Florida Association of District School Superintendents

Florida's Accountability System
Recommendations for a Transitional Accountability System

Executive Summary

Florida's Accountability System is in jeopardy

Florida's accountability system is no longer credible in the eyes of the public - from the adoption of new standards to the nationally recognized awarding of school grades. Unless public confidence is restored, the entire system is at risk. This would be a mistake as the goal of the accountability system is to increase student performance. The stakes have never been higher: retention and graduation rates for students are impacted; teacher and principal evaluations and pay are tied to it; and a failing school grade negatively affects students, teachers, parents and the business community.

Florida's accountability system is complex and comprehensive. The goal of having an integrated system that can accurately and fairly assess student performance, evaluate teachers, implement pay for performance and assign school grades is in jeopardy.

- The foundation of the accountability system – Common Core State Standards – is under attack.
- The standards were just introduced in 2010 and have only been fully implemented in K-2 as of the 2013-2014 school year. It is unrealistic expect a full and quality implementation across all grades and courses (K-12) by the 2014-2015 school year.
- Teachers are simultaneously receiving training and expected to teach the new standards.
- The new standards were required to be taught even though instructional materials aligned to the new standards were not available. Reading/Math materials for the elementary grades have only been available this school year (2013-2014) and some of those materials were backorders and not available until this October or two months after school began, and will not be available for the secondary grades until 2014-2015, when the first year of full implementation is scheduled.
- The new statewide assessment aligned to the new standards is scheduled for field testing in spring 2014, yet no test has been developed to date (November 2013).
- School districts have struggled with the development of local assessments, including End-of-Course Exams (EOCs), which will satisfy the statutory deadline of 2014-2015. The item bank may ultimately be helpful, but alignment to new standards, adequate number of questions, etc. remain issues.
- Districts and schools do not have the infrastructure, connectivity, bandwidth, etc. to meet the instructional and assessment needs of students.
- Teachers and administrators are frustrated and do not trust an evaluation system that is based on standards that may change, with an assessment that has yet to be developed or validated.

Proposed Solution – Transitional Accountability System

Florida must realign and revamp the accountability system and regain the trust of students, teachers, parents and Floridians. Otherwise, the system will buckle due to the unrealistic expectations of the individual components of the system and the impending implementation date of 2014-2015.

Standards

The first step to restoring trust is for the Legislature and the State Board of Education to reaffirm Florida's education standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. This must include modifications made as a result of the recent public hearings.

The standards must be thoroughly implemented in all grades and all subjects before students and teachers are held accountable. It is unfair to hold students or teachers accountable for standards that have not been fully taught.

Teachers and principals must have adequate time to ensure competency in instruction of the new standards and necessary instructional strategies and practice.

Recommendations:
- Extend the phase-in period through the 2016-2017 school year by fully implementing the English Language Arts and Mathematics standards in K-3 in 2014-2015, K-4 in 2015-2016, and K-5 in 2016-2017.
- Implementation of literacy and text would continue for the secondary grades.

Professional Development

Teachers have been provided with limited professional development on both the state and district level. However, the professional development has been insufficient when implementing standards that require such a significant instructional shift from basic facts to critical thinking skills.

Recommendations:
- Extend the timeframe for full implementation of the standards to enable teachers to become competent in the new standards and shift their delivery of instruction.
- Fund additional days of training at the district level to further assist teachers and districts in preparation to implement the standards.
- Ensure that teachers graduating from Florida colleges and universities are trained to use and teach the new standards.

Instructional Materials

Materials aligned to the standards were back ordered until the end of the first quarter of school and are just becoming available. Overall, materials for the elementary grades were not available for adoption until this year (2013). Materials for grades 6 through 12 will not be available until 2014.

Recommendations:
- Extend the timeframe for implementation to ensure that adequate and sufficient instructional materials are available; including digital materials.
- Districts cannot be expected to secure all of the necessary aligned materials on the current instructional materials allocation. Therefore, adequate funding is needed to ensure materials are available in multiple formats for students and teachers.

Assessments

Statewide - The statewide assessment, FCAT 2.0, is not aligned to the new standards. The last administration of FCAT 2.0 will be in spring 2014. In fact, in order for students to be ready for FCAT in the spring, teachers must be teaching a blended curriculum of the new and old standards. However, a new statewide assessment has not been selected. Whether there is sufficient time to select and implement a new assessment in spring 2015 that is aligned to the standards is now in question.

Local EOCs - Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, every district must administer for each course a student assessment that measures mastery. Most of the district-developed EOCs are in courses not covered by FCAT and include kindergarten through second grade and high school courses. Districts are challenged and still in the process of developing up to 900 end-of-course exams.

