



MAKING THE SHIFT TO THE FLORIDA STANDARDS

A TOOLKIT FOR CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS

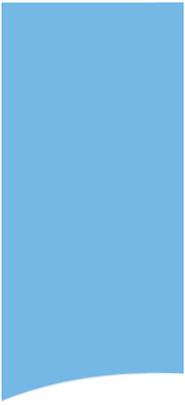


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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Why this toolkit exists.

Thank you for lending your voice to help students, parents and community members throughout Duval County and the state of Florida better understand the transition to the Florida Standards. This toolkit is intended for any person or organization working to improve the lives of children throughout our city and support better public schools for all students.

Making the shift to college and career readiness

Locally, statewide and nationally, our schools are in a time of transition. Our world is changing and so is the way we are preparing students for the future. That means that Florida schools are using new guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, guidelines that are easily translated from one state to another. These guidelines are known as the Florida Standards. They are consistent expectations that foster the critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills that students need to be successful in the future. While the Florida Standards are not the same as the Common Core State Standards, they are similar. States that are already using these standards are seeing great results; in Kentucky, one of the first states to adopt the standards, the percentage of high school graduates ready for college and career has increased from 34 percent to 62 percent in four years.

This shift, which fully took place in Florida during the 2014-15



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school year, includes a new test, and, like any change, a few bumps in the road. In the fall and winter of 2015, as the new baseline scores and school grades are released, parents and community members will continue to have a lot of questions about what's happening.

Our students and teachers need time to adjust — and they need strong support from the community. Our hope is that this toolkit will help partners work together to ensure that everyone can help citizens support strong public schools.

From chaos to coherence: Where do you come in?

Local non-governmental organizations are among our country's most trusted institutions. We are closest to our communities and best know their needs. But we need some common language from a chorus of voices to talk about this complex issue in a way that makes it easier to understand and encourages productive conversation — even where there is disagreement — and active support for public education.



HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Some of the ways you can use this information.

This document is intended to help you explain the shifts that our schools are experiencing and give you easy-to-use information that you can distribute to the people you know and serve, from parents, students and teachers to clients, friends, neighbors and coworkers. It includes an overview of the shifts that will help you as you talk with people in your network, as well as adaptable and re-usable electronic and print collateral that you can share.

For nonprofit partners, we hope that you will use this information and conclude with a call to action for support for your work — you all have very important ways that community members can get involved to support children and schools. Best of all: The messages in this toolkit have been research-tested and proven successful in other communities across the country.

Materials are free to use and change

All of the content here is provided in the public domain, neutrally branded and usable as-is, but please feel free to modify and adapt all of these materials however works best for you and your organization! Your feedback, questions or suggestions are always welcome by contacting Deirdre Conner at Deirdre@jaxpef.org or (904) 394-0950. If you have additional materials, graphics or other collateral that you produce, please share it with us so we can share it with the rest of the coalition!



All content provided here is in the public domain. You are free to modify and adapt all of these materials however works best for you and your organization. We hope it will be a chance to issue a call to action for your cause and the people you serve.

Make it your own!

The idea behind the talking points and metaphors is that they are generative — in other words, the baking metaphor might mean lemon cake to one person, and sweet potato pie to another. YOU know what's best for your audiences, whether they are friends you're talking to on the soccer field, or parents and teachers you're presenting to at a meeting. The goal of this toolkit is to give you the basic ingredients and let you whip up the right recipe for your constituents.

What this toolkit is NOT for

The information in this toolkit is not designed to supplant information provided by school districts or the Florida Department of Education. It is not intended to be a defense of state or local accountability policies or practices. It is primarily aimed at putting out accurate information about the current state of standards, testing and accountability, and trying to



make a complex issue a bit more understandable for everyone. In addition, there may be questions that citizens and parents have that cannot be answered here, or questions that simply do not have an answer. It's OK to say "I don't know." If you are regularly getting questions about the same thing, please let us know so we can try to research it and add it to the Frequently Asked Questions part of this document.

Updates and new information

This toolkit and available resources will be accessible online and updated as new information becomes available. Please check jaxpef.org/toolkit to download the entire toolkit and additional resources.

