



# FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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## FLORIDA SUPERINTENDENTS STAND WITH COMMISSIONER ROBINSON IN SUPPORT OF RAISING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) supports Florida Department of Education (DOE) Commissioner Gerard Robinson’s recommended changes to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scoring system, which further increases academic expectations and rigor. The DOE-appointed Reactor Panel was presented the final recommendations that resulted from a strategic review process by a team of educators, psychometricians, and DOE staff; coupled with external data including National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) performance and college readiness percentages.

“The recommendations brought before the Reactor Panel and subsequently vetted and approved, will further raise academic standards and rigor across multiple grade levels; and the increased standards and high expectations will serve our students well as we all work together to ensure that they are academically prepared for a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy” states FADSS President and Orange County Superintendent Ronald Blocker.

The Reactor Panel – which brought together a diverse group committed to further strengthening Florida’s K-12 education system – included: the Council of 100, the Foundation for Florida’s Future, Florida PTA, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Philanthropic Network, Florida State University, the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options, Step Up for Students, educators and Florida superintendents (<http://fcap.fldoe.org/pdf/11fcatrma1eocarpl.pdf>). Each entity’s concerns were thoroughly discussed and vetted; with the end result being a solid, realistic recommendation for FCAT cut scores that continues to raise the academic bar for Florida students. The final recommendations which the Reactor Panel approved were a collaborative effort of this diverse and engaged group.

“I am confident that the concerns of Florida superintendents were clearly heard, thoroughly discussed, and the end result of this inclusive process is a solid recommendation for FCAT cut scores that raises the academic bar; which in the end is what superintendents have always supported,” adds Reactor Panel member and Okaloosa County Schools Superintendent Alexis Tibbetts.

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“These new standards will surely bring increased challenges for Florida’s public schools; however Florida superintendents have always championed rigorous, academic standards that are defined and implemented through an inclusive, prudent and transparent process,” states Blocker. “These recommendations are the result of such a process.”

Florida’s public school system already boasts some of the highest academic standards in the nation and the results speak volumes:

### **Florida Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation**

- ✓ according to *Education Week’s* 2011 Quality Counts Report, up from 31<sup>st</sup> in 2007. (Source: [www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/01/13/index.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/01/13/index.html))

### **Florida was one of only four states**

- ✓ to improve significantly in both 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading on NAEP.

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

- ✓ **Florida has the highest percentage of students in the nation who took an AP exam in high school and is tied for 5<sup>th</sup> in the percent of those students earning a 3 or higher on an AP exam.**
- ✓ **Seven Florida public schools were recognized in the AP report as leading the nation in increasing access to AP courses among traditionally underserved students.**
- ✓ **The jump in the percentage of Florida students doing well on the exams — up to 21.3 percent in 2009 from 16.3 in 2004 — came even as the number and percentage of students taking the tests has climbed significantly.** (Source: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Florida-AP-Report-2010.pdf>)

### **Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)**

- ✓ **Florida’s participation on the SAT has reached its highest point yet**, with over 100,000 of its 2009 public and nonpublic high school graduates having taken the SAT.
- ✓ In 2009, the **combined score for African-American SAT test takers in Florida was 7 points higher than the national average** for their counterparts; likewise the combined score for **Hispanic test takers is 42 points higher than the national average** for Hispanic students.

Florida Superintendents look forward to working with Commissioner Robinson, the State Board of Education, the Florida Legislature, parents, students and the business community as we continue moving down the path of higher academic standards and increased accountability through a transparent process; with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement and academic success.

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*The mission of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents is to assist and support superintendents in providing leadership to ensure that every student in Florida acquires the skills, knowledge and attitude to be contributing members of our democratic society through leadership development programs focused on student achievement, building relationships with business and governmental leaders, and communication and networking services.*