Recommendations:

Statewide
- Florida must secure the new assessment using an RFP process.
- A major issue is to identify a statewide assessment that will serve as the accountability tool for retention, graduation, teacher/administrator evaluations, and school grading.
- The new assessment must compare the performance of Florida's students with students in other states in addition to measuring the performance of students on Florida's standards.
- The new assessment must have undergone a rigorous content review measured against Florida's standards. The technical quality of the assessment must be accurate. The assessment must be available in a timely manner.
- The reliability and validity of the new assessment must be determined before its use for retention, graduation, teacher/administrator evaluations, and school grading.
- The new assessment must be field tested. After field testing, a thorough impact data review must be conducted. Only then can appropriate and reliable standard setting and accountability measures be established. This process must include representation from all stakeholders.

Local EOCs
- The Department of Education currently provides secure, high-stake reading, math, and writing assessments for Grades 3-10 as well as US History, Biology 1, Algebra 1, Geometry and Civics. Require the Department of Education, at a minimum, to develop or purchase appropriate assessments for grades PreK-2 and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12 for use by all districts and provide the reports and parent communication associated with the assessments Until such time as the department provides the appropriate assessments, allow school districts the flexibility to develop student learning growth measures for grades and subjects not assessed by statewide assessments. The will require s. 1012.34 (7)(b) to be amended.

Technology

Adequate technology infrastructure and maintenance is critical to the success for the entire accountability system. A realistic technology plan must be developed, adequately funded and maintained. The state's technology plan is for there to be a 1:1 ratio - one student to one computer. In addition, districts are to have the infrastructure for teachers to deliver instruction, administer assessments and meet state and district reporting requirements. This will require a commitment of funds. Districts vary in their readiness to meet this goal. Some are well on the way; others are not even connected to the Internet.

Recommendations:

- Require the Department of Education in conjunction with district representation to develop a realistic technology plan that upon full implementation results in a 1:1 ratio in accordance with the published state technology plan.
- The plan must include a realistic timeframe for implementation, including professional development.
- The plan must include a funding methodology for infrastructure, devices and maintenance in order to teach the standards in a rich technology environment and for students to be assessed online without unnecessary educational disruption.

Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance

The evaluation instrument needs to be modified particularly in the time of transition and provide superintendents the ability to manage their districts and personnel.

Recommendations:

- Modify the evaluation instrument and the distribution of the weight to be 50 percent based on instructional practice, 30 percent based on student learning growth measures, and 20 percent district-determined outcome measures such as school improvement goals, professional growth plans, student/parent surveys, etc. This will require s. 1012.34(1) and (2) to be amended.
- The Department of Education currently provides secure, high-stake reading, math, and writing assessments for Grades 3-10 as well as US History, Biology 1, Algebra 1, Geometry and Civics. Delay the implementation of assessments for grades and subjects not assessed by statewide assessments until the Florida Department of Education develops or purchases assessments for PreK-2 and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12 for use by all districts and provide the reports and parent communication associated with the assessments. Until such time as the department provides the appropriate assessments, allow school districts the flexibility to develop student learning growth measures for grades and subjects not assessed by statewide assessments. This will require s. 1012.34 (7)(b) to be amended.
- Modify the mandate that a teacher will receive an overall unsatisfactory performance rating if the student learning growth standard is not met. Such a mandate negates the instructional practice portion of the evaluation. The performance rating of a teacher should be based on the total evaluation instrument, not a component part. This will require s. 1012.34(8) to be amended.
- Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures. Upon full implementation in 2017-2018, incorporate student learning growth measures into the pay-for-performance salary schedules.

School Grades

The school grading system has changed multiple times over the past few years, including 34 changes in 2011-2012 alone. The culmination of these changes have had a significant impact on Florida's accountability system and today many Floridians lack confidence in the assessments and school grades as a precise measure of a school's performance.

Recommendations:

- Suspend the school grading system and implement a Transitional Accountability System (School Report on Student Outcomes) for three years or for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years. A new school performance system would be implemented in the 2017-2018 school year.

- A Transitional Accountability System would include:
  - A School Report on Student Outcomes.
  - Inclusion of all students.
  - Performance indicators based on both performance (proficiency) and growth towards proficiency (learning gains).
  - Performance by content area and grade levels could be established using percentile rankings (either at state or district level). This could be used to target assistance and interventions at the district or state levels.
  - Growth measures for all ESEA subgroups could be compared to statewide median growth (by subgroup) to determine if progress is being made. This can be used to determine Differentiated Accountability support at the state level.

- During the 3-year transition period, create a new School Performance reporting system that is aligned to the new standards and assessment that provides a more comprehensive picture of individual school quality.

  - During the transition period, stakeholders must be involved, similar to what occurred during the development of the original A+ plan.
  - The new performance reporting system should not rely on a single letter grade or performance designation, but should instead reflect performance in multiple areas, i.e. literacy, numeracy, student growth, etc. This will require statutory change.
  - New formula should include measures for PreK-2 performance such as SAT-10.
  - Elementary and middle schools grade measures should include other performance factors similar to high schools and include attendance, parental involvement, disciplinary results, school climate and culture.

