

2010 Guide to Calculating School Grades

Technical Assistance Paper



Florida Department of Education
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I. Overview

Introduction

The purpose of this technical assistance paper is to provide a description of the procedures used to determine school grades for the 2010 school year. In 2010, all schools' grades include four measures of student achievement and four measures of student learning gains (the same eight components that were in place the previous year) plus several new, non-FCAT-based components for high schools. Florida's current school accountability system originated with state legislation passed in 1999 (the "A+ Plan") and has been revised periodically to reflect increased standards and expectations for student performance. Florida is the first state to track annual student learning gains based on the state's academic standards.

School grades have been issued since 1999, with the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) being the primary instrument in calculating school grades. In 2002, significant improvements were made in how school grades were calculated to fully implement the intent of Florida's original plan. The most noteworthy improvement was the inclusion of student learning gains. Additionally, a measure was added to determine whether the lowest performing students are making annual improvements in specified subjects. Florida's accountability system allows the improvement of individual students to be tracked from one year to the next based on FCAT developmental scores in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 10. In 2010, Florida's school grading system was further revised to include several additional measures for high schools, including the four-year graduation rate, the graduation rate for at-risk students, participation and performance in accelerated curricula, and postsecondary readiness, as well as a component for measuring annual growth or decline in these measures.

This paper contains two sections: the Overview (Section I) and the Process for Calculating School Grades (Section II). These sections describe a series of procedures for determining a school's final grade and are intended for knowledgeable audiences who are interested in the details of determining the school grades. A more general and concise description of the school grading system is found on the school grading "guide sheet" (see Appendix A, p. 25) which can be accessed online at the applicable link at the bottom of the Florida School Grades Web site (<http://schoolgrades.fdoe.org/>).

Specific Authority

The authority for Florida's system of school accountability is addressed in Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code Rules. It is not the intent of this section to provide a detailed description of the specific contents of the state law and rule. Readers interested in the additional legal information should consult the source documents.

Florida Statutes - [Section 1008.34](#)

This section of Florida law requires the Commissioner of Education to prepare annual reports of student performance for each school and district in the state. The law specifies the grade categories, the timeframes, and the types of information to be included in the calculations. Further, the law directs the State Board of Education to adopt appropriate criteria for each school grade category.

Florida Administrative Code Rule [6A-1.09981](#)

This rule describes the implementation requirements for Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability. The State Board of Education has periodically revised this rule for clarification and to ensure compliance with updates to the governing statute. The rule provides policy information as well as procedural guidance for implementing the program. It also specifies which schools are included in the system and the criteria for designating the school grades. In addition, the rule describes the rewards and recognition for schools and the assistance and intervention provisions for low performing schools (D and F).

Florida Statutes – [Section 1008.341](#)

This section of Florida law provides for school improvement ratings for alternative schools. Alternative schools that provide dropout prevention and academic intervention services pursuant to s. [1003.53](#) may elect to receive a school improvement rating in lieu of a grade. The school improvement rating shall identify schools as having one of the following ratings defined according to rules of the State Board of Education:

- "Improving" means schools with students making more academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools.
- "Maintaining" means schools with students making progress equivalent to the progress made when the students were served in their home schools.
- "Declining" means schools with students making less academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools.

Specific provisions of this statute are implemented by FAC Rule 6A-1.099822, which was passed by the State Board of Education on February 19, 2008.

Florida Administrative Code Rule [6A-1.099822](#)

This rule implements provisions of the alternative school rating system mandated by s. 1008.341, Florida Statutes. In cases where an alternative school elects to receive a school improvement rating in lieu of a grade, the FCAT results of students who have been referred to the alternative school by another school will be credited back to the home school for inclusion in the home school's grade calculations.¹ This provision thereby affects identification of students to be included in the school grading calculations. For more information, see p. 6, Step 2.4—*Identify students at alternative schools whose FCAT results will be credited back to home schools ("zoned schools")*.

¹ Applied to the learning gains components for reading and math.

Summary of the School Grading Criteria

State Board Rule *6A-1.09981* describes the performance measures included in the overall grade for a school (including additional criteria for high school grades²). School grades for all schools include eight assessment-based measures of achievement that are primarily FCAT components, in addition to two other conditions.

Points for these eight assessment-based components are calculated as follows:

1. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in reading.
2. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in mathematics.
3. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in science. If fewer than 10 eligible students have test scores in science, the district average in science is substituted.
4. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring 3.5 or higher on the FCAT writing assessment (average of scores at 3 and up and scores at 4 and up). If fewer than 10 eligible students have test scores in writing, the district average in writing is substituted.
5. One point for each percent of students making learning gains in reading.
6. One point for each percent of students making learning gains in mathematics.
7. One point for each percent of the lowest performing students making learning gains in reading. In the event that there are not at least 30 eligible students, the school's reading learning gains are substituted.
8. One point for each percent of the lowest performing students making learning gains in mathematics. In the event that there are not at least 30 eligible students, the school's mathematics learning gains are substituted.

FCAT Retake Bonus Points for High Schools: High schools qualify to earn 10 bonus points to their total school grade points if at least half of the 11th and 12th grade students in the school required to take the grade 10 FCAT retake meet the FCAT graduation requirement. There must be 10 eligible students in reading and 10 eligible students in math in order to receive the bonus. Points will not be split; the bonus is all or nothing.

These points are added together and converted into a school grading scale, shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: 2010 School Grading Scale
(Elementary and Middle Schools)

Grade	Total points
A	525 and above
B	495-524
C	435-494
D	395-434
F	Less than 395

² See Step 8 (p. 16) for detailed information on non-FCAT-based components for grading high schools.

In addition to the accumulation of percentage points for each of the eight performance measures, schools are also evaluated on the basis of two other conditions:

1. Percent Tested: Schools earning enough total points to earn a grade of A must also test at least 95% of their eligible students. All other letter grade designations are based on a minimum of 90% tested. If any school tests fewer than 90% of their students, the school will initially receive an “I” (incomplete). After investigation, if the percent tested remains less than 90%, the final grade will be lower than indicated by the total points accumulated.
2. Adequate Progress of the Lowest Performing Reading and Mathematic Students: A school with enough points to earn an “A” must show adequate progress of the low 25% in both reading and math for the current year. A school with enough points to earn a “B” or “C” must show adequate progress of the low 25% in both reading and math for either the current or previous year. The final grade will be reduced one letter grade for schools failing to meet this criterion.

For purposes of this calculation, the lowest performing students are the lowest quartile (or 25%) of students scoring at achievement levels 1-3 of the FCAT reading and mathematics subtests in each grade. The lowest 30 students are substituted when there are not 30 in the lowest quartile. In the event that there are not 30 eligible students scoring at FCAT achievement level 3 or below in reading, the percent of students making annual learning gains in reading for all students is substituted for this performance measure. In the event that there are not 30 eligible students scoring in FCAT achievement level 3 or below in mathematics, the percent of students making annual learning gains in mathematics for all students is substituted for this performance measure.

Adequate progress of the lowest performing quartile in FCAT reading and math is attained when at least 50 percent of students in the group have made annual learning gains in each subject. The following flexibilities are extended to schools falling short of the 50-percent mark:

- Schools can avoid having their grade lowered if at least 40 percent of students in the lowest quartile have made learning gains and there was annual improvement of 1% or more in the percent making learning gains.
- Schools in which less than 40 percent of students in the lowest quartile made learning gains can avoid having their grade reduced if there was at least a five-percentage-point improvement in the percent making learning gains.

In addition to the measures described above, high schools will have 50% of their grade based on components outside of FCAT-based scores, as detailed in Step 8 (p. 16).

See also Appendix A (p. 25) for a schematic summary description of the school grading system. Further clarification of the details involved in the calculation of school grades is in the next section of this paper.

II. Process for Calculating School Grades

This section of the paper describes in sequential order the processes involved in evaluating the performance of each school and determining a school grade.

