

Florida Association of District School Superintendents

Florida's Current Accountability System

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 October 2013 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 (December 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 obstacles.
- 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.

The accountability system must be aligned. To better understand the coming crisis, the independent parts must be examined and interrelationships understood. A timeline illustrating the component parts is attached.

Standards

The foundation of the accountability system - the standards - is under attack. The implementation of Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics began in 2010. In 2013, the Legislature adopted these standards by incorporating them into the definition of "Next Generation

Sunshine State Standards” in SB 1076. Over the summer, the standards came under increasing criticism and Governor Scott called for statewide hearings. Commissioner Stewart just completed these hearings. Recommendations as to changes in the standards may be forthcoming.

It is interesting to note that Florida’s standards and Common Core Standards are fairly aligned. According to information released by the Florida Department of Education, Next Generation Mathematics is rated as an “A” and Common Core is rated an “A-.” In English Language Arts, New Generation is rated a “B” and Common Core is rated a “B+.” However, the Common Core standards are distinguished from the old standards because they are aligned with college and work expectations; include rigorous content; focus on application of knowledge through high-order skills; build upon strengths and lessons of current standards; and are informed by other top performing countries so that students are prepared to succeed in the global economy.

The new standards require changes in instruction and require teachers to teach more non-fiction, focus more on argument versus persuasion, help students ground their thinking in textual evidence, and help students compare content across texts. Math instruction is more focused and concentrates on increasing depth of knowledge and the transfer of skills to more difficult work. There is greater coherence in a single grade and across grades. The standards strive for conceptual understanding, skill and fluency in the standard, and application to the real world.

The Common Core State Standards are being implemented in four aggressive phases. In 2011-2012, full implementation was required for Kindergarten and a grade was added each year. So, by full implementation in 2014-15 of all grade levels K-12; only Kindergarten through second grade will have benefited from a full implementation. Literacy and complex/informational text requirements were implemented in the other grades. Mathematic standards are being implemented in a similar manner. It is questionable whether the standards are really implemented in all grades and all subjects especially in the absence of instructional materials aligned to the new standards.

Ongoing Issues

- *Will the standards be modified based on the statewide public hearings?*
- *Will the new standards be affirmed by the Legislature and State Board of Education?*
- *Will the new standards have been implemented successfully in all grades and all courses by 2014-2015 school year?*
- *If the standards have not been implemented, is there legal issue similar to the “Debra P” case?*
- *Are teachers competent to teach the new English Language Arts and Mathematics standards and accompanying instructional strategies in all grades and all subjects?*

Professional Development

The new standards focus on understanding and the application of knowledge not just learning facts. Therefore, extensive professional development of teachers, principals and administrators is essential for the success of the new standards. Teaching the new standards require a significant shift in instructional practices and strategies. There have been changes to Florida standards in the past, but nothing as fundamentally significant as Common Core State Standards. Instead of teaching basic facts about a subject, the new standards focus on understanding and explaining the importance of the facts.

Professional development is critical. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) has provided summer training institutes for district and school teams throughout the state for the past two summers.

Additionally, individual school districts are training teachers to make the shift in instructional practices. However, it takes time and resources to transition teachers and schools from one set of standards and instructional practice to new standards that require a whole new way of instruction. The statewide trainings provided by DOE depend, in part, on a “train-the-trainer” model. It is impossible to sufficiently train over 171,000 teachers using this model within the time constraints. Teachers are being trained at the same time the standards are required to be implemented in the classroom. Districts are attempting to provide their own training, but there are not enough staff development days for successful implementation. To be successful, teachers must have the time to develop the skills to implement the new standards in their classrooms. In essence, teachers are flying the plane while building it.

Ongoing Issues

- *Are all teachers proficient in teaching the new standards?*
- *Have teachers received sufficient and ongoing training in the new standards and teaching strategies?*
- *Have teachers received sufficient and ongoing training in the technology that can be used to teach and enhance instruction in the new standards?*
- *What evidence do we have that teachers graduating from Florida or other colleges and universities are fully trained and prepared to teach the new standards?*

Instructional Materials

All instructional materials are not necessarily aligned with the new standards. While districts have been implementing the new standards, this school year (2013-2014) is the first year the state adopted instructional materials are available in English Language Arts and Mathematics for kindergarten through 5th grade. The comprehensive reading and mathematics instructional materials for grades 6 through 12 are not available until 2014, the year of full implementation. How can districts be expected to have teachers trained in the new standards when the instructional materials are just being made available for an assessment that has yet to be developed?

