

FAQs on Assessments for Principals

1. When did the Palm Beach County School Board issue the Proclamation on Assessments?

September 19, 2014

2. What are we trying to accomplish?

- Putting democracy into action
- Allows people to have a say and a voice
- Allowing for time for people to speak with their representatives
- Ensure we have valid and reliable accountability system

3. What practices do we support?

- Increased rigor
- Higher Order Thinking Skills
- Higher Standards IF based on a balanced, fair, and reliable system that accurately assesses student performance and teacher effectiveness AND is implemented in a way that is NOT too fast

4. What are some of the reasons that tests are administered?

- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) requires Districts and schools to administer FDOE standardized assessments per State Statute
- Students are required to participate in statewide assessments
- Students are required to demonstrate mastery to be eligible for a high school diploma
- Provides student information for enrichment, remediation, and course placement
- Schools monitor student progress toward mastery of standards to improve instruction
- Provides students and parents with information on strengths and weaknesses for support and resources
- Provides teachers with information so they can provide differentiated support to students toward mastery of standards
- Allows schools to monitor progress toward meeting School Improvement Plan goals

5. What are the Florida Assessments based on?

The Florida Assessments are based on the Florida Standards per Florida Statute.

6. As constitutional agents, can our School Board change the Florida Assessments required?

School Board Members cannot change the law but rather must comply with the law. Only the State Legislators and Governor can change the law.

7. How do the new Florida Standards differ from the old standards?

They require students to:

- Be critical thinkers
- Reason
- Provide evidence to support their thoughts

They require teachers to:

- Change their delivery style

8. Why doesn't our District just *Opt Out* of testing?

Florida Statute 1008.25 requires that each student must participate in the Florida Statewide Standardized Assessment Program. Currently, State law does not provide an avenue for each school district to exempt students from the state-mandated assessments.

9. What do I do if a parent/guardian contacts me and asks that his/her child be removed from testing?

Remind the parent that current law (F.S. 1008.25) does not provide an avenue for the school or district to exempt students from state-mandated assessments.

10. What if they won't accept that their child cannot opt-out?

Conduct an individual parent meeting to explain the benefits of how assessments are used to provide valuable feedback to the teacher on progress monitoring. Review each assessment with them and explain how they are used to support the growth of learning. You might also want to remind them that the student's performance on state assessments is also used in calculating the school's grade.

11. Besides the school, who else would require a signed copy of a refusal letter?

The District is required to follow statutory requirements which do not provide an opt-out of testing. The statute does not provide for an applicable exemption.

12. What, if any, tests absolutely cannot be refused and why?

The District is required to follow statutory requirements which do not provide an opt-out of testing. The statute does not provide for an applicable exemption.

13. Who sees the scores, where will they be recorded, and for what purpose?

The scores are available to the teacher of record, administration and other school staff providing support to the student. Scores are recorded as part of the District’s student information systems.

14. What is the rule for Third Grade Mandatory Retention?

Students in Grade 3 must score an Achievement Level 2 or higher on the statewide, standardized reading assessment, on a scale of 1-5, to be promoted to grade 4. Good cause exemptions are available for Grade 3 students who do not meet this requirement and are stipulated in s.1008.25(6)(b)1.-6., F.S.

15. What about the use of portfolios? What is their purpose?

The Portfolio Process applies to the Grade 3 Exemption. This process is limited to Grade 3 students who performed on Level 1 on State assessments. In previous years, we started portfolios with students not meeting proficiency standards based on our diagnostic test as well as other District assessments.

The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate evidence of the mastery of standards (equivalent to Level 2 performance or above).

16. Why do we have to measure if students are meeting proficiency?

Students are required to participate in the statewide standardized assessment program and meet proficiency standards in Reading to be promoted from Grade 3 to Grade 4. In previous years, students performing in Level 1 could be exempted from the mandatory retention requirements by a method known as *Good Cause Promotion*.

17. What options are there for meeting Good Cause?

- Completing an Academic Portfolio
- Passing an Alternate Assessment approved by the State after completing the Summer Reading Academy – in Palm Beach County that is the SAT-10

18. What must the portfolio contain?

The portfolio must contain evidence collected that will provide an accurate picture of student ability. It should only contain student work independently produced in the classroom, accumulated over an entire year. It must also contain evidence of the Grade 3 benchmarks being met.

19. How can we measure the benchmarks being met?

The evidence of benchmarks being met must include multiple choice questions and passages that are 60% literary and 40% informational. The passages must contain 100-700 words with an average of 500 words. There must be three examples of mastery per benchmark scored at 70% or above.

20. When is the SAT-10 given?

The SAT-10 is given only after the student scores at a Level 1 (or equivalent) on the State assessment and completes the Summer Reading Academy.

21. How do I explain to the parent of a middle or high school student how the state assessments are required for graduation?

Impacts:

- 30% of the student final course grade in the course: Geometry, U.S. History, Civics, Biology, Algebra 2
- Student Graduation Eligibility: Student must participate in Statewide Grade 10 assessment in order to use concordant scores (ACT/SAT) and students must take the Algebra 1 End of Course Exam (EOC) to be eligible for use of comparative scores (PERT)
- Student eligibility for Scholar Diploma Designation with Geometry, Biology 1, US History, and Algebra 2
- Student placement in the appropriate support or remediation courses (Intensive Reading)
- Student placement into advanced courses

22. What other things do the assessments impact?

Impacts:

- School grade accountability
- Participation in Florida School Recognition Program
- Differentiated Accountability monitoring and accountability
- Accreditation which impacts a student's eligibility into post-secondary institutions
- Teacher and administrator evaluations

23. Why do we have to monitor the progress of our students?

Florida Statutes (F.S.) 1008.25 requires that each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics; that district school board policies facilitate such proficiency; and that each student and his or her parent be informed of that student's academic progress.

24. What are the statutes and rules that govern the assessments administered in Palm Beach County?

Some of the statutes and rules are listed below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Florida Statute (F.S.) 1008.22 (Student assessment program for public schools)
- Florida Statute (F.S.) 1008.25 Public school student progression; remedial instruction; reporting requirements
- NCLB Act Section 1111 Title I
- SB 1642 Accountability
- Florida Administrative Code, Rule: 6A-1.09422 FCAT EOC Requirements
- Florida Administrative Code, Rule: 6A-1.09981 Implement SI and Accountability
- Florida Administrative Code, Rule: 6A-1.094223 Concordant Scores SAT ACT PERT
- Bright Futures Handbook
- DA-1_2014-15_DRAFT
- AdvancED Standards for Quality
- SB Policy 8.01 Promotion
- FY14 Elem student progression
- FY14 HS student progression
- Palm Beach ELEM CRRP
- Florida Administrative Code, Rule: 6A-6.053 K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan (CRRP)