1. Identify the Schools to be Graded

Pursuant to State Board Rule, the Commissioner will determine the school types to earn school grades. Schools that meet all of the following criteria will receive school grades:

- The school serves at least 30 full-year-enrolled *standard-curriculum* students³ with valid FCAT scores in reading and math; and
- The school serves at least 30 full-year-enrolled students⁴ with valid FCAT scores in reading and math in both the current year and the previous year.

This includes new schools. Department of Juvenile Justice Schools do not earn school grades. Alternative schools may elect to receive an alternative school improvement rating in lieu of a grade.

2. Identify the Students to be Included

All students enrolled in the same school for a full academic year are included in the school grades calculation. The performance of students who are standard curriculum, speech impaired, gifted, hospital homebound, and English language learners who have been in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program for more than two years is included in all components of the school grade calculation. Students who are in exceptional student education or are English language learners for less than two years are included only in the participation and learning gains components of the school grade; they are not included in the components for meeting high standards in reading, math, writing, and science.

In addition, eligible students who are enrolled in an alternative school⁵ will have their FCAT scores credited back to the home school for inclusion in the learning gains components of that school's grade. (See Step 2.4 for more information.)

To identify which of the eight components of the school grade calculation in which a student should be included, the electronic record of each student in a school must be reviewed to determine his/her eligibility. The following steps briefly describe this process.

³ Also includes speech impaired, gifted, hospital/homebound, and English language learners (ELLs) with more than two years in an English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) program.

⁴ Applies to all eligible students; includes students with disabilities and ELLs in all program areas.

⁵ Applies to students enrolled in alternative schools during Survey 2 (October) or Survey 3 (February) who were also tested at alternative schools.

2.1 – Determine student SWD and ELL classifications on Survey 3: The Students With Disabilities (SWD) classification and English language learners (ELL) status of each student is determined, and the student is identified as “included” for all components of the school grade if eligibility criteria are met.

a) SWD Status: The electronic record for each student contains up to 20 possible SWD classifications, as well as the student’s entry date into the SWD program. SWD students are included in the school grade calculations for proficiency in reading, math, writing, and science when their only exceptionality is gifted (L), hospital/homebound (M), speech impaired (F), or a combination of those three. Students with any other disability are not included in the proficiency components for the four subject areas noted above. Students must be enrolled in an SWD program prior to testing to be excluded from the school grading proficiency calculations.

b) ELL Status: ELL students are included in the school grading proficiency components when they have been in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program for more than two years prior to testing.

If a student is in exceptional student education or is an English language learner and does not meet the criteria set forth in a) or b), the student is included only in the calculation of participation and learning gains components.

2.2 – Determine full academic year status: Students are included in the school grading system if they have been enrolled in the same school for a full academic year. Students are considered continuously enrolled for a full academic year if they were enrolled in the same school during the October and February FTE (full-time equivalent) counts. This determination is made by matching the “Student Number Identifier, Florida” in the Survey 3 file to the “Student Number Identifier, Florida” in the Survey 2 file by district and school.

2.3 – Identify the grade 10 students who have previously passed the FCAT: Grade 10 students who have previously passed the grade 10 FCAT reading and/or mathematics will not be included in the school grading calculations. The identification process is completed separately for reading and for mathematics. All enrolled tenth grade students must take the writing test, even if they have already passed the reading and/or mathematics tests.

2.4 – Identify students who attended alternative schools and whose FCAT results will be credited back to home schools: Per requirements of FAC Rule 6A-1.099822, students enrolled in and tested at alternative schools will have their FCAT scores credited back to their home school if the alternative school elects a school improvement rating instead of a school grade. Districts report the “home school” (the school to which the FCAT scores will be credited back) for each student at an alternative school by using two data elements on the Survey 3 Student Demographic Information records:

- “District Number, Zoned School” (http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0910/st87_35.pdf), which reports the district in which the home school is located; and
- “School Number, Zoned School” (http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0910/st246_25.pdf), which reports the school number of the home school.

Eligible students for whom a home school (“zoned school”) is reported will have their FCAT scores credited back to the home school for inclusion in the learning gains components (percent making learning gains in FCAT reading; percent making learning gains in FCAT math) of that school’s grade. Note that a student must have FCAT scores for the current and prior year in a subject in order for learning gains to be calculated. Eligible students’ performance will be included in the home school’s grade calculation as long as the student is enrolled in a grade level at the alternative school that is offered by the student’s home school.

Note also that s. 1008.34, F.S., excludes certain classifications of students in alternative schools from school grading:

- Students subject to district school board policies for expulsion for repeated and/or serious offenses, and
- Students who are in dropout-retrieval programs who have officially been designated as dropouts.

(In addition, test scores for students who are in programs operated or contracted by the Department of Juvenile Justice are excluded from school grading, as required in statute.)

Students belonging to these classifications are reported by districts to the Department of Education’s automated student database via the Federal/State Indicator Status reporting format (http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0910/0910fsis.asp), using specific codes reported on the Dropout Prevention/Juvenile Justice Programs data element (http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0910/st91_1.pdf). The following codes will be used to identify students in alternative schools whose FCAT scores will not be included in school improvement rating or school grading calculations: R (for students in dropout retrieval programs), and E (for students in “alternative to expulsion” programs). A code of D can be reported for students in Department of Juvenile Justice programs; however, DJJ centers are already excluded from the grading process based on school type.

2.5 – Obtain corrections and updates from the school districts: Lists of students to be included in school grades are identified by the Department and shared with the school districts in electronic form. Corrections are submitted to the Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS) office, and corrected files are posted for district review. Districts are given the opportunity to correct data. Districts and schools are then given the opportunity to submit updates directly to the Bureau of Research and Evaluation (Evaluation and Reporting section) for students whose status changed after the end of

the Survey 3 reporting period and before testing. A general description of the correction/update process is provided below.

- a. Unmatched Identification Numbers: If there are students who were present for a full academic year but the student ID on Survey 2 does not match the student ID on Survey 3, this results in unmatched records. Districts are required to resolve these discrepancies by correcting the student ID on submitted records so that the Survey 2 and Survey 3 records can be matched.
- b. Inaccuracies in the data reported in Survey 3: Districts are given an opportunity to correct inaccuracies in data used for the school accountability calculations and reported in Survey 3.
- c. Non-public school students taking courses at public schools: Home schooled and private school students who receive services from a public school are excluded from calculations if N998 (Home Education) or N999 (Private School) is reported as the primary school number in the “Current Enrollment” field of Survey 3. For students whose primary instructional school has been misidentified, districts must report the correct primary school number to the Office of Evaluation and Reporting.
- d. ELL status during FCAT is different from Survey 3: Only ELL students who were enrolled in an ESOL program for more than 2 years at the time of testing are included in the four proficiency components for school grading. Updated information must be provided for students who enroll in an ESOL program after Survey 3 but before testing.
- e. SWD status during FCAT is different from Survey 3: All students who are enrolled in designated SWD programs prior to testing are not included in the four proficiency components of school grade calculations (exemptions noted above). Updated information must be provided for students who are enrolled in a program after Survey 3 but before testing.
- f. Withdrawal status prior to testing: All students who were withdrawn from school after Survey 3 and prior to the first day of FCAT testing must be identified.
- g. 10th grade FCAT graduation requirements met prior to testing: All 10th grade retained students who have passed the reading and/or math FCAT prior to testing are not included in the school grade calculation. Districts must ensure that these students are appropriately identified.

2.6 – Creation of the Membership File: Upon completion of both rounds of error corrections, a final file is created and referred to as the Membership File. The Membership File is used for all accountability calculations.

3. Obtain Student Assessment Scores

The Evaluation and Reporting Office works closely with the K-12 Assessment staff to obtain accurate assessment data on all students. The matching process is similar to that used for the matching of Survey 2 and 3. After the initial matching process is complete, districts are provided a list of unmatched and mismatched students. School districts must return updated and corrected information for each student. The extent to

which this step is completed correctly by the school districts affects the Department's ability to include the maximum number of eligible students in the school grading process. The matching and corrections processes are briefly summarized below.