If you have participated in a training or webinar, you will automatically receive biweekly updates via email and invitations to participate in regular partner conference calls that will help keep everyone informed about the latest developments and opportunities to get involved. If you are not receiving these, please email Deirdre@jaxpef.org to be added to the list.

Social media

This effort is designed to create grassroots awareness and support for the transition to new standards. While the messages are applicable to traditional print and broadcast media, sharing them through social media accounts is vital — both from organizations and individual people. Encourage your friends, neighbors, clients, members and supporters to adopt these messages and materials and share them as well!

A note for state-wide partners

This toolkit began as a Jacksonville-focused effort, but we learned that partner organizations around the state were interested as well. Almost all of this messaging is adaptable to any community. We have also created a special version of the one-page flier that is less Duval-centric for statewide partners. Graduation rate data for all counties in Florida can be found at www.jaxpef.org/learn.

OVERVIEW AND TALKING POINTS

The basic messages that form the foundation of these materials are found here. Infuse them into all types of communications vehicles.

One-Paragraph Overview

Our world is changing, and so is the way that we're preparing students for the future. Ensuring that every child is ready to be succeed will make our city strong, and we're already seeing great progress. Five years ago, it used to be that nearly half of students in Duval County didn't graduate on time — now that figure is 74 percent! And more students than ever are graduating prepared for college, career and the 21st Century workforce. Today, students and teachers are adjusting to another big shift: The new Florida Standards, which are guidelines for what students should be able to do at every grade level, that were first implemented in schools in 2014-2015. That also means a new way of assessing student performance. The Florida Standards Assessment was given in 2015, and that means new scores and new school grades will be released in January. All of these changes are a little like renovating a house — there's dust and noise that we have to live through, but the end result will be worth it when our students are better prepared for college and the workforce.

The key message is this: We all must give teachers and students the time they need to adjust to the new standards and the support to keep increasing student achievement.

Talking Points - Primary Messages

- Our world is changing, we don't know what tomorrow's jobs will look like. **But we do know that our future will depend on having a strong workforce, and we want our children to be prepared for it. That's why we are shifting what we want our students to know and be able to do. In our state, these guidelines are known as the Florida Standards.**
 - - Because of these shifts, our statewide test must change as well. That's why we have the new Florida Standards Assessment, which students took for the first time in spring 2015. It replaced the old FCAT 2.0.
- Starting this fall, you'll hear people talking about new baseline test scores that reflect those changes. Those scores won't be released until January or February 2016.
 - As you know, schools are graded on an A-F system, but last year's school grades were delayed because of this new test. When they come out in January, the grades will be based on the new tests.
 - The new scores and grades aren't comparable to earlier years. The school grades and FSA scores that come out in January will establish a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time.
 - Just like the standards they measure, these tests are more challenging, and the scores and grades will reflect that.



- When talking to your friends and neighbors, be an advocate for your local school(s) by explaining that students and teachers at your local school need time to adjust to the new standards — and they need your support.
 - - (For direct service providers, this is the perfect place to issue a call to action for volunteers to serve students through your organization.)
- Ultimately, these new scores and new school grades will provide important information to help the community better understand where students are excelling and where they are struggling, so we can improve instruction.
- That way, we can make sure that every child in our school system is prepared for success in the future, ready to enter college or the workforce.

Talking Points - Messages about the Florida Standards

- Florida adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, but after public concerns, revised them and adopted the new Florida Standards in 2014.
- **Standards are guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level.** They were designed by educators focus on building the critical thinking and problem solving skills that can be applied in any context. And they help military families make an easier transition from one state to another.
- **Similar efforts in other states are showing great results.**
 - Kentucky was the first state to adopt standards that are similar, and the percentage of high school graduates ready for college and career has increased for 34 percent to 62 percent in four years.
- So what's different now? Think for a moment about baking. You know how to follow a recipe for red velvet cake and get a great result. But being able to follow a recipe doesn't mean you understand why you put a certain proportion of baking soda, flour, and eggs. Previous standards and assessments only required student to memorize a "recipe." The new Florida Standards help students understand not just what to do, but why and how.
- **The Florida Standards aim to teach a deeper, more applicable set of skills. That way, students will learn how to bake a cake, not just how to memorize recipe after recipe.**
- When we give students the kinds of skills that can be applied in many different arenas, they will grow into adults who can successfully navigate this world. And when all of our children are successful, we know that Jacksonville will become the vibrant city we know it can be.

