

Florida's Standards-based Accountability System Primer

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Executive Summary

For decades, Florida has been using standards and assessments that have contributed to increasing levels of achievement by our students and schools. Florida's standards are unique to our state and designed to prepare students for success in higher education and the workforce.

Timeline

Standards were first adopted in Florida in the 1970's when students' expectations varied widely and poor and minority students were falling behind. Florida's standards have always been and continue to be tailored to our state's education system to address the academic needs of our students.

- In 1971, Florida established statewide assessments for students to gauge academic proficiency at certain grade levels.
- In 1977, Florida established minimum student performance expectations and standards.
- Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Florida implemented statewide assessments for various subject matters and for many different grades.
- In 1991, Florida enacted Blueprint 2000 to revise standards and assessments and to create a statewide accountability system.
- In 1996, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the Sunshine State Standards.
- The FCAT was first administered in 1998.
- In 1999, Florida implemented the school grading system proposed by Gov. Jeb Bush.
- In 2008, under the leadership of Speaker Marco Rubio, the Legislature enacted legislation that required the SBE to review the Sunshine State Standards and replace them with the more rigorous Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS).
- In 2010, the SBE adopted updated NGSSS in English language arts (ELA) and math.
- In February 2014, the SBE adopted changes to standards based on public input and renamed NGSSS as Florida Standards.
- In March of 2014, the Florida Department of Education selected the American Institutes for Research as the new assessment provider for statewide standardized assessments of student academic performance under the new standards.
- In the spring of 2015, the Florida Standards Assessments in ELA and math were administered for the first time in grades 3 through 8.

Responsibilities

Florida's education system is a shared effort between the Legislature, Commissioner of Education, State Board of Education, and District School Boards, with the bulk of the responsibility falling at the district level.

- **The State/Legislature** is constitutionally required to make “adequate provision . . . for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education.” Consistent with this duty, the Legislature enacts laws establishing statewide education policy, appropriates funds for the education system, and establishes the framework for standards-based education accountability for students, teachers, and schools.
- **The State Board of Education**, under the constitution, “has such supervision of the system of free public education as is provided by law.” Accordingly, the State Board of Education adopts, reviews, and revises Florida’s standards; selects and sets passing scores on state assessments; and monitors changes to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The state board also appoints the Commissioner of Education.
- **The Commissioner of Education** is the chief educational officer of the state, the sole custodian of the K-20 data warehouse, and is “responsible for giving full assistance to the State Board of Education in enforcing compliance with the mission and goals of the K-20 education system, except for the State University System.” (s. 1001.10(1), F.S.) The commissioner proposes standards, designs and implements state assessments, and sets the schedule for adoption of instructional materials for use by school districts.
- **The District School Boards** are required by the constitution to “operate, control, and supervise all free public schools within the school district . . .” District school boards also implement standards, select curriculum, administer state and local assessments, monitor student progress, hold teachers accountable, select and adopt instructional materials, and report data to DOE.

Results

Since standards-based accountability was enacted in Florida, it has been instrumental in raising the academic achievement of all Florida students compared to the nation.

- Standards define by grade level the essential concepts and skills that all students are expected to know.
- Florida’s standards have helped narrow the achievement gap and helped students meet rising graduation requirements.
- Changing the standards while they are being implemented would result in lost time, lost money, and lost accountability for student learning.

Facts

There are many misconceptions about what Florida's standards are and are not. The fact is that standards do not prescribe what curriculum should be taught, which instructional materials should be used, or how students should be taught.

- Florida's standards describe what students must learn at each grade level; curriculum, which is the responsibility of districts, schools, and teachers, provides for the specific content taught and the instructional methods and materials used by teachers.
- Florida's standards establish a set of clear, consistent, and strong academic expectations that prepare students to be promoted from grade to grade and to graduate from high school ready for success in higher education and the workforce.
- Florida's English language arts (ELA) standards help students acquire higher levels of literacy through a balance of literature and informational texts.
- Florida's math standards require deeper understanding of important concepts and skills that are necessary for success in higher education and the workforce.
- Instructional materials adoption in Florida is an open, competitive, free-market process. Districts select the instructional materials they purchase.
- The new statewide assessments are aligned to Florida's ELA and math standards and promote more critical and analytical thinking by students.