3.1 – Identify assessment records with blank or duplicate Student IDs: For records with a blank or duplicate FCAT (or FAA) Student ID, districts must provide the matching student ID from the Membership File for inclusion of student results.

3.2 – Match membership files to assessment files by district, school, and student ID: Students on the Membership File are matched to assessment files using district, school, and student ID. Unmatched records are flagged and districts must provide the matching fields from the Membership File for inclusion of student results.

3.3 – Identify assessment records that have missing prior-year assessment data: Any record that does not contain prior-year test results will be flagged. Districts must report correct prior-year print-after-scan numbers that are associated with the missing data for Reading and Mathematics.

3.4 – Update assessment records with district corrections: Upon completion of error corrections, student results in the FCAT (or FAA) file should be closely matched to the students enrolled in the Membership File.

Note: This process is completed for all students tested, not just those to be included in the school grading process. This is important for two reasons. First, scores for these students might be needed for determining learning gains the following year if the students become eligible for inclusion; e.g., students in limited English programs for more than two years. Secondly, because all students are included in determining Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, it is necessary to correct all Student IDs. The process is also important for the alternative school rating system implemented in 2008.

4. Compute the Percentage Points for Each Performance Measure

The eight assessment-based measures evaluated as part of determining school grades can be grouped into three categories:

- The percent of students achieving high standards (steps 4.1-4.4),
- The percent of students making learning gains (steps 4.4-4.5), and
- The percent of the lowest performing students who make learning gains (steps 4.6-4.7).

Although the computations are similar within each category, the computations for each performance measure are described separately in the following sections.

4.1 – Calculate Reading Performance: This component focuses on the extent to which eligible students score sufficiently high on the reading portion of the FCAT to be considered “on grade level.” Schools accumulate one point for each percent of eligible students scoring at FCAT achievement levels 3, 4, and 5 in reading. The number of eligible students scoring at levels 3-5 is divided by the total number of eligible students who took the FCAT reading test and for whom a valid score was reported.

4.2 – Calculate Mathematics Performance: This component focuses on the extent to which eligible students score sufficiently high on the mathematics portion of the FCAT to be considered “on grade level.” Schools accumulate one point for each percent of eligible students scoring at FCAT achievement levels 3, 4, and 5 in mathematics. The number of eligible students scoring at levels 3-5 is divided by the total number of eligible students who took the FCAT mathematics test and for whom a valid score was reported.

4.3 – Calculate Science Performance: This component focuses on the extent to which eligible students score sufficiently high on the science portion of the FCAT to be considered “on grade level.” Schools accumulate one point for each percent of eligible students scoring at FCAT achievement levels 3, 4, and 5 in science. The number of eligible students scoring at levels 3-5 is divided by the total number of eligible students who took the FCAT science test and for whom a valid score was reported.

Note: If fewer than 10 eligible students were tested in science, the district science average is substituted for school science proficiency results.

4.4 – Calculate Writing Performance: This component recognizes the traditional objective that students be able to write a composition that meets at least minimal requirements. The percentage points earned take into account the percent of students scoring at proficient and above on the essay part of the FCAT writing examination. The number of eligible students scoring at proficient and above is then divided by the number of eligible students who took the writing test and for whom a valid score was reported. Beginning with reporting for 2009-10, changes in scoring procedures for FCAT writing essays (assignment of a single reader to each essay, rather than two readers per essay) will require an adjustment to the way that “percent proficient” is determined for schools. Since “proficient” is still equated with a score of 3.5 – but only whole-number scores from 1 to 6 are now possible with single-reader scoring – the percent proficient will be determined by averaging the percent of eligible students scoring at 3 and higher with the percent of eligible students scoring at 4 and higher.

Example: In a hypothetical school, there were 131 eligible students who took FCAT Writing. Ninety-four students scored at 3 and above. Eighty-one students scored at 4 and above. The percent meeting high standards in writing at this hypothetical school is the average of 72% ($94 \div 131$) and 62% ($81 \div 131$), or 175 ($94 + 81$) \div 262 ($131 + 131$), which equals 67%.

Note: If fewer than 10 eligible students were tested in writing, the district writing average is substituted for the school writing proficiency results.

4.5 – Calculate Reading Gains: Including learning gains as a performance measure for determining school grades was initiated in 2002. It emphasizes the importance of learning a year’s worth of knowledge in a year’s worth of time. Individual student learning gains are determined by comparing each student’s prior year test score to the current year test score using three different methods. Schools earn one point for each

percent of students who make learning gains in reading. Students make learning gains by any one of the three methods described below.

Students make learning gains if they

- a. improve one or more FCAT achievement levels (e.g., from 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, or 4-5) or Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) performance levels (for students with disabilities who are administered the FAA in lieu of the FCAT);
- b. maintain a proficient achievement level on the FCAT or FAA (at least level 3 for the FCAT, level 4 for the FAA) without decreasing a level; or
- c. demonstrate more than one year's growth when remaining in achievement level 1 or 2 on the FCAT for both years. Under this alternative, one year's growth is defined in terms of the difference between a student's current year and prior year FCAT developmental score. Students who remain in levels 1 or 2 are credited with learning gains for reading if they improve more than the cut-off scores (point differentials between prior and current year developmental scores) shown in Table 2.

Note: Retained students are included in methods a. and b. above but not in method c. because the definition of one year's growth is based on taking the FCAT at the next higher grade. Also, when a student's achievement level scores drop (e.g., from level 4 to level 3), the student is not counted as having made learning gains, even if the lower score is on or above grade level.

**Table 2:
One Year's Growth Definition for FCAT Reading Developmental Scores**

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
230	166	133	110	92	77	77

4.6 – Calculate Mathematics Gains: This component is parallel to the reading procedure described in step 4.5. Individual student learning gains are determined by comparing each student's prior year test score to the current year test score using three different methods. Schools earn one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in mathematics. Students make learning gains by any one of the three methods described below.

Students make learning gains if they

- a. improve one or more FCAT achievement levels (e.g., from 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, or 4-5) or FAA performance levels (for students with disabilities who are administered the FAA in lieu of the FCAT);
- b. maintain a proficient achievement level on the FCAT or FAA (at least level 3 for the FCAT, level 4 for the FAA) without decreasing a level; or
- c. demonstrate more than one year's growth when remaining in achievement level 1 or 2 on the FCAT for both years. Under this alternative, one year's growth is defined in terms of the difference between a student's current year and prior year FCAT developmental score. Students who remain in levels 1 or 2 are credited with learning gains for mathematics if they improve more than the cut-off scores

(point differentials between prior and current year developmental scores) shown in Table 3.

Note: Retained students are included in methods a. and b. above but not in method c. because the definition of one year's growth is based on taking the FCAT at the next higher grade. Also, when a student's achievement level scores drop (e.g., from level 4 to level 3), the student is not counted as having made learning gains, even if the lower score is on or above grade level.

**Table 3:
One Year's Growth Definition for
FCAT Mathematics Developmental Scores**

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
162	119	95	78	64	54	48

4.7 – Calculate reading gains for the lowest performing students: Special attention is given to the reading gains of the lowest 25% of students or lowest 30 scoring at FCAT achievement levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school.

The students included in the calculations for this component are students who

- a. meet all criteria for inclusion in school grade calculations for the current year;
- b. have both a prior year score and a current year score on FCAT reading;
- c. are ranked in the lowest 25% based on their prior year FCAT reading developmental scale scores; and
- d. have a prior year score less than or equal to an achievement level 3 score.

4.8 – Calculate mathematics gains for the lowest performing students: Special attention is given to the mathematics gains of the lowest 25% of students or lowest 30 scoring in FCAT achievement levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school.

The students included in the calculations for this component are students who

- a. meet all criteria for inclusion in school grade calculations for the current year;
- b. have both a prior year score and a current year score on FCAT reading;
- c. are ranked in the lowest 25% based on their prior year FCAT mathematics developmental scale scores; and
- d. have a prior year score less than or equal to an achievement level 3 score.

