

**Pupil Progression**

**Plan**

**2008-2009**



PUPIL PROGRESSION PLAN  
2008 – 2009

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# **PUPIL PROGRESSION PLAN**

## **FOREWORD**

The purpose of the Pupil Progression Plan for Alachua County Public Schools is to describe School Board procedures for implementing state and district pupil progression requirements. This plan is prepared in accordance with Section 1008.25, Florida School Code:

1. Each district school board shall establish a comprehensive program for pupil progression which shall be based upon an evaluation of each pupil in a curriculum which covers the Sunshine State Standards and Grade Level Expectations and complies with state law.
2. The district program for pupil progression shall be based upon local goals and objectives which are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. Pertinent factors considered by the teacher before recommending that a pupil progress from one grade to another shall be prescribed by the district school board in its rules.
3. Each district's comprehensive program for pupil progression shall reflect an effort to identify students at each grade level in grades 9 through 12 who have attained a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or below. The program shall further include provisions for assisting such students to achieve the 2.0 cumulative grade point average required for graduation pursuant to s.1008.25.
4. All students are encouraged to obtain a high school diploma. Failure to earn a standard diploma may impact a student's eligibility to receive student financial assistance and pursue post-secondary education.

Promotion, retention, and the specific assignment procedures contained in this plan are designed to insure that students are placed in instructional programs which challenge them to make substantial academic growth and develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically.

## GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION

- A. Pupil promotion and/or credit is based on evaluation of each pupil's achievement in terms of established Sunshine State Standards provided by the state. The basis for making promotion determinations should include teacher judgment based on classroom work, daily observation, formal and informal assessments, parental input and objective data. The primary responsibility for recommending grade placement for the next year is that of professional staff members, subject to review and approval of the principal and Superintendent.
- B. Sunshine State Standards will be incorporated into district subject area curricula and highlighted for documentation purposes. Students must receive a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as one condition toward receiving a Standard Diploma.
- C. It is the responsibility of teachers to identify students achieving below district or state standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Additional diagnostic assessments of identified students will be performed to determine each student's difficulty. Students achieving below standard should have a progress monitoring process to track student improvement. Remedial instruction will be continued until the district and state expectations are met or the student graduates from high school or is not subject to compulsory school attendance. District school boards shall assist schools and teachers to implement research-based reading activities that have been shown to be successful in teaching reading to low-performing students. Parents of K-12 students must be notified when students are failing or their performance has decreased more than one letter grade since the last grading period.
- D. Any student who has been retained two or more years must be provided an alternative placement. Such placement shall be designed to meet the educational needs of the student and provide intensive remediation in the core areas of reading and/or mathematics.
- E. An annual report on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is provided to parents/guardians regarding the student's proficiency in reading, writing, math, and science. For high school, course titles may be used to indicate the level of instruction.
- F. Parents will be notified when students are achieving below the expected level and when the student continues to achieve below the expected level. Teachers may suggest or parents may request suggestions for special help and assistance for the student. Students who still do not make satisfactory progress in basic skills may be referred to special programs and/or be retained an additional year in the current grade.
- G. Any elementary or middle school pupil who needs to be considered for assignment to the next higher grade may be assigned to the appropriate higher grade based on reevaluation by the professional staff of the school. The principal will hold a staffing conference including the parent and school professionals. If the determination is made that the student will be able to benefit from instruction at a higher grade, placement may occur at anytime in the school year. The school principal is responsible for making the assignment. Grade 5 students moving to grade 6 or grade 8 students moving to grade 9 may be treated on an exception basis and will be moved either during the first three weeks or at the end of the semester. If such an assignment results in the child being transferred to another school, both the sending and receiving principals must approve the placement. When necessary, the Superintendent or his designee may help make a decision. When possible, the pre-placement staffing should include appropriate staff members of the sending as well as the receiving school. Parents/guardians should be consulted or included in this process.

- H. All limited English proficient students will receive a recommended grade placement from the school principal or counselor based on age and past educational experiences as verified by student records. Grade placement is not based upon English proficiency. All Limited English Proficiency students receive ESOL services.
- I. With the exception of after-school activities approved by parents, student schedules and course loads shall be appropriate to student needs and will normally be scheduled within the established instructional day. Course loads normally shall not exceed six (6) subjects for middle school students and high school students during the established instructional day.
- J. The Board recognizes the importance of a student grading system which is clearly identified and meaningful to students, parents, and school personnel. The grading system gives each student credit for actual work done and does not compare one student's progress with another. Grades shall be assigned according to School Board Policy.
- K. Promotion or the awarding of high school credit may be competency-based for students who are enrolled in dropout prevention, adult education programs, or regular education programs. This can result in acceleration of credit for some students.
- L. The School Board of Alachua County recognizes the importance of Physical Education in improving the health and fitness of students. Physical Education shall be offered as a regular part of the instructional program in elementary, middle, and high school. The expected outcomes of Physical Education programs are:
- Improved physical fitness
  - Development of healthy eating habits
  - Development of healthy lifestyles. Students may consult their teachers individually about the benefits of physical education.
- M. The district School Board shall annually publish in the local newspaper and report in writing to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year the following information on the prior school year:
- the provisions of the law relating to public school student progression and the district's policies and procedures on student retention and promotion
  - by grade, the number and percentage of all students in grades 3 through 10 performing at Levels 1 and 2 on the reading portion of the FCAT
  - by grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in grades 3 through 10
  - information on the total number of students who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause as specified in S. 1008.25(6)(b)
  - any revisions to the school board's policy on student retention and promotion from the prior year

[s. 1008.25(7)(b)F.S.]

N.

<b>Required Instruction</b>	
	Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction, the following:
<b>1003.42 (a)</b>	The history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property, and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government.
<b>1003.42 (b)</b>	The history, meaning, significance, and effect of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States and amendments thereto, with emphasis on each of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights and how the constitution provides the structure of our government.
<b>1003.42 (c)</b>	The arguments in support of adopting our republican form of government, as they are embodied in the most important of the Federalist Papers.
<b>1003.42 (d)</b>	Flag education, including proper flag display and flag salute.
<b>1003.42 (e)</b>	The elements of civil government, including the primary functions of and interrelationships between the Federal Government, the state, and its counties, municipalities, school districts, and special districts.
<b>1003.42 (f)</b>	The history of the United States, including the period of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, the Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present boundaries, the world wars, and the civil rights movement to the present. American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.
<b>1003.42 (g)</b>	The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.
<b>1003.42 (h)</b>	The history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society.
<b>1003.42 (i)</b>	The elementary principles of agriculture.
<b>1003.42 (j)</b>	The true effects of all alcoholic and intoxicating liquors and beverages and narcotics upon the human body and mind.
<b>1003.42 (k)</b>	Kindness to animals.
<b>1003.42 (l)</b>	The history of the state.
<b>1003.42 (m)</b>	The conservation of natural resources

<b>1003.42 (n)</b>	Comprehensive health education that addresses concepts of community health; consumer health; environmental health; family life, including an awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of teenage pregnancy; mental and emotional health; injury prevention and safety; nutrition; personal health; prevention and control of disease; and substance use and abuse.
<b>1003.42 (o)</b>	Such additional materials, subjects, courses, or fields in such grades as are prescribed by law or by rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board in fulfilling the requirements of law.
<b>1003.42 (p)</b>	The study of Hispanic contributions to the United States.
<b>1003.42 (q)</b>	The study of women's contributions to the United States.
<b>1003.42 (r)</b>	The nature and importance of free enterprise to the United States economy.
<b>1003.42 (s)</b>	A character-development program in the elementary schools, similar to Character First or Character Counts, which is secular in nature. Beginning in school year 2004-2005, the character-development program shall be required in kindergarten through grade 12. Each district school board shall develop or adopt a curriculum for the character-development program that shall be submitted to the department for approval. The character-development curriculum shall stress the qualities of patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty; charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; and cooperation.
<b>1003.42 (t)</b>	In order to encourage patriotism, the sacrifices that veterans have made in serving our country and protecting democratic values worldwide. Such instruction must occur on or before Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. Members of the instructional staff are encouraged to use the assistance of local veterans when practicable.
1003.421	<p>Recitation of the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>(1) To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded, the last full week of classes in September shall be recognized in public schools as Celebrate Freedom Week. Celebrate Freedom Week must include at least 3 hours of appropriate instruction in each social studies class, as determined by each school district, which instruction shall include an in-depth study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>(2) To emphasize the importance of this week, at the beginning of each school day or in homeroom, during the last full week of September, public school principals and teachers shall conduct an oral recitation by students of the following words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."</p> <p>(3) Student recitation of this statement shall serve to reaffirm the American ideals of individual liberty.</p> <p>(4) Upon written request by a student's parent, the student must be excused from the recitation of the Declaration of Independence.</p>

## Glossary of Terms

<b>504 Plan</b>	A written plan for students not classified in Exceptional Student Education, but who may need special accommodations to facilitate academic learning.
<b>AICE</b>	<b>Advanced International Certificate of Education</b>
<b>DOP</b>	<b>Drop Out Prevention</b> A program designed to meet the needs of students who do not perform well in traditional educational programs.
<b>ELL</b>	<b>English Language Learner</b> Students whose native language is not English and who have not yet met state-defined levels of English proficiency.
<b>EPT</b>	<b>Educational Planning Team</b> A team normally comprised of teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators to develop the most appropriate learning environment for non-Exceptional Education students.
<b>ESE</b>	<b>Exceptional Student Education</b> Special education and related services provided to eligible students, including students with disabilities, and gifted students.
<b>ESOL</b>	<b>English for Speakers of Other Languages</b> This program provides support for English language learners.
<b>ESY</b>	<b>Extended School Year</b> Often referred to as Summer School. Designed for students needing remediation or high school students taking courses for credit.
<b>FAPE</b>	<b>Free Appropriate Public Education</b> Special education and related services that are provided at public expense and meet the standards for the State educational agency
<b>FCAT</b>	<b>Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test</b> State initiated test that measures student performance in Reading, math, Writing, and Science as they apply to the benchmarks in the Sunshine State Standards.
<b>FDLRS</b>	<b>Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System</b> State project which provides support services to enable districts to meet educational goals (opportunities) for students with disabilities.
<b>GED</b>	<b>General Educational Development</b> Often referred to as High School Equivalency Diploma
<b>GLE</b>	<b>Grade Level Expectations</b> Expected outcomes as tested by grade and subject in grades 3 through 10.

<b>GPA</b>	<b>Grade Point Average</b> Defines and reflects students academic standing on a 4.0 scale with 0.0 being the lowest ranking and 4.0 being the highest ranking.
<b>H/H</b>	<b>Hospital Homebound</b> Special education and related services provided to eligible students, including students with disabilities and gifted students.
<b>HRS681</b>	A form provided by the Health Department that exempts students from providing a health certificate based on religious grounds.
<b>IB</b>	<b>International Baccalaureate</b> The IB magnet offers a traditional rigorous college preparatory program.
<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</b> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act governs the provisions of special education and related services to children with disabilities.
<b>IEP</b>	<b>Individual Education Plan</b> Written plan for each student with a disability, which is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with federal and state rules and regulations.
<b>JROTC</b>	<b>Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp.</b> Students learn leadership fundamentals to prepare them to assume leadership responsibilities within the Cadet Corps., the school and/or the local community.
<b>LEA</b>	<b>Local Educational Agency</b> A public board of education or other public authority within a state for either administrative control or direction of public elementary and secondary schools.
<b>MAI</b>	<b>Major Area of Interest</b> Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter are required to declare a major area of interest each year. Four credits in one or more major areas of interest are required for graduation, beginning with students graduating from high school in 2010 – 2011.
<b>OCP</b>	<b>Occupational Completion Point</b> An occupational point is a group of competencies or skills for a specific occupation as identified by the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), an Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) code, or an industry-defined title.
<b>SPP</b>	<b>Student Performance Plan</b> High school students taking a Level I course must have this form filed in their cumulative folder in order for credit to be awarded.

- SPS**            **Student Performance Standard**  
State and workforce objectives that must be mastered in order for students to be awarded credit and receive an OCP in Career and Technical Education programs of study.
- SSS**            **Sunshine State Standards**  
State-initiated standards that indicate what knowledge students should retain, by grade and subject area.
- Title I**         **Federal Program**  
A federally funded program which provides supplemental resources for students in schools with a free/reduced lunch rate of 35% and higher.

**Section I**

**Elementary Grades**  
**K-5**

# GENERAL EDUCATION: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS GRADES K-5

## A. Admission and Placement of Students

### 1. Admissions

- a. Evidence that the student resides in the school's designated zone is required for each student enrolling in the Alachua County school system (e.g., utility bill, bill of sale or deed for the house, lease agreement, rent receipt, homestead exemption receipt, or verification through a home visit by a school official).
- b. A birth certificate or other evidence of age is required for enrollment.
- c. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a certificate of immunization or a valid certificate of exemption.
- d. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a health certificate completed within twelve (12) months prior to enrollment or HRS Form 681 completed by the parent or guardian requesting exemption on religious grounds.
- e. The parent or guardian must complete a student emergency card when enrolling a student and will be asked to provide the student's social security number. Since a parent is not always able to be reached by phone, the number of an available emergency contact is mandatory.

### 2. Placement

The grade placement of any student new to an elementary school is determined by the principal and staff of the receiving school on the basis of results of tests administered by the school and other appropriate considerations. A principal may request a student to present a report card or other evidence of school attendance to facilitate proper placement of a student in the school.

- a. Kindergarten Admission Criteria: [s. 1003.21 F.S.]  
Regular entry age for kindergarten is five years of age on or before September 1. Each kindergarten student will be screened for school readiness strengths and weaknesses using a standardized process during the first 30 school days. Based on results, interventions will be planned and assessed throughout the school year. All school districts are required to administer the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener implemented by the Department of Education to each kindergarten student in the district upon the student's entry into kindergarten.
- b. Grade 1 Admission Criteria: [s. 1003.21 F.S.]  
Students must be 6 years old on or before September 1 and have been enrolled in a public school or satisfactorily completed the requirements for kindergarten in a nonpublic school. Students meeting these requirements may enter grade 1 at any time during the school year.
- c. Enrollment:  
To be enrolled in school, students must register for and attend a complete schedule of classes at the school unless they are home education students attending a regularly scheduled class period at the zoned school or participating in one of the district's approved educational options.