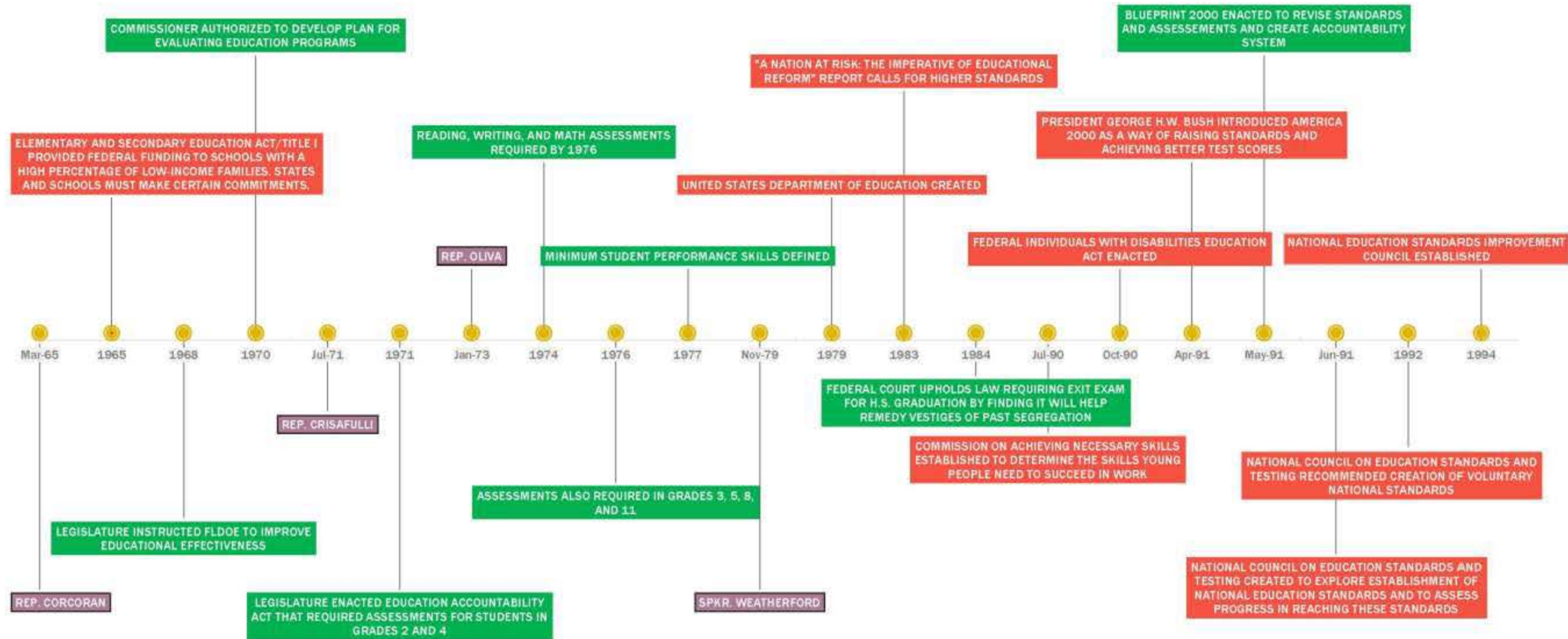
HB 7069

After the original development of this document in January of 2015, HB 7069 became law. The bill addressed concerns raised by school districts, parents, and other stakeholders with respect to assessments, teacher evaluations, and student progression. The bill:

- **Allows school districts to start school as early as August 10 each year.**
- **Reduces excessive testing by:**
 - **Eliminating the 11th grade English Language Arts assessment.**
 - **Making administration of the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test to 11th graders optional.**
 - **Eliminating prescriptive remediation and progress monitoring requirements for low-performing students and providing for targeted instructional support in reading for K-3 students.**
 - **Allowing districts to choose how to measure student performance in courses not associated with state assessments and prohibiting final exams in addition to state end-of-course assessments.**
 - **Limiting administration of state and local assessments to no more than 5% of a student's total school hours and requiring written parental consent for local assessments that exceed the cap.**

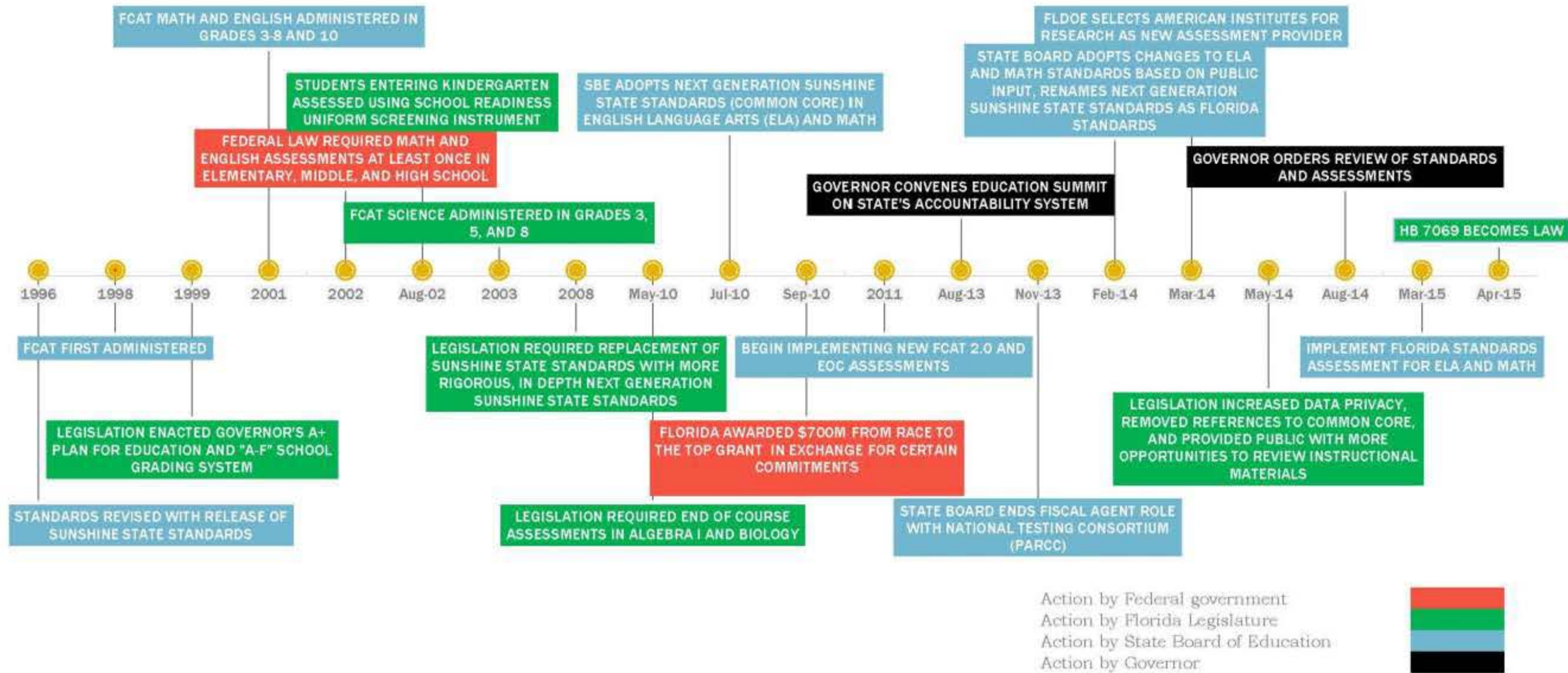
- **Helps to provide clearer information to parents and the public by:**
 - **Requiring the Department of Education, school districts, and public schools to publish a uniform assessment calendar and specifying information to be included in the calendar.**
 - **Requiring districts to provide local assessment results to teachers and parents within 30 days.**
 - **Requiring future state testing contracts to provide assessment results by the end of the school year.**
- **Reduces test administration burdens on schools by allowing teacher assistants and other district employees to administer state assessments.**
- **Lowers the emphasis on student test scores in evaluating education personnel by reducing student performance from 50 percent of a teacher’s or administrator’s evaluation to one third.**
- **Specifies professional development activities for teachers rated less than “effective.”**
- **Requires the state board to publish a comparison of instructional personnel district evaluation and state performance results.**

PART I. Timeline of standards-based accountability



- Action by Federal government
- Action by Florida Legislature
- Action by State Board of Education
- Action by Governor
- Birth date

PART I. Timeline of standards-based accountability (continued)



PART II. Responsibilities for Florida's K-12 Standards-Based Accountability System

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FLORIDA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM?

