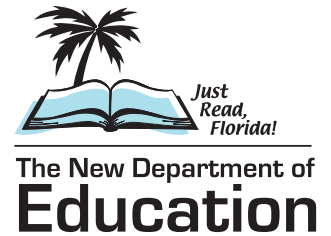


The FCAT Waiver for Students with Disabilities— Fact Sheet for School Districts



In the Background: Florida School Code requires that, in order to graduate with a standard diploma, students must earn a minimum of 24 academic credits in grades 9–12 (plus meet any additional district requirements), have a cumulative academic grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, and pass the Grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Students with disabilities who are having difficulty passing the FCAT should receive intensive remediation to meet the FCAT requirement. Some examples of intensive remediation include before- and after-school tutoring and Saturday sessions, summer camps, and individual and small-group tutoring, to name a few.

This fact sheet focuses on an additional graduation option passed by the 2003 Florida Legislature for students with disabilities who have an individual educational plan (IEP) and who have not passed the FCAT but meet all other graduation requirements.

In the Foreground—The Enhanced New Needed Opportunity for Better Life and Education for Students with Disabilities (ENNOBLES) Act (HB 1739) greatly expands access to postsecondary education and meaningful career opportunities for students with disabilities while maintaining current high standards and expectations. Each district school board is required to provide instruction to prepare students with disabilities to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation.

This Is New

A new provision gives the individual educational plan (IEP) team the authority to waive passage of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as a requirement for graduation with a standard diploma in the traditional 24-minimum-credit graduation program. This new waiver option became available for 2003 graduates.

In order for the FCAT graduation requirement to be waived, the IEP team must meet and compile the form titled *Waiver of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Graduation Requirement for Students with Disabilities* during the student's senior year to determine whether or not the FCAT can accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration allowable accommodations.

If there is sufficient evidence that the student has mastered the applicable Sunshine State Standards and the IEP team determines that the FCAT is **not** an accurate measure of the student's ability, even with allowable accommodations, the FCAT requirement may be waived and the student may graduate with a standard diploma.

To be considered for the waiver, a student must meet the following requirements:

- be identified as a student with a disability, as defined in section 1007.02(2), Florida Statutes
- have an individual educational plan (IEP)
- be a senior or a student with disabilities who remains enrolled seeking a standard diploma for whom the FCAT is the graduation test
- have demonstrated mastery of the grade 10 Sunshine State Standards
- have taken the Grade 10 FCAT with appropriate, allowable accommodations at least twice (for example, once in grade 10 and once in grade 11) or, if not continuously enrolled in public school in Florida, at least once during each year of enrollment in grades 10, 11, or 12
- have participated in intensive remediation for the FCAT Reading and/or FCAT Mathematics, if passing scores were not earned, and have participated in the March FCAT administration during the senior year
- be progressing toward meeting the state's 24-credit/course and 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements and any other district requirements for graduation with a standard diploma.

Should the IEP team determine that the FCAT **does** accurately measure the student's ability and the test should not be waived, then the student may

- remain in school through until the age of 22 or until the student earns a standard diploma, whichever occurs first
- exit with a certificate of completion
- graduate with a special diploma.

Note: The FCAT waiver for students with disabilities is only available for the traditional 24-credit graduation program. It is not available for either of the three-year, 18-credit graduation programs.

For more information on this or other new requirements for the school district student progression plan, contact the following Florida Department of Education personnel:

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