## **B. Student Promotion and Retention:**

1. Pupil promotion is based on evaluation of each student's achievement in regard to the Sunshine State Standards. Each student's progression from one grade to another is based, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics (s. 1008.25 F.S.). All students must participate in the statewide assessments. Each elementary school must regularly assess the reading ability of each K-3 student. The basis for making promotion decisions includes objective data and teacher judgment based on classroom performance, daily observation, formal and informal assessments, and parental input. The primary responsibility for recommending grade placement for the next year is that of professional staff members, subject to review and approval of the principal and the Superintendent.

Any student failing to attain the specified district or state levels of performance for pupil progression on designated district or state assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, or science must receive remediation or be retained. Each student who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the district school board in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, or who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the commission on statewide assessments at selected grade levels, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student's difficulty and areas of academic need.

The parent of any K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency must be immediately notified of the student's deficiency with a description, understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the deficiency. The parent must be informed that the student will be given intensive reading instruction until the deficiency is corrected. Evaluation of progress must be based on the student's class work, observations, tests, district and state assessments, and other relevant information, as provided in s. 1008.25 F.S. If a student is retained, it must be in an intensive program different from the previous year's setting. The new setting must take into account the student's learning style.

Educational Planning Team conferences or Individual Educational Planning conferences will be held for students experiencing learning difficulties. Conferences will include qualified professionals knowledgeable about the student. Intervention strategies will be identified, implemented, and monitored.

Progress monitoring is required for any student who scores Level I or Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics.

A student who is not meeting proficiency in reading and/or mathematics shall be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his/her academic achievement:

- a federally required plan such as an IEP
- a scholastic system of progress monitoring for all students
- an individualized progress monitoring plan

Indicators of the student's proficiency include teacher assessment, norm-referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, diagnostic assessments, statewide tests, and the student's instructional level in reading, mathematics, writing, and/or science.

If the student has been identified as having a deficiency in reading the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan shall include instructional and support services to meet the desired levels of proficiency.

Upon subsequent evaluation, if the documented deficiency has not been remediated the student may be retained. [s. 1008.25 (4) (b) F.S.]

2. Parents of a child with a reading deficiency must be informed of the following:
  - ◆ The FCAT is not the sole determiner of promotion
  - ◆ Additional evaluations, portfolio reviews and assessments are available to assist parents and the district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for grade promotion.
  - ◆ The district’s specific criteria and policies for mid-year promotion
  - ◆ It is the ultimate goal of the Legislature that every student read at or above grade level.

4. **Retention Criteria:**

Any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, based upon locally determined or statewide assessments conducted in kindergarten or grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3, or through teacher observations, must be given intensive reading instruction immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency. The student’s reading proficiency must be reassessed by locally determined assessments or through teacher observation at the beginning of the grade following the intensive reading instruction. The student must continue to be provided with intensive reading instruction until the reading deficiency is remedied.

If the student’s reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring a Level 2 or higher on FCAT Reading, the student must be retained, unless the student meets specific guidelines for good cause promotion.

The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading (grades K-3) must be notified in writing of the following:

- a. Notice that his/her child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading.
- b. A description of the current services that are being provided to the child.
- c. A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports, designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency that will be provided to the child.
- d. Notice that if the child’s reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless he/she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause.
- e. Strategies for parents to use in helping their child succeed in reading proficiency.

The school must provide written notification to the parent of any third grade retained student explaining that the child has not met the proficiency levels required for promotion and the reasons that the child is not eligible for a good cause promotion.

The notification must comply with the provisions of s. 1002.20(14) and include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

Retained students must be provided with intensive interventions in reading to address the student’s specific reading deficiency as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment.

Intensive intervention must include:

- ◆ Effective instructional strategies
- ◆ Participation in summer reading camp
- ◆ Appropriate teaching methodologies to help students become successful readers and be promoted to the next grade

The school must review the progress monitoring plans of each retained third grade student. The review must address the additional supports and services needed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

The school must complete a student portfolio for each retained third grade student. This portfolio must contain evidence of mastery of benchmarks, results of diagnostic assessments and progress monitoring, and other information to assist parents in determining the student's progress.

The school must provide retained third grade students with intensive instructional services and supports to remediate identified areas of reading deficiency including a minimum of 90 minutes of daily uninterrupted reading instruction using a scientifically research-based program, and other strategies prescribed by the school district which may include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Small group instruction
- ◆ Reduced teacher-student ratio
- ◆ More frequent progress monitoring tutoring or mentoring
- ◆ Transition classes containing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students
- ◆ Extended school day, week, or year
- ◆ Summer Reading Camps

Students who are retained in third grade must be provided with a high-performing teacher as determined by student performance data and above-satisfactory performance appraisals.

The school must provide parents of retained third grade students with at least one of the following options:

- ◆ Supplemental tutoring in scientifically research-based services in addition to the regular reading instruction
- ◆ A "Read at Home" plan
- ◆ A mentor or tutor with specialized reading training

Each school must establish, where applicable, an Intensive Acceleration Class for retained third grade students who subsequently score a Level I on FCAT Reading. The focus of the Intensive Acceleration class is to increase a child's reading level at least two grade levels in one school year.

**The Intensive Acceleration class must:**

- ◆ Be provided to any student in grade 3 who scores Level 1 on FCAT Reading and who was retained in grade 3 the prior year because of scoring Level 1 on FCAT Reading
- ◆ Have a reduced student-teacher ratio
- ◆ Provide uninterrupted reading instruction for the majority of the student contact time each day
- ◆ Incorporate opportunities to master the grade 4 Sunshine State Standards in other core subject areas
- ◆ Provide intensive language and vocabulary instruction using a scientifically research-based program including use of a speech language therapist.
- ◆ Use a reading program that is scientifically research-based and has proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year.

- ◆ Include weekly progress monitoring
- ◆ Report to the Department of Education through the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) the progress of students in the class at the end of the first semester.

Each district shall establish a Reading Enhancement and Acceleration Development (READ) Initiative to prevent the retention of grade 3 students and to offer intensive reading instruction to grade 3 students who failed to meet standards for promotion to grade 4 and each K-3 student who has a reading deficiency.

**The READ Initiative must:**

- ◆ Be provided to all K-3 students at risk of retention as identified by the statewide assessment system used in Reading First schools. The assessment must measure phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
  - ◆ Be provided during regular school hours in addition to the regular reading instruction.
  - ◆ Provide a state-identified reading curriculum that has been approved by the Florida Center for Reading Research and that meets, at a minimum, the following specifications:
    1. Assists students assessed as exhibiting a reading deficiency in developing the ability to read at grade level.
    2. Provides skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
    3. Provides scientifically based and reliable assessment.
    4. Provides initial and ongoing analysis of each student's reading progress.
    5. Is implemented during regular school hours.
  - ◆ Provide a curriculum in core academic subjects to assist students in maintaining or meeting proficiency levels for the appropriate grade in all academic subjects.
5. Promotion/retention decisions are made at the end of the regular 180-day school year. The options for each K-5 student are as follows:
    - a. Promote to next grade level.
    - b. Remediate before the next school year and promote.
    - c. Promote for good cause as specified by law and remediate during the following year with more intensive intervention and remediation strategies (Good cause promotions apply to third grade students only.)
    - d. Retain and remediate in a different program.
  6. Promotion for Good Cause. The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retentions, as provided in s. 1008.25 (5)(b) F.S. for good cause. Good Cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:
    - a. English language learners who have had less than 2 years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages program.
    - b. A student with disabilities whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment is more appropriate, consistent with the requirements of State Board of Education rule.
    - c. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
    - d. Students who demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that the student is reading on

grade level as evidenced by demonstration of mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the FCAT.

- e. Students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT and who have an individual education plan (IEP) or a Section 504 plan that reflects that, although the student still demonstrates a deficiency in reading, he/she has received intensive remediation as required in reading for more than 2 years and was previously retained in grades K-3.
- f. Students who have received the intensive remediation in reading as required but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in grades K-3 for a total of 2 years. Intensive reading instruction for students so promoted must include an altered instructional day based upon a progress monitoring plan that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies for each student.

[s. 1008.25 (6) (b) F.S.]

### **Documentation for Good Cause Promotions:**

Requests for good cause exemptions for students from the mandatory retention requirements shall be made consistent with the following:

- ◆ Documentation shall be submitted from the student's teacher to the school principal that indicates the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student's academic record. In order to minimize paperwork requirements, such documentation shall consist only of the existing progress monitoring plan, student portfolio results, ELL Plan, or Standardized Achievement Test Score.
- ◆ The school principal shall review and discuss such recommendation with the teacher and make the determination as to whether the student should be promoted or retained.
- ◆ If the school principal determines that the student should be promoted, the school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the district school superintendent.

The district school superintendent shall accept or reject the principal's recommendation in writing. [s. 1008.25 (6) (c) F.S.]

District school boards are required to adopt and implement a policy for the mid-year promotion of any student retained in third grade due to a reading deficiency, as required by section 1008.25(5)(b), Florida Statutes. Such mid-year promotions of retained third grade students should occur during the first semester of the academic year.

- a. To be eligible for mid-year promotion, a student must demonstrate that he or she:
  - 1) is a successful and independent reader as demonstrated by reading at or above grade level;
  - 2) has progressed sufficiently to master appropriate fourth-grade reading skills; and
  - 3) has met any additional requirements, such as satisfactory achievement in other curriculum areas, as determined by the policies of the District School Board.
- b. Standards that provide a reasonable expectation that the student has met the requirements for mid-year promotion are:
  - 1) successful completion of portfolio elements that meet state criteria or
  - 2) satisfactory performance on a locally-selected standardized assessment.
- c. To promote a student mid-year using a student portfolio, there must be evidence of the student's mastery of third-grade Sunshine State Standard Benchmarks for Language Arts

and beginning mastery of the Benchmarks for fourth grade. The student portfolio must meet the following requirements:

- 1) be selected by the student's teacher;
  - 2) be an accurate picture of the student's ability and include only student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
  - 3) include evidence of mastery of the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 Reading FCAT, as required by Rule 6A-1.094221, FAC;
  - 4) include evidence of beginning mastery of fourth grade benchmarks that are assessed by the grade 4 Reading FCAT. This includes multiple choice, short response, and extended response items and passages that are approximately 50% literary text and 50% information text, and that are between 100-900 words with an average of 375 words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. For each benchmark, there must be two examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or better; and
  - 4) be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.
- d. To promote a student mid-year using a locally-selected standardized assessment, there must be evidence that the student scored at or above grade level in reading comprehension, as demonstrated by standard scores or percentiles. Students promoted during the school year after November 1 must demonstrate proficiency above that required to score on Level 2 on the grade 3 FCAT, as determined by the State Board of Education.
- e. The progress monitoring plan (AIP) for any retained third-grade student who has been promoted mid-year to fourth grade must continue to be implemented for the entire academic year.
- f. Schools shall review the progress monitoring plans for all students who scored Level I on FCAT reading and were not promoted for good cause. The review shall address additional supports and services needed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency. The school district shall require a student portfolio to be completed for each such student. Districts shall provide a student who has been retained in grade 3 and has received intensive instructional services but is still not ready for grade promotion, as determined by the school district, the option of being placed in a transitional setting designed to produce learning gains sufficient to meet grade 4 performance standards while continuing to remediate the areas of reading deficiency.
7. Parents or guardians may appeal a promotion or retention decision made by the school at the end of the current school year to the Deputy Superintendent for Student Support and Curriculum Services. This appeal process shall be completed before the start of the Extended School Year program.

No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

The allocation of remedial and supplemental instruction resources for students shall occur in the following priority:

- ◆ students who are deficient in reading by the end of grade 3
- ◆ students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion consistent with the

district's plan for student progression. [s. 1008.25 F.S.]

- ♦ Districts shall report to the State Board of Education, as requested, on specific intensive reading interventions and supports implemented at the school level. Commissioner of Education shall prescribe the required components of requested reports.

### C. Grading System for K-5

The Board recognizes the importance of a student achievement grading system that is meaningful to students, parents, and school personnel. This grading system gives students credit for actual work they have done. It does not compare their progress with others. Grades shall be assigned as follows:

		<b>Grading Scale</b>			
Grades K-2		Grades 3-5			
		<i>Percent Achievement</i>	Grade Points	Progress Level	
E	=	Excellent	A = 90-100	4.0	Outstanding
S	=	Satisfactory	B+ = 87-89	3.0	
N	=	Needs Improvement	B = 80-86	3.0	Above Average
U	=	Unsatisfactory	C+ = 77-79	2.0	
			C = 70-76	2.0	Average
			D+ = 67-69	1.0	
			D = 60-66	1.0	Lowest Acceptable
			F = 0-59	0.0	Failure

In grades kindergarten through 5, plus (+) or minus (-) symbols may be used with the above listed grades to indicate achievement at the upper (+) or lower (-) end of a given letter grade range with the exception of U (Unsatisfactory), F (Unsatisfactory/Failure), and I (Incomplete).

Grades for English language learner students will be based upon their demonstrated knowledge of the appropriate subject area regardless of their level of English proficiency.

#### **Class Conduct Grades K-5:**

The following symbols are used to denote class conduct in grades K-5:

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs Improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

No national origin minority or English language learner student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action solely because of their use of a language other than English. This does not abrogate any rules, standards, or guidelines as specified in the School Board of Alachua County Code of Student Conduct.