Ongoing Issues

- *How can the state be assured that instructional materials are aligned to the new standards?*
- *How can students and teachers be held accountable to the new standards when instructional materials are not available for purchase?*
- *Are teachers proficient in teaching the new standards using technology?*

Assessments

The statewide assessment, FCAT 2.0, is not aligned to the new standards. While the new standards are similar to the old standards, the expectation is that students will apply the knowledge they have learned. Therefore, a new statewide assessment is necessary in order to test the understanding and application of knowledge. This is one reason why the length of the new test is an issue. Cost is also an issue. The difficulty is developing or purchasing an assessment that measures the application of knowledge while not being too lengthy or too costly. So far, Florida has not been successful.

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. It was anticipated that PARCC would be selected, but questions relating to that assessment have mounted. Florida is no longer the fiscal agent

for the PARCC Consortium and some member states have left the consortium. 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.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, every district must administer a student assessment that measures mastery for each course. Such assessments may include statewide assessments, other standardized assessments, industry certification examinations, and district-developed or selected end-of-course exams (EOCs). 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 EOCs.

Ongoing Issues

Statewide Assessment

- *What is the purpose of the assessment?*
 - *Is it to measure performance of students on Florida's Standards?*
 - *Is it to compare performance of Florida's students with students in other states and countries?*
- *Is there sufficient time to secure a new assessment that has undergone a rigorous content review measured against Florida's standards, undergone a rigorous technical quality review, and had a determination of reliability and validity?*
- *Should administration of the new assessment be delayed for at least a year, two years?*
- *If the administration is delayed – how are student retention/graduation requirements impacted and teacher evaluations/pay for performance?*
- *Should FCAT 2.0 be administered for an additional year?*
- *Is there sufficient time to field test the new assessment?*
- *Once field tested, is there sufficient time to have a thorough impact data review and appropriate setting of standards and accountability measures with stakeholders?*
- *How much time will the new assessment take to administer?*
- *What impact will the administration of the new assessment have on other statewide and local assessment schedules?*
- *How soon will the results be available to students, parents and schools?*

District Developed EOCs

- *Is it realistic for districts to develop EOCs for every course not covered by a statewide assessment?*
- *Should the state be responsible for developing these EOCs?*
- *What are the costs?*
- *What are the consequences of districts failing to develop district EOCs?*
- *What is the status of state or district-shared item banks?*
- *Will the item bank have adequate number of questions; be aligned to the state standards?*
- *What is the plan and cost of maintaining such item banks?*
- *To what extent has the state assisted districts in developing EOCs or an item bank?*

Technology

Technology requirements are daunting for both instruction and assessment. Schools should have the technology infrastructure and the devices to deliver instruction and to accommodate assessments without disrupting a student's education. All statewide, standardized EOC assessments must be administered online except as provided for exceptional education students. Given the questions raised about the technology readiness of schools, the Legislature enacted language that requires such implementation only after the technology infrastructure, connectivity, and capacity of all public schools and districts have been load tested and independently verified. In addition, the technology infrastructure must also be available and load tested for statewide standardized assessments. Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, at least 50 percent of the annual instructional materials allocation must be used to purchase digital or electronic instructional materials for students in kindergarten through grade 12.

The Department of Education has published Florida Technology Specification and an implementation timeline. In the 2014-2015 school year the student to computer ratio goal is 2 students to 1 computer. The bandwidth goal is for 100 percent of schools meeting bandwidth standards (100 Mbps per 1000 students). The goal for 2017-2018 is a student to computer ratio goal of 1 student to 1 computer. The bandwidth goal is 100 percent of schools meeting bandwidth standards of 1000 Mbps (1Gbps) per 1000 students.

Ongoing Issues

- *Can all statewide, standardized EOC assessments be administered online successfully?*
- *What are the requirements to administer the new statewide assessment online?*
- *Do all districts have the technology infrastructure to administer and then maintain the administration of all statewide assessments online?*
- *Do all districts have the infrastructure to deliver instruction with technology and consecutively conduct online testing?*
- *Do all districts have the ability to expand and maintain the infrastructure to deliver instruction with technology?*

Teacher Evaluation/Pay for Performance

Teacher and school administrator performance evaluations must be based on the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools. At least 50 percent must be based on student learning growth and the remaining percentage is for the evaluation of instructional practice. The Student Success Act or SB 736 radically changed the relationship between school districts and teachers by authorizing only an annual contract to teachers hired after July 1, 2011. New salary schedules incorporating student performance as a major part of compensation must be fully implemented in the 2014-2015 school year.

Ongoing Issues

- *How is the lack of a new assessment and lack of sufficient district developed EOCs impacting the validity of the evaluation instrument?*
- *Is the evaluation instrument aligned with the assessments administered by each teacher?*
- *Does the evaluation instrument have credibility with teachers and administrators?*
- *Should the percentages or weights be modified until the overall assessment system is stable?*
- *Will districts be able to successfully negotiate salary schedules that will be in effect July 1, 2014?*
- *Are districts funded adequately to award meaningful performance pay?*

School Grading

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. The public does not understand a system that celebrates student performance on national assessments, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and statewide end-of-course exams; while the school grading system yields an unprecedented number of schools with grades of "D" or "F" and significant drops overall in school grades.