Talking Points - Messages to Understand Florida's Accountability System

- Let me give you an analogy. Think for a minute about the dashboard of your car. There are a lot of gauges and dials that tell you what's happening in the car, from how fast you are going to how hot the engine is running.
 - Measuring how well students and school are doing is a lot like that — you need a handful of different gauges, because no one measure can tell you everything.
 - The Florida Standards Assessment, the statewide standardized test that replaced the FCAT 2.0 as a broad measure of how students, schools and teachers are performing, is one of these gauges. It's an important test — just like those that doctors, nurses and military members take to be admitted to their professions, it tells us a lot about how much a student is learning.
- **Think for a moment about the speedometer — imagine that you're used to using kilometers per hour, and the gauge suddenly switches to miles. The number would be a lot lower —but you'd be going just as fast.** Maybe you'd even feel like increasing your speed a bit.
- That's where we are right now with the new Florida Standards assessment. **When the new scores come out, even though they'll look different than what we are used to, our children are learning just as much, and maybe even more, than they did in the past.**
- Because of this transition year, our school grades will probably look different, too. They might be lower than we expect — but that doesn't mean our schools and our students are going backwards. In fact, we expect them to go farther than ever before.

Think about the dashboard of your car. Imagine you have been using kilometers per hour, and the gauge suddenly switches to miles. The number would be a lot lower, but you'd be going just as fast.

Talking Points on Progress in Public Education

- With all of these changes to the statewide standardized test, how do we know how well our students are doing?
- **There are plenty of measures that haven't changed, and they show that most students are heading in the right direction.**
- The most important is the four-year graduation rate. **Here in Duval County, the four-year graduation rate has surged, up from 56 percent in 2009 to 74 percent in 2014.**
 - - This graduation rate is measured by a uniform federal formula that only includes students that receive a high school diploma four years after entering ninth grade. It does not include certificates of completion, GEDs, or students that take longer than four years to graduate, among other restrictions.
- In the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, Duval outperformed most other large urban districts in reading and math, ranking above the national average in many instances.
- Another way of measuring student performance that is consistent over the years is the college readiness rate. In Duval County, the number of graduates who are college ready is rising — now up to 83 percent in reading and 63 percent in math.
- Duval County also has a way to measure student wellbeing. It's called the Gallup survey, and the most recent results found increasing student engagement, hope and wellbeing.



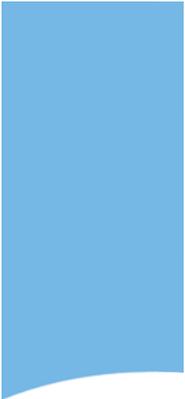
Talking Points on Coping with Change

- We want a school system that helps all students succeed.
- Right now, our school system is in the midst of a major renovation in order to get there. Just like when you renovate a house, we're keeping what works and updating other parts that need to be upgraded.
- As with any remodeling job, there is bound to be dust, noise and inconvenience — but in the end, the short-term pain is more than worth the long-term gain.
- What we need to do is give teachers and students time to adjust to these changes — they need our support more than ever.
- Educators in our district are working really hard to

Right now, our school system is in the middle of a renovation, keeping what works and updating parts that need to be upgraded. There's bound to be dust, noise and inconvenience. But the short-term pain is more than worth the long-term gain.

help students achieve their fullest potential, and are improving every day.

- By making these important changes now, we will give more and more students the chance to graduate ready to succeed.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions that many parents and citizens have, and the most up-to-date answers to them.

What are the Florida Standards and how do they benefit my child?

Our world is changing, we don't know what tomorrow's jobs will look like. But we do know that if we prepare children with critical thinking and problem solving skills, they will be better prepared to succeed in the future. That's the idea behind the Florida Standards, adopted in 2014. They are guidelines for what students should know and be able to do in math and English Language Arts at every grade level. These standards were designed by educators to ensure that when students graduate from high school, they are ready for college and the workforce.

