

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

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TO: School Board Members

FROM: Katherine Blasik, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent
Research, Evaluation, Assessment & Boundaries

VIA: Frank Till
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT TESTS**

The goal of the District Benchmark Assessment Test (BAT) project is to implement a districtwide benchmark assessment system that will inform instruction and predict status of state/federal accountability measures. As part of the eight step instructional process, frequent and ongoing assessments are critical to move students in the continued direction of demonstrated proficiency on rigorous work. BAT is supported, to a large extent, from formula grant funds (Title II, IV, and V) reallocated to the project. **An analysis of the 2003-04 BAT results in comparison to the 2004 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores indicated that the BAT is a highly predictive assessment and is able to predict which students will score at FCAT Achievement Level 3 or above with an 80-85% accuracy rate.**

In preparing for the 2004-05 school year, each component of the 2003-04 implementation phase (test item construction; administration; training; data analysis, and application of information) was carefully studied in preparation for 2004-05. Recommendations for improvement were received and considered on an ongoing basis from community members and school staff.

Data Analysis: BAT 2004/FCAT 2004

Student results from the 2004 FCAT have been compared to the 2003-04 BAT results. The analysis completed by staff from Research Services and Student Assessment departments demonstrates that the BAT is a strong predictor of FCAT performance. A complete grade analysis of BAT as compared to FCAT is found in the attachment. It was determined that:

- The 2003-04 BAT predicted which students would score at FCAT Achievement level 3 or above with approximately an 85% accuracy
- Items were of high internal consistency, demonstrating that students are not using a random choice method of answering questions
- Benchmarks with the fewest number of questions on the BAT were less useful for informing instruction.

- Data for the 2004-05 school year will identify a cut score on the 2005 BAT that is indicative with 80-85% accuracy whether a student will score at Achievement Level 3 or above on the 2005 FCAT.
- Internal Benchmark data will be able to diagnose issues related to strengths and weaknesses in specific strands.

Data Reporting

In 2004, the BAT results were reported to schools via the Data Warehouse. Reports were configured as follows:

- Grade Level Summary by School: Mathematics
- Grade Level Summary by School: Reading
- Mathematics Benchmark Flag Reports by Teacher
- Reading Benchmark Flag Reports by Teacher
- Mathematics Strand Flag Report by Teacher
- Reading Strand Flag Reports by Teacher

Based on feedback from school staff, refinement of the reporting was implemented for the second administration of the BAT in December 2003 and included access to the above mentioned classroom reports via the Virtual Counselor. Plans for the 2004-05 BAT include updating the report views to include an increased graphic representation of the school/classroom level results.

BAT Administration 2004-05

As indicated in the analysis, benchmarks with too few items may not adequately inform instruction. Based on this information and input from school staff, the BAT format for 2005 will more closely resemble the FCAT administrations in length and depth of questioning. Elementary School students will participate in two administrations during 2004-05. Administration for students in grades 3-5 is scheduled for the weeks of September 20, 2004 and December 13, 2004. However, as per the request of school principals, students in grades 6-10 will participate in only one BAT administration currently scheduled for November 29, 2004 to December 3, 2004.

The basis for this change is twofold. First, development of a more robust test will assist in the goal of informing instruction as the results will give a more guided direction on teaching and learning of specific benchmarks. Second, students in grades 6-10 have a multitude of assessment data already available. To assist in using the already existing data, an Interpretive Guide to Using Data is being developed by the Curriculum Division. The intent of the guide is to provide additional assistance in understanding and using BAT/FCAT data to make informed decisions related to instruction.

In addition to the districtwide administrations, District Curriculum and Instruction/Student Support will provide schools with mini-assessments during the year to help in the 8 Step Process of Instruction. The mini-assessment items have been provided as components of textbook adoption process for Reading and Mathematics. Support will be provided for schools identified as Superintendent Schools in using the mini-assessments through District Coaches and support personnel.

Test Item Construction and Revision

Items on the BAT were developed based on existing Florida Department of Education released items. Each item response data set was analyzed for validity and reliability. Items that needed refinement are being revised for the 2004-05 administration window. Revisions will not affect the FCAT performance prediction rates as these predictions are based on a subset of questions. Recently released FCAT items and items from a purchased item bank will be field tested in future BAT administrations to provide for continuous refreshment and reliability.

Training

Feedback from various groups highlighted the need for an increased level of training in BAT use and application. Although the implementation year saw communications about BAT shared via principal meetings, BECON interactive broadcast discussions, school visit/leadership team conversations; online training through a streaming video and a newly developed BAT website, it is apparent that more intensive communications are required. Planned communication efforts for 2004-05 include presentations via BECON monthly update broadcasts, principals meeting presentations and superintendent school support conversations. In addition, the website listed below will be promoted for ongoing assistance and updates.

[http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/my%20webs2/BAT1\(Home\).htm](http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/my%20webs2/BAT1(Home).htm),

Online Assessment Products

The BAT committee reviewed multiple products, consulted with other large districts and participated in the Council of Great City Schools assessment review to identify existing item banks/online assessment products that could meet Broward's needs. The committee has concluded that test development companies are in the early stages of developing and validating Sunshine State Standard aligned benchmark assessments. Potential products were reviewed for alignment in technology applications, curriculum, item format, data reporting, vendor support and financial impact. None of the reviewed products emerged as viable alternatives to the current BAT project. Additional vendors who may be interested in presenting their product may contact the committee chair, Anne Dilgen, Director, Student Assessment. In addition, the committee is reviewing products that would allow the current BAT items to be managed online for future administrations.

As each phase of the BAT project concludes, information gleaned from that phase will be analyzed and acted upon to ensure the optimal use of resources and the highest level of expected outcomes to assist schools in increasing student achievement. If you have any questions about the project, please contact **me at 754-321-2470 or Anne Dilgen, Director, Student Assessment, at 754-321-4257.**

FT/KAB/AD:sjm
Attachment

cc: Senior Management
Area Directors
Principals
DAC

PTA
BAT Committee