

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESEARCH, EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT & BOUNDARIES**

Katherine Blasik, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent

Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

October 29, 2004

TO: High School Principals
Charter High School Principals
Center Principals

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

VIA: Dr. Verda Farrow, Area Superintendent
South Central Area

SUBJECT: **CHANGE IN FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT)
SCIENCE ADMINISTRATION FROM GRADE 10 TO GRADE 11**

On October 13, 2004, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) issued a memorandum announcing that the FCAT Science Assessment previously administered to grade 10 students will be administered to grade 11 students effective this school year.

According to the DOE memorandum, the rationale behind this change is that high school educators working with the DOE to describe “on-grade level” science achievement for 10th grade students determined that the content that could be described as “on-grade level” for grade 10 students was too limited. Reportedly, science educators in Florida believe that students need to learn more high school science content than can be expected by grade 10. Because the FCAT was designed to assess the full range of Florida’s standards in science, the test includes content from courses, such as biology and chemistry, which many grade 10 students have not yet completed and in which they may not even be enrolled during the 10th grade. As such, the recommendation was made that the FCAT Science Assessment be moved from grade 10 to grade 11.

After conducting a pilot study in the spring of 2004, the DOE has determined that the FCAT Science test items developed for use at grade 10 can be used at grade 11 without additional field testing. Consequently, the 2005 administration of the FCAT Science Assessment to grade 11 students will be used to:

- collect baseline data that will be utilized to establish “on-grade level” expectations in science for high school students,
- identify five levels of achievement expectations (achievement levels), and
- in the near future, for accountability reporting.

Although the FCAT Science Assessment is not one of the requirements for high school graduation, it is included in the A+ Plan School Grading System. Beginning in June of 2006, the DOE will report

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FCAT Science scores by achievement levels and will add science to the school grading system in June of 2007.

Please note that the FCAT Science Sample Test Materials and Keys to FCAT scheduled for delivery to schools later this year will include references to science testing at grade 11. This memorandum, as well as the memorandum issued by the Florida Department of Education, may be found on the Testing Updates & Information page of the Student Assessment & School Performance Department website, which is located at <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/TestingUpdates.htm>. If you have any questions regarding the change in the FCAT Science Assessment, please contact **me at (754) 321-2470** or **Kimberley Kraft, Director of Student Assessment & School Performance, at (754) 321-4250**.

VMF/KAB/KEK:sjm

cc: Senior Management
Area Directors
Diane Carr, Executive Director, Core Curriculum
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