What's different about the Florida Standards?

Think for a moment about baking. You know how to follow a recipe for red velvet cake and get a great result. But do you know why you put a certain proportion of baking soda, flour and eggs? That's what the Florida Standards aim to do — teach students not just what to do, but why and how. That means teaching a deeper, more applicable set of skills. That way, students will learn how to bake a cake, not just how to memorize recipe after recipe. When we give students the kinds of skills that can be applied in many different arenas, they will grow into adults who can successfully navigate this world.

How will these changes affect my child?

The Florida Standards are better aligned with what your child needs to know to be successful in post-secondary education and careers when they graduate from high school. So the long-term impact is that all children will be better prepared to succeed! In the short term, you may notice some changes in the type of homework and schoolwork that your child has. And because the standards are more rigorous, there's a chance that you'll notice that their score on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) might be lower than it was with the FCAT 2.0.

My child doesn't understand their homework, and neither do I. What can I do to help them?

It's true — math homework looks different than the way we adults learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide. The way teachers are teaching is changing to help students think more deeply instead of just memorizing formulas like we all used to do. If you don't understand an assignment, the best thing to do is to communicate with your

child's teacher. Ask your child's teacher if there are examples or other resources to help you help your child with homework. There are also a number of different informational sessions being offered by Duval County Public Schools' Parent Academy. See below for more information. Finally, Duval County Public Schools and the Jacksonville Public Library offer homework. For more information, visit www.duvalschools.org/domain/5447 or www.tutor.com/jacksonville (make sure to enter your library card number).

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What do I need to know about the Florida Standards Assessment?

New standards mean a new statewide assessment, and in the spring of 2015, students took the new Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) for the first time. The results of this test will not be released until likely January 2016. Some information was released in fall 2015, but these are not formal results. If your child did not do well on the 2015 test, there will be no direct impact on them (they will not be retroactively retained), and although schools will receive school grades, they will not be punished if they receive a low school grade. To keep up with the latest news, visit jaxpef.org for updates.

I'm not a parent of a student in public schools. What do I need to know?

This shift affects everyone! For our city to reach its full potential, we need to make sure that all children are prepared to reach their full potential. When we all work together to get students ready to become the strong workforce of the future, Jacksonville will become the vibrant city we know it can be. If you don't have kids in school, you can still help! Volunteer at a local school, or just make time to talk to people you know about this shift. Go to jaxpef.org/get-involved to see a list of volunteer opportunities and find other ways to move public education forward.

How can I help my child be successful in school with all of these changes?

- Stay in tune with what your child is learning. Make sure you're doing homework with them and helping them use Achieve and iReady on the computer on a regular basis at home.
- Make sure you have open and regular communication with your child's teacher. Ask how your child is doing, and whether and how well they are meeting expectations.
- Duval County Public Schools is offering a wide variety of different hour-long sessions to help parents understand the Florida Standards. The sessions are specifically targeted at different subjects and grade levels so you can pick the ones most applicable to you. To see a full schedule, which includes after-hours sessions, go to

www.duvalschools.org/parentacademy and register online.

- Visit www.fsassessments.org to find out more about the Florida Standards Assessment and see sample problems.
- CPALMS is a site designed mostly for educators, but has some examples that might be helpful as you work to help your child with homework. Go to www.cpalms.org to get started.
- Schools and the Jacksonville Public Library offer homework. For more information, visit www.duvalschools.org/Page/17284, www.duvalschools.org/domain/5447 or www.tutor.com/jacksonville (make sure to enter your library card number).
- Parents can go to this link and get downloadable resources for each grade level: www.duvalschools.org/Page/16648.

What if my child does not pass the FSA in third or tenth grade in spring 2016?

Beginning with the 2016 administration of the FSA, children who score at a Level 1 in third grade are at risk of being retained. However, there are several options available to help your child pass into fourth grade, including taking an alternative assessment, submitting a portfolio or attending summer school. Students are required to pass the tenth grade test in order to graduate from high school (typically a mid-range Level 2), so they will have two additional years to re-take the exam. Most importantly, talk with your child's teachers and guidance counselors and ask what you can do to make sure your child is successful.