#### **Reporting to Parents**

Parents/guardians will be notified annually regarding the student's progress toward achieving state and district expectations for proficiency in reading, math, science, and writing. The district school board must report to the parent the student's result on each statewide assessment test. Progress reporting must be provided to the parent in writing in a format adapted by the district school board. Schools shall use district-adopted report cards to report grades at nine-week intervals in elementary schools. Interval grades shall be based upon assignments and tests, class participation, research, and

other activities. Grades shall be supported by records which indicate how the teacher arrived at the evaluation.

Final report card for a school year shall indicate end-of-year status regarding performance/nonperformance at grade level, acceptable/unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion/non-promotion. [s.1003.33(1) F.S.]

#### **D. Instructional Program Requirements**

Teachers will teach the Sunshine State Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations as established by the State of Florida

Instruction will include age-appropriate study of the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government. Instruction will also include the United States constitution, flag education (proper flag display and flag salute), elements of civil government, the history of the Holocaust, African–American history, the history of the state, the study of Hispanic contributions to the United States, the study of women’s contributions to the United States, character education, Veteran’s Day, free enterprise and consumer education.

##### **Additional Information:**

1. Students may not be exempted from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student’s attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement. [s. 1003.22 (2) F.S.]
2. Participation in the FCAT is mandatory for all students attending public school, except as otherwise prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Each student must participate in the statewide assessment tests required by s. 1008.22 F.S. If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment, the district must notify the student’s parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation. If modifications are made in the student’s instruction to provide accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessment tests, the district must notify the student’s parent of the implications of such instructional modifications. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations. [s. 1008.25 F.S.]

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year, each public school is prohibited from suspending a regular program of curricula for purposes of administering practice tests or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT. However, schools may engage in the following test-preparation activities:

- Distributing to students the sample test books and answer keys published by the Department of Education
- Providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, without suspending the school’s regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT
- Providing individualized instruction in the content knowledge and skills assessed, without suspending the school’s regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or

Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT or a student who, through a diagnostic assessment administered by the school district, is identified as having a deficiency in the content knowledge and skills assessed.

- Incorporating test-taking exercises and strategies into curricula for intensive reading and intensive mathematics intervention courses.
  - Administering a practice test or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the FCAT, the format of the test items, and the test directions, or which are otherwise necessary for the valid and reliable administration of the FCAT as set forth in State Board of Education rule.
3. Elementary magnet programs are offered in the following schools:  
Science, Mathematics, and Technology Magnet – Stephen Foster Elementary  
Gifted Magnet – Williams Elementary  
Gifted and Talented Magnet – Archer Community  
Performing Arts Magnet – Duval Elementary
- Some magnet programs have entrance requirements and enrollment caps. Please contact the school principal for more information. Priority for admission will be given to students currently enrolled in district-run Alachua County Public Schools.

#### **E. Workforce Preparation**

All schools K-12 should document the manner in which they have prepared students to enter the workforce, including information regarding the provision of accurate, timely career and curricular counseling to students. This information shall include:

1. information about available career opportunities;
2. educational requirements associated with each career;
3. educational institutions that prepare students for each career;
4. student financial aid;
5. school procedures for identifying individual student interests and aptitudes;
6. recommended high school coursework that prepares students for success in college coursework;
7. availability of applied instruction;
8. availability of support services to help students who need assistance to successfully complete instruction necessary to enroll in postsecondary education or enter the workforce;
9. availability of technical instruction and workplace-based learning.  
[s. 1006.02 F.S.]

#### **F. Extended School Year**

The board may sponsor an extended school year program.

# EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION-ELEMENTARY

## Student Rights for Instruction

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 states that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible: Modifications to the general curriculum occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that mastery of the general curriculum with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In addition, ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. The needs and services of the student are documented on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

## Promotion and Placement

Grade placement for students with identified disabilities is first determined by the same criteria for promotion and placement as for all students, with some additional considerations. A student with a disability who does not meet criteria for promotion may be exempted from mandatory retention after considering the procedures for good cause exemption that apply to all students with the following additional options.

- ◆ Students with disabilities whose IEP indicates participation in an alternate assessment is more appropriate may be considered for good cause exemption from mandatory retention.
- ◆ Students with disabilities who take the FCAT and have an IEP that reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than 2 years but still has a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in K, grade 1, or grade 2 or 3 may be considered for good cause exemption from mandatory retention.

## *Reporting Student Progress*

### Report Cards/Grading Procedures

Report card grades for students with disabilities are first determined by the same criteria for grades for all students, with some additional considerations. Students with disabilities may receive report card grades in general education or special education classes that are based on instructional level rather than grade placement if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Accommodations/Modifications to the general curriculum are documented on the student's IEP as appropriate. The standard report card is used for a vast majority of students with disabilities. However, in limited cases, the IEP team may opt to use an alternate report card when the standard report card would be ineffective in communicating the progress of the student.

## **Parent Notification of Student Progress**

Parents of students with disabilities will be regularly informed as to their student's progress toward the annual goals of the IEP and the extent to which the progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year. Progress towards goals and likelihood of attainment is sent home with the report card.

## **Guidelines for Determining Appropriate Accommodations for Exceptional Students**

### **Accommodations to the General Curriculum**

Consistent with the accountability requirements of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), the vast majority of students with disabilities in Florida are expected to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, participate in the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and graduate high school with a standard diploma. In order to achieve this expectation, students with disabilities must be provided access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible with appropriately designed instruction and accommodations. An accommodation is intended for those students who would be denied meaningful participation in instruction and assessment without the accommodation. Accommodations allow a student with a disability the same access to instruction and assessment as students without disabilities. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are determined at the IEP meeting and indicated on the student's IEP.

Appropriate accommodations for state and district assessments are determined for each student at the IEP meeting.

The following guidelines will be considered when making individual accommodation decisions:

- Accommodations are adjustments made to the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed but do not affect the expected outcomes in relation to the Sunshine State Standards.
- ◆ Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do:
- ◆ Accommodations should remove or neutralize the limiting effects of the student's handicapping condition by altering the test administration in appropriate ways:
- ◆ Accommodations should not change the intent of the test; i.e., the educational goal or skill measured by the test:
- ◆ Accommodations should not be used to compensate for lack of achievement:
- ◆ Accommodations should not provide the student with unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test. They must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test:
- ◆ Test accommodations must be the same or nearly the same as accommodations used by the student in completing the classroom instructional and assessment activities.
  - ◆ Accommodations must be necessary to allow the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery required by the assessment.

## **Testing Accommodations**

Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC] permits test accommodations for any student with a disability who has a current IEP. Expanded accommodations on state and district assessment are authorized for students with disabilities through executive order. Allowable accommodations are detailed in the test administration manuals under the following categories:

- Flexible Presentation
- Flexible Responding
- Flexible Scheduling
- Flexible Setting
- Use of Assistive Technology

## **Parent Notification of Testing Accommodations/Modifications**

A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations and/or modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations and/or modifications.

## **Modifications to the General Curriculum**

Modifications are changes in the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed, and modifications are changes in expected outcomes and curricular standards. When students are unable to meet the expectations of the general curriculum, the expectations are modified. Modifications to the curriculum are generally used in coordination with an assessment that is compatible with the modified expectations. The general education curriculum may be modified to meet the student's needs. All modifications are addressed in the student's IEP. The following guidelines should be considered when making modifications decisions:

- Curricular modifications should be considered only after all types of accommodations have been exhausted.
- The IEP team must consider the long-term impacts of lowering the expectations for students.
- Students with a disability who are not challenged to reach the same level of achievement as the non-disabled classmates in elementary or middle school may find that they are not ready for a program that leads to a standard diploma in high school.
- A student's priority educational needs may be different from the general curriculum specific in the Sunshine State Standards for the academic subject areas. For example, a student with a moderate or severe disability may need to learn how to care for personal needs and develop interpersonal communication skills. The student's annual goals would reflect the student's needs in personal care, socialization, and interpersonal communication, and not the academics of the regular school program.
- Students who require modified standards or an alternate curriculum may meet the criteria for exemption from FCAT and therefore be required to participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment through grade 11.

## **Guidelines for Exemptions of Selected Students from State or District Assessment**

In order to be excluded from the FCAT, a student must meet the following requirements according to Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (FAC):

- ◆ The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course modifications, and
- ◆ The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure and vocational activities.

When deciding whether a student should or should not participate in FCAT, the Florida Department of Education has suggested that IEP teams consider the following:

- ◆ Is the student unable to master the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course accommodations?
- ◆ Is the student's demonstrated cognitive ability the primary reason for the inability to master these standards?
- ◆ Is the student participating in a modified or functional curriculum based upon competencies in the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma for all academic areas?
- ◆ Does the student require extensive direct instruction in functional academics and vocational competencies as well as domestic, community living, and leisure activities?
- ◆ Does the student have deficits in adaptive behavior as demonstrated by the inability to function effectively and independently in everyday living skills (interpersonal and social interactions) across a variety of settings?

If the IEP team cannot answer "yes" to all of the questions, the student should participate in the FCAT, with allowable accommodations, as appropriate. If the IEP team determines that the student meets the criteria for exemption from the FCAT the student must participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

### **Extended School Year**

The need for extended school year services is determined by an IEP committee.

For students eligible for Exceptional Student Education, the need for Extended School Year (ESY) services is determined at an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) conference and documented on the IEP. Multiple criteria for eligibility for ESY services, as defined by DOE, may include but are not limited to: consideration of the likelihood of regression/recoupment, critical points of instruction, emerging skills, nature or severity of disability, interfering behaviors, rate of progress, or special circumstances.

IEP conferences to consider extended school services are held prior to May 1, in order to allow sufficient notice to families regarding the decision for extended school year services.

# **Section II**

## **Middle Grades 6-8**

# GENERAL EDUCATION: MIDDLE SCHOOLS GRADES 6-8

## A. Admission and Placement of Students

### 1. Admissions

- a. Evidence that the student resides in the school's designated zone is required for each student enrolling in the Alachua County school system (e.g., utility bill, bill of sale or deed for the house, lease agreement, rent receipt, homestead exemption receipt, or verification through a home visit by a school official).
  - b. A birth certificate or other evidence of age is required for enrollment.
  - c. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a certificate of immunization or a valid certificate of exemption.
  - d. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a health certificate completed within twelve (12) months prior to enrollment or HRS Form 681 completed by the parent or guardian requesting exemption on religious grounds.
  - e. The parent or guardian must complete a student emergency card when enrolling a student and will be asked to provide the student's social security number. Since a parent is not always able to be reached by phone, the number of an available emergency contact is mandatory.
2. The grade placement of any student new to a middle school is determined by the principal and staff on the basis of results of tests administered by the school and other appropriate considerations. A principal may request a student to present a report card or other evidence of school attendance to facilitate proper placement of a student in the school.
  3. To be enrolled in middle school, students must register for and attend a complete schedule of classes at the school unless they are home education students attending a regularly scheduled class period at the zoned school or are participating in one of the district's approved educational options.

## B. Course of Study Requirements and Offerings

### 1. Regular Program Requirements:

- Language Arts
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education

### 2. Electives:

- Career and Technical Education
- Computer Education
- Fine Arts
- Foreign Languages
- Performing Arts

### 3. Magnet Programs:

The district offers academic magnet programs at the middle school level. Admission is by application only. Selection criteria are available from each program. Priority for admission

will be given to students currently enrolled in district-run Alachua County Public Schools.

4. Advisor/Advisee:

It is recommended that each middle school conduct a student advisement program in grades 6 – 8. The nature of the advisement program is determined by each middle school based on student needs.

5. Teachers will teach the Sunshine State Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations as established by the State of Florida

Instruction will include age-appropriate study of the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government. Instruction will also include the United States Constitution, flag education (proper flag display and flag salute), elements of civil government, the history of the Holocaust, African–American history, the history of the state, the study of Hispanic contributions to the United States, the study of women’s contributions to the United States, character education, Veteran’s Day, free enterprise and consumer education.

For a complete list of state curriculum mandates, see item N. in General Procedures for Promotion section.

### **C. Student Promotion and Retention**

1. Pupil promotion is based on evaluation of each student’s achievement of the Sunshine State Standards. Each student’s progression from one grade to another is based, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Parents must be informed of their students’ progress in meeting academic standards. [s. 1008.25 (1) F.S.] Each student who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the district school board in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, or who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the commissioner on statewide assessments at selected grade levels, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty and areas of academic need.

Beginning with students entering grade 6 in the 2006-2007 school year and thereafter, promotion from middle school to high school requires that all students successfully complete the following academic courses:

- Three middle school or higher courses in English. These courses shall emphasize literature, composition, and technical text.
- Three middle school or higher courses in Mathematics.
- Three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.
- Three middle school or higher courses in science.
- One course in career and education planning, to be completed in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Evaluation of proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards includes scores on district and statewide assessments, classroom performance, daily observations, and formal and informal assessments of competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. The primary responsibility

for recommending grade placement for the next year is that of professional staff members, subject to review and approval of the principal and Superintendent.

Participation in the FCAT is mandatory for all students attending public school, except as otherwise prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Each student must participate in the statewide assessment tests required by s. 1008.22 F.S. If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment, the district must notify the student's parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation. If modifications are made in the student's instruction to provide accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessment tests, the district must notify the student's parent of the implications of such instructional modifications. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations. [s. 1008.25 (3) (c)(6) F.S.]

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year, each public school is prohibited from suspending a regular program of curricula for purposes of administering practice tests or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT. However, schools may engage in the following test-preparation activities:

- Distributing to students the sample test books and answer keys published by the Department of Education
  - Providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT
  - Providing individualized instruction in the content knowledge and skills assessed, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT or a student who, through a diagnostic assessment administered by the school district, is identified as having a deficiency in the content knowledge and skills assessed.
  - Incorporating test-taking exercises and strategies into curricula for intensive reading and intensive mathematics intervention courses.
  - Administering a practice test or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the FCAT, the format of the test items, and the test directions, or which are otherwise necessary for the valid and reliable administration of the FCAT as set forth in State Board of Education rule.
2. Progress monitoring is required for any student who scores level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics. The school in which the student is enrolled must develop, in consultation with the student's parent, and must implement a progress monitoring plan designed to assist the student in meeting state and district expectations for proficiency.

