



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 24, 2011

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Florida Superintendent's Counter Winn's Assertions Regarding Readiness of Florida High School Students

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) questions the assertion of former Education Commissioner John Winn at the state's Higher Education Coordinating Council last week in which Winn implied that Florida's schools are not preparing students for college.

The truth is student achievement is rising in Florida's public school system. **Florida's education system is now ranked 5th in the nation according to Education Week's 2011 Quality Counts Report.** In addition – Florida high schools continue to raise the bar in terms of academic offerings. In 2009, 40% of the graduating class of 2009 took at least one AP Exam during high school; compared to just 26% nationally.

"Florida's public schools are doing a phenomenal job of preparing students for life after high school – whether they are on the college track, pursuing a skill in a technical school or trade school," states Orange County School Superintendent and FADSS Board President Ron Blocker. "This is especially impressive given the continued funding cuts that Florida's public school system has had to absorb over the past five years," adds Blocker.

In citing American College Testing (ACT) scores as an indication of lowered performance, Winn does not take into account the fact that the number of students taking the ACT has increased; particularly by students who have not passed the FCAT and opt to take the ACT as a means to receive their diploma. A senior can graduate by receiving a score comparable to the FCAT passing score on the ACT or SAT, and they satisfy the score requirements using various combinations of the tests.¹


In addition:

- Florida ACT test takers represent 66% of Florida's 2011 public and nonpublic high school graduates, compared to 65% in 2010. Nationwide, the number of ACT-tested seniors represents 49% of the number of 2011 graduates, compared to 47% in 2010.
- Average ACT scores for Florida increased from 2010 to 2011 by two-tenths of a point in English and mathematics, increased by one-tenth of a point in reading and composite, and remained the same in science.

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¹ <http://fcats.fldoe.org/pdf/fcatpass.pdf>

	Florida		Nation	
	2011 Score	Change	2011 Score	Change
English	18.8	.2	20.6	.1
Reading	20.2	.1	21.3	0
Math	19.9	.2	21.1	.1
Science	19.1	0	20.9	0
Composite	19.6	.1	21.1	.1

 = Positive change greater than the nation

Source: <http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation/pdf/ACT-Trends2011-FloridaNation.pdf>

“We really need to be looking at all the data and information at our disposal regarding school performance, and not zero in on one piece of data and make broad assumptions,” states FADSS CEO Bill Montford. “There are amazing achievements happening everyday throughout the 3,345 Florida public schools that serve the educational needs of more than 2.6 million students,” adds Montford.

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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.