The school grading system must be simplified and recognize student performance in a way that is easily understood by the public, parents, and students. To move Florida's accountability system forward, we need to pause and revamp the accountability system in order to regain the trust of the public and the students we serve.

Ongoing Issues

- *Should Florida adopt a transitional accountability system until the various components are stabilized?*
- *How should ESE and ELL students be incorporated fairly into the system?*
- *How and when should growth and proficiency standards be set when a new assessment has yet to be determined?*
- *To what extent should stakeholders be involved in the setting of cut scores?*
- *Should a single letter grade system be superseded by a multi-grade model that measures proficiency and growth in multiple areas?*
- *Will a comprehensive public information campaign be developed for all stakeholders?*

Current Timeline

2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Common Core	Common Core	Common Core	Common Core	Common Core
Grade K. Begin Literacy in 6-12. Begin Text for K-12. Blended Mathematics Standards in Grades 1-12	Grades K-1. Full Literacy in 6-12. Continue Text for K-12. Blended Mathematics Standards in Grades 2-12.	Grades K-2. Blended with Old because of FCAT 2.0 – Grades 3-12. Continue Text for K-12. Blended Mathematics Standards in Grades 3-12.	Full Implementation K-12. Assessment Aligned to Standards. Blended Mathematics Standards in Grades 4-12.	Full Implementation K-12. Assessment Aligned to Standards. Blended Mathematics Standards, Alg 1, Geometry – Grade 12.
Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development
State -Summer Regional Meetings Reading/800 teachers Reading/150 Career/Tech ELA/Math - Kindergarten Regional/District workshops on Literacy Standards, etc. DOE/District Training Districts delivered own training	DOE Common Core Summer Institutes (2012) 7,500 educators and 1,800 teams (all districts represented) Each team submitted standards implementation plan. Fall Institutes focused on 6-12 Literacy. Districts delivered own training	DOE Common Core Summer Institutes (2013) Focus on implementation in all content areas. Fall training for Math and ELA specialists Fall Training for Math Districts delivered own training	Negotiating with College and SUS for professional development on tools created by Race to Top Grant. Will be available for pre and in-service teachers. Districts delivered own training	State – Ongoing Districts - Ongoing
Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule	Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule	Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule	Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule	Instructional Materials Adoption Schedule
None for Common Core	None for Common Core	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

2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Assessments	Assessments	Assessments	Assessments	Assessments
<p>Statewide FCAT 2.0 Algebra 1 EOC Geometry EOC Biology EOC</p> <p>Local Assessments Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments</p>	<p>Statewide US History EOC</p> <p>Local Assessments Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments</p>	<p>Statewide Civics EOC</p> <p>Local Assessments Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments</p>	<p>Statewide Common Core Standards New Assessment</p> <p>Local Assessments Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments</p>	<p>Statewide Common Core Standards New Assessment</p> <p>Local Assessments Local Districts work on hard to measure courses and assessments</p>
Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology
NA	Devices - 2.75 students to 1 computer Bandwidth -100% of schools meet standard of 50 Mbps/1000 Students	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
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
Teachers hired after 7/1/11 on annual contract. PSC or “tenure” is repealed. Advanced degrees may not be used in setting salary schedule for teacher hired after 7/1/11.	New Evaluation System implemented – 50% based on student learning/50% based on instructional practice Learning Growth measured by using VAM. State rule establishing standards for each rating not promulgated. Gov/Legislature provided \$480 million for salary increases.	Statute amended to clarify that student performance is 40% if less than 3 years of student performance data available. Data based on performance of students assigned to teacher. Districts negotiating \$480 provided for salary increases.	By 7/1/2014 School Board must adopt performance salary schedule based on performance. PSC teachers may remain on grandfather salary schedule. Teachers for whom there are no appropriate assessments measuring growth remain on grandfather schedule.	Full Implementation

2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
School Grades - Revised	School Grades - Revised	School Grades - Revised	School Grades - Revised	School Grades - Revised
New cut scores in Reading Grades 3-10; Math -3-8; Algebra 1 – New Grad Requirement SBE must intervene as result of Writing Exam issues; establish safety net for districts in overall school grading system	New cut scores in Geometry and Biology Add Geometry and Biology to school grades. SBE continues safety net for district as they transition to new test and standards.	New cut scores in US History Add US History to school grades. SBE continues safety net for district as they transition to new test and standards.	Common Core in ELA, Math; Link New Assessment with FCAT; New cut scores in Civics Add Civics to school grades	New Standards New cut scores 3-11 ELA, Math; New Graduation score. Revise school grades