

GOVERNOR SCOTT: WE MUST REDUCE TESTING IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS

*DOE testing investigation recommends Florida students take fewer
assessments*

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, upon completing a testing investigation requested by Governor Rick Scott, Education Commissioner Pam Stewart recommended a reduction in the number of tests Florida students in public schools are required to take.

Governor Rick Scott said, “A quality education prepares students to succeed in college or a career so they can pursue their dreams. It’s important to measure students’ progress and achievements, but we must not lose sight of our goal to provide every student with the very best education. As I have traveled the state, I have heard from parents and teachers that there are too many tests and I agree. I would like to thank Commissioner Stewart for leading an investigation of standardized testing and helping to determine which tests can be eliminated. I look forward to working with the Legislature to implement the Commissioner’s recommendations and reduce the number of tests this year.”

The investigation conducted by the Commissioner included: a comprehensive inspection of district-level assessments to better understand the number, frequency, and purpose; and an evaluation to determine whether the local assessment was already assessed by a statewide, standardized assessment.

Education Commissioner Pam Stewart said, “We worked closely with each school district to understand how many standardized tests are currently being administered. I appreciate that our state’s school districts took the time to provide the department with detailed information regarding the tests their students are taking. There is, without a doubt, an excess of testing in Florida schools, and I look forward to working with Governor Scott and the Legislature to ensure we strike the appropriate balance between accountability and instruction.”

Senate President Andy Gardiner said, "My Senate colleagues and I share Governor Scott's belief that we can effectively measure student learning through fewer and better tests. As we head towards the start of session, we look forward to a continued dialogue with Governor Scott as well as the parents, teachers and students across Florida who have played a role in this important discussion."

Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli said, "Governor Scott has shown tremendous leadership on the issue of testing and accountability. Our shared goal is to ensure that our students receive a high quality education to prepare them for their futures. These recommendations will be carefully reviewed and considered by the House. I know our members have already embraced many of these ideas for the upcoming Session."

Florida has a strong, established statewide, standardized testing program that measures student progress and provides useful information to educators and parents. During the course of the Commissioner's investigation, the department identified several opportunities where the state requirements should be reduced. In order for Florida to move forward with fewer, better assessments, the Commissioner recommends enacting the following four measures:

- 1. Issue an Executive Order to suspend the grade 11 Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) for English language arts until legislation is enacted to eliminate the mandate.**
 - Governor Scott will work with President Gardiner and Speaker Crisafulli and quickly issue an executive order, which will later be codified into law during Session. Since students meet their English language arts graduation requirement upon completion of the 10th grade assessment, the grade 11 FSA for English language arts is no longer needed.
 - While the Governor and Legislature are working together on a comprehensive plan to address over testing, the Executive Order is necessary to provide immediate relief to eleventh graders.
- 2. Enact legislation to eliminate the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) as a state mandate for grade 11 and make it optional.**
 - The Department believes that the PERT current practice should continue as an option for students in high school and local colleges.
 - Rigorous standards and increased graduation requirements are in place to ensure college and career readiness upon high school graduation.

3. Enact legislation to eliminate the current progress monitoring requirements.

- The Department believes current state requirements are overly prescriptive and progress monitoring decisions should be left at the district level.

4. Enact legislation to eliminate local final exams in courses/subjects where there is also a statewide standardized end-of-course exam.

- Current statewide end-of-course assessments are Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, U.S. History, Biology 1, and Civics.

Further, the Commissioner urges districts to consider the following recommendations:

- 1. Give no more than one school-wide or district-wide interim assessment per course/subject per grading period.** Interim assessments are administered at certain times during the school year, and can be used to predict a student's ability to succeed on a summative assessment or to diagnose student learning gaps.
- 2. Don't test students for the sole purpose of evaluating teachers.** It is important to recognize the contribution of teachers in students' learning. Students already take tests to determine whether they know their subject matter and districts should use information from these tests to help gauge teacher performance.
- 3. Provide teachers, parents, and students with information about how students are doing on each assessment used to monitor student progress.** Teachers, parents and students deserve to know how well students are grasping the content they are taught. For parents, this information can be a sign that their child could benefit from additional assistance, while teachers may use the information to adapt their lessons to meet students' needs.

To read the complete investigation report, please click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) for information on tests given by school district.

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