- Common Sense Accountability System Implemented – 2017-2018 School Year

  - Concurrent with the launch of a new accountability system there must be a comprehensive public information campaign to inform parents, educators, and the business community of the new system and its connections to improved student performance, enhanced opportunity for postsecondary and career success and other desired outcomes.

Proposed Transitional Timeline

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Common Core	**Common Core**	**Common Core**	**Common Core**	**Common Core**
Legislature & SBE affirm standards Grades K-2 Blended with Old because of FCAT 2.0 – Grades 3-12 Continue Text for K-12	Maintain standards Grades K-3 Continue Literacy in 6-12 Continue Text for K-12 Blended Mathematics Standards in Grades 4-12	Maintain standards Grades K-4 Continue Literacy in 6-12 Continue Text for K-12 Blended Mathematics Standards, Algebra 1, Geometry – Grade 12	Maintain standards Grades K-5 Continue Literacy in 6-12 Continue Text for K-12 Blended Mathematics Standards, Algebra 2-12	Maintain standards Full Implementation of English Language Arts and Mathematics K-12 Assessment Aligned to Standards
Professional Development	**Professional Development**	**Professional Development**	**Professional Development**	**Professional Development**
Ongoing for all school and district & instructional staff	Ongoing for all school and district & instructional staff	Ongoing for all school and district & instructional staff	Ongoing for all school and district & instructional staff	Ongoing for all school and district & instructional staff
Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule	**Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule**	**Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule**	**Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule**	**Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule**
Reading – Grades K-5 Math – Grades K-5 None for Grades 6-12	Reading – Grades K-5 Math – Grades K-5 Reading – Grades 6-12 Literature – Grades 6-12 Math – Grades 6-12	Reading – Grades K-5 Math – Grades K-5 Reading – Grades 6-12 Literature – Grades 6-12 Math – Grades 6-12	Reading – Grades K-5 Math – Grades K-5 Reading – Grades 6-12 Literature – Grades 6-12 Math – Grades 6-12	Reading – Grades K-5 Math – Grades K-5 Reading – Grades 6-12 Literature – Grades 6-12 Math – Grades 6-12
Assessments	**Assessments**	**Assessments**	**Assessments**	**Assessments**
Statewide FCAT 2.0 Algebra 1 EOC Geometry EOC Biology EOC US History EOC Civics EOC **Local Assessments** Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments. Implementation should be delayed until DOE develops or purchases assessments	**Statewide** New Assessment Field Tested Content Review Technical Quality analysis Involve Stakeholders Question: What Assessment will be used for retention/graduation and evaluation purposes? **Local Assessments** Begin implementing assessments purchased or developed by DOE for PreK-2	**Statewide** New Assessment Administered Continue Content Review Technical Quality analysis Involve Stakeholders Question: What Assessment will be used for retention/graduation and evaluation purposes? **Local Assessments** Begin implementing assessments purchased or developed by DOE for PreK-2	**Statewide** New Assessment Administered Set cut scores/standards Technical Quality analysis Involve Stakeholders Question: What Assessment will be used for retention/graduation and evaluation purposes? **Local Assessments** Begin implementing assessments purchased or developed by DOE for PreK-2	**Statewide** New Assessment Administered and applied throughout system.

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
for PreK-2 and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12.	and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12.	and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12.	and non-FCAT subjects in Grades 3-12.	
Technology	**Technology**	**Technology**	**Technology**	**Technology**
Devices - 2.25 students to 1 computer Bandwidth -75% of schools meet standard of 100 Mbps/1000 Students	Devices - 2 students to 1 computer Bandwidth -100% of schools meet standard of 100 Mbps/1000 Students	Devices – 1.5 students to 1 computer Bandwidth -50% of schools meet standard of 1000 (1 Gbps) Mbps/1000 Students	Devices – 1.25 students to 1 computer Bandwidth -75% of schools meet standard of 1000 (1 Gbps) Mbps/1000 Students	Devices – 1 student to 1 computer Bandwidth -100% of schools meet standard of 1000 (1 Gbps) Mbps/1000 Students
Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance	**Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance**	**Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance**	**Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance**	**Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance**
Modify the percentages within the evaluation instrument. Amend statute to base performance rating on total evaluation, not weighted on performance. Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures	Maintain evaluation modifications at least until full implementation. Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures	Maintain evaluation modifications at least until full implementation. Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures	Maintain evaluation modifications at least until full implementation. Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures	Fully implement new evaluation instrument and performance pay process. Through the transition period, authorize pay-for-performance based on instructional practice and district determined outcome measures
School Grades – Revised	**School Grades – Revised**	**School Grades – Revised**	**School Grades – Revised**	**School Grades - Revised**
Develop and Implement a Transitional Accountability System focused on Student Outcomes for three full school years. Address impact of changes on the federal waiver.	Establish Stakeholder Workgroup that will develop transition system and follow it through to full implementation. System should address all of the components and ensure alignment.	Continue Transition Begin developing public information campaign	Continue Transition Implement public information campaign	Full Implementation with continued public information campaign