-year trajectory is established, the student's 2006 grade 3 FCAT DSS score in reading (1205) is the baseline that anchors his three-year projected trajectory toward proficiency. The DSS reading score required for proficiency in year 3 of the trajectory (for this student, the grade 6 DSS score required for proficiency in reading) is 1622. The gap between the targeted Year 3 DSS proficiency score and the student's actual baseline score is 417:

$$1622 - 1205 = 417$$

The resulting "gap" value is important, because it is the value that is divided by 3 (for each year in the trajectory) to determine the amount added to the student's baseline DSS score to establish the DSS target score for Year 1 and to establish the target score for Year 2 in the trajectory. Thus, 417 ÷ 3 = 139. The value of 139 (or 1/3 of 417) is added to the baseline score of 1205 to establish the target score of 1344 in Year 1. In turn, 139 is added to Year 1's target score of 1344 to establish Year 2's target score of 1483. By Year 3, the target score is the actual DSS score required for proficiency.

Growth Model Trajectory and Results Established for a Sample Fourth Grader in 2007

Year in Trajectory >	**Baseline**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
Grade Tested >	3	4	5	6
Year of Testing >	2006	2007	2008	2009
Student's Actual Reading Developmental Score	**1205**	1475	**1480**	**1675**
DSS Score for Proficiency	1198	1456	1510	1622
Cut score needed to be "on track to be proficient" -- **Target score** >	NA	1344 (1205 + 1/3 of 417*) ~ (1205 + 139)	1483 (1205 + 2/3 of 417*) ~ (1344 + 139)	**1622** (1205 + 417*)
Is student "on track to be proficient" ?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

* 417 = gap between baseline score (1205) and Year 3 proficiency score (1622).

The target scores for this trajectory would remain in place for the student through Year 3 of the trajectory, contingent on continued enrollment.

Table Set A – Calculation of Growth Model Trajectory Benchmarks

Table A1. Grades and Tests Used for Trajectory Growth and the Percent of Closing Needed Per Year

Grade Of Enrollment	Test Used As The Basis For Trajectory	Test Used As Target For Proficiency	Years In Trajectory	Percent Of Difference Closed Per Year
3	3	6	3	33.3%
4	3	6	3	33.3%
5	4	7	3	33.3%
6	5	8	3	33.3%
7	6	9	3	33.3%
8	7	10	3	33.3%
9	8	10	3	33.3%
10	9	10	2	50%

The trajectory benchmarks are built individually for students and separately for reading and for mathematics. Therefore, a student will have a trajectory based on his/her baseline mathematics score and a proficiency cut score for mathematics which is separate from the student's trajectory, baseline score, and proficiency cut score for reading.

The following table displays the performance expected of students to be counted as "on track to be proficient" in the growth model calculation.

Table A2. The Amount of Required Improvement in Terms of Decrease in the Distance Between Baseline Performance and Proficiency Benchmark in the Target Grade

Trajectory Year In Consecutive State-Tested Grades	Decrease From Baseline Assessment In Performance Discrepancy
1	33.3% of original gap
2	66.6% of original gap
3	Student must be proficient

Table Set B – Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Developmental Scale Scores

The FCAT vertical developmental scale score accounts for an increased score for the "same" performance level cut point at every higher grade, as shown on the following charts.

Reading developmental scale scores (86 to 3008) for each achievement level on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test:

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	86-1045	1046-1197	1198-1488	1489-1865	1866-2514
4	295-1314	1315-1455	1456-1689	1690-1964	1965-2638
5	474-1341	1342-1509	1510-1761	1762-2058	2059-2713
6	539-1449	1450-1621	1622-1859	1860-2125	2126-2758
7	671-1541	1542-1714	1715-1944	1945-2180	2181-2767
8	886-1695	1696-1881	1882-2072	2073-2281	2282-2790
9	772-1771	1772-1971	1972-2145	2146-2297	2298-2943
10	844-1851	1852-2067	2068-2218	2219-2310	2311-3008

Mathematics developmental scale scores (375 to 2709) for each achievement level on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test:

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	375-1078	1079-1268	1269-1508	1509-1749	1750-2225
4	581-1276	1277-1443	1444-1657	1658-1862	1863-2330
5	569-1451	1452-1631	1632-1768	1769-1956	1957-2456
6	770-1553	1554-1691	1692-1859	1860-2018	2019-2492
7	958-1660	1661-1785	1786-1938	1939-2079	2080-2572
8	1025-1732	1733-1850	1851-1997	1998-2091	2092-2605
9	1238-1781	1782-1900	1901-2022	2023-2141	2142-2596
10	1068-1831	1832-1946	1947-2049	2050-2192	2193-2709