A student who is not meeting proficiency in reading and/or math (FCAT Level 3 or higher) shall be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his/her academic achievement:

- A federally required plan such as an IEP

- A school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students
  - An individualized progress monitoring plan
- a. Indicators of the student's proficiency include teacher assessment, norm-referenced tests, statewide tests, diagnostic assessment, and grade point average (GPA).
  - b. Remediation options may include strategies within the regular class, tutorial support, extended school year, extended day activities, home strategies, contracted academic services, drop-out prevention coursework, and intensive math, science, reading, writing/language arts courses.
  - c. The progress monitoring plan must be designed to assist the student in meeting expectations for proficiency.
  - d. If the student has been identified as having a deficiency in reading, the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan shall include instructional and support services to meet the desired levels of performance.

The district may require low-performing students to attend remediation programs held before school, after school, or during the summer if transportation is provided.

### 3. Reading Requirement

For each year in which the student scores a level 1 on FCAT Reading, the student must be enrolled in and complete an intensive reading course the following year.

A student who scores Level 2 on FCAT Reading shall be placed in an Intensive Reading class or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered, as determined by a diagnosis of the student's reading needs.

Student progress toward increased reading achievement must be reported three times per year. The school shall use research-based reading activities that have been shown to be successful in teaching reading to low-performing students.

### 4. High School Credit

Each middle school must offer at least one high-school level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit. Middle schools may offer additional high-school level courses for credit with approval from the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

High school credit may be granted only for those students completing a full year of study. No half credit will be awarded.

6. Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit who get a grade of C, D, or F, may retake the same or comparable course and replace their original grade with a grade of C or higher earned in the same or comparable course. Only the new grade shall be used in the calculation of the student's grade point average.

7. Students in grade 6 who are enrolled in a school that contains one or more elementary grades shall be provided 150 minutes each week of physical education (at least 30 consecutive minutes per day on any day when physical education is conducted).

Beginning with the 2009 – 2010 school year, the equivalent of one class period day of physical education for one semester of each year is required for students enrolled in grades 6-8.

The requirement for physical education shall be waived for any student who meets one of the following criteria:

- The student is enrolled or required to enroll in a remedial course
- The student's parent indicates in writing to the school that:
  - The parent requests the students enroll in another course from among those courses offered as options.
  - The student is participating in physical activities outside the school day which are equal to or in excess of the mandated requirements.

Each school shall notify the student's parents of the options available before scheduling the student to participate in physical education.

#### 8. Retention Criteria

Middle school students may be retained for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. Scoring Level 1 on FCAT Reading and/or Math
- b. Receiving failing grades in two or more academic subjects
- c. Achieving less than a 2.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale)
- d. Missing more than fifteen days per semester (students may be retained for lack of attendance unless a medical excuse is presented to the principal from a competent medical authority to excuse absences in excess of fifteen days; or there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the principal based on recommendations of teachers, counselors, or Student Services personnel.) [Board policy 5.21]

**Students entering grade 8 for the first time in 2008 – 2009 and thereafter must meet the middle school promotion requirements to be promoted to high school.**

9. Parents or guardians may appeal a promotion or retention decision made by the school at the end of the current school year to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This appeal process shall be completed before the start of the Extended School Year program.
9. No Limited English Proficient (LEP) student will be retained based solely on his/her language proficiency in English.
10. Promotion/retention decisions are made at the end of the regular 180-day school year. The options for each 6 – 8 student are as follows:
  - a. Promote to next grade level.
  - b. Remediate before the beginning of the next school year and promote.
  - c. Promote for good cause, and remediate during the following school year with more intensive intervention and remediation strategies specified in a revised progress monitoring plan.
  - d. Retain and remediate in a different program.
11. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

#### 12. Resource Allocation

The allocation of remedial and supplemental resources for students shall occur in the following priority:

- ◆ Students who are deficient in reading at the end of grade 3.
- ◆ Students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion consistent with the district's plan for student progression.

#### 13. Graduation Options

Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, each district school board shall provide each student in grades 6-8 and their parents with information concerning the three-year and four-year graduation options.

**D. Grading System for Grades 6-8**

The following scale is used to convert quantifiable achievement to alphabetic symbols in middle school courses. Grades will be calculated mathematically for each term.

% Achievement of Course Objectives	Grade Points	Progress Level
A = 90-100	4.0	Outstanding
B+ = 87-89	3.0	
B = 80-86	3.0	Above Average
C+ = 77-79	2.0	
C = 70-76	2.0	Average
D+ = 67-69	1.0	
D = 60-66	1.0	Lowest Acceptable
F = 0-59	0.0	Failure
I = 0	0.0	Incomplete

Students may not be exempted from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student’s attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement. [s.1003.33 (2)]

**E. Class Conduct Grades 6-8**

The following symbols are used to denote class conduct in grades 6-8:

- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

No national origin minority or limited English proficient student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action solely because of his/her use of a language other than English. This does not abrogate any rules, standards, or guidelines as specified in the School Board of Alachua County Code of Student Conduct.

**F. Workforce Preparation**

All schools K-12 should document the manner in which they have prepared students to enter the workforce, including information regarding the provision of accurate, timely career and curricular counseling to students. This information shall include:

1. information about available career opportunities;
2. educational requirements associated with each career;
3. educational institutions that prepare students for each career;
4. student financial aid;
5. school procedures for identifying individual student interests and aptitudes;
6. recommended high school coursework that prepares students for success in college coursework;

7. availability of applied instruction;
8. availability of support services to help students who need assistance to successfully complete instruction necessary to enroll in postsecondary education or enter the workforce;
9. availability of technical instruction and workplace-based learning.  
[s. 1006.02]

#### **G. Report Cards and Student Progress Reports to Parents**

The district school board must report to the parent the student's results on each statewide assessment. The final report card for a school year shall indicate end-of-year status regarding performance or nonperformance at grade level, acceptable or unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion or non-promotion. [s. 1003.33 (1) F.S.] Progress reporting must be provided to the parent in writing in a format adapted by the district school board. Progress reports will be issued to students during each marking period.

#### **H. Extended School Year**

The board may sponsor an extended school year program. Low-performing students may be required to attend extended school year programs if transportation is provided.

## **Exceptional Student Education Middle School**

### **Student Rights for Instruction**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 states that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Modifications to the general curriculum occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that mastery of the general curriculum with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In addition, children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education, related services, and accommodations or modifications designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. The needs and services of the student are documented on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **Promotion and Placement**

Grade placement for students with identified disabilities is first determined by the same criteria for promotion and placement as for all students, with some additional considerations. A student with a disability who does not meet criteria for promotion may be exempted from mandatory retention after considering the procedures for good cause exemption that apply to all students with the following additional options.

- ◆ A student with disabilities whose IEP indicates participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment is more appropriate may be considered for good cause exemption from mandatory retention.
- ◆ Students with disabilities who take the FCAT and have an IEP that reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than 2 years but still has a deficiency in

reading and was previously retained in K, grade 1, or grade 2 or 3 may be considered for good cause exemption from mandatory retention.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

### **Report Cards/Grading Procedures**

Report card grades for students with disabilities are first determined by the same criteria for grades for all students, with some additional considerations. Students with disabilities may receive report card grades in general education or special education classes that are based on instructional level rather than grade placement if determined appropriate by either the IEP team or individual classroom teachers. Accommodations/Modifications to the general curriculum are documented on the student's IEP as appropriate. The standard report card is used for a vast majority of students with disabilities. However in limited cases, the IEP team may opt to use an alternate report card when the standard report card would be ineffective in communicating the progress of the student.

### **Parent Notification of Student Progress**

Parents of students with disabilities will be regularly informed as to their student's progress toward the annual goals of the IEP and the extent to which the progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year. Progress towards IEP goals and statement of likelihood of attainment is sent home with the report card.

## **Guidelines for Determining Appropriate Accommodations/Modifications For Students with Disabilities**

### **Accommodations to the General Curriculum**

Consistent with the accountability requirements of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004(IDEA)* the vast majority of students with disabilities in Florida are expected to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, participate in the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and graduate high school with a standard diploma. In order to achieve this expectation, students with disabilities must be provided access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible with appropriately designed instruction and accommodations. An accommodation is intended for those students who would be denied meaningful participation in instruction and assessment without the accommodation. Accommodations allow a student with a disability the same access to instruction and assessment as students without disabilities. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are determined at the IEP meeting and indicated on the student's IEP.

The following guidelines will be considered when making individual accommodation decisions:

- ◆ Accommodations are adjustments made to the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed but do not affect the expected outcomes in relation to the Sunshine State Standards.
- ◆ Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do:

- ◆ Accommodations should remove or neutralize the limiting effects of the student’s disability by altering the presentation, response, schedule, setting, use of assistive devices, or test administration in appropriate ways.
- ◆ Accommodations should not change the intent of the test (i.e., the educational goal or skill measured by the test):
- ◆ Accommodations should not be used to compensate for lack of achievement;
- ◆ Accommodations should not provide the student with unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test. They must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test:
  - ◆ Test accommodations must be the same or nearly the same as accommodations used by the student in completing the classroom instructional and assessment activities.
- ◆ Accommodations must be necessary to allow the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery required by the assessment.

## **Testing Accommodations**

Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC] permits test accommodations for any student with a disability who has a current IEP. Expanded accommodations on state and district assessment are authorized for students with disabilities through executive order. Allowable accommodations are detailed in the test administration manuals under the following categories:

- Flexible Presentation
- Flexible Responding
- Flexible Scheduling
- Flexible Setting
- Use of Assistive Technology

## **Parent Notification of Testing Accommodations**

A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations and/or modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations and/or modifications.

## **Modifications to the General Curriculum**

Modifications are changes in the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed, AND modifications are changes in expected outcomes and curricular standards. When students are unable to meet the expectations of the general curriculum, the expectations are modified. Modifications to the curriculum are generally used in coordination with an assessment that is compatible with the modified expectations. The general education curriculum may be modified to meet the student’s needs. All modifications are addressed in the student’s IEP.

The following guidelines should be considered when making modifications decisions:

- Curricular modifications should be considered only after all types of accommodations have been exhausted.
- The IEP team must consider the long-term impacts of lowering the expectations for students.
- Students with a disability who are not challenged to reach the same level of achievement as the non-disabled classmates in elementary or middle school may find that they are not ready for a program that leads to a standard diploma in high school.
- A student's priority educational needs may be different from the general curriculum specific in the Sunshine State Standards for the academic subject areas. For example, a student with a moderate or severe disability may need to learn how to care for personal needs and develop interpersonal communication skills. The student's annual goals would reflect the student's needs in personal care, socialization, and interpersonal communication, and not the academics of the regular school program.
- Students who require modified standards or an alternate curriculum may meet the criteria for exemption from FCAT and therefore be required to participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment through grade 11.

## **Guidelines for Exemptions of Selected Students from State or District Assessment**

In order to be excluded from FCAT, a student must meet the following requirements according to Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC]:

- The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course accommodations, and
- The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure and vocational activities.

When deciding whether a student should or should not participate in FCAT, the Florida Department of Education has suggested that IEP teams consider the following:

- Is the student unable to master the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable accommodations?
- Is the student's demonstrated cognitive ability the primary reason for the inability to master these standards?
- Is the student participating in a modified or functional curriculum based upon competencies in the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma for all academic areas?
- Does the student require extensive direct instruction in functional academics and vocational competencies as well as domestic, community living, and leisure activities?
- Does the student have deficits in adaptive behavior as demonstrated by the inability to function effectively and independently in everyday living skills (interpersonal and social interactions) across a variety of settings?

If the IEP team cannot answer "yes" to all of the questions, the student should participate in the FCAT, with allowable accommodations, as appropriate. If the IEP team determines that the student meets the criteria for exemption from FCAT, the student must participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

## **Extended School Year**

The need for extended school year services is determined by an IEP committee.

For students eligible for Exceptional Student Education, the need for Extended School Year (ESY) services is determined at an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) conference and documented on the IEP. Multiple criteria for eligibility for ESY services, as defined by DOE, may include but are not limited to: consideration of the likelihood of regression/recoupment, critical points of instruction, emerging skills, nature or severity of disability, interfering behaviors, rate of progress, or special circumstances.

IEP conferences to consider extended school services are held prior to May 1, in order to allow sufficient notice to families regarding the decision for extended school year services.

# **Section III**

## **High School Grades 9-12**

# GENERAL EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS GRADES 9 – 12

## A. Admission and Placement of Students

### 1. Admissions

- a. Evidence that the parent resides in the school's designated zone is required for each student enrolling in the Alachua County school system (e.g., utility bill, bill of sale or deed for house, lease agreement, rent receipt, homestead exemption receipt, or verification through a home visit by a school official). Students who move away from their parents' residence shall be assigned to the school attendance zone in which their parents reside unless a legal guardianship has been awarded to an adult with whom the student resides.
- b. A birth certificate or other evidence of age is required for enrollment.
- c. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a certificate of immunization or a valid certificate of exemption.
- d. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a health certificate completed within the twelve (12) months just prior to enrollment or HRS Form 680.
- e. The parent or guardian must complete an Emergency Card when enrolling a student and will be asked to provide the student's social security number. Since it is not always possible to reach a parent by phone, the number of an available emergency contact is mandatory.
- f. Teachers will teach the Sunshine State Standards, Student Performance Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations as established by the State of Florida

Instruction will include age-appropriate study of the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government. Instruction will also include the United States Constitution, flag education (proper flag display and flag salute), elements of civil government, the history of the Holocaust, African –American history, the history of the state, the study of Hispanic contributions to the United States, the study of women's contributions to the United States, character education, Veteran's Day, free enterprise and consumer education.