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS

- Implement standards
- Administer state & local assessments
- Monitor student progress
- Select curriculum
- Select & adopt instructional materials
- Report data to DOE

COMMISSIONER

- Serves as state's Chief Education Officer
- Propose standards for adoption
- Design & implement statewide assessment system
- Adopt list of instructional materials districts may choose

STATE BOARD

- Adopt standards
- Select & set passing scores on statewide assessments
- Monitor changes to student privacy protections
- Implement, coordinate, and supervise the system of free public education

LEGISLATURE

- Establish statewide education policy and accountability system
- Appropriate funds for education
- Set grade levels and subject areas included in the statewide assessment system

Constitutional provisions

- **The State/Legislature—Art. IX, s. 1.(a), Fla. Const.** The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require.
- **State Board of Education—Art. IX, s. 2, Fla. Const.** The state board of education shall be a body corporate and have such supervision of the system of free public education as is provided by law. The state board of education shall consist of seven members appointed by the governor to staggered 4-year terms, subject to confirmation by the senate. The state board of education shall appoint the commissioner of education.
- **District School Boards—Art. IX, s. 4(b), Fla. Const.** The school board shall operate, control and supervise all free public schools within the school district and determine the rate of school district taxes within the limits prescribed herein.

Components and Responsible Entities

➤ **Academic Standards**

- **Legislature** – establishes the subject areas for which the State Board of Education (SBE) must adopt standards, but is not otherwise involved in adopting academic standards. (s. 1003.41, F.S.)
- **Commissioner of Education** –develops and submits proposed standards for review and comment by Florida educators, school administrators, postsecondary institution representatives, business and industry leaders, and the public. (s. 1003.41, F.S.)
- **State Board of Education** – adopts and periodically revises Florida’s standards as proposed by the commissioner. (s. 1001.03(3), F.S.)
- **District School Boards** – implement the standards adopted by the SBE. (s. 1001.41, F.S.)

➤ **State Assessments**

- **Legislature** – establishes the grades and subject areas to be assessed using state assessments, including end-of-course assessments. (s. 1008.22, F.S.); appropriates funds for the purchase, development, and administration of state assessments.

- **State Board of Education** –establishes, by rule, a passing score for each statewide, standardized assessment. (s. 1008.22(3)(e), F.S.)
- **Commissioner of Education** – designs and implements the statewide, standardized assessment program aligned to the standards. (s. 1008.22(3), F.S.)
- **District School Boards** – administer the statewide, standardized assessments.

➤ *Local Assessments*

- **Legislature** – requires district school boards to establish a comprehensive plan for student progression, assess student mastery of course content, and provides flexibility to district school boards when selecting and implementing local assessments. (s. 1008.22(6), F.S.)
- **District School Boards** – select and administer a local assessment that measures student mastery of course content for subjects and grade levels not assessed by statewide, standardized assessments. (s. 1008.22(6)(b), F.S.) Some district school board student progression plans use such assessments to monitor the academic progress of students. (s. 1008.25(2), F.S.)

The changes made by HB 7069 (2015) provided school districts full control in choosing how to measure student performance in courses not associated with a statewide assessment. The bill also clarified that a district-selected or district-developed end-of-course assessment is not required for such courses.

➤ *Curriculum*

- **District School Boards** – “operate, control, and supervise” the public schools within the district. This includes the selection of curriculum.

➤ *Instructional Materials*

- **Legislature** –appropriates funds for the purchase of instructional materials by districts; sets a 5-year term of adoption for instructional materials; and requires district school boards to use 50% of the instructional materials allocation to purchase digital or electronic instructional materials that align with state standards and are on the state-adopted list.
- **Commissioner of Education** – annually determines the areas in which instructional materials must be submitted for state adoption, including the number of titles for adoption in each area, and appoints state and/or national experts to review and evaluate the content. (s. 1006.29, F.S.)

- **District School Boards** – select and provide adequate instructional materials, aligned to the standards, for all students. (s. 1006.28, F.S.) Each board must provide a process for public review of, public comment on, and adoption of all instructional materials, whether selected from the state-adopted list or through a district-established program. (s. 1006.40(5)(b), F.S.) Boards must establish a process by which parents may contest the adoption of an instructional material and must also establish a process by which parents may object to their child’s use of an instructional material. (s. 1006.28(1), F.S.)

➤ **Student Records**

- **Legislature** – restricts the use of social security numbers, prohibits districts from collecting, obtaining, or retaining information on the political affiliation, voting history, religious affiliation, or biometric information of a student or a parent or sibling of the student, and requires district school boards to consider whether designating directory information would put students at risk of becoming targets of marketing campaigns, the media, or criminal acts. (1002.222, F.S.)
- **State Board of Education** – monitors changes to federal law (FERPA) and advises the Legislature if state law should be amended. (s. 1002.22(3), F.S.)
- **Commissioner of Education** – maintains the confidentiality of student records while implementing and overseeing the statewide accountability system.
- **District School Boards** – maintain the confidentiality of student records while reporting assessment results, attendance, graduation rates, and discipline data to DOE.

PART III. Results of Florida’s standards-based accountability system

Florida’s statewide standardized assessments measure student achievement and learning gains relative to Florida’s standards.

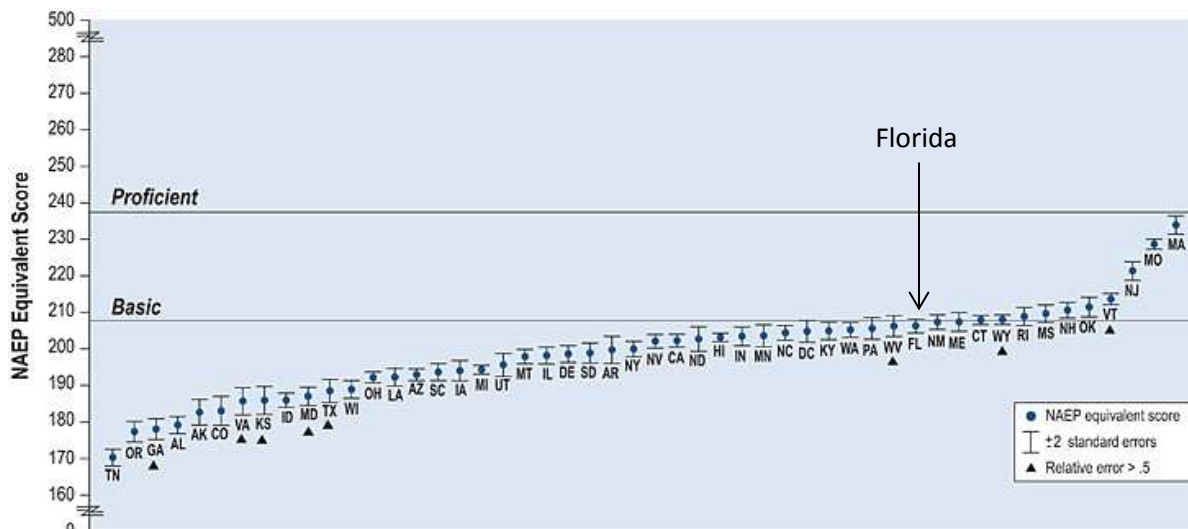
In Florida, assessments are not used to measure “intelligence” or to sort students based upon ability. Instead, assessments are used to measure students’ mastery of the expectations established in the standards. Prior to standards-based reform, many functionally illiterate students were awarded high school diplomas. In the landmark *Debra P. v. Turlington* decision, the court upheld the law that conditioned award of a high school diploma on passage of a competency exam that measured what students were actually taught in Florida’s schools. The court found that “(1) that students were actually taught test skills, (2) that vestiges of past intentional segregation do not cause the [exam’s] disproportionate impact on blacks, and (3) that use of the [exam] as a diploma sanction will help remedy the vestiges of past segregation.” *Debra P. v. Turlington*, 730 F.2d 1405, 1416 (11th Cir. 1984).