What's happening with school grades?

Right now, the school grades for the 2014-15 school year will not be issued until, at the earliest, January or February 2016. The grades, which are required to be issued by the Florida Legislature, will be calculated differently for the 2014-15 school year because of the transition to the new standards. Since there is no good way to measure growth — which typically accounts for half of a school's grade — from the FCAT 2.0 to the FSA, it is likely school grades will be lower than they were in 2014-15, and significantly so in some cases. Schools will not be sanctioned for the grades they receive in 2015. School grades will come out on a normal schedule for the 2015-16 school year, include student growth measures, and should be released in June or July 2016.

What can I do to support local public schools during this time?

Right now, our public school system is in the middle of a major renovation. We're keeping what works and updating other parts that need to be upgraded. Just like when you remodel your house, it can be noisy and inconvenient at times. That's why our schools need more support than ever! We all need to speak out about the need to give teachers and students time to adjust to these changes. Consider volunteering at a public school near you, or with one of the many great nonprofit organizations that work to support students with mentoring, after school programs and other services.

PRESENTATION SLIDES

A sample PowerPoint presentation that you can use to explain the changes.

These slides and other graphic elements are available for download at jaxpef.org/toolkit.

Learning Recipe After Recipe ...



... Or Learning to Bake a Cake



An Example: Learning to Apply Skills in Different Ways

OLD STANDARDS

Donna buys 40 apples at 35 cents each. She eats 2 apples and sells the rest for 45 cents each. How much money does she make?

NEW STANDARDS

Donna buys some apples at 35 cents each. She eats 2 apples and sells the rest for 45 cents each. She makes \$4.40. How many apples did she buy?

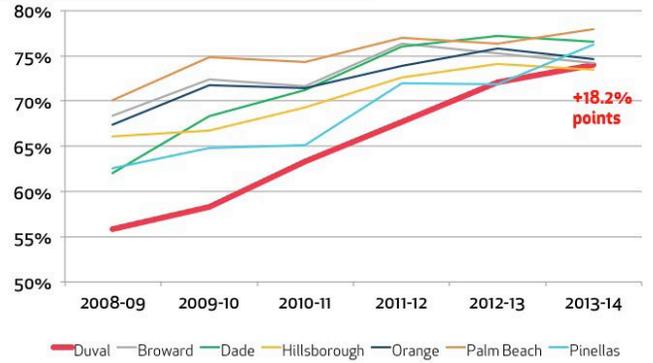
Gauging student achievement



New scores, new grades

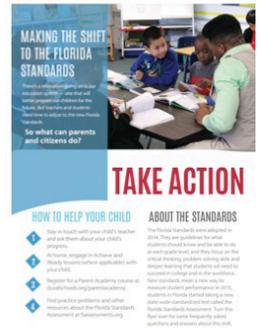


Other indicators: Graduation rate



Take Action: What Parents Can Do

- Find practice problems and other resources about the Florida Standards Assessment at fsassessments.org.
- Register for a Parent Academy course at duvalschools.org
- At home, engage in Achieve and iReady lessons (where applicable) with your child.
- Stay in touch with your child's teacher and ask them about your child's progress.



Take action: What you can do

- Advocate to give teachers and students the time they need to adjust
- Volunteer at a local school
- Share your support via social media or by hosting a presentation



Students and teachers need time to adjust to the new Florida Standards. I support my local public schools!

ONE PAGE FLIER - DUVAL

You can give out this one-page (front and back) paper to explain the changes. It is aimed at parents but could be useful to anyone who wants to know more.



MAKING THE SHIFT TO THE FLORIDA STANDARDS

There's a renovation going on in our education system — one that will better prepare our children for the future. But teachers and students need time to adjust to the new Florida Standards.

So what can parents and citizens do?