A complete list of state curriculum mandates can be found in the section titled "General Procedures for Promotion".

### 2. Placement and Classification in High School

- a. Placement in Grade 9

Placement in grade 9 is dependent upon successful completion of grade 8. Specific requirements are given in Section II, Promotion and Placement within the Middle Schools, of the Pupil Progression Plan. However, the following exceptions may be made:

Middle school students completing high school courses in middle school may be admitted to the next course in the sequence upon entering high school provided that 1) the student earns a semester grade of A or B each semester; 2) the completed middle school course is comparable to the course offered at the high school; and 3) the student passes a comprehensive final examination with a score of 70% or higher.

Middle school students who make a “C” (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or below in a high school course in middle school are encouraged to confer with their parents and high school personnel before going on to the next level course. Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit who get a grade of C, D, or F may replace that grade with a grade of C or higher in a comparable course.

- a. Classifying of students in grades 10, 11, and 12
- b. The classification of students in grades 10, 11, and 12 is based upon the number of credits earned in high school, as follows:

Classification	Credits Earned
Grade 10	4
Grade 11	10
Grade 12	16
Graduation	24

Students may be promoted from one grade classification to the next at the semester if credit requirements are met.

Progress monitoring is required for any student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics. A student who is not meeting proficiency in reading and mathematics (Level 3 or higher) shall be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his/her academic achievement:

- A federally required plan such as an IEP
- A school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students
- An individualized progress monitoring plan

\*\*Students entering a school from a school system whose graduation credit requirement and/or school day is different from the school of entry may be placed in a grade by the principal and given an individually prescribed program designed for completion of credits.

**c. Student Promotion and Retention**

Pupil promotion is based on evaluation of each student’s achievement of the Sunshine State Standards. Each student’s progression from one grade to another is based, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Parents must be informed of their students’ progress in meeting academic standards. Evaluation of proficiency on the Sunshine State Standards includes classroom performance, daily observation, and formal and informal assessments of competency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Each student who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the district school board in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, or who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the commissioner on statewide assessments at selected grade levels, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty and areas of academic need.

The school in which the student is enrolled must develop, in consultation with the student’s parent, and must implement a progress monitoring plan designed to assist the

student in meeting state and district expectations for proficiency

If a student has been identified as having a deficiency in reading, the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan shall include instructional and support services to meet the desired levels of performance.

A student who scores Level I on FCAT Reading must be enrolled and must complete an intensive reading course the following year.

A student who scores Level 2 on FCAT Reading shall be placed in an Intensive Reading class or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered, as determined by a diagnosis of the student's reading needs.

For each year in which a student scores Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year. These courses may be taught through applied, integrated, or combined courses.

Indicators of the student's proficiency include teacher assessment, norm-referenced tests, statewide tests, diagnostic assessment, and grade point average (GPA).

Remediation options may include strategies within the regular class, tutorial support, extended school year, extended day activities, home strategies, contracted academic services, drop-out prevention coursework, and intensive mathematics, reading, writing/language arts courses.

The allocation of remedial and supplemental instruction resources for students shall occur in the following priority:

- ◆ students who are deficient in reading by grade 3
- ◆ students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion consistent with the district's plan for student progression.

Students who have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except passing the grade 10 FCAT or an alternate assessment must be provided the following learning opportunities:

- ◆ participation in an accelerated high school equivalency diploma preparation program during the summer
- ◆ upon receipt of a certificate of completion, be allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to remedial or college coursework at a state community college as appropriate
- ◆ participate in an adult general education program until he/she masters subjects requested for high school graduation
- ◆ Beginning in the 2008 – 2009 school year, a college readiness assessment shall be administered to all high school students, prior to grade 12, with defined FCAT scores and who have indicated an interest in post-secondary education. Students scoring at or above the minimum score and enrolling in a community college within two (2) years will not be required to enroll in remediation courses. Students scoring below the minimum level will have access to remediation to the extent practicable.

d. **Compulsory Attendance**

A student who reaches the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if

the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The school district must notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. [s. 1003.21(1)2(c)F.S.; s.1008.25 F.S.]

The student's guidance counselor or other school personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities to continue his/her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

e. **Maximum Age for High School Students**

High school students pursuing a regular high school diploma must be able to graduate from school prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Permission for students to attend high school to pursue a regular high school diploma after their birthday will be made on an individual basis by the high school principal and the superintendent designee.

## **B. Graduation Requirements**

To be enrolled in high school, students must register for and attend a complete schedule of classes at the school unless they are participating in an approved dual enrollment program, are home education students attending a regularly scheduled class period at the zoned school, or are students who have earned a certificate of completion and are entitled to return to school for remediation.

For high school graduation, students shall earn a minimum of 24 credits in grades 9 through 12 or earn the appropriate credits to meet one of the accelerated graduation options. No student may be required to take more than the maximum number of credits, unless remediation is required in English and mathematics. Students may elect to take additional credits in any area.

Students will have access to enroll in courses available through the Florida Virtual School. Credit will be awarded for successful completion of these courses. [s.1001.42(21)F.S.]

Passing scores on FCAT Reading and Mathematics are required for graduation. A student who takes the FCAT three times without earning a passing score may use concordant scores on the ACT or SAT as an alternative assessment to satisfy the high school graduation requirement.

Participation in the FCAT is mandatory for all students attending public school, except as otherwise prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Each student must participate in the statewide assessment tests as required by s. 1008.22 F.S. If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment, the district must notify the student's parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation. If modifications are made in the student's instruction to provide accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessment tests, the district must notify the student's parent of the implications of such instructional modifications. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations. [s.1008.25(3)(c)(6)F.S.]

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year, each public school is prohibited from suspending a regular program of curricula for purposes of administering practice tests or engaging in other test-

preparation activities for the FCAT. However, schools may engage in the following test-preparation activities:

- Distributing to students the sample test books and answer keys published by the Department of Education
- Providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT
- Providing individualized instruction in the content knowledge and skills assessed, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT or a student who, through a diagnostic assessment administered by the school district, is identified as having a deficiency in the content knowledge and skills assessed.
- Incorporating test-taking exercises and strategies into curricula for intensive reading and intensive mathematics intervention courses.
- Administering a practice test or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the FCAT, the format of the test items, and the test directions, or which are otherwise necessary for the valid and reliable administration of the FCAT as set forth in State Board of Education rule.

A dependent child of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who enters a public school at grade 12 from out-of-state or from a foreign country and provides satisfactory proof of attaining a score on an approved alternative assessment that is concordant to a passing score on the grade 10 FCAT shall satisfy the assessment requirements for a standard high school diploma. [s.1003.43(5)(a) F.S.]

No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion. [s.1008.25 F.S.]

Remedial and compensatory courses taken in grades 9 through 12 may only be counted as elective credit. [s.1003.43 (2)F.S.]

Remedial instruction provided during high school may not be in lieu of English and Mathematics credits required for graduation.

No student may be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in any Level I course except when an assessment of the student indicates that a more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate. In such cases a written assessment of the need must be included in the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or in a Student Performance Plan signed by the principal, the guidance counselor and the parent or guardian of the student or the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Students must earn a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale to meet graduation requirements. Students may earn more than 24 high school course credits.

### **Definition of credit:**

For graduation requirements, one full credit means a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains student performance standards.

A failing grade of “F”, or below average passing grade of “D”, for a given course will not be used in calculating the final grade point average if the student repeated the course and received a higher passing grade. For the purpose of graduation, grade averaging of the two semesters for a year long course will be permitted when one is a failing grade and the other grade is “C” or higher.

A student enrolled in a full-year course shall receive one-half credit if the student successfully completes either the first half or the second half of a full-year course but fails to successfully complete the other half of the course and the averaging of the grades obtained in each half would not result in a passing grade.

A student enrolled in a full-year course shall receive a full credit if the student successfully completes either the first half or the second half of a full-year course but fails to successfully complete the other half and the averaging of the grades obtained in each half would result in a passing grade, provided that the student meets district policies for class attendance, homework, participation, and other indicators of performance, such as a passing grade on the final exam. [s.1003.436 F.S.]

### **Workforce Preparation**

All schools K-12 should document the manner in which they have prepared students to enter the workforce, including information regarding the provision of accurate, timely career and curricular counseling to students. This information shall include:

1. information about available career opportunities;
  2. educational requirements associated with each career;
  3. educational institutions that prepare students for each career;
  4. student financial aid;
  5. school procedures for identifying individual student interests and aptitudes;
  6. recommended high school coursework that prepares students for success in college coursework;
  7. availability of applied instruction;
  8. availability of support services to help students who need assistance to successfully complete instruction necessary to enroll in postsecondary education or enter the workforce;
  9. availability of technical instruction and workplace-based learning.
10. information on the ability to earn advanced college credit in Career and Technical programs of study towards Applied Technology programs of study at the post-secondary level. [s.1006.02 F.S.]

Prior to each student’s graduation from high school, the school shall assess the student’s preparation to enter the workforce in terms of employability skills and shall provide the student and the student’s parent or guardian with the results of this assessment. The Department of Education has determined that since FCAT assesses certain standards from the U.S. Secretary of Labor’s report on necessary skills for the workforce (SCANS), the FCAT can serve as this assessment. [s.1006.02 F.S.]

Beginning with students entering grade 9 in 2009 2010 and thereafter, each high school student must have an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) that is updated annually.

### **Grade Forgiveness**

Students must include any course grade not replaced according to the district forgiveness policy in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average. All courses taken must be included in the grade point average calculation unless the grade has been forgiven by retake. Required courses shall be limited to replacing a grade of “D” or “F” with a grade of “C” or higher earned subsequently in the *same* or *comparable* course. Elective courses shall be limited to replacing a grade of “D” or “F” with

a grade of “C” or higher earned subsequently by retaking the same or comparable course or *another* course. Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit who get a grade of C, D, or F may replace that grade with a grade of C or higher in a comparable course. Such students may repeat a course for forgiveness with grades above a “D”. Any course grade not replaced according to a district forgiveness policy shall be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation.

## Diploma Options

At the beginning of each school year, parents of students in or entering high school must be notified of the opportunity and benefits of advanced placement, IB, AP, AICE, dual enrollment, and Florida Virtual School courses.

Students who enter the ninth grade in the 2006 – 2007 school year and thereafter may select one of the three high school graduation options:

- Completion of the 24 credit general requirements for high school graduation.
- Completion of a 3-year standard college preparatory program requiring a minimum of 18 academic credits.
- Completion of a 3-year career preparatory program requiring a minimum of 18 academic credits.

Students must select one of the graduation options by the end of their ninth grade year. A student and the student’s parent must meet with designated school personnel to receive an explanation of the relative requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each program option on the Accelerated Graduation/18 Credit Program Request form. The student must submit a signed parental consent to the principal and guidance counselor to enter one of the 3-year graduation options. Certain exceptions exist for students who transfer from a private school or from out-of-state schools after ninth grade.

If a student and a parent do not select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the 24-credit option.

### 1. Requirements for the Four-Year, Standard 24-credit Diploma Option

The receipt of a Standard diploma indicates the student completed the minimum criteria for high school graduation.

The following requirements apply to students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter.

In accordance with s.1003.43 F.S. the requirements for standard diploma are listed below. See the current Alachua County High School Course Description Book for detailed course offerings.

Students must complete a minimum of 24 credits, which shall be distributed as follows:

- a. English 4 credits  
At least four credits in English with concentration in composition, literature, and reading for information are required. ESOL credits will count toward the 4 credits in English.
- b. Mathematics 4 credits  
A minimum of four credits in mathematics is required. One of these credits must be Algebra I, a series of courses that is its equivalent, or a higher level mathematics course for those who mastered Algebra I prior to high school. Students are encouraged to take

Geometry and Algebra II as part of their mathematics preparation.

- c. Science 3 credits  
A minimum of three science credits is required. Two of these courses must have a laboratory component. Agriscience Foundations I counts as one of the science credits.
- d. Social Studies 3 credits  
A minimum of three credits in social studies is required. These include:  
1 credit in World History  
1 credit in American History  
½ credit in American Government  
½ credit in Economics
- e. Physical Education 1 credit  
One full credit of physical education is required for graduation. This includes:  
For students who entered grade 9 in or before the 2006 – 2007 school year, the physical education requirements is as follows:  
One-half (.50) credit in Personal Fitness and one-half (.50) credit in any other Physical Education course.  
Those students may use the following exemptions to meet their Physical Education requirement:
- Participation in two full seasons of interscholastic sports at the junior varsity/varsity level and a grade of “C” or higher on the competency test for Personal Fitness. No credit will be earned with satisfying the Physical Education requirement through interscholastic sports participation.
  - Completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or better in a marching band class or in a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity shall satisfy .50 credit in Physical Education. This .50 credit shall not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.
  - A Reserve Officer Training Class (ROTC), a significant component of which is drills, shall satisfy .50 credit requirement in Physical Education. This .50 credit shall not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter may fulfill the 1.0 credit in Physical Education through one of the following course options:

- 1.0 credit in Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE)
- 1.0 credit in HOPE (PE variant)
- .50 credit in Personal Fitness and .50 credit in any other physical education course.

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter may use the following exemptions to meet their Physical Education requirement:

- Participation in two full seasons of interscholastic sports at the junior varsity or varsity level and a grade of “C” or higher on the competency test for Personal Fitness No credit will be earned with satisfying the Physical Education requirement through interscholastic sports participation.
- Completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or better in a marching band class, physical activity class with marching band activities or dance shall satisfy .50 credit requirement in Physical Education or .50 credit in Performing Arts. This .50 credit shall not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.
- Completion of two years of ROTC shall satisfy the 1.0 credit requirement in Physical Education (HOPE) and the 1.0 credit requirement in Performing Arts. This credit may not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

f. Students who entered grade 9 in the fall of 2006 or before must satisfy these additional requirements for a standard diploma:

- 1.0 credit in Practical and/or Performing Arts
- .50 credit in Life management Skills
- 8.5 credits in Electives

Students entering grade 9 for the first time in the fall of 2007 and thereafter must satisfy these additional requirements for a standard diploma:

- 1.0 credit in Fine Arts/Performing Arts or designated Practical Arts
- 4.0 credits in a Major Area of Interest (MAI)
- 4.0 credits in Electives

g. Major Area of Interest 4 credits

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter must earn four credits in a major area of interest (MAI), such as sequential courses in a career and technical program, fine and performing arts, or an academic content area. Students may revise major areas of interest each year as part of the annual course registration process and should update their educational plan to reflect such revisions.