Statewide, standardized assessments aligned to Florida’s standards help to determine whether the instruction provided to students, using locally selected curriculum, is preparing students based upon Florida’s expectation of what the student should know and be able to do. In addition to state requirements, local school boards have discretion to determine how other assessments are used.

Florida’s implementation of academic standards has raised student performance expectations

Florida’s standards define the essential grade-by-grade concepts and skills that students are expected to know and be able to do. Over time, standards have progressed from the minimum acceptable levels of performance to desirable, or expected, levels of performance. Florida’s student performance expectations are among the highest in the nation. The following figure demonstrates the difference between state student performance standards and the standards measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which determines and reports the status and trends of each state over time in educational achievement.

NAEP scale equivalents of state grade 4 reading standards for proficient performance, by state: 2009



▲ Inferences based on estimates with relative error greater than .5 may require additional evidence.

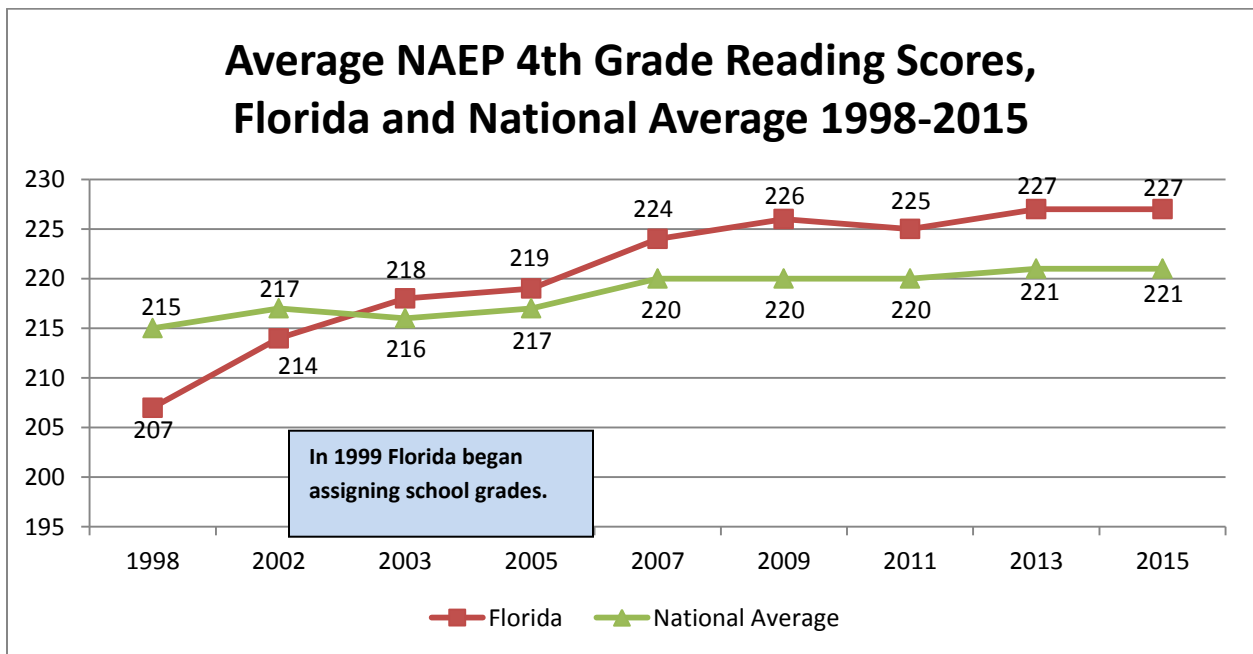
Standards-based accountability has been instrumental in raising the academic achievement of Florida students, closing achievement gaps, and raising graduation rates.

Florida’s focus on standards and assessments can be traced back to the 1970’s. The use of statewide, standardized assessments identified significant gaps in student achievement. In 1999, when school grades were instituted, Florida still had wide achievement gaps in every area. In 1998, the 4th grade reading, average score demonstrated a:

- 31 point gap between white and black students
- 19 point gap between white and Hispanic students
- 30 point gap between affluent and poor students

