

# **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.

The parent of siblings who are assigned to the same grade level and school may request that the school place the siblings in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. This request must be made no later than five (5) days before the first day of school each school year or five (5) days after the first day of attendance of the students if the students are enrolled in school after the school year commences. The school is not required to meet the request if there is factual evidence indicating a specific placement is better for the student than that requested by the parent. (F.S. 1003.06)

- 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 Next Generation 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 1 or Level 2 on FCAT 2.0 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 School-wide 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 2.0 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 2.0 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 1 on FCAT 2.0 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 2.0 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 Next Generation 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.. 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 2.0.
    - e. Students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT 2.0 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, 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 Next Generation 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 2.0, 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 2.0. This includes multiple choice items, and passages that are approximately 50% literary text and 50% information text, and that are between 100-900 words with an average of 500 words. Such evidence could include chapter, unit, or benchmark tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. For each benchmark, there must be three examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or better; and
  - 5) 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 2.0 Reading, as determined by the State Board of Education.
  - e. The progress monitoring plan, PMP, 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 1 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 the specific intensive reading interventions and supports implemented at the school level. The Commissioner of Education shall annually 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:

## Grading Scale

Grades K-2		Grades 3-5			
		Percent Achievement	Grade Points	Progress Level	
E	= Excellent	A	= 90-100	4.0	Outstanding
S+					
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

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.

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 or guardians will be notified annually regarding the student's progress toward achieving state and district expectations for proficiency in reading, mathematics, 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.

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

## D. Instructional Program Requirements

Kindergarten and first grade teachers will teach Common Core State Standards. Third through fifth grade teachers will teach the Next Generation 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 2.0 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 2.0. 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 2.0.
  - 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 2.0 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 2.0 which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the FCAT 2.0, 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.

- Alachua County offers a full-time virtual school option for eligible students in grades K-5. To be eligible for the ACPS Virtual School, a student must meet one of the following criteria:
- The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school in Florida and was enrolled and reported by a public school district for funding during the preceding October and February for purposes of the FTE survey.
- The student is a dependent child of a member of the US Armed Forces who was transferred within the last 12 months to this state from another state or from a foreign country pursuant to the parent's permanent change of station orders.
- The student was enrolled during the prior school year in a K-8 virtual school program funded by the State of Florida (Florida Virtual Academy or Connections Academy)

Enrollment information is available on the ACPS website ([www.sbac.edu](http://www.sbac.edu)) If necessary students on free or reduced lunch may be provided a computer, printer and internet access by the virtual school vendor.

## **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 2.0 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 as 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 2.0), 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 Next Generation 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 Next Generation 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 2.0 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**

Individual educational plan (IEP) teams are responsible for determining whether students with disabilities will be assessed with the general statewide assessment or with the Florida Alternate Assessment based on criteria outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943(4), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The IEP team should consider the student’s present level of educational performance in reference to the Florida State Sunshine Standards. The IEP team should also be knowledgeable of guidelines and the use of appropriate testing accommodations.

In order to facilitate informed and equitable decision making, IEP teams should answer each of the following questions when determining the appropriate assessment.

1. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?
2. Is the student unable to master the grade-level, general state content standards even with appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, assistive technology, or accessible instructional materials?
3. Is the student participating in a curriculum based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Access Points for all academic areas?
4. Does the student require extensive direct instruction in academics based on access points in order to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills across settings?

If the IEP team determines that **all four of the questions** accurately characterize a student’s current educational situation, then the **Florida Alternate Assessment** should be used to provide meaningful evaluation of the student’s current academic achievement. If “yes” is not checked in all four areas, then the student should participate in the general statewide assessment with accommodations, as appropriate.

If the decision of the IEP team is to assess the student through the Florida Alternate Assessment, the parents of the student must be informed that their child’s achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards, and that the decision must be documented on the IEP. The IEP must include a statement of why the alternate assessment is appropriate and why the student cannot participate in the general 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.