Students enrolled full-time in an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum or Advanced Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum are not required to be enrolled in a major area of interest.

h. Electives Minimum of 4  
credits

Three of these elective courses may be in a minor area of interest selected by the student as part of his/her educational plan.

Students may earn a maximum of .50 credit in social studies and .50 elective credit for student completion of unpaid voluntary community or school service work. Students choosing this option must complete a minimum of 75 hours of service in order to earn the .50 credit in either category of instruction. Credit may not be earned for service provided as a result of court

action. Principals are responsible for approving specific volunteer activities. [s.1003.43(1)(k) F.S.]

Students may earn high school credit for volunteer activities and nonacademic activities which have been approved for such credit by the State Board of Education. [s.1003.43(3) F.S.] See the current Alachua County High School Course Description Book for detailed offerings.

No student may be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in the following courses or programs:

- ◆ More than 9 elective credits in remedial programs
- ◆ More than 1 credit in exploratory career education courses as defined in s. 1003.01 (4) (a).
- ◆ More than 3 credits in practical arts family and consumer sciences classes as defined in s. 1003.01 (4)(a).
- ◆ Any Level I course unless the student's assessment indicates that more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate, in which case a written assessment of the need must be included in the student's individual education plan or in a student performance plan, signed by the principal, the guidance counselor, and the parent of the student, or the student if he/she is 18 years of age or older. [s.1003.43(7) F.S.]

## 2. **International Baccalaureate Diploma**

The International Baccalaureate Diploma curriculum may be substituted to meet state graduation requirements. [s. 1003.43]

## 3. **Accelerated Graduation Options**

Students who enter grade 9 in the 2006 – 2007 school year and thereafter may select one of the following accelerated graduation options.

Designated school personnel shall meet with the student and student's parents to explain the relative requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each graduation option. A student must have written consent of the parent to enroll in one of the accelerated options.

The district may not establish requirements for accelerated graduation options in excess of those required by statute.

Selection of an accelerated graduation option must be completed by the student prior to the end of grade 9. The deadline for selection of the accelerated graduation option may be extended until the end of first semester of grade 10 for students who enter a Florida public school after grade 9 upon a transfer from a private school or another state or who was prevented from choosing a graduation option due to illness. If a student and parent do not select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the standard four-year, 24 credit option.

## 4. **Requirements for the Three-Year, 18-credit College Preparatory Diploma Option**

- ◆ 4 credits in English (major concentration in composition and literature)
- ◆ 3 credits in mathematics (Algebra I or higher) from the list of courses that qualify for state university admission.
- ◆ 3 credits in natural science (two of which must include a lab component)

- ◆ 3 credits in social sciences (1 credit in World History, 1 credit in American History, .50 credit in American Government, .50 credit in Economics)
- ◆ 2 credits in the same second language (or demonstrated proficiency in another language)
- ◆ 3 credits in electives
- ◆ At least 6 of the 18 credits required for this program must be received in classes that are offered pursuant to the International Baccalaureate program, the Advanced Placement program, dual enrollment, Advanced International Certificate of Education or specifically listed or identified by the Department of Education as rigorous pursuant to s.1009.531 (3)

Students pursuing the accelerated 3-year high school college preparatory graduation option are required to:

- Earn passing scores on the FCAT or scores on a standardized text concordant with passing scores on the FCAT as defined in s.1008.22(9)
- Achieve a cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the college preparatory 3-year high school graduation option.
- Receive a weighted or un-weighted grade that earns at least 3.0 points, or its equivalent, to earn course credit toward the 18 credits required for the college preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.

All 18 credits required for the three-year college preparatory program, including three electives, must satisfy the course distribution requirements for state university admissions.

## **5. Requirements for the Three-Year, 18-credit Career Preparatory Diploma Option**

- ◆ 4 credits in English (major concentration in composition and literature)
- ◆ 3 credits in mathematics (must include Algebra I or its equivalent)
- ◆ 3 credits in natural science (two must include a lab component)
- ◆ 3 credits in social sciences (1 in World History, 1 in American History, .50 in American Government, .50 in Economics)
- ◆ 3 credits in a single career and technical education program, 3 credits in career and technical certificate dual enrollment, or 5 credits in career and technical education courses
- ◆ 2 credits in elective courses (unless 5 credits are earned in vocational/career/technical)

Students pursuing the accelerated 3-year career preparatory high school graduation option are required to:

- Earn passing scores on the FCAT or scores on a standardized test that are concordant with passing scores on the FCAT as defined in s.1008.22(9)
- Achieve a cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the career preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.
- Receive a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 2.0 points, or its equivalent, to earn course credit toward the 18 credits required for the career preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.

If, at the end of grade 10, the student is not on track to meet the credit, assessment, or grade-point average requirements of the accelerated graduation option selected, the school shall notify the student and parent of the following:

- ◆ The requirements that the student is not currently meeting
- ◆ The specific performance necessary in grade 11 for the student to meet the accelerated graduation requirements
- ◆ The right of the student to change to the 4-year graduation option

A student who selected one of the accelerated 3-year graduation options shall automatically move to the 4-year program if the student:

- ◆ Exercises his/her right to change to the 4-year program
- ◆ Fails to earn 5 credits by the end of grade 9 or fails to earn 11 credits by the end of grade 10
- ◆ Does not achieve a score of 3 or higher on the grade 10 FCAT Writing Assessment
- ◆ By the end of grade 11 does not meet the course requirements and/or the GPA requirements for the accelerated option

Each district school board shall provide each student in grades 6-12 and their parents with the 3-year and 4-year graduation options. Selection of one of the graduation options is exclusively up to the student and parent. If the student and parent fail to select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the 24-credit graduation requirement.

Students selecting one of the three-year programs must be treated equally with students graduating via the 24-credit program in all ways including eligibility for valedictorian, salutatorian, Talented 20, and Bright Futures.

#### **6. Certificate of Completion**

Students who have completed the required coursework for graduation but have not earned passing scores on the FCAT or have not achieved a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 are eligible to receive a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion does not carry any of the privileges of a standard high school diploma. The awarding of a certificate of completion is limited to those students choosing the 24-credit graduation option and is not applicable to three-year programs. Any student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to remain in the secondary school either as a full-time student or a part-time student for up to 1 additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his/her identified deficiencies.

#### **7. Common Placement Test (CPT)-Eligible Certificate of Completion Followed by Continued Education**

Students who meet all requirements for graduation with a standard diploma except earning passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT are eligible for a CPT-eligible certificate of completion.

Students who receive a CPT-eligible certificate of completion may enroll directly in community college or postsecondary career and technical education programs. Students may enroll in college credit courses if they pass the CPT with scores that meet the cutoff for admission into college credit courses. Students who do not meet the cutoff score are eligible to enroll in remedial coursework at the community college.

### **C. Grade Point Average**

The grade point average for all students in grades 9 through 12 will be calculated at the end of each semester. Students whose grade point average is 2.5 or less will be identified in accordance with s.1003.43 (2) F.S. The parent or guardian of each student with a grade point average of 2.5 or less shall be notified at the end of each semester that the student is at risk of not meeting the requirements for graduation. The notice shall contain an explanation of the types of assistance which have been put in place to assist the student in meeting the grade point average requirement. Identified students will be offered assistance by means of one or more of the following:

Counseling	Summer School
Special Help	Remedial Courses
Different Courses	After-school Tutoring Sessions
Study Hall	Saturday Tutoring Sessions

#### **D. Grading System 9 – 12**

The following scale is used to convert quantifiable achievement to alphabetic symbols in middle and high school level courses. Grade points will be used to calculate grades for each marking period.

Percent Achievement of Course Objectives	Grade Points	Progress Level
A = 90-100	4.0	Outstanding
B+ = 87-89	3.0	
B = 80-86	3.0	Above Average
C+ = 77-79	2.0	
C = 70-76	2.0	Average
D+ = 67-69	1.0	Acceptable
D = 60-66	1.0	Lowest
F = 0-59	0.0	Failure
I = 0	0.0	Incomplete

Students may not be exempted from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement. [s.1003.33(2) F.S.]

#### **E. Class Conduct Grades 9 – 12**

The following symbols are used to denote class conduct:

- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

No national origin minority or limited English proficient student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action solely because of his/her use of a language other than English. This does not abrogate any rules, standards, or guidelines as specified in the School Board of Alachua County Code of Student Conduct.

#### **F. Report Cards and Student Progress Reports to Parents**

The district school board must report to the parent the student's results on each statewide assessment test. Progress reporting must be provided to the parent in writing in a format adopted by the district school board. The final report card for a school year shall indicate end-of-year status regarding performance or nonperformance at grade level, acceptable or unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion or non-promotion.

[s. 1003.33(1) F.S.]

Progress reports will be issued to students during each marking period.

All high schools will establish a procedure to notify parents and students of the students's graduation status for any student planning to graduate at the end of the current school year. Such notification will be issued after the first nine-week grading period is completed.

Schools will provide documentation of this procedure to the district.

### **G. Class Ranking**

A numerical ranking of students by class on the basis of academic achievement is permitted only at the high school level. Ranking shall be determined on the basis of grade point average, awarded as follows:

A	=	4	grade points
B+	=	3	grade points
B	=	3	grade points
C+	=	2	grade points
C	=	2	grade points
D+	=	1	grade point
D	=	1	grade point
F	=	0	grade point

An additional weighted ranking and grade point average shall be computed. This weighted ranking by class shall be calculated on the basis of a grade point average determined by courses designated as honors, advanced, Advanced Placement, college-level dual enrollment, Pre-International Baccalaureate, and International Baccalaureate, and AICE, Pre-AICE, Pre-AP weighted ranking are as follows:

A	=	5	grade points
B+	=	4.5	grade points
B	=	4	grade points
C+	=	3.5	grade points
C	=	3	grade points
D+	=	2.5	grade points
D	=	2.0	grade point
F	=	0	grade point

College-level dual enrollment courses are weighted the same as honors or advance placement courses in calculating a weighted grade point average [s.1007.271(16)F.S.]

## **I. Summer School/Extended School Year**

If eligible, students may attend school beyond the 180-day term to:

- ◆ earn credit for a course previously failed if graduation requirements have not been met
- ◆ participate in a program indicated in the IEP for exceptional students

The principal, or designee at a given school, shall determine student eligibility for attendance at the summer session. The district shall determine specific program offerings for the extended school year.

## **I. Transfer of Credits**

The Board shall recognize high school credits awarded by accredited public and private day schools, public and private boarding schools, the Florida Virtual School, and Santa Fe Community College. The principal has the authority to grant credits awarded by other institutions, agencies, or individuals and they will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

The Board shall recognize a maximum of three (3) credits awarded from the following institutions: the State University System High School Extension program, and the public Adult Education program.

A maximum of (2) elective credits may be awarded toward graduation for successful completion of the University of Florida/Santa Fe Community College Upward Bound Program. These elective credits may be in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science, computer education, and conversational Spanish. The Upward Bound Program will specify in writing the course number(s) and the amount of credit to be awarded in the course(s). Students must master the district and state performance standards for all courses for which they receive credit through the Upward Bound Program.

Credits earned in nonpublic schools which are not accredited by a recognized state or regional agency shall be validated by the principal. The State Uniform Transfer of High School Credits Rule states that credits and grades earned and offered for credit shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation required by receiving school's accreditation. If the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits (not grades) shall be validated through performance during the first semester. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and to receive credit should have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 at the end of the first semester.

Alternative validation procedures must be used when the student does not meet the 2.0 GPA scholastic performance standard at the end of the first semester.

### **Alternative Validation Procedures**

- ◆ Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee
- ◆ Written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent and approved by the principal
- ◆ Demonstrated performance in courses taken in dual enrollment or at other public or private schools.
- ◆ Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments. Student must be allowed at least 90 days from the date of transfer to prepare for this assessment

- ◆ Demonstrated proficiencies on the FCAT. Students must be allowed at least 90 days from the date of transfer to prepare for this assessment.
- ◆ Written review of the criteria used for a given subject provided by the former school.

Validation procedures must be determined and agreed upon by the teacher, principal, and parent. Students must be allowed all of the options listed under validation procedures.

A school has until the end of the first semester to validate an official transcript, and then all credits and grades are to be accepted at face value. For students who do not have an official transcript or are from a home education program, the credits will be validated and granted at the end of the first semester based on scholastic performance.

Students who enter a Florida public school at the eleventh or twelfth grade from out of state or from a foreign country shall not be required to spend additional time in a Florida public school in order to meet the high school course requirements if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he or she is transferring. Such students who are not proficient in English should receive immediate and intensive instruction in English language acquisition. However, to receive a standard high school diploma, a transfer student must earn a 2.0 grade point average and pass the grade 10 FCAT required in s. 1008.22(3) or an alternate assessment as described in s. 1008.22(9).

Grades for home schooling may be awarded if a certified teacher from the student's zoned school, having voluntarily examined a portfolio of the student's work in the course and, if appropriate, having administered the end of year test, attests (with the principal's approval) that the course standards have been met and awards a grade for the course.

Students have access to courses available through Florida Virtual School. The district accepts credit for the successful completion of these courses.