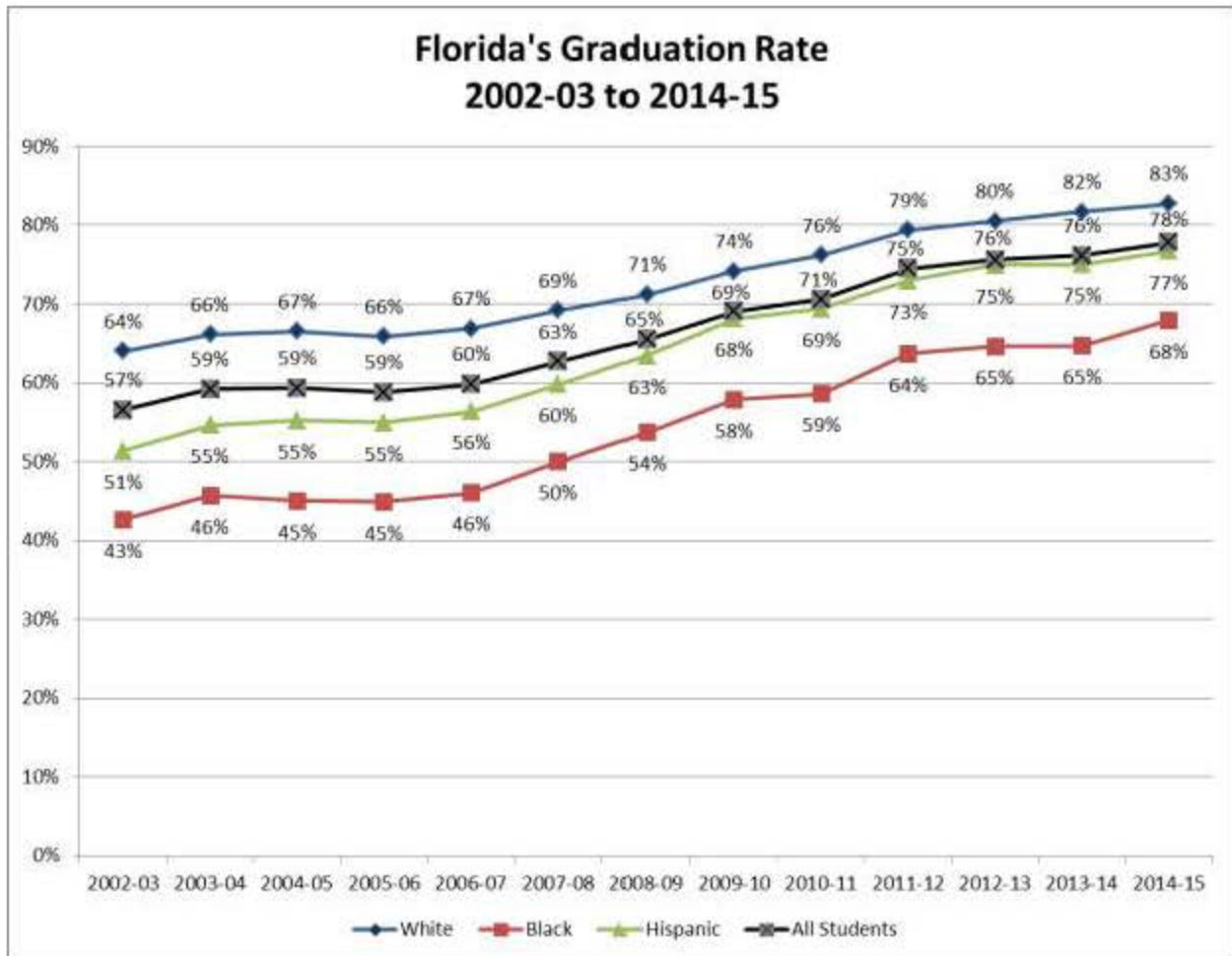
Since that time, the gaps have narrowed. In 2013 the average 4th grade reading score demonstrated a:

- 24 point gap between white and black students (7 point improvement)
- 11 point gap between white and Hispanic students (8 point improvement)
- 24 point gap between affluent and poor students (6 point improvement)



Florida’s system of measuring school, teacher, and student performance has yielded better results than the previous policies of social promotion. The standards-based system better equips schools to provide their students the opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

After implementation of a standards-based accountability system, Florida saw marked achievement gains, especially for minority student subgroups. For example, since 1999, Florida’s graduation rate has risen by more than 25 points from 60.2 percent (including GEDs) to 76.1 percent (excluding GEDs). While all Florida students have improved, minority students have made the strongest gains.



PART IV. Facts about Florida’s accountability system

Standards

Florida’s standards:

- Are benchmarks that establish the academic knowledge and skills students need to acquire at each grade level and in each content area.
- Provide structure for the scope and sequence of student learning expectations that can be assessed so parents and teachers know how their students are learning.
- Are a set of clear, consistent, and strong year-by-year academic standards that are designed to prepare students to be successful high school graduates.
- Are not curriculum—the standards describe what students must learn; the curriculum and instructional materials, which are the responsibility of districts, schools, and teachers, present the specific content taught and the instructional methods and materials used for teaching and learning.

Florida’s standards were developed by the state, not the federal government or national groups.

- Florida has established student performance expectations and standards since 1977.
- The federal government has never been involved in the development or adoption of Florida’s standards. The standards can be reviewed and updated at any time by Florida’s State Board of Education without federal or other external interference.
- The standards “movement” grew out of frustration in the 1970s with a fragmented public school system in which expectations for students varied widely and poor and minority students were falling behind.
- Florida’s standards were developed to require that all students have access to quality academic content at each grade level.
- Florida’s standards were developed after reviewing standards from other states and top-performing countries.
- Content experts, Florida educators, parents, students, and citizens have participated in developing and reviewing Florida’s standards numerous times since 1977 (1985, 1995, 1996, 2007-2012, and 2013-2014).
- Florida’s process for developing and reviewing standards has been used as a guide by other states.
- Florida’s standards demand a high level of critical thinking and the use of evidence to support conclusions.

Florida’s ELA standards help students acquire higher levels of literacy.

- Today’s information-based economy demands a higher level of literacy than ever before. Students must be able to read for both literature and information.

- Mounting research shows that reading comprehension and vocabulary are best enhanced by subject-matter knowledge. Florida’s standards are structured, beginning in kindergarten, to develop reading skills through a balance of literature and informational texts. This grade-by-grade approach builds a body of general knowledge that develops the reading comprehension and application skills needed in higher education and the workforce.
- Fictional works, such as classical literature and Shakespeare, still form the basis of English language arts courses. However, Florida’s standards encourage the increased use of informational text instruction, including the use of original writings like the U.S. Constitution, to enhance student knowledge in subjects such as social studies.
- Florida’s standards require students to support answers by citing evidence found in reading passages and research. This is a key critical thinking skill.

Sample Grade 11 ELA Standard

Strand: Language Standards

Cluster 3: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Standard #: LAFS.1112.L.3.6 – Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Cognitive Complexity Level: Level 2: Basic Application of Skills & Concepts

Subject(s): English Language Arts

Grade Level: 1112

An 11th grade student enrolled in English III orally, with support from technology, presents an informative essay that is time bound and includes:

- *An articulated topic from grade level content*
- *Academic vocabulary related to the grade level content*
- *Research citations*
- *Grammatical precision, and*
- *Informs the audience*

Florida’s math standards require deeper understanding of important concepts and skills.

- Florida’s math standards focus deeply on the most important concepts and skills necessary for understanding math. Instead of simply learning to plug numbers into a formula or memorizing rules, students develop an understanding of why a formula works and learn how to use the formula in real world applications.
- Florida’s math standards provide students the intellectual flexibility and computational fluency to apply math in new situations and choose the best way to solve a problem. The standards also prepare students to explain what they are doing when they solve a problem and use math to analyze a situation. This ability to genuinely use math is valued by businesses and is necessary in quantitative disciplines.
- Florida’s math standards systematically and coherently specify the topics and connections needed for math to make sense and promote understanding and accuracy.

