



SANDRA "SAM" HIMMEL – SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

*"Where Learning is the Expectation
And Caring is a Commitment"*

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May 29, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you may be aware, there have been many changes to state tests that students took this spring. Because these changes include how they will be scored and reported, it is important to review what results to expect this year.

2015 TESTS

Several tests given this spring remained unchanged. The grades 5 and 8 FCAT 2.0 Science test had no changes. The Biology 1, U.S. History, and Civics EOC tests remained the same. Retake tests, including FCAT 2.0 Reading, FCAT Math, and the Algebra 1 Retake EOC, did not change.

NEW TESTS: The grades 3-10 FCAT 2.0 Reading test was replaced by the new Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) English Language Arts (ELA) test. The FSA ELA test is a combination of both the reading and writing assessments. The ELA writing component was taken by students in grades 4-10 this year. **The grades 3-8 FCAT 2.0 Math test was replaced by the FSA Math test.** Grade 7 and 8 students who took an Algebra 1 or Geometry end-of-course (EOC) exam did not take the FSA Math test. For middle and high school students, **previous EOC tests in Algebra 1 and Geometry were replaced with FSA EOC exams. The FSA Algebra 2 EOC exam was introduced for the first time this year.**

SCORING & REPORTING

For the unchanged tests (Science, Biology 1, U.S. History, Civics), students will receive familiar scale scores and achievement level scores. Achievement level scores of 3, 4, or 5 are considered passing. High schools have already received Retake scores for reading, math, and Algebra 1. Scores for FCAT 2.0 Science (grades 5 & 8) and for unchanged EOC tests (Biology 1, US History, and Civics) are legislatively required to be reported by the week of June 8. Passing scores for Science and the Biology 1, U.S. History, and Civics EOCs are not required to pass the courses or to meet graduation requirements, but the EOC scores will count as 30% of students' final course grades.


The new FSA tests - including grades 3-10 FSA English Language Arts (ELA), grades 3-8 FSA Mathematics, and the FSA Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 EOC exams will not have standardized scale scores or achievement levels set until fall of 2015. Originally, we expected to receive preliminary scores for students in May and June that would tell us how they performed compared to other students in the state using percentile rankings and T-scores. We expected the FLDOE to provide scores for tests related to promotion or graduation (grades 3 and 10 ELA and Algebra 1 EOC). However, state legislators have called for a review of the validity of the new tests and have prohibited the release of any scores until September. As a result, **neither schools nor students will receive test scores for any FSA tests by the end of the school year.**

The inability to get results for FSA tests is of most concern for tests linked to promotion or graduation and for EOCs expected to count as 30% of the student's final course grade. Citrus has a plan to address the absence of scores:

1. **Grade 3 Reading/ELA:** Promotion for third grade students will be based on evidence collected throughout the school year demonstrating reading proficiency in the Florida reading standards.
2. **High School Graduation Requirements:** In early June the FLDOE will provide districts with a list of students who have met the graduation requirements for Reading/ELA and Algebra 1. Although scores for these tests may not come until the next school year, students will know if they have met graduation assessment requirements much sooner.
3. **FSA EOCs:** The requirement for FSA EOCs to count as 30% of the final grade has been suspended by the FLDOE. Final grades will be calculated by averaging the first and second semester grades 50/50 without the EOC.

In summary, **FCAT tests that students took this year will receive scores, but scores for the new FSA tests are not expected any earlier than September.** We hope this helps with what to expect during this very different testing year.

Sincerely,


Sandra "Sam" Himmel
Superintendent of Schools