The lowest 25 percent in reading and the lowest 25 percent in mathematics is determined using the same method but applied separately to reading data and to mathematics data. The procedure used to identify the lowest 25% of the students in a school is applied separately by grade, and the identified students are combined across all grades to determine learning gains. The first step is to rank the scores of all students in the grade from highest to lowest based on their prior year reading developmental scale scores. Students without a prior year score are not included. The second step is to identify the developmental scale score that corresponds to the percentile rank of 25. This is not the same as sorting the scores descending as ranking allows for duplicate scores. This scale score becomes the boundary score. The boundary score must not

be in FCAT achievement levels 4 or 5. Any student who has a score equal to or below the boundary score is included in the lowest 25%. Students from all grades are combined to form the total pool of students to be evaluated. If the total number of students in the lowest 25% is 30 or more, the percent making learning gains is calculated as described in Steps 4.5 and 4.6.

If the total number of students in the lowest 25% is less than 30, then the following process is used to identify which students will be added to the group comprising the lowest 25% to form the group of 30 or more students that will be included in the lowest performing group. Each student is assigned a percentile ranking within his or her grade. After the lowest 25% is identified through the process described in the preceding paragraph, the remaining students are ranked together based on the percentile rank that was assigned to each within his or her grade. Of these students, the one with the lowest percentile ranking is added to the lowest performing group. If the group still numbers less than 30, then the student with the next lowest percentile ranking is added to the group, and so on, until the number of the group reaches 30. It is possible for the group to exceed 30 if there are students with a tied percentile ranking who are added at the last step.

If there are not 30 or more students who scored at or below achievement level 3 in the prior year, the reading or mathematics gains respectively of all students will be substituted. Table 4 shows examples of how the lowest 25% component is evaluated.

**Table 4:
Examples of Learning Gains for the Lowest 25% in Reading**

Criteria	Shell Elementary School	Dolphin Middle School
Number of eligible students included in the current year school grade	125	1050
Number of eligible students with prior year FCAT reading scores	100	1000
Students in the lowest 25% based on the prior year's FCAT reading scores that are less than or equal to an achievement level 3 score	28	250
Is the number 30 or more?	No	Yes
Identify and add the next lowest percentile ranked student among those who were not included in the lowest 25% and whose score is no higher than level 3.	$28 + 1 = 29$	
Is the number 30 or more?	No	
Identify and add the next lowest percentile ranked student among the remaining students whose score is no higher than level 3.	$29 + 1 = 30$	
Is the number 30 or more?	Yes	
Number showing learning gains	12	150
Percent showing learning gains	40% (12/30)	60% (150/250)
If there are not 30 or more students who scored at or below achievement level 3 in the prior year, the reading gains of all students will be substituted.	If <30 Substitute Reading Gains of All students	

5. Determine Retake Bonus Points for High Schools

Students included in the bonus-points calculation for retakes include standard curriculum, speech-impaired, gifted, and hospital-homebound students, as well as English language learners (ELLs) who have been in the English for Speakers of Languages (ESOL) program for more than two years. These are the same criteria for inclusion as those applied to the percent-proficient components of school grades except students are in 11th or 12th grade during the current year.

Eligibility for the retake calculation is applied in the following order:

Eligibility for Denominator:

- a. Students who have not met the reading and/or math FCAT graduation requirement (as applicable, by subject) following the March administration of the prior year.
- b. Students enrolled full time for two consecutive years (the current and prior school years).
- c. During the prior year, students can be in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade.
- d. Students are in 11th or 12th grade during the current year.

Districts will have the opportunity to identify students who met the reading and/or math FCAT graduation requirement through a concordant test score on the assessment retake Web application. Students who have met the graduation requirement for a subject area (reading, math) through concordant test scores will be excluded from the retakes calculation for that subject area.

Eligibility for Numerator:

- a. Student is in the denominator.
- b. Reading and/or math FCAT results with a scale score of at least 300 on the Summer 2008, Fall 2008, or Spring 2009 administrations. If records are duplicated within an administration, only the highest record is kept.

Retake Calculation:

- a. The criteria for determining the retake bonus apply when there are at least 10 students in the denominator for reading and at least 10 students in the denominator for math.
- b. Numerator / Denominator = retake percent.
- c. There must be at least 50 percent meeting the FCAT graduation requirement in both reading and math in order to earn 10 bonus points.

The requirement to be enrolled in the same school for two consecutive years ensures that districts will not be held responsible for students that were only enrolled in the school for a brief amount of time. Also, the determination that the student be enrolled in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade the prior year is required because students should be taking the 10th grade FCAT. Students in 9th grade that are promoted to 11th grade are not included.

6. Determine the Percent Tested

The procedure for estimating a school's percent tested was developed long before school grades were first calculated. Starting in 1995, the estimating procedure was developed in cooperation with district testing directors and has been modified only slightly over the years. It has always been a straightforward approximation.

The estimate of the percent tested is calculated by dividing the total number of eligible students tested in each subject by the number of eligible students in membership who are expected to take each subject test. Students are eligible for inclusion in the school grades calculation for participation (percent tested) if they are enrolled in the same school for a full academic year. All students are included in the participation calculation unless (a) the student took an alternate assessment because the FCAT was not appropriate for the student due to a disability (writing and science), or (b) the student was a first-year English language learner who was not administered the FCAT in reading. Students with disabilities are included in the reading and math components of the calculation and are counted as "tested" if they have FCAT results or Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) results. Note that this is a different calculation and population from those used to determine percent tested for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure.

The example in Table 5 shows how the percent tested for a hypothetical high school is calculated.

Table 5: Example for Estimating the Percent Tested

Subject Area	Number Tested	Eligible Membership	Percent Tested (Total Only)
Reading	620	640	
Mathematics	640	650	
Writing	340	350	
Science	345	350	
Totals	1,945	1,990	98%

An adjustment of the membership is included to take into account that some students in the membership have actually taken FCAT, but those scores never show up because the students may have answered too few items to generate a score or their test was invalidated due to a testing irregularity. Another adjustment is included for retained grade 10 students who have previously taken and passed the FCAT, and for retained grade 10 students who have met graduation requirements through concordant score(s) on the ACT or SAT. These adjustments are accomplished by either adjusting the number tested (the numerator) or the number in membership (the denominator) as appropriate.

7. Determine Whether the Low 25% in Reading and Math Made Adequate Progress

Adequate progress of the lowest performing quartile in FCAT reading and math is attained when at least 50 percent of students in the group have made annual learning

gains in each subject. Schools that fall short of the 50-percent mark can still avoid having their grade reduced by one grade if they meet the following criteria:

- For schools with at least 40 percent of students in the lowest quartile making learning gains, there is at least a 1% improvement in the percent making learning gains vs. the prior year.
- For schools with less than 40 percent of students in the lowest quartile making learning gains, there is at least a 5% improvement in the percent making learning gains vs. the prior year.

See p. 4 for additional information.

8. Determine Points for Non-FCAT High School Grading Components*

* Indicators in this section are subject to further updating.

As established in s. 1008.34(3)(c)4, F.S., the 2008 Florida Legislature has required that, beginning with school year 2009-10, the school grade calculation for high schools will include additional components other than the traditional FCAT-based measures, so that 50 percent of the high school grade will consist of the traditional FCAT-based measures, and 50 percent of the high school grade will consist of additional non-FCAT-based measures. The non-FCAT-based components for 2009-10 include the following:

- Graduation rate,
- Graduation rate for at-risk students,
- Participation in accelerated coursework,
- Performance in accelerated coursework,
- Postsecondary readiness, and
- Annual growth in performance of each of these components.

Minimum cell size. For each of the new components, the minimum cell size for inclusion in the high school grade is 10 students in the denominator. High schools for which the denominator count falls below 10 students in any of the measures except the graduation rate for at-risk students will have the school grade calculated based on the traditional FCAT measures. For high schools where all components meet minimum cell-size criteria except for the graduation rate for at-risk students, the points for the school's overall graduation rate will be substituted in place of points for the graduation rate for at-risk students.

Steps for calculating the non-FCAT-based components for high school grading are described in sections 8.1 through 8.5 below.