- Florida’s math standards connect concepts and skills students learn at each grade level, building upon the foundation established in previous grades. The complex computations students are expected to perform in later grades are rooted in the knowledge and skills students acquire beginning in kindergarten.

Sample Grade 8 Math Standard

Strand: Mathematics Standards

Cluster 6: Attend to Precision

Standard #: MAF.S K12.MP.6. – Attend to precision

Cognitive Complexity Level: Level 3: Strategic Thinking & Complex Reasoning

Subject(s): Mathematics

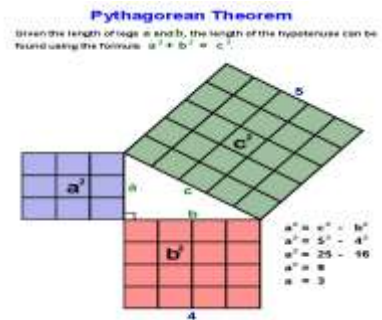
Grade Level: K12

An 8th grade Geometry student attending to precision in meeting standard MAF.S 8. G.2.6. would be able to orally explain and justify a mathematical proof using the Pythagorean Theorem and its Converse, which applies to right triangles, where “a” and “b” represent two sides of the triangle and “c” represents the hypotenuse. The student would be able to:

Use clear definitions in discussion and in their own reasoning

Use symbolic language accurately

State the meaning of symbols they choose, including using the equal sign consistently and appropriately



Florida’s standards enhance digital literacy, which is an essential element of student learning in today’s world.

- Digital literacy is imperative in education and in careers—today’s students learn in ways unimaginable only a decade ago, with vast amounts of information made instantly available to them through the internet. Technology must be used in teaching to connect with students and to prepare them for the future.
- Florida’s standards support student digital literacy and skill proficiency.
- The standards do not mandate the purchase or use of any specific electronic materials or devices. Each school district decides which devices and materials are used in the classroom.
- The standards help students to evaluate the accuracy and source of internet content and use it appropriately. School principals and teachers are responsible for supervising any activity involving internet use at school and on school-owned devices.

Sample Grade 6 Writing Standard

Strand: Writing Standards

Cluster 2: Production and Distribution of Writing

Standard #: LAFS.6. W.2.6 – Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills and to type a minimum of three pages in a single setting.

Cognitive Complexity Level: Level 2: Basic Application of Skills & Concepts

Subject(s): English Language Arts

Grade Level(s): 6

Example Lesson Plan—Grandparent Interview

- *Students will interview a grandparent, relative, or friend on their perspective of a famous event in history and write a news article based upon the interview.*
- *They research the event, using a variety of sources, to develop questions to ask during the interview.*
- *Students will type their paper for peer review before giving a final copy to their teacher.*
- *The teacher will create a computer-based template and compile a class newspaper for the class to enjoy and share their work.*

Assessments

Assessments measure how well students learn standards and help hold districts and schools accountable for student learning.

- Assessing how well students have mastered Florida’s standards provides parents with objective information on how their child is doing; identifies struggling students and schools to make sure they receive the help and resources they need to be successful; provides information on whether state policies and interventions are working; and provides for accountability to taxpayers whose funds pay for education.
- Florida, through the Commissioner of Education, has sole authority to select the statewide assessments used to measure student achievement of its standards. The federal government currently requires states to administer standardized tests annually to show that our students are learning but has never required the selection of any specific assessment.
- Statewide standardized tests are administered in English Language Arts in grades 3 through 10, math in grades 3 through 8, and as end-of-course (EOC) assessments when students complete Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry, Civics, Biology I, and U.S. History.

Florida’s assessments are selected by the state.

- Since 1971, Florida has selected and developed the assessments to measure student performance.
- Governor Rick Scott issued an executive order in 2013 which directed the Department of Education to remove itself as the fiscal agent of the consortia of states committed to using

English language arts and math assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a multi-state consortium.

- During a competitive bidding process, Florida reviewed five proposals and selected the non-profit American Institutes for Research to develop statewide assessments aligned to the new Florida Standards for ELA and math. The assessments were administered for the first time in 2015.

Assessments provide teachers and schools information to drive results.

- Testing gives teachers and schools vital information, particularly in critical subject areas like math and English, on what is working, how well students are learning, and what needs improvement.
- Information from assessments helps school leaders, teachers, and students to receive the services and support needed to be successful and helps prevent students from being left behind or promoted without necessary knowledge and skills.

Testing is a critical component of Florida's school accountability system.

- Standardized assessments were introduced to provide accountability for students, teachers, and schools and to reverse social promotion policies that awarded high school diplomas regardless of the student's academic ability.
- The goal of these assessments is to understand where the strengths and weaknesses are in our educational system and to measure students' learning so they graduate with the skills needed to succeed in college or the workforce.

Shading:

Abbreviations:

Required statewide assessment	Required by state and federal law	District-determined measure of student performance
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EOC-End of Course Assessment
 FCAT-Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

State and Federal Testing requirements in Florida for K-12 Public School Students

Red highlighting Indicates Assessments Students **Must Pass** for Promotion or Graduation

STATE LAW REQUIRES

FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES

- Statewide standardized English language arts (grades 3-11) and math assessments (grades 3-8, Algebra I & Geometry) since 2001; and a science assessment in (grades 5, 8, and Biology I) since 2003. These assessments form the basis of our school accountability system. The Florida Alternate Assessment offered as an alternative to the Florida Standards Assessment for cognitively impaired students.

- Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, English language arts and math assessments in grades 3-8 and once in high school; and a science assessment once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.

- Since 1999, school districts must measure student performance in courses not associated with a statewide assessment and evaluate instructional personnel.
- Since 2015, districts have **full control** to determine the method by which to measure student performance in such courses. Districts may choose to select or develop an EOC assessment, so long as the course does not already have a state EOC assessment.

- Administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress at a sample of schools in grades 4 and 8, every other year.
- Administration of the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment to certain students identified as English language learners.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) became law on December 10, 2015. Regulations from the US Department of Education are expected in December 2016. Changes to Florida's accountability system may be required once the regulations are finalized.

