

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

You may have heard or read about changes in testing and school grades and are wondering what this means for your child and your family.

To help better prepare students for college and careers, the Florida Department of Education has transitioned to new standards that set expectations for what students need to learn by each grade level and in various subjects. New assessments measure a student's progress toward meeting the standards.

Raising educational standards and measuring a student's progress toward meeting them is the right thing to do because it works. Every time we have raised the bar in Florida, after dropping at first, scores have moved higher. In December, after input from educators, parents, and the community, the State Board of Education set higher achievement levels for reading and mathematics.

Your student's spring 2012 FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics score report is enclosed. Since this is the first time in 10 years that Florida has had new reading and math achievement levels, you may see a lower score for your student than in the past. That does not mean your child knows less, or that his or her teacher is not doing a good job. Any time standards are raised, some students will struggle to meet the new expectations.

We encourage you to use the scores that your child receives on these assessments as a point of conversation with your child's teacher to determine the next steps in helping them achieve their academic goals.

You can find more information about your student's report on the Department's website in *Understanding FCAT 2.0 Reports Spring 2012* (<http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcat2/pdf/s12uf2r.pdf>). There is also a new website for parents where you can sign up to receive information about your child's education (<http://www.floridapathtosuccess.org>).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Gerard Robinson.

Gerard Robinson

Please note: If we were able to match your student's score on a subject to the score received last year, you will find it on the new FCAT 2.0 reporting scale so you can compare it to this year's score. Because achievement standards are higher, your student's converted score from 2011 may appear lower on the new scale than it actually was. For example, a student who scored in Achievement Level 3 in 2011 might appear on the new scale as having a score in Achievement Level 2. (This does not mean that your student's 2011 scores have been changed; the converted scores are only for comparison so that you can see how this year's score compares to last year's.)