8.1 – Calculate the graduation rate:

The graduation rate for high school grading is modeled on the National Governors Association four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, which is currently reported along with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) graduation rate in Florida's annual NCLB School Public Accountability Reports (<http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbpar/index.cfm>).

(a) Determine the adjusted cohort (denominator):

Regarding the year for which the rate is to be calculated, the adjusted cohort = the number of first-time ninth graders in membership during fall of the year four years prior to the expected year of graduation **plus** incoming transfer students on the same schedule to graduate (i.e., first-time 9th graders in Year 1, first-time 10th graders in Year 2, first-time 11th graders in Year 3, and first-time 12th graders in Year 4) **minus** students from this combined population who transferred out to another public school, students who left to enroll in a private school, a home education program, or an adult education program, and deceased students. Withdrawals are classified based on the student's most recently reported withdrawal code for the school. In addition, the cohort is further adjusted to remove "additional year" students who may have repeated one or more grades and were assigned to a previous year's cohort.

(b) Determine the number of on-time graduates (numerator):

The number of on-time graduates is the count of students from the adjusted cohort who received a standard diploma or a special diploma (for students with disabilities) by the end of the expected year of graduation. GED diploma recipients in high school exit option programs are not counted as graduates. However, students in the cohort who received a standard high school diploma through an adult education program are counted as graduates.

Note: Students who repeat grades at one school and then transfer to another school in the district will be assigned to the receiving school's cohort based on the year of their first enrollment in the district cohort rather than by grade level when first entering the receiving school's cohort.

(c) Calculate the rate:

Divide the count of on-time graduates (b) by the count of students in the adjusted cohort (a). The resulting percentage rate figure is rounded to the nearest whole number.

For more specific information on calculating the graduation rate, contact Education Information and Accountability Services (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/>) at askeias@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0400.

8.1.1 - Determine growth (or decline) in component points for the graduation rate:

The four-year graduation rate as described in Step 8.1 is calculated for the prior year, rounded to the nearest whole number, and subtracted from the current-year rate. One growth point is awarded for each annual percent increase in the graduation rate, up to a maximum of 20 points. Schools lose five points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually.

8.1.2 - Determine total points for the graduation rate, factoring in weighting (x2):

Add the growth points earned (or subtract points for declining performance), if any, to (from) the current-year graduation rate. Multiply the resulting count by two (2). Up to 200 total points may be awarded for the graduation rate component.

8.2 – Calculate the graduation rate for at-risk students:

Students comprising the at-risk group are selected from the adjusted cohort of the graduation rate calculation, based on students' grade 8 FCAT scores in reading and mathematics. Students who scored at FCAT level 2 or lower in both mathematics and reading on the grade 8 FCAT are classified as at risk. The graduation rate for these students is calculated the same as for the regular graduation rate. The annual growth measure for the at-risk graduation rate is calculated the same as for the regular graduation rate – by subtracting the prior year rate from the current year rate and adding the percent increase to the rounded whole number percent of the current year rate. Schools lose five points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually. Note, however, that the at-risk graduation rate does not receive extra weighting as described in Step 8.1.2. Up to 100 total points may be awarded for the at-risk graduation rate component. Total points are determined by adding the growth points to the current rate (or by subtracting points for declining performance from the points for the current rate).

At-risk graduation rate requirement for high schools graded “A”. For high schools to qualify for a grade of “A,” the school's at-risk population must meet an annual target of 75% or show adequate annual improvement. For schools within 10 percent of the rate target, annual improvement of at least 1% is required. For schools falling more than 10% short of the target, annual improvement of at least 5% is required.

8.3 – Calculate points for accelerated coursework participation:

As with the graduation rate and at-risk graduation rate, this component is percentage-based, although not a “rate” per se.

The denominator of the calculation is the count of all students in grades 11 and 12 in membership in Surveys 2 and 3 (matched membership).

The numerator comprises a weighted count of accelerated coursework participants in grades 9 through 12* who are full-year-enrolled students at the school. A student is an accelerated coursework participant if he or she has taken at least one examination in an Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), AICE, or Industry Certification area, or has completed at least one dual enrollment course with an earned grade.

AP, IB, and AICE courses that are included in this component are addressed in the Articulation Coordinating Committee's Credit by Exam Equivalencies list at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/pdf/ACC-CBE.pdf>. (See also *Appendix V: List of Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Courses* at the following URL: http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0910/appendv.pdf.)

* Students in grades 9 and 10 must successfully complete the acceleration to be counted as participants.

For industry certification, in order to be counted as a participant, a student must have taken an industry certification examination on the Industry Certification Funding List approved by the State Board of Education in Rule 6A-6.0573, F.A.C. The Industry Certification Funding List may be obtained from the Department of Education's web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/fcpea/default.asp>.

For dual enrollment, in order to be counted as a participant, a student must be enrolled in a course for which college credit can be awarded (i.e., credit toward an A.A. or A.S. degree).

Note: Schools shall receive credit for accelerated coursework participants in grades 9 and 10 in the numerator of the calculation only if the participants successfully complete the acceleration as outlined in Step 8.4 of this document.

Additional information on data sources for accelerated participation components is available in Appendix C, p. 30.

Determining the school of enrollment (school credited with participation). Applicable assessment records and course records are matched to the student membership records. For dual enrollment courses, the school of enrollment reported on the applicable course transcript records will be the school credited with the student's participation. Course transcript records for which the school of enrollment is different from the school of enrollment reported on the student's demographic record will not be included as part of the weighted participation count described in subsection (a) below. For AP, IB, AICE, and Industry Certification examination matches to student records, the school of enrollment that is reported on the matched Survey 3 Student Demographic Information record will be the school of enrollment identified for the student's participation.

- (a) Weighting of counts for individual participants. For each student counted as a participant in accelerated coursework, the weighted count that is credited to the student is established at 1.0 for a student who has taken one course/examination in accelerated coursework and is increased incrementally by 0.1 for each additional course/examination taken. The weighted counts for all participants are summed to produce the numerator for the calculation.
- (b) Calculating the accelerated coursework participation measure (prior to adding growth points). The numerator, as described above, is divided by the denominator as described above, and the resulting figure is rounded to a whole number percentage (capped at 100).

8.3.1 - Determine growth or decline in component points for accelerated coursework participation:

The accelerated coursework measure as described above is calculated for both the current and prior year. One growth point is awarded for each annual percent increase in the accelerated coursework measure, up to a maximum of 20 points. Schools lose five

points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually.

8.3.2 - Determine total points for accelerated coursework participation, factoring in weighting (x 2):

Add the growth points earned (or subtract points for declining performance) to (from) the points for the accelerated coursework participation measure described in section 8.3(b) above, and multiply the sum by 2. The total amount of possible points awarded for this component is capped at 200 points.

8.4 – Calculate points for accelerated coursework performance:

The denominator for the Accelerated Coursework Performance component is the unweighted and unduplicated count of students in grades 11 and 12 who took at least one AP, IB, AICE, or Industry Certification examination or at least one dual enrollment course, plus the unduplicated and unweighted count of students in grades 9 and 10 with at least one successful completion on an AP, IB, AICE, or Industry Certification examination or dual enrollment course. In effect, the denominator for this component is the unduplicated (and unweighted) count of students included in the numerator for section 8.3 (Accelerated Coursework Participation). Note: The denominator for this component is not the same value as the numerator for section 8.3 because the denominator count for this component is unweighted.

The numerator comprises a weighted count of successful completions for students in the denominator. “Successful completion” is defined as a score on an AP, IB, or AICE examination that is high enough to earn college credit, as determined by the Articulation Coordinating Committee’s Credit-by-Exam Equivalencies list accessible at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/pdf/ACC-CBE.pdf>. For dual enrollment courses, “successful completion” is defined as attainment of a course grade of “C” or higher. For industry certification, successful completion is defined as passing an industry certification examination on the State Board of Education approved industry certification funding list. Schools can earn additional successful completions for students who achieve industry certifications that result in credit for more than one (1) college course through statewide articulation agreements, which can be accessed online at http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/dwdframe/artic_indcert2aas.asp.