Level	Grade	Reading, Writing, Math, and Science	Other Subjects						
Elementary	K	<i>Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener must be administered to each kindergarten student within the first 30 school days</i>							
	1								
	2								
		English Language Arts	Math				Science	Social Studies	Courses not measured by Statewide Assessments
	3	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>						
4	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>							
5	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	FCAT						
Middle	6	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>		Civics EOC				
	7	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>						
	8	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	FCAT					
High	9	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>	<i>Algebra I EOC Geometry EOC and Algebra II EOC also satisfy Federal math requirement.</i>	<i>Biology I EOC satisfies federal science requirement.</i>	U.S. History EOC				
	10	<i>Florida Standards Assessment</i>							
	11								
	12								

Sample Test Q & A
Grade 3

7



Select the two correct meanings of the phrase good to go as it is used in the sentence.

"Students who live far apart, students who can't leave home, students who want to take a class they can't take nearby—all they need is a computer and an Internet connection and they're good to go!" (paragraph 6)

- okay to leave
- able to learn quickly
- able to begin
- prepared to travel
- ready to start to learn

Option A: This answer is incorrect. While the literal meaning is the same as "good to go," this is not its meaning as it is used in the sentence.

Option B: This answer is incorrect. Although this phrase suggests that students will be ready to learn, it does not mean that they will learn the subject matter quickly.

Option C: This answer is correct. The phrase means that students have what they need in order to participate for the class. They are ready to begin.

Option D: This answer is incorrect. Although "go" implies actual movement, the passage does not suggest that students will be ready to travel. Rather, the passage illustrates students do not have to travel to learn.

Option E: This answer is correct. The phrase means that the students have all that they need to begin learning the new subject matter.

Sample Test Q & A
Grade 4

4



A bakery uses 48 pounds of flour each day. It orders flour every 28 days.

Create an equation that shows how many pounds of flour the bakery needs to order every 28 days.

$48 \times 28 = 1344$

Other Correct Responses:

- $28 \times 48 = 1,344$
- Any equivalent equation derived from the Commutative Property of Multiplication

Very few tests are truly “high stakes,” and students have multiple opportunities and ways to meet the tests’ requirements.

- Students in the 3rd grade must demonstrate reading proficiency to be promoted. Students may demonstrate reading proficiency through the state test, an alternative test, or a teacher-created portfolio of the child’s work throughout the year.
- The 10th grade English language arts test and the high school Algebra I test are “high stakes” tests that students must pass in order to graduate from high school. It is critically important that students possess a mastery of basic English and mathematics skills before they graduate and go to college or begin their careers.
- Students are provided multiple opportunities before they graduate to retake these assessments or earn a concordant score on another assessment. The state allows multiple opportunities to take these two tests, and students can substitute a PERT, ACT, or SAT score to meet certain graduation requirements.
- At every other grade level, the state reading and math tests are not high stakes, and state law does not require students to pass the test to move on to the next grade. Statewide end-of-

course assessments count towards 30 percent of a student's grade. Students who do not score on grade level receive additional support and intervention through remedial coursework the following school year. Providing additional support to help those students catch up is important.

- District-selected assessments students take in other courses are not high stakes and do not have to be in a standardized test format.
- There have been calls in some quarters to allow students to opt out of testing. The Florida School Board Association has identified numerous consequences associated with opting out of statewide assessments, including:
 - Students would be unable to receive a high school diploma or a Bright Futures scholarship.
 - Students would not be eligible to receive course credit and would be placed in remedial courses.
 - Teachers would be unable to receive salary increases under the performance pay schedule.

Beginning in 1999, local assessments were required by law.

- Districts have flexibility in how to measure student learning in the subjects not measured by statewide assessments
- In the years leading up to HB 7069, testing appeared to increase because:
 - While districts were required to use student performance on tests to evaluate teachers since, the legislature required districts to publish a calendar of all district-mandated assessments for the first time starting in 2013 (s. 1008.22(6)(e), F.S. (2013)); and
 - The term “testing” is used on district assessment calendars to describe any measure of student progress, including traditional textbook exams, progress monitoring, and standardized assessments.
- Districts could use teacher or principal tests or create their own tests, any of which can be “paper and pencil” or computer based.
- Districts could employ different test “formats,” such as a creative writing essay for a creative writing class, a piano recital for a music class, a poetry recitation for a speech class, a debate for debate class, a combination of a written and physical test for a PE class, or building a birdhouse for a carpentry class.

With the passage of HB 7069 in 2015, districts were given full control to determine how to measure student performance in courses without a statewide assessment.

Use of local assessments does not require more time spent testing students or teaching to tests.

- Teachers regularly assess their students through tests, quizzes, projects and final exams. Districts that choose to create end-of-course tests may substitute these tests for final exams. A district-created test does not have to be in addition to a teacher's own tests.

- In almost every grade, 1 percent or less of the 900 hours of instructional time during the school year is used for state tests.
- Local assessments help to determine whether teachers are instructing students in accordance with the state’s academic standards.

Some districts have created additional end-of-course tests instead of using pre-existing final exams.

- Some districts have reported that when they collected all of their teachers’ final exams (in World History or Chemistry, for example) they were surprised at how little correlation there was between what was measured on the final exam and the actual course requirements. In other words, some districts found that teacher-created tests were not actually measuring what students needed to be taught.¹
- A number of districts have chosen to create standardized local assessments so that students would be taught what they need to learn while creating a consistent, equitable district-wide teacher evaluation system.

Computer-based testing is being phased into Florida’s schools and allows for greater instruction time prior to testing.

- It is important to provide teachers with more time to teach and to assess students as late as possible in a school year. In addition, parents and teachers want to see assessment results before the end of the school year. While Florida has been consistently moving the tests later in the year, the best way to ensure more teaching time is to move the tests online so that they can be administered later in the year and scores can be calculated more quickly.
- In addition to funds already regularly appropriated in the FEFP to purchase computers, the Legislature has appropriated additional funds for school districts to purchase computers and increase bandwidth.
- The state is in the process of transitioning to computer-based testing for all grades and courses associated with a statewide ELA or math assessment by the 2017-2018 school year. Students with disabilities will still have the option of paper-based assessments in accordance with their 504 plan or IEP.

¹ Example given is a paraphrase of findings reported by Orange County.