Growth Model Application for Students without Two Years of FCAT DSS Scores

Third-Graders

*"O*n track to be proficient" for third grade students who do not have a prior year data will be determined by proficiency (i.e., if the student scores at a proficient level, he/she is included in the growth model numerator). All third grade students without prior year data will be included in the growth model and considered "on track to be proficient" if they are currently proficient in third grade. If the third grade student is not proficient and does not have prior year data, then the student would be included in the growth model as NOT "on track to be proficient."

Students Administered Alternate Assessments (in lieu of FCAT)

Students who use alternate assessments are not on the FCAT developmental scale and will have growth calculated based on improving achievement levels or maintaining a proficient level. Student may not decrease achievement levels in order to be considered "on track to be proficient."

Additional Information on Florida's growth model for AYP can be found in the AYP technical assistance paper via a link at the bottom of this web page: http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/ (see "Adequate Year Progress Technical Assistance Paper . . . ").

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Appendix K

USED Letter Approving Florida's Assessment System

ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Florida Assessment Letter

(URL: http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/fl3.html)

June 27, 2007

Honorable Jeanine Blomberg
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Commissioner Blomberg:

I am pleased to approve Florida's assessment system under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). I congratulate you on meeting this important NCLB requirement.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Florida. I have concluded that the evidence demonstrates that Florida's standards and assessment system satisfies the NCLB requirements. Specifically, Florida's system includes academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; student achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics; alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in reading/language arts and mathematics; grade-level assessments in each of grades 3-8 and high school in reading/language arts and mathematics; and alternate assessments in each of grades 3-8 and high school in reading/language arts and mathematics for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities on the Independent and Supported levels. As such, the status of Florida's system is Full Approval with Recommendations. This status means that Florida's standards and assessment system meets all statutory and regulatory requirements; however, some elements of the system could be improved. The Florida Alternate Assessment Report (FAAR) on the Independent and Supported levels meet the essential requirements of NCLB, but we recommend Florida strengthen the alignment of its alternate assessment to the related academic content standards.

Please be aware that approval of Florida's assessment system under NCLB is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Finally, please remember that, if Florida makes significant changes in its assessment system, the State must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval. For its reading and mathematics assessment system components, Florida has agreed to count students who took the FAAR on the Participatory leveling in the 2006-07 school year, in reading and mathematics, as non-participants in the assessment process for NCLB accountability due to the fact that this level is not linked to grade-level content. I understand Florida is planning to implement a new alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards to replace the FAAR, which will no longer be

used after the 2006-07 school year. Please note that this approval does not include this new assessment. Florida will need to submit additional evidence to the Department for review and approval when Florida implements this assessment in the 2007-08 school year.

We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. Please accept my congratulations for your State's approved standards and assessment system under NCLB. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Florida.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Governor Charlie Crist
Jay Pfeiffer, Director, Accountability Research & Measurement

Appendix L

Proficient Scale Scores by Grade Cluster,
Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA)

Oral Skills (listening and Speaking) grade cluster scale scores by English Language Proficiency Level				
Grade Clusters	Beginning	Low Intermediate	High Intermediate	Proficient
K-2	495-632	633-649	650-672	673-755
3-5	560-675	676-697	698-719	720-805
6-8	565-680	681-712	713-732	733-830
9-12	580-681	682-713	714-738	739-835

Writing grade cluster scale scores by English Language Proficiency Level				
Grade Clusters	Beginning	Low Intermediate	High Intermediate	Proficient
K-2	515-636	637-657	658-689	690-775
3-5	575-674	675-702	703-726	727-825
6-8	580-687	688-719	720-745	746-845
9-12	600-689	690-720	721-745	746-850

Reading grade cluster scale scores by English Language Proficiency Level				
Grade Clusters	Beginning	Low Intermediate	High Intermediate	Proficient
K-2	345-545	546-628	629-689	690-800
3-5	590-689	690-714	715-733	734-810
6-8	600-713	714-741	742-758	759-815
9-12	605-743	744-761	762-777	778-820

Prepared by

The Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement

Florida Department of Education
Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner
www.fldoe.org