TAKE ACTION

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

- 1 Stay in touch with your child's teacher and ask them about your child's progress.
- 2 At home, engage in Achieve and iReady lessons (where applicable) with your child.
- 3 Register for a Parent Academy course at duvalschools.org/parentacademy.
- 4 Find practice problems and other resources about the Florida Standards Assessment at fssassessments.org.

ABOUT THE STANDARDS

The Florida Standards were adopted in 2014. They are guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, and they focus on the critical thinking, problem solving skills and deeper learning that students will need to succeed in college and in the workforce. New standards mean a new way to measure student performance. In 2015, students in Florida started taking a new state-wide standardized test called the Florida Standards Assessment. Turn this flyer over for some frequently asked questions and answers about this shift.

Back page

Neutral branding
Frequently Asked Questions
Resource links
Editable design file available
Duval-oriented
Check jaxpef.org/toolkit for statewide version

Front page

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FLORIDA STANDARDS

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WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Florida Department of Education

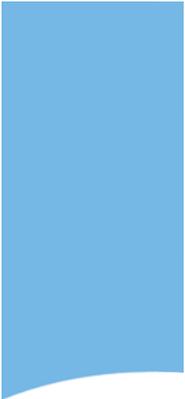
Visit www.fssassessments.org to find out more about the Florida Standards Assessment and see sample problems.

CPALMS

CPALMS is a site designed mostly for educators, but has some examples that might be helpful as you work to help your child with homework. Go to cpalms.org to get started.

Duval County Parent Academy

Duval County Public Schools is offering a wide variety of different hour-long sessions to help parents understand the Florida Standards. The sessions are specifically targeted at different subjects and grade levels so you can pick the ones most applicable to you. To see a full schedule, which includes after-hours sessions, go to duvalschools.org/parentacademy and register online.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Graphics and sample posts you can distribute via Twitter, Facebook and other outlets that you use.

Social media is a crucial tool for advancing the cause of public education and educating your constituents about these changes while shoring up support for public schools. We will send new messages throughout the fall as news happens and there is more information to share. For counties outside Duval, you can find your county's graduation rate at www.jaxpef.org/learn.

Social Media Sample Posts

All 140 characters or less

- Our school system is undergoing a major renovation. Give our students and teachers time they need to adjust to the new Florida Standards.
- Fill in the blanks: I support students and teachers in Florida by ...
- Do you volunteer in our city's public schools? Show your support for students and teachers by telling the world about the work they do.
- Did you know that Duval County's graduation rate went from 55% to 74% between 2009 and 2014? Learn more about *[insert your relevant program/URL here, or fee free to use "graduation rates at jaxpef.org]*.
-
- Switching to the FSA is like switching from kilometers to miles on your car speedometer — the number's different but your speed is the same.
-
- Why is math different now? For years, we've been taught to make cakes by memorizing recipe after recipe. Today, kids are learning to bake.
-
- Understanding how students and schools are performing is like a car dashboard — no one gauge can tell you everything that's going on.

Social Media Graphics

Editable versions available. Or try making your own! Free online programs like PicMonkey and Piktochart make it easy to add your own logo, photos and text. Try adding data points, whether from your own program or from public education statistics. Need ideas? Contact us and we can help!



**UPGRADE
SCHOOLS
AND
PREPARE
STUDENTS**

I SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION

Give students and teachers need time to adjust to the Florida Standards!



**SUPPORT
STUDENTS
AND GET
INVOLVED**

Our schools need your help and your voice!

TAKE ACTION

Students and teachers need time to adjust to the new Florida Standards. I support my local public schools!



Moving from one measurement to another

DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN

Give students and teachers the time they need to adjust to the new Florida Standards!



SAMPLE BLOG & NEWSLETTER POSTS

Edit and use this sample blog post and newsletter item in your online and printed products.

Blog posts are a great way to get the word out on your website. Use the following sample blog post as a starting point. And share your good news with us! We are always looking to publish guest blog posts on jaxpef.org.

Understanding shifts in Florida’s standards and school accountability

What you need to know, and how you can help your child

If you have a child in public school this year, you may be hearing a lot about new standards and new standardized tests. Maybe your child’s math homework looks a little different. What’s the deal? Read on to learn a little bit more about what’s happening in Florida’s public school landscape.

