

Proposed State Changes to How Your School Will be Graded

Your child will be participating in the new FCAT 2.0 test and possibly in the new end-of-course tests in Algebra, Geometry or Biology. The State of Florida adopted a new FCAT that is more rigorous and demanding and at the same time increased scores required for your child to be considered on grade level. The State is proposing that these changes go into effect this year without allowing sufficient time for teachers and students to adapt to the new criteria. As a result, there is a great probability that fewer students will be considered at grade level. These new higher standards will affect your child's test scores and your school's grade. Students in your school may show great improvement on the tests, but with the new changes to the school grading formula proposed by the State, your school's overall grade may be adversely impacted. Below are a few of the most troubling of the State's proposals for your school.

State Proposed Change 1: If your school has less than 25 percent of students scoring at grade level in Reading, then your school will automatically receive a grade of "F".

M-DCPS Proposed Solution 1: If your school receives a school grade of "A" or "B" and does not meet this criteria, your school's grade will be reduced by only one letter grade – not drop to an automatic "F". If your school receives a school grade of "C" or "D", the letter grade would not drop.

State Proposed Change 2: Include all students with disabilities and English language learners in the proficiency component for your school. Previously, these students counted only in the learning gains components.

M-DCPS Proposed Solution 2: Credit students with disabilities and English language learners who achieve proficiency with bonus points.

State Proposed Change 3: Penalize your school for not having enrolled all 8th graders who scored at grade level on the 2011 FCAT in Algebra. Currently, middle schools use multiple indicators to accelerate students in 7th or 8th grade to participate in Algebra. Students are not enrolled in Algebra based on one single test.

M-DCPS Proposed Solution 3: Award your school bonus points when students take the Algebra end-of-course test and score at grade level.

State Proposed Change 4: Decrease the number of bonus points your school can receive for improvement.

M-DCPS Proposed Solution 4: Award your school the number of points in improvement they earn on a 1 to 1 ratio. For example, if your school increases its graduation rate by 8 percent, your school would be awarded 8 bonus points. The State is proposing that an improvement of 1-4 points not earn any points for a school; 5-9

points will earn your school 5 bonus points, and 10 or more points a maximum of 4 bonus points.

State Proposed Change 5: For high schools, use last year's Science scores for this year's school grade.

M-DCPS Proposed Solution 5: Why would the State use last year's test scores to measure your high school in Science? Keep Science out of the school grade until next year after the Biology end-of-course test has been administered for two years.

Did You Know?

The DOE's proposal would severely impact the positive trend in student achievement in M-DCPS over the past three years. Indeed, rather than provide a reasonable transition to increase the high standards now in place, the DOE's proposal would:

- Likely lead to more than 40 percent of schools in the state dropping a letter grade;
- Potentially increase the number of schools statewide receiving an F from 38 to 268;
- Change the grading scale for the next year if more than 75 percent of schools earn As or Bs;
- Cause a school to receive an F if it fails to meet a reading criterion no matter how many points earned in all other accountability categories;
- Put schools with a high percentage of students for whom English is a second language at an unfair disadvantage – creating an unrealistic expectation that these students develop proficiency in only one year despite the fact that vast scientific evidence shows that true proficiency can take from 3 to 5 years to achieve.
- Put schools with a high percentage of students with disabilities at a disadvantage by creating unrealistic proficiency expectations; and
- Use science scores from the previous year as the current year's accountability measure.