- (a) Weighting of counts for successful completions. For each successful completion credited to a student in the denominator, the weighted count that is credited to the student is established at 1.0 for one successful completion and is increased incrementally by 0.1 for each additional successful completion credited to the student. The weighted counts for all students are summed to produce the numerator for the calculation.
- (b) Calculating the accelerated coursework performance measure (prior to adding growth points). The numerator, comprising the sum of individual students’ weighted successful completion counts for accelerated coursework performance, is divided by

the denominator (the unweighted and unduplicated count of accelerated coursework participants in grades 9-12), and the resulting figure is rounded to a whole number percentage (capped at 100).

8.4.1 - Determine growth or decline in points for accelerated coursework performance:

The accelerated coursework performance measure as described above is calculated for both the current and prior year. One growth point is awarded for each annual percent increase in the accelerated coursework performance measure, up to a maximum of 20 points. Schools lose five points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually.

8.4.2 - Determine total points for accelerated coursework participation:

Add the growth points earned (or subtract points for declining performance) to (from) the points for the accelerated coursework participation measure described in section 8.4(b) above. The amount of total possible points awarded for this component is capped at 100 points.

8.5 – Calculate points for postsecondary readiness:

This measure consists of two separate components, one for reading and one for mathematics. For each subject area component, the denominator will consist of the count of on-time high school graduates who scored at Level 3 or higher on the grade 10 FCAT in the applicable subject. The numerator will consist of the count of students from the denominator who scored at “ready” levels on the ACT, SAT, and/or CPT in the applicable subject area. Readiness cutoff scores by subject area on the ACT, SAT, and CPT are established in Rule 6A-10.0315, F.A.C. For students who have taken multiple tests among the ACT, SAT, and CPT, the student’s highest score by subtest shall be used to determine postsecondary readiness for the applicable subject area component. For each of the subject area components, one (1) grade point is awarded for each percentage point outcome of the postsecondary readiness calculation. The total possible points that may be awarded to a school for each component is 100 points.

8.5.1 - Determine growth points for postsecondary readiness:

The postsecondary readiness measure as described above (Step 8.5) is calculated for both the current and prior year. One growth point is awarded for each annual percent increase in the measure, up to a maximum of 20 points. Schools lose five points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually.

8.5.2 - Determine total points for postsecondary readiness:

Add the growth points earned (Step 8.5.1) to the points for the postsecondary readiness measure described in Step 8.5 above (or subtract points for declining performance, if applicable). The amount of total possible points awarded for this component is capped at 100 points.

9. Determine the Total Points and the Final School Grade

1. All percentage points are accumulated for each performance measure and added together to obtain the total points.
2. Schools earning enough total points to earn a grade of “A” must also test at least 95% of their eligible students. All other letter grade designations are based on a minimum of 90% tested. For schools testing less than 90%, the final grade may be one letter grade lower than indicated by the total points accumulated, or an “I” grade (for “incomplete data”) may be assigned. A school’s grade will only be lowered once.
3. A school with enough points to earn an “A” must show adequate progress of the low 25% in both reading and math for the current year. A school with enough points to earn a “B” or “C” must show adequate progress of the low 25% in both reading and math for either the current or previous year. The final grade of schools that would otherwise be graded C or above will be reduced one letter grade for schools failing to meet this criterion. A school’s grade will only be lowered once.
4. As noted in Step 8.2.1, for high schools to qualify for a grade of “A,” the school’s at-risk population must meet an annual graduation rate target of 75% or show adequate annual improvement.
5. Schools that have at least half of the grade 11 and 12 students retaking the grade 10 FCAT and meeting the graduation requirements for reading and mathematics will be awarded 10 bonus points on top of the eight components.

Table 6 (below) and Table 7 on the following page provide a summary of school grading criteria and grading scales for elementary, middle, and high schools.

Table 6: Summary of School Grading Criteria for Elementary and Middle Schools

Grade	Grading Criteria
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 525 points or more • 95% tested or more • Make adequate progress in the current year with the lowest performing students.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 495 to 524 points • 90% tested or more • Make adequate progress with the lowest performing students in either the current or the previous year.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 435 to 494 points • 90% or greater tested • Make adequate progress with the lowest performing students in either the current or the previous year.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 395 to 434 points • 90% tested or more
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 395 points • 90% tested or more
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 90% tested (Schools initially receive a grade of “incomplete” while the status is investigated.)

Table 7: Summary of School Grading Criteria for High Schools

Grade	Grading Criteria
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,050 points or more • 95% tested or more (FCAT math, reading, science, writing) • Make adequate progress in the current year with the lowest performing students (learning gains measured by FCAT math and reading). • Reach target for at-risk graduation rate (75%), or show annual improvement in at-risk graduation rate: $\geq 1\%$ if within 10% of target; $\geq 5\%$ if more than 10% shy of target
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 990 to 1,049 points • 90% tested or more • Make adequate progress with the lowest performing students in either the current or the previous year.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 870 to 989 points • 90% or greater tested • Make adequate progress with the lowest performing students in either the current or the previous year.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 790 to 869 points • 90% tested or more
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 790 points • 90% tested or more
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 90% tested (Schools initially receive a grade of “incomplete” while the status is investigated.)

Grade Scale Weighting for Combination Schools Serving Grades 9-12

For combination schools in which grades 9-12 are taught, the school grade shall be based on a weighting of FCAT-based components and non-FCAT-based components proportional to the number and level of non-high-school grades taught at the school at tested grade levels. Whereas the point totals for regular high schools (serving only grades 9 through 12) weight the FCAT-based components at 50 percent of the grade and the non-FCAT-based components at 50 percent of the grade, the following weightings for FCAT-based and non-FCAT-based components shall be applied to combination high schools:

- a. A combination high school serving more than three tested grade levels below grade 9 shall have a school grade point total that weights the FCAT components as 80 percent of the grade and the non-FCAT components as 20 percent of the grade.
- b. A combination high school serving three or fewer tested grade levels below grade 9 shall have a school grade point total that weights the FCAT components as 70 percent of the grade and the non-FCAT components as 30 percent of the grade.

After the weighting for FCAT and non-FCAT components is applied, a 1600-point grading scale will be used for combination schools (the same scale as for high schools).

Example: Sunshine Combo School is a school serving grades 6 through 12. The 70% (FCAT) and 30% (non-FCAT) weighting will be applied.

- The school earns 620 points on the FCAT components.
- The school earns 510 points on the non-FCAT components.
- $(620 \times .70) \times 2 = 868$ points for FCAT components.
- $(510 \times .30) \times 2 = 306$ points for non-FCAT components.
- Total weighted points = 1174 on a 1600-point scale.
- The school earns an “A” on the 1600-point scale if it meets all additional requirements for “A” schools in the elementary/middle and high school grading criteria.

Grading Scale after Applied Weighting of FCAT and Non-FCAT Components:

A = 1,050 points or more
 B = 990 to 1,049 points
 C = 870 to 989 points
 D = 790 to 869 points
 F = less than 790 points

10. Review of School Grades

State Board Rule 6A-1.09981(9) requires each district to have an accountability contact person to verify that each school is appropriately classified, that students have been correctly identified and properly included for school grading, that matching FCAT records and previous year FCAT records can be identified, and that each school grade was calculated as specified in the Rule. The Rule also permits a 30-day period of time for districts to review the grade assigned. Therefore, the Florida Department of Education has instituted an appeals process described in this section. Requests for grade changes related to the specific requirements of the statute or rule cannot be granted and should not be submitted.

If a school district identifies a data miscalculation or circumstances that might result in the assignment of a different grade, the district can participate in the school grade review process. Appropriate documentation of all elements and data to be reviewed by the Department must be submitted within thirty (30) days from the date of the school grades release. These requests must be submitted by the school district accountability contact rather than by individual schools. Appeals that do not comply with the detailed instructions from the Department will not be reviewed.