Students who have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except for passing the grade 10 FCAT or an alternate assessment by the end of grade 12 must be provided the following learning opportunities:

- Participation in an accelerated high school equivalency diploma preparation program during the summer upon receipt of a certificate of completion and be allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to remedial or credit courses at a state community college, as appropriate.
- Participation in an adult general education program for such time as the student requires to master English, reading, mathematics, or any other subject required for high school graduation. A student attending an adult general education program shall have the opportunity to take the grade 10 FCAT an unlimited number of times in order to receive a standard high school diploma.

Students who have been enrolled in an ESOL program for less than two school years and have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except passing the grade 10 FCAT or alternate assessment may receive immersion English language instruction during the summer following their senior year. Students receiving such instruction are eligible to take the FCAT or alternate assessment and receive a standard high school diploma upon passage of the grade 10 FCAT or the alternate assessment.

The superintendent shall be responsible for notifying all students of the consequences of failure to receive a standard diploma, including the potential ineligibility for financial assistance at postsecondary educational institutions.

## **J. Program Options**

### **1. Career and Technical Education**

The School Board of Alachua County offers a variety of career and technical education programs that prepare students for employment in specific occupations and enrollment in post secondary education. High school students are eligible to enroll in specific programs as part of their planned sequence of coursework leading to a high school diploma. Program offerings vary among high schools and include the areas of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction, Arts, A/V Technology & Communication, Business Management & Administration, Education & Training, Finance, Health Science, Hospitality & Tourism, Human Services, Information Technology, Law, Public Safety, & Service, Manufacturing, Marketing, Sales & Service, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics. Career employability skills instruction is incorporated in all Career and Technical courses.

For specific program and course information please see the Alachua County High School Course Description book and/or the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide for Tech Prep programs of study.

#### **a. Tech Prep**

Tech Prep is an articulated Career and Technical Education program to post secondary institutions. The School Board of Alachua County cooperates with Santa Fe Community College and The School Board of Bradford County as a Regional Tech Prep Consortium. These programs outline a jointly approved pathway for students to articulate from high school programs to the college level in a variety of career related programs. Students completing these programs may be eligible to receive advanced program and/or credit standing based upon successful completion of the high school course sequence and a competency exam given by the college. Further information regarding Tech Prep is available through the office of Career and Technical Education, the District Course Description Handbook, and the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide.

#### **Magnet Programs**

The district offers a variety of academic and career/technical magnet programs at the high school level. Admission is by application only. Selection criteria are available from each program. Priority for admission will be given to students currently enrolled in district-run Alachua County Public Schools.

#### **b. Career Magnet Academies**

Magnet Career and Technical Academies are also provided at specific high schools. Students in Alachua County may apply for admission to these academies and begin enrollment in the ninth grade. Specific admission criteria have been set for each academy and admission is by application only. The academies provide opportunities for students to prepare for specific careers through school and work-based learning experiences.

Specific academy information is found in the District Course Description Book and the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide, and on the district web page ([www.sbac.edu](http://www.sbac.edu)).

**c. Course Substitution**

Limited substitution for required academic credits is permitted as follows:

- ◆ Students enrolled in the JROTC program who successfully complete levels, I, II and III may substitute one JROTC credit for Physical Science (2003310) to satisfy one of the three science requirements needed for graduation.
- ◆ Upon completion of the JROTC program (Air Force, Navy) students may substitute, on a curriculum equivalency basis, one JROTC credit to satisfy to the Practical Arts graduation requirement.
- ◆ Upon completion of the Air Force JROTC Leadership Education I and II (180400 and 180410) or Naval Science I and II (1802300 and 1802310) students may substitute, on a curriculum equivalency basis, one JROTC credit for .50 credit in Health I-Life Management Skills (0800300) to satisfy the Life Management Skills requirement needed for graduation.
- ◆ Students completing two years of ROTC shall satisfy the 1.0 credit requirement in PE and the 1.0 credit requirement in Performing Arts. This credit may not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or Adaptive PE under an IEP or 504 plan.
- ◆ A student who completes a Career and Technical Program or JROTC Program and substitutes part of that program for Applied Math I, Applied Math II, Business English I, Business English II, or Physical Science may not take any of these courses and receive additional credit. A course that has been used to substitute on one subject are may not be used to substitute for any other subject area.
- ◆ Students enrolled in the Academy of Agriscience at Santa Fe High School who complete the Vet Assisting I, II and III (8111510, 8111540, 8111550) may substitute that course sequence for one (1.0) credit in Anatomy and Physiology (2000350).

**2. Dual Enrollment**

- a. The Academic Dual Enrollment program allows eligible high school students to take college-level courses and receive both college credit and credit toward a high school diploma.

Students shall be informed annually of the dual enrollment program as an educational option and a mechanism for acceleration.

Students taking college-level courses under the Academic Dual Enrollment program will not be charged registration, matriculation, or tuition fees by the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, St. Petersburg Junior College, Tallahassee Community College, and Lake City Community College.

- b. The Dual Enrollment Program in Technology and Applied Sciences is available to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who are at least 16 years old. Students apply to the program through their high school counselor and if accepted take both their career related courses and their academic courses (either high school or college level) at Santa Fe Community College.

Acceptance into the program in general and a student's particular program of choice is based on 1) pre-admission test scores which indicate the ability to succeed in the

required course work, 2) the recommendation of the student's high school counselor, 3) the parent's permission, and 4) the student's acceptance of personal responsibility necessary for the college campus environment.

Students in the Institute of Culinary Arts may be eligible for dual enrollment courses through Johnson and Wales.

All credits earned are transferred back to the local high school from which the student graduates. College courses taken while in the program also remain on the student's permanent college transcript.

The State Board of Education shall determine the number of post secondary credit hours earned through dual enrollment pursuant to s.1007.271 that satisfy the requirements of a district's inter-institutional articulation agreement according to s.1007.235 and that equal one full credit of the equivalent high school course identified pursuant to s.1007.271 (6).

Absent such determination by the State Board of Education, dual enrollment students will earn .50 credit for each 3-hour course completed.

To qualify for dual enrollment programs, the student must demonstrate readiness for college-level coursework and achieve the requisite GPA for the specific program requested.

- c. Part-time dual enrollment is available to students in certain Career and Technical Education programs through Santa Fe College and Lake City Community College (i.e., Academy of Health Professions' Dental Aide, Allied Health and First Responder, and the School of Construction at SFCC programs). Students must meet the college's requirements for enrollment.

### 3. **Advanced Placement College Courses**

When enrollment is sufficient, high schools provide Advanced Placement courses for qualified students and offer students the option of participation in the Advanced Placement Examination Program. Many colleges recognize passing scores for college credit and/or advanced standing. Each school district, community college, and state university may conduct advanced placement instruction within dual enrollment courses. Each joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course shall integrate, at a minimum, the course structure recommended by the College Board and the structure that corresponds to the common course number. No student shall be funded through both programs for enrollment in a course provided through this section. No student shall be reported for advanced placement funding who fails to meet the examination requirement for such funding.

Postsecondary credit for student completions of a joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course shall be awarded, based on the stated preference of the student, as either dual enrollment or advanced placement credit; however, an award of advanced placement credit shall be limited to students who score a minimum of 3, on a 5-point scale, on the Advanced Placement Exam. No student shall claim double credit based on the completion of a single joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course, nor shall any student enrolled be required to complete the Advanced Placement Exam. Students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses shall be exempt from the payment of any fees for the examinations. [s.1007.272 F.S.]

#### **4. International Baccalaureate Program**

The International Baccalaureate Program, offered under the auspices of the IB Organization, is available as a magnet program at Eastside High School. The IB offers a traditional rigorous college preparatory program that culminates in an IB Diploma. Many colleges and universities recognize the IB Diploma for college credit and/or advanced standing. Students may apply for the pre-IB program during the high school registration process.

Students enrolled in IB courses shall be exempt from paying examination fees for the IB examinations.

#### **5. Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)**

Students may apply to a magnet program at Gainesville High School that offers the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) program through Cambridge University. Students who successfully complete AICE examinations may be granted postsecondary credit. Students enrolled in these courses shall be exempt from the payments of any fees for the administration of the examinations.

#### **6. Early College Admission**

Qualified high school seniors shall be provided the opportunity to complete requirements for graduation by attending an accredited college and successfully completing a normal class load at that college. High school credit shall be awarded for college or university level coursework successfully completed at accredited institutions. This course work is also creditable toward the associate or baccalaureate degree. Qualifications for early college admission include:

- a. Eighteen (18) credits which include all required credits in specific subject areas except English IV, American Government, and Economics requirements.
- b. Overall unweighted grade point average of 3.5 through first semester, grade 11.
- c. Parent permission.
- d. Completed application form.
- e. Letter stating reasons for application.
- f. Approval of school-level faculty committee.
- g. Acceptance by an accredited college.

A normal course load with a “C” average or above must be maintained during the first year in college. Students enrolled in early admission are exempt from the payment of registration, matriculation, and lab fees.

#### **7. Travel Study**

The Board shall neither sponsor nor recognize student travel study for credit toward promotion or graduation.

#### **8. Home Education**

Home education students may participate in dual enrollment, career and technical dual enrollment, early admission, and credit by examination. Credit earned by home education students through dual enrollment shall apply toward the completion of a home education program that meets the requirements of [s.1002.41 F.S.]

## 9. **Adult Education**

Students who are 16 years of age or older and have discontinued high school are eligible to enroll in the Adult Education Program. Students, grades 9-12, may take after normal school hours Adult Education classes with permission from their home school (limited to three (3) credits).

Students who have been expelled from the regular school program are not eligible to enroll in the Adult Education Program during the period of expulsion. Students who withdraw from the regular school program and enter the Adult Education Program must have specific Board approval to re-enter the regular school program. The Board may delegate this responsibility to a district level administrator. Veterans enrolled in the Adult Education Program may be granted two (2) elective credits for one (1) year or more of honorable military service.

Graduation requirements for adult students are the same as specified for regular high school students in school board policy with the following exceptions:

- a. Credit in physical education is not required and shall be substituted with elective credit.
- b. The laboratory component of the science credit is waived.
- c. Courses in comprehensive art, art portfolio, ceramics/pottery, drawing, painting, creative photography, sculpture, dance, drama, musical theatre, instrumental music, or vocal music may be taken and, if satisfactorily completed by adult secondary students, shall satisfy the performing arts requirement for graduation.

## 10. **Credit by Examination**

Secondary students may generate postsecondary credit by receipt of a specified minimum score on nationally standardized general or subject area examinations. These examinations and the corresponding minimum scores required for an award of credit shall be delineated by the State Board of Education in a statewide articulation agreement. [s.1007.27(7)F.S.]

## 11. **High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)**

The High School Equivalency Diploma is awarded in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.21, FAC, which states that the District Superintendent may award State High School Equivalency Diplomas based on successful testing under the following conditions:

- a. The qualifying of individuals and the administration of the procedures shall be under the direction of the supervisor of the Adult Education Program.
- b. A candidate shall be at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in a regular day school.
- c. Individuals who are 16-18 years old may make application to take the test if they are officially withdrawn from school and meet the requirements as set by the district. For specific information related to underage candidates, the individual should contact the Adult Education Program of the Alachua County Public Schools.
- d. Candidates must submit individual applications that provide essential personal data, education and training records, and information regarding residence.
- e. Out-of-county applicants over the age of 18 are eligible to test in Alachua County.
- f. Out-of-county applicants under the age of 18 cannot test except in their home county.
- g. Candidates shall reside in the State at the time of application.

- h. Candidates will pay a fee as established by the Florida Department of Education, for the complete five (5)-test battery at the time the application is submitted.
- i. A standard score of 410 or above on each of the five parts of the test and a total score of 2250 are required to be eligible to receive the High School Equivalency Diploma (GED).

## **12. The GED Exit Option**

High school students who meet the following eligibility criteria may be eligible for the GED Exit Option:

- a. 16 years of age, or older, and currently enrolled in a PK-12 program
- b. Enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation requirements
- c. Overage for grade, behind in credits, low GPA, and/or in jeopardy of not graduating with cohort group.
- d. Class or peer group with whom they entered kindergarten is graduating, or has graduated.
- e. Minimum reading level at seventh grade, as documented by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading component or other test to determine grade level proficiency.
- f. Acceptable scores on the official GED Practice Tests, administered under student testing conditions.
- g. Completed a minimum of three years in high school.
- h. Passing scores on Grade 10 FCAT
- i. Recommended by the guidance counselor and/or principal.
- j. Parent permission is granted.

This option may not be used for early graduation, and will be an additional option at the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) sites, but will not replace the GED option currently available at DJJ sites.

## **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program**

The Bright Futures Scholarship Program consists of three types of awards:

- 1. the Florida Academic Scholarship
- 2. the Florida Medallion Scholarship
- 3. the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship

Students and parents should consult with their guidance counselors for specific information about qualifying for the Florida Academic Scholars Award and the Florida Medallion Scholars Award.

The Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award recognizes and rewards both academic achievement and career and technical preparation by high school students. A student is eligible for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award if the student meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program and:

- 1. completes a career and technical program at the secondary level of at least 3 credits
- 2. earns a minimum score on each sub section of the CPT, ACT or SAT. Composite scores are not accepted.
- 3. earns a minimum weighted GPA of 3.0 on all required courses; and

4. earns a minimum un-weighted GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale for secondary career and technical courses comprising the career and technical program.

### **Florida Ready-to-Work Credential**

Students who successfully pass designated assessments and complete designated programs of study may earn the Florida Ready-to-Work Credential. The credentials may be earned at the bronze, silver, or gold level.

### **Standard High School Diploma Designations**

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year the following designations are added to the standard high school diploma, as applicable:

- Major Area of Interest
- Completion of four (4) or more accelerated college credit courses in AP, IB, AICE or dual enrollment
- Career Education certification
- Florida Ready-to-Work Credential

# Exceptional Student Education

## High School

### Student Rights for Instruction

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004* states that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible.

Modifications to the general curriculum occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that mastery of the general curriculum with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In addition, children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education, related services, and accommodations or modifications designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. The needs and services of the student are documented on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### Promotion and Placement

Grade placement for students with disabilities is determined by the same criteria for promotion and placement as for all students based on credits earned. All requirements for general education students also apply to exceptional students who may earn credits while in special education, general education, or vocational education courses. While enrolled in a special education class, the student may earn credit toward a regular course if the course is equivalent to the regular course.

In accordance with Florida Statute 1003.43, an exceptional student course will be deemed to be equivalent to a regular course only if the enrolled students are required to meet regular student performance standards as outlined in official course frameworks. Exceptional students will be required to master the content to the same extent required of non-exceptional students, with the understanding that certain teaching accommodations may be utilized. Acceptable accommodations include:

- ◆ An increase or decrease in the instructional time
- ◆ Variations of instructional strategies
- ◆ Teacher instruction or student response through special communication systems
- ◆ Classroom and district test administration procedures and other evaluation procedures may be modified as specified in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC., to accommodate the student's disability.

To assure exceptional students the opportunity to meet graduation requirements the following strategies are allowed:

- ◆ Assignment of the exceptional student to an exceptional class for a basic course with the same student performance standards as those for non-exceptional students, and/or
- ◆ Assignment of the exceptional student to a basic education class for instruction to accommodate the student's exceptionality.

The strategy(s) chosen would be based upon an assessment of the student's needs and shall reflect this decision in the student's individual educational plan. [S.1003.43 F.S.]

Courses designated as exceptional student courses may be used for elective credit for a standard diploma or credit toward a special diploma.

## Diploma Options

Florida offers all students options regarding the course of study leading to a high school diploma. For students with disabilities, the diploma option decision occurs through the IEP process during the student's eighth grade year or during the school year of the student's fourteenth birthday. The student is invited to participate in this meeting. The team should select the diploma option that best prepares the student for educational and career goals after high school. The diploma option decision is revisited at each annual IEP meeting.

## Standard Diploma

The **standard diploma** is a high school diploma earned by most students with disabilities who graduate from a Florida high school. To earn a standard diploma, students with disabilities must meet the graduation requirements set by the State of Florida and the local school district. These requirements are detailed in the general education section of the Pupil Progression Plan with the following additional considerations:

**FCAT Waiver:** For certain students with disabilities who have IEPs, a waiver may be considered for the FCAT requirement. A waiver can be granted if the IEP team determines that the FCAT does not accurately measure a student's ability, even with allowable accommodations. Students who are seniors pursuing the traditional 24-credit standard diploma program are eligible for an FCAT waiver.

To be considered for a waiver from the FCAT graduation requirement, the student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be identified as having a disability as defined in Section 1007.02 (2), F.S.,
2. Have a current Individual Educational Plan (IEP),
3. Be a senior or a student with disabilities who remains enrolled seeking a standard diploma for whom the FCAT is the required graduation test,
4. Have demonstrated mastery of the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards (SSS),
5. Have taken the grade 10 FCAT with appropriate, allowable accommodations at least twice including March of the senior year or if not continuously enrolled in public school in Florida, at least once during each year of enrollment in grades 10, 11, or 12,
6. Have participated in intensive remediation for FCAT Reading and FCAT Math if passing scores were not earned in the assessments, and
7. Be progressing toward meeting the state's 24 credit/course and 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements and any other district requirements for graduation with a standard diploma

Students with a disability who transfer to Florida from another state in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible to be considered for the waiver. However, students must be provided with every opportunity to take and pass the FCAT. For example, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student who enrolls in a Florida public school from another state at the beginning of the school year must take the FCAT during the October and March administrations. However, a 12<sup>th</sup> grader who enrolls in a Florida public school in January may only take the March FCAT and shall still be considered for the waiver.

## **Special Diploma**

Special diplomas are available to student with disabilities who are not able to meet the requirements for a standard diploma. Two special diploma options are available for students with disabilities. Special diplomas are available to certain students with disabilities who have been properly identified as:

- Specific learning disability
- Emotionally or behavioral disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Language impaired
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Dual sensory impaired

Students who are identified solely as hospital/homebound, visually impaired or speech impaired are not eligible for a special diploma.

## Special Diploma Option 1

### Courses or Subject Required for a Special Diploma 1

The following courses or subjects shall be required for graduation for students who are seeking a Special Diploma 1. *Courses in each of these categories can be either exceptional student education courses or their corresponding regular education courses.*

<b>Minimum of 8 credits selected from Academic, Supported, or Participatory Levels:</b>
Academic or Life Skills courses
Functional Living Skills courses
Cognitive and Linguistic Skills course
<b>Minimum of 4 credits selected from:</b>
Vocational, Career, Technical courses
Life Management and Transition courses
Life Sustaining and Environmental Interaction Courses
<b>Minimum of 12 Electives to include:</b>
1 credit of physical education or specially designed physical education
11 credits of electives
<b>24 Total Credits</b>
* 1 credit in Language Arts and 1 credit of Math may be awarded to a student who has earned six (6) or more vocational/career credits.

**Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma Access Points:** Student must demonstrate proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards Access Points. The Sunshine State Standards Access Points are assessed by the Florida Alternate Assessment at three levels of functioning.

- *Independent Level:* Students are able to perform the skills for each benchmark on their own.
- *Supported Level:* Students require ongoing use of prompting or supervision in order to perform the skills for each benchmark.
- *Participatory Level:* Students require extensive personal assistance to be able to participate in activities of daily living.

Proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards Access Points at the appropriate level for the student is demonstrated through successful completion of ESE courses and evidenced either by successfully passing the FCAT or through the Florida Alternate Assessment. Students who qualify for exemption from the FCAT due to significant cognitive impairments must be assessed with the Florida Alternate Assessment.

### Extended Time to Meet Graduation Requirements

Students with disabilities who have not earned a standard diploma may stay in school until the end of the school year in which they turn 22 years of age. This also applies to students with disabilities who have been awarded a special diploma, certificate of completion, or special certificate of completion. The district must continue to offer services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years old, or until the student earns a standard diploma, whichever comes first. Services may include academic supports, vocational training, or transition services including supports for accessing post-secondary services, independent living, and job placement agencies.

Also, if a student earns a special diploma, he/she may enroll in Adult Education and work towards earning a standard diploma or a General Education Development (GED) diploma to facilitate access to postsecondary

education. He/she also may enroll in vocational/technical schools, in adherence to their guidelines for placement. (s.1007.02, F.S.)

## **Transfer Student Pursuing Special Diploma Option 1**

Students who enter an Alachua County Public School their eleventh or twelfth grade year from another Florida public school, state, or foreign country shall not be required to spend additional time in Alachua County Public Schools in order to meet the Special Diploma Option 1 course requirements, if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he/she is transferring.

## **Special Diploma-Option 2**

**Special Diploma Option 2 is an individually designed, flexible option based on mastery of employment and community competencies. This option may be selected for a student age 16 and older that has had previous job experiences. Following selection of this option, students are required to be employed in paid jobs in the community for 180 days (2 semesters).**

**In order for a student to receive a Special Diploma under this option, procedures for selection of the appropriate employment and community competencies in accordance with Rule [6A-1.0996 FAC], require that a student must:**

- **Achieve all annual goals and short term objectives related to employment and community competencies specified by the Transition IEP,**
- **Be successfully employed in a community-based job for 180 days (2 semesters), at or above minimum wage, for a minimum of 30 hours per week (unless physically or emotionally incapable as a consequence of the student's disability) in compliance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and**
- **Demonstrate mastery of competencies specified in the Graduation Training Plan**

***Graduation Training Plan.* The Graduation Training Plan identifies the following elements:**

- **Competencies the student is expected to demonstrate related to employment**
- **Competencies needed by the student related to living in the community**
- **Criteria used to determine mastery of employment and community competencies**
- **Work schedule and the number of hours per week the student will work**
- **Description of the student's supervision related to employment to be provided by school district personnel, including location and frequency.**

## **Certificate of Completion**

**The regular certificate of completion is available to any student who passes the required courses in high school but doesn't achieve the required GPA and did not pass the Grade 10 FCAT. Students with disabilities who are eligible for a regular certificate of completion may also choose to graduate under Special Diploma Option 1. The special certificate of**

**completion is available to students with disabilities who do not meet all graduation requirements for a special diploma.**

## **Movement Between Diploma Options**

A student may move between various diploma options. The decision regarding whether a student chooses a course of study leading to a Standard Diploma or Special Diploma is reviewed annually. For a student to move from a **Standard Diploma** to **Special Diploma** Option 1 or 2, the IEP committee must meet and revise the IEP to reflect change of diploma option. The IEP committee will determine which standard diploma option courses taken meet the requirement for Special Diploma 1. Regular education courses may be substituted for any special diploma subject area as determined at the IEP meeting.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

### **Report Cards/Grading Procedures**

Report card grades for students with disabilities are first determined by the same criteria for grades for all students, with some additional considerations. Students with disabilities may receive report card grades in general education or special education classes that are based on instructional level rather than grade placement if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Accommodations/Modifications to the general curriculum are documented on the student's IEP as appropriate. The standard report card is used for a vast majority of students with disabilities. However in limited cases, the IEP team may opt to use an alternate report card when the standard report card would be ineffective in communicating the progress of the student

### **Parent Notification of Student Progress**

Parents of students with disabilities will be regularly informed as to their student's progress toward the annual goals of the IEP and the extent to which the progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year. Progress towards IEP goals and statement of likelihood of attainment is sent home with the report cards.

## **Guidelines for Determining Appropriate Accommodations/Modifications for Students with Disabilities**

### **Accommodations to the General Curriculum**

Consistent with the accountability requirements of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, the vast majority of students with disabilities in Florida are expected to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, participate in the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and graduate high school with a standard diploma. In order to achieve this expectation, students with disabilities must be provided access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible with appropriately designed instruction and accommodations. An accommodation is intended for those students who would be denied meaningful participation in instruction and assessment without the accommodation. Accommodations allow a student with a

disability the same access to instruction and assessment as students without disabilities. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are determined at the IEP meeting and indicated on the student's IEP.

The following guidelines should be considered when making individual accommodations decisions:

- Accommodations are adjustments made to the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed but do not affect the expected outcomes in relation to the Sunshine State Standards.
- Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do.
- Accommodations should remove or neutralize the limiting effects of the student's disability by altering the presentation, response, schedule, setting, use of assistive devices, or test administration in appropriate ways.
- Accommodations should not change the intent of the instruction or test. (i.e. the educational goal or skill measured by the test).
- Accommodations should not be used to compensate for lack of achievement.
- Accommodations should not provide the student with unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test. They must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test.
- Test accommodations must be the same or nearly the same as accommodations used by the student in completing the classroom instructional and assessment activities.
- Accommodations must be necessary to allow the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery required by the assessment.

## **Testing Accommodations**

Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC] permits test accommodations for any student with a disability who has a current IEP. Expanded accommodations on state and district assessment are authorized for students with disabilities through executive order. Allowable accommodations are detailed in the test administration manuals under the following categories:

- Flexible Presentation
- Flexible Responding
- Flexible Scheduling
- Flexible Setting
- Use of Assistive Technology
- 

## **Parent Notification of Testing Accommodations**

A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations and/or modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations and/or modifications.

## **Modifications to the General Curriculum**

Modifications are changes in the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed, AND modifications are changes in expected outcomes and curricular standards. When students are

unable to meet the expectations of the general curriculum, the expectations are modified. Modifications to the curriculum are generally used in coordination with an assessment that is compatible with the modified expectations. The general education curriculum may be modified to meet the student's needs. All modifications are addressed in the student's IEP.

The following guidelines should be considered when making modifications decisions:

- Curricular modifications should be considered only after all types of accommodations have been exhausted.
- The IEP team must consider the long-term impacts of lowering the expectations for students.
- Students with a disability who are not challenged to reach the same level of achievement as the non-disabled classmates in elementary or middle school may find that they are not ready for a program that leads to a standard diploma in high school.
- A student's priority educational needs may be different from the general curriculum specific in the Sunshine State Standards for the academic subject areas. For example, a student with a moderate or severe disability may need to learn how to care for personal needs and develop interpersonal communication skills. The student's annual goals would reflect the student's needs in personal care, socialization, and interpersonal communication, and not the academics of the regular school program.
- Students who require modified standards or an alternate curriculum may meet the criteria for exemption from FCAT and therefore be required to participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment through grade 11.

## **Guidelines for Exemptions of Selected Students from State or District Assessment**

In order to be excluded from FCAT, a student must meet the following requirements according to Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC]:

- The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course accommodations, and
- The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure and vocational activities.

When deciding whether a student should or should not participate in FCAT, the Florida Department of Education has suggested that IEP teams consider the following:

- Is the student unable to master the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable accommodations?
- Is the student's demonstrated cognitive ability the primary reason for the inability to master these standards?
- Is the student participating in a modified or functional curriculum based upon competencies in the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma for all academic areas?
- Does the student require extensive direct instruction in functional academics and vocational competencies as well as domestic, community living, and leisure activities?

- Does the student have deficits in adaptive behavior as demonstrated by the inability to function effectively and independently in everyday living skills (interpersonal and social interactions) across a variety of settings?

If the IEP team cannot answer “yes” to all of the questions, the student should participate in the FCAT, with allowable accommodations, as appropriate.

If the IEP team determines that the student meets the criteria for exemption from FCAT, the student must participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

## **Extended School Year**

For students eligible for Exceptional Student Education, the need for Extended School Year (ESY) services is determined at an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) conference and documented on the IEP. Multiple criteria for eligibility for ESY services, as defined by DOE, may include but are not limited to: consideration of the likelihood of regression/recoupment, critical points of instruction, emerging skills, nature or severity of disability, interfering behaviors, rate of progress, or special circumstances.

IEP conferences to consider extended school services are held prior to May 1, in order to allow sufficient notice to families regarding the decision for extended school year services.