What are the standards?

The world that our children will inherit is very different than the one we grew up in — what they need to know and be able to do has changed a lot. In an effort to help students get ready, our state has adopted new standards — guidelines about what skills students should have by the end of each grade — called the Florida Standards. This shift is well under way for our local public schools, students and teachers, who are working with new ways to help students learn even more.

Think about baking for a moment. If you learn how to follow a recipe for making red velvet cake, you

know how to make red velvet cake. But if you learn how that cake is made — the proportion of wet to dry ingredients, the amount of baking soda needed — you will have the skills needed to understand how to make many kinds of baked goods, not just follow a recipe. That’s what this shift is all about: teaching students not just what to do, but why and how. While it requires more of teachers and students, it will ensure the next generation is prepared with the tools and skills they need to be ready for future success.

What about the test?

New standards mean a new end of year test, so the FCAT is out and the FSA is in. The Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) is administered in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and end-of-course (EOC) subjects (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry) to measure proficiency levels and gains among students.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) was administered for the first time in grades 3-10 but not without a few glitches. School districts across the state experienced technology issues such as students being unable to access the test. Lawmakers required an independent review of

the test to make sure it was valid. In September, that review, conducted by Alpine Testing, deemed the results of the FSA to be valid. Consequently, public and charter schools in Florida will receive school grades for the 2014-2015 school year — likely released sometime in January or February 2016. This fall, the Florida Department of Education will be determining and releasing cut scores for the FSA. Cut scores will determine what constitutes a Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5. More information is available on the Florida Department of Education website, www.fldoe.org or www.fsassessments.org.

What will be the impact?

These new scores will likely mean that school grades and student achievement levels will be lower than what most parents and community members are used to. But it doesn't mean that our schools are backsliding! What it does mean is that schools, teachers and students will need time and extra support to adjust to these changes.

What can you do?

Stay informed and get involved! Right now, our public school system is in the middle of a major renovation. We're keeping what works and updating other parts

Sample newsletter blurb

Did you know that students and teachers in public schools are learning and achieving at higher levels than ever before? Our school system is undergoing a major renovation right now, upgrading some old systems with new parts. One of those shifts is that schools are using the new Florida Standards, guidelines for what students should know and be able to do. They focus more on problem solving and critical thinking, and less on memorization. Like any major improvement, it will take some time, but the result will be that students are better prepared for college and the workforce — ready to live up to their full potential. You can help by supporting public schools! Consider volunteering or just visiting a school to learn more about the support they need. For parents, the best way to help your child be successful is to talk to their teacher regularly. Ask how your child is doing, and what additional resources are available to help them at home.

that need to be upgraded. Just like when you remodel your house, it can be noisy and inconvenient at times. That's why our schools need more support than ever! We all need to speak out about the need to do is give teachers and students time to adjust to these changes. Consider volunteering at a public school near you, or with one of the many great nonprofit organizations that work to support students with mentoring, after school programs and other services.

For parents, stay in tune with what your child is learning. Make sure you're doing homework with them and helping them use Achieve and iReady on the computer on a regular basis at home. Make sure you have open and regular communication with your child's teacher. Ask how your child is doing, and whether and how well they are meeting expectations.

Consider signing up for a Parent Academy class through Duval County Public Schools specifically designed to help parents understand the Florida Standards. To see a full schedule, which includes after-hours sessions, go to www.duvalschools.org/parentacademy and register online.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Some other websites where you can find information.

Florida Department of Education

Visit www.fsassessments.org to find out more about the Florida Standards Assessment, see sample problems and read Frequently Asked Questions.

CPALMS

CPALMS is a site designed mostly for educators, but has some examples that might be helpful as you work to help your child with homework. Go to cpalms.org to get started.

Duval County Public Schools

- **Parent Academy**

Duval County Public Schools is offering a wide variety of different hour-long sessions to help parents understand the Florida Standards. The sessions are specifically targeted at different subjects and grade levels so you can pick the ones most applicable to you. To see a full schedule, which includes after-hours sessions, go to duvalschools.org/parentacademy and register online.

- **Homework Helpline**