Following the thirty (30) day appeal window, the Department of Education will review the appeals documentation and present recommendations to an appeals committee for their review and recommendations. Final recommendations will be made to the Commissioner of Education, and the Commissioner’s determination of a school’s grade shall be final. The Department will notify each district Superintendent and accountability contact of the final school grade after the final decision of the Commissioner. Local district officials, as designated by the Superintendent, are responsible for notifying individual schools.

Grading Florida's Public Schools, 2009-10

FCAT Performance and Learning Gains: 100% of Grade for Elementary and Middle Schools, 50% of Grade for High Schools

Schools are awarded one point for each percent of students who score high on the FCAT and/or make annual learning gains (800 possible points).

Scoring High on the FCAT
(400 possible points)

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is the primary measure of students' achievement of the Sunshine State Standards. Student scores are classified into five achievement levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

- ⇒ Schools earn one point for each percent of students who score at FCAT achievement levels 3, 4, or 5 in reading; one point for each percent of students who score at FCAT levels 3, 4, or 5 in mathematics; and one point for each percent of students who score at FCAT levels 3, 4, or 5 in science. (100 possible points each for reading, mathematics, and science)
- ⇒ Students earn a score of 1 to 6 on the FCAT writing exam. The earns grading points for writing based on the average of (a) the percent of students scoring 3 or higher and (b) the percent of students scoring 4 or higher. (100 possible points for writing)

Making Annual Learning Gains
(400 possible points)

Schools earn one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in reading (100 possible points) and one point for each percent who make learning gains in math (100 possible points). Students can demonstrate annual learning gains in one of the following ways:

1. Score at a higher achievement level than in the previous year (applies to FCAT results and Florida Alternate Assessment [FAA] results for students with disabilities).
2. Maintain a proficient achievement level (applies to the FCAT and FAA).
3. For students taking the FCAT who remain at level 1 or 2, demonstrate more than one year's growth through increased developmental scale scores (does not include retakes).

⇒ Special attention is given to the reading and mathematics gains of students in the lowest 25% at FCAT levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school. Schools earn one point for each percent of the lowest performing students who make learning gains from the previous year in reading and mathematics (100 possible points for each subject). At least 50% of these students must make gains in reading and mathematics for the school to make adequate progress. Schools that fall short of 50% can still meet this requirement if they show annual improvement in this percentage.

In addition, high schools are eligible for 10 bonus points if at least 50% of the students retaking the grade 10 FCAT in reading and math attain scores required for graduation in each subject area.

School Grading Scale for Elementary and Middle Schools

Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 525 points or more • Meet adequate progress of lowest 25% in reading and mathematics. • Test at least 95% of eligible students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 495 to 524 points • Meet adequate progress of lowest 25% in reading and mathematics within two years. • Test at least 90% of eligible students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 435 to 494 points • Meet adequate progress of lowest 25% in reading and mathematics within two years. • Test at least 90% of eligible students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 395 to 434 points • Test at least 90% of eligible students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 395 points

Note: Schools that fail to test at least 90% of eligible students are initially assigned a grade of "I" (for incomplete data). Such schools are further investigated to determine whether sufficient data are available to accurately assign a regular school grade. The Commissioner of Education also has the authority to assign a lowered grade to a school that fails to test at least 90% of eligible students.

Which students are included in school grade calculations? As in previous years, the components for scoring high on the FCAT include only standard curriculum students, speech impaired students, gifted students, hospital homebound students, and English language learners (ELLs) with more than two years in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program who are enrolled in the same school in both October and February. All students, including students with disabilities and ELL students, are included in the learning gains components of the school grade calculation.

What happens if the lowest performing students in the school (the low 25%) do not make "adequate progress" in reading and mathematics? For schools that would otherwise be graded A, B, or C but do not meet the adequate progress requirement, the final (assigned) grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

Grading Florida's High Schools in 2009-10

50% of Grade Based on FCAT & Learning Gains, 50% Based on New Non-FCAT Components

As established in s. 1008.34, F.S., for school grading in 2009-10 and thereafter, Florida's high schools are graded using the FCAT-based components described in the grading criteria for elementary and middle schools, plus several non-FCAT based components that account for 50 percent of the high school grade. The non-FCAT-based grading components include the following measures (note that measures counting for more than 100 points are double-weighted):

- Graduation rate: the percentage of students graduating with a standard or special diploma within four years of initial enrollment in grade 9, adjusting for transfers. Double-weighted. (200 points)
- Graduation rate for at-risk students. At-risk students are those who scored at Level 2 or below on both the FCAT reading and FCAT math tests in grade 8. (100 points)
- Accelerated coursework participation for students in grades 9 – 12, based on exams taken for AP, IB, AICE, and industry certification, as well as dual enrollment course enrollments. This component measures the combined weighted student participation count divided by the membership count of students in grades 11-12. Students in grades 9 and 10 may only be included as participants in the numerator if they have successful completions (passing test scores, or, for dual enrollment, passing course grades of "C" or higher). Double weighted. (200 points)
- Accelerated coursework performance: the measure of successful completions in accelerated coursework divided by the weighted count of accelerated coursework participants. (100 points)
- Postsecondary readiness: calculated separately for reading and math, the count of on-time graduates scoring "ready" or higher on ACT, SAT, or Common Placement Test (CPT) examinations divided by the total count of on-time graduates scoring at FCAT level 3 or higher. Cut scores for readiness are provided online at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/perfCPT/default.asp>. (100 points for math; 100 points for reading)
- Annual growth or decline in the measures mentioned above. Schools that demonstrate an annual increase their component points receive additional points based on the annual increase in points, up to 20 points per component (up to 40 points for double-weighted components). Schools lose five points for this component if performance declines by 10 or more percentage points annually (with up to ten points subtracted for double-weighted components).
- In addition to meeting adequate progress requirements (learning gains) for low-performing students and requirements to test at least 90% of students (95% to qualify for an "A"), high schools that would otherwise earn an "A" on points must meet a statewide target of 75% for the graduation rate of at-risk students or show sufficient annual improvement in that rate to qualify for a grade of "A." Sufficient annual improvement = 1% or more for schools that have an at-risk graduation rate of at least 65%. Schools that have an at-risk graduation rate of below 65% must show at least a 5% annual increase in the rate to meet this requirement.

Grade Scale for High Schools and Combination Schools (Based on a 1600-Point Scale)

A = At least 1,050 points, B = 990 to 1,049 points, C = 870 to 989 points, D = 790 to 869 points, F = Fewer than 790 points.

Grading Combination Schools (Weighting Factors)

For school grading purposes, combination schools serving the high school grades will be classified as either K-12 schools or 6-12 schools based on the closest match for the range of grades served. These schools will have points calculated using the same components and grading scale applicable to high schools, except the following weighting factor will be applied to the subtotals for points on the FCAT-based components and non-FCAT-based components.

K-12 schools: Total points for FCAT components = 80% of grade. Total points for Non-FCAT components = 20% of grade.

6-12 schools: Total points for FCAT components = 70% of grade. Total points for Non-FCAT components = 30% of grade.

Appendix B

Definition of One Year's Growth

Florida's school grading system has the following major components based on test scores:

- Yearly achievement of high standards in reading, mathematics, writing, and science;
- Annual learning gains in reading and mathematics; and
- Annual learning gains in reading and mathematics for the lowest 25% of students in each school.

The definition of learning gains is spelled out in State Board of Education *Rule 6A-1.09981*. Schools can be credited for the annual learning gains of their students when students:

1. improve their FCAT (or FAA) achievement level from one year to the next;
2. maintain a proficient achievement level from one year to the next; or
3. demonstrate more than one year's growth within FCAT Levels 1 or 2, as measured by an increase in their FCAT developmental scores from one year to the next.

The first two gain definitions are relatively straightforward because student achievement level information is readily available from the FCAT student report and district test data files provided by the Department. The third definition is more complex since it is based on the amount of gain that represents one year's growth. Thus, a definition of "one year's growth" in terms of FCAT developmental scale score gain is required.