**FLORIDA'S TRANSITION TO COMPUTER-BASED TESTING
FOR STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS 2014–18**

Assessment	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
FLORIDA STANDARDS ASSESSMENTS				
Grade 3 ELA*	PBT	PBT	PBT	1 st year CBT
Grade 3 Mathematics	PBT	PBT	1 st year CBT	CBT
Grade 4 ELA**	PBT	1 st year CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 4 Mathematics	PBT	PBT	1 st year CBT	CBT
Grade 5 ELA**	1 st year CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 5 Mathematics	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 6 ELA**	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 6 Mathematics	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 7 ELA**	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 7 Mathematics	1 st year CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 8 ELA	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 8 Mathematics	1 st year CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 9 ELA	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Grade 10 ELA	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Algebra 1 EOC	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Geometry EOC	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Algebra 2 EOC	New CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
NEXT GENERATION SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS (NGSS) ASSESSMENTS				
Grade 5 Science	PBT	PBT	PBT	PBT
Grade 8 Science	PBT	PBT	PBT	PBT
Algebra 1 EOC (retake)	CBT	CBT	CBT	NLA
Geometry (retake)	CBT	NLA	NLA	NLA
FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake	CBT	CBT	NLA	NLA
FCAT Mathematics Retake	CBT	NLA	NLA	NLA
Biology 1 EOC	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
Civics EOC	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT
U.S. History EOC	CBT	CBT	CBT	CBT

* Grade 3 ELA—PBT Reading Component only (no Writing Component).

** Grades 4–7 ELA—Reading Component is CBT; Writing Component is PBT.

ELA = English Language Arts

PBT = Paper-based test

CBT = Computer-based test

EOC = End-of-Course

NLA = No longer administered

The Department of Education establishes windows for administering statewide assessments. Local districts must establish schedules for administering state and local assessments.

- Assessment windows are periods of time, typically one to two weeks, during which assessments may be administered. Although a testing window may span up to multiple weeks, it does not mean that a student is tested each day.
- The Commissioner of Education must establish assessment windows for statewide assessments during which districts must administer the assessments and report the results. These windows must be published by August 1 each year. Districts choose the exact dates they will administer the assessment.

Florida's standards-based accountability system utilizes criterion-referenced assessments.

Florida's criterion-referenced, statewide assessments are specifically designed by assessment experts under the direction of the state, aligned to the Florida Standards, and vetted by Florida education experts. Beginning in grade 3, Florida uses these statewide assessments as part of its statewide accountability system to:

- Evaluate each student's acquisition of the skills outlined in the Florida Standards;
- Provide academic support to students who are unable to meet specific Florida Standards; and
- Verify that teachers are providing instruction aligned to the Florida Standards.

Changes were made by HB 7069 (2015) to alleviate concerns over excessive statewide assessments, reduce test administration burdens, and provide more information to parents and the public.

- **The statewide, standardized 11th grade ELA assessment was eliminated.**
- **Administration of the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test to 11th graders is no longer required.**
- **Students in a course with a statewide EOC assessment may not be required to take a final exam.**
- **Teacher assistants and other district employees may help administer state assessments.**
- **Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the state board must develop and distribute a uniform assessment calendar to each school district. Each district and public school must fill in the calendar with certain required information, such as testing dates and the time allotted to administer each test, and publish the calendar on its website by October 1 of each year.**
- **Administration of state and local assessments is capped at 5 percent of a student's total hours each year, except with written parental consent.**

- Results from local assessments must be provided to a student’s teacher and parent within 30 days after the assessment is given. Additionally, future contracts for statewide, standardized assessments must require that results be provided to teachers and parents by the end of the school year.
- To improve instruction, teachers must be provided information on student achievement of standards and benchmarks, based on state and local assessments and evaluations used in progress monitoring, when available.

Teacher Evaluation

Teachers are not evaluated based solely on student performance on assessments.

- Half of a teacher’s evaluation is based upon instructional practice such as classroom strategies and behaviors, planning and preparing, and collegiality and professionalism.
- The other half of a teacher’s evaluation is based upon the progress of students they taught for the prior three years on the assessments the districts have chosen to use for this half of the evaluation. Statewide assessments must be used if a state test is given and local assessments are used when there is not a statewide assessment.
- A student’s performance on a particular test is combined with all the students in the class as well as all the students the teacher has taught over the previous three years. The school district then determines how to use these results.

Some teachers’ salaries may be adjusted based on their evaluations.

- By July 1, 2014, local districts were required to adopt pay schedules that provide salary adjustments based on how effectively the teachers teach as indicated by their performance evaluations instead of primarily providing pay raises to teachers based upon their years of teaching and educational degree.
- In 2015, over 98% of teachers in Florida were rated “effective” or “highly effective.” This means that over 98% of Florida teachers would earn a raise based upon how effectively they teach. In no instance is the evaluation used to decrease a teacher’s salary under the new pay schedule.

Locally negotiated salary schedules may provide salary supplements based upon who, what, and where teachers teach.

- Who they teach – Teachers who teach more at-risk and harder to teach students, such as students with disabilities or low-income students, may be rewarded in a district’s pay scale for taking on what can be a more challenging population of students.
- What they teach – Teachers who teach subjects for which there may be few qualified, certified teachers may be rewarded in a district’s pay scale for filling these harder to fill teaching slots (i.e., high school physics).

- Where they teach – Teachers who teach in high poverty schools or lower performing schools may be rewarded in a district’s pay scale for teaching in schools that are more challenging.

Changes were made by HB 7069 (2015).

- **Student performance data was reduced from 50 percent to one third of a teacher’s or administrator’s evaluation.**
- **School districts are allowed to select their own methods for measuring student performance in courses that do not have a statewide assessment.**
- **Districts may determine the proportion of student performance data used in a teacher’s evaluation based on the teacher’s instructional assignment (i.e., what courses or subjects are taught by the teacher).**

Student Information

Florida law goes above and beyond federal law to protect student information.

- Florida law restricts use of social security numbers and expressly forbids districts from collecting certain information about students and their families, including biometric data, political affiliation, voting history, and religious affiliation.
- The federal government does not have access to student-level information housed in Florida’s data system. All information is securely stored with limited access granted only to those who assist schools and districts with data processing.
- The adoption of standards does not affect the type of student information the Department of Education collects.

Instructional Materials

Selection of instructional materials is a local decision.

- The adoption of instructional materials in Florida is an open, competitive, free-market process. Districts select the instructional materials they purchase and are responsible for all instructional materials used in the classroom.
- The federal government does not make decisions about the content of curriculum or instructional materials. Those decisions are made by Florida’s district school boards, superintendents, principals, and teachers.
- The state does not require use of any specific instructional materials in a classroom.
- Districts have two options for adoption:

- Districts may establish their own instructional materials adoption process, which must include the appointment of materials reviewers by the district. Districts that establish their own adoption process are not required to purchase materials from the state list.
 - Districts may select materials that have been reviewed and adopted by the Commissioner of Education. This option enables local school boards to choose from a variety of instructional materials.
- Under either option, districts must make recommended materials available for public review and comment before purchase.
- Districts are required to establish a process by which parents may contest the adoption of an instructional material. Districts must also establish a process by which parents may object to their child's use of an instructional material.