The definition of "one year's growth" applied to the third gain option for calculating school grades is based on the numerical cut-scores for the FCAT achievement levels approved by the State Board of Education. In State Board Rule 6A-1.09422, there are four cut-off scores that separate FCAT scale scores into five achievement levels, with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 being the highest. At each of the four cut-off scores between achievement levels, FCAT scale scores (100-500) were converted to FCAT developmental scores that range from 0-3000. This allows all of the cut scores to be placed on the same scale. The increase in FCAT developmental scores necessary to maintain the same relative standing within achievement levels from one grade to the next was calculated for each of the four cut points between the five achievement levels.

The following table provides an example of how the three preceding steps were applied to the reading cut points from grade three to grade four:

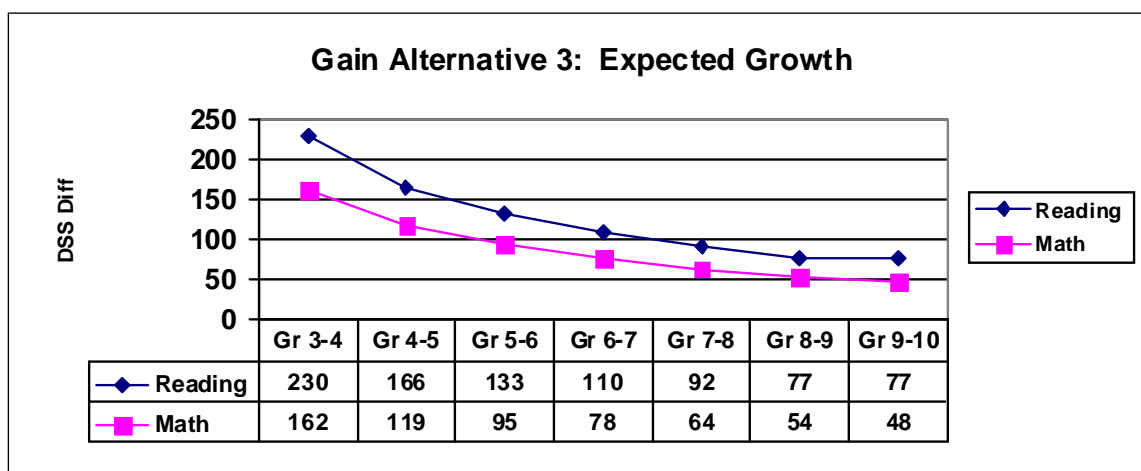
Grade 4 Example

Grade	Measure	Level 1-2 Cut	Level 2-3 Cut	Level 3-4 Cut	Level 4-5 Cut
3	FCAT scale score	258	283	331	393
3	Developmental score	1045	1197	1488	1865
4	FCAT scale score	274	298	338	385
4	Developmental Score	1314	1455	1689	1964
3 and 4	Difference in Developmental Scores at the cut points	269	258	201	99

Midpoint of differences at the cut points	230
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The last line of the table shows the expected gain from one achievement level to the next is different, depending on the initial achievement level of the student. To produce a single value that represents the entire student population, the median value of the differences is calculated. The median of the four developmental scale score differences necessary for students to maintain the same relative standing within an FCAT achievement level in the example is 230. The median was considered more appropriate than the average or maximum of the four values because the median is less sensitive to very high or low values.

After median gain expectations were determined for each grade progression (3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7, 7-8, 8-9, and 9-10), a best-fit curve (logarithmic trend line) was calculated, beginning at grades 3-4 and ending at grades 9-10. Other curve fits were considered, including regression lines and polynomial transformations; however, the logarithmic trend line was adopted because it best described the theoretical expectation of greater gains in the early grade levels and lesser at the upper grade levels due to student maturation. The expected gain values for reading and mathematics were obtained separately. The following chart provides the values used to define one year's growth.



It is important to note the following points:

- For purposes of school accountability calculations under the third gain alternative, *6A-1.09981* requires that students who remain within FCAT Achievement Levels 1 or 2 must demonstrate more than one year's growth on the FCAT developmental scale, as determined by the Department. Therefore, for students to be credited with learning gains under the third alternative, they must achieve at least one developmental scale score point more than the values listed above.
- The definition of "one year's growth" in terms of the FCAT developmental score applies to all students who are promoted from one grade level to the next. It cannot be ascertained for retained students who take the same level of the test in two consecutive years.

Other methods for defining one year's growth were also considered prior to the adoption of the procedures described herein. These alternative procedures are described briefly for historical purposes, but each of these options was determined to be less desirable than the one adopted. (1) Expected growth amounts could have been calculated using observed differences in students' developmental scale scores for two consecutive years; however, this approach would lock in expected growth values based on the first year of available gain data and might not reflect actual growth patterns in future years. (2) Expected growth could have been defined at some point in the future after tracking actual cohorts of students over multiple years and determining their average yearly gains; however, this would have delayed the use of learning gains in the accountability system for several more years. (3) The definition of "one year's growth" could have been done separately for students within each of the five achievement levels; however, this method would result in different standards for different students. (4) The definition of "one year's growth" could have been based on the values obtained from grades 3-10 without statistical smoothing; however, this would lead to widely fluctuating expectations from grade to grade.

In summary, the definition of "one year's growth" applied to the calculating of learning gains was based firmly on the numerical cut-scores approved by the State Board of Education for the applicable assessment achievement levels. The numeric values of the learning gain expectations represent the average progress expected of students from grade to grade.

Appendix C

Data Sources: Additional Information

Data sources for accelerated curriculum participation components are indicated as follows.

- AP data: supplied by the [College Board](#), compiled by the Florida Department of Education's [PK-20 Education Data Warehouse](#) (EDW) URL: <http://edwapp.doe.state.fl.us/doe/>. See also www.collegeboard.com.
- IB data: supplied by [IBO](#), compiled by EDW. See also www.ibo.org.
- AICE data: reported by Florida school districts on the [Student Assessment](#) record format, Survey 5.
- Dual enrollment data: reported by Florida school districts on the [Student Course Transcript Information](#) record format, Survey 5.
- Industry certification data: reported by Florida school districts on the [Vocational Student Course Schedule](#) record format, Survey 5. To be included in high school grading, industry certification areas must appear on the state-approved Industry Certification Funding List. Links to funding lists by school year are available online at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/fcpea/default.asp>. Additional information on relative weighting of industry certification areas is available through the statewide articulation agreements at
- Links to the record format descriptions for reporting AICE, dual enrollment, and industry certification data are accessible online at the following URL: http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/student_0910.asp#REPORTING%20FORMATS.

Data sources for postsecondary readiness components are indicated as follows.

- SAT data: supplied by the [College Board](#), compiled by EDW. See also www.collegeboard.com.
- ACT data: supplied by [ACT Education](#), compiled by EDW. See also www.act.org. For the ACT, readiness will be evaluated for the "Reading" and "Math" subject areas ("English" is not applicable).
- CPT data: Results reported to the DOE by Florida public community colleges and universities; data compiled by EDW. Readiness cutoff scores by subject are posted online at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/perfCPT/default.asp>.
- In addition, for postsecondary readiness, the Department will be using high school transcript data to supplement matches with the vendor data (e.g., College Board, ACT). The data on the transcript is reported to determine Bright Futures eligibility.

Additional Resources for Information about Florida’s School Grades

School Accountability Reports Web Site

Florida’s School Accountability Reports Web site allows users to request the latest information on school grades, AYP results, Return on Investment (ROI) information, and School Report Card results. See <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/default.asp>.

Florida School Grades Home Page

The home page for Florida’s School Grades includes downloadable files for school grades and AYP, as well as press materials and links to additional resources. See <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/>.

Guide to Alternative School Improvement Rating Calculations

Detailed steps used in calculating the school improvement ratings for alternative schools are described in a separate guide. See the link at the bottom of the Web page at <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/>.

Links to Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code Rules

Florida Statutes addressing the school grading system (s. 1008.34) and the school improvement rating system for alternative schools (s. 1008.341) are accessible at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm>.

For Florida Administrative Code Rules that implement requirements of these statutes (see 6A-1.09981 and 6A-1.099822), see <https://www.flrules.org/default.asp>.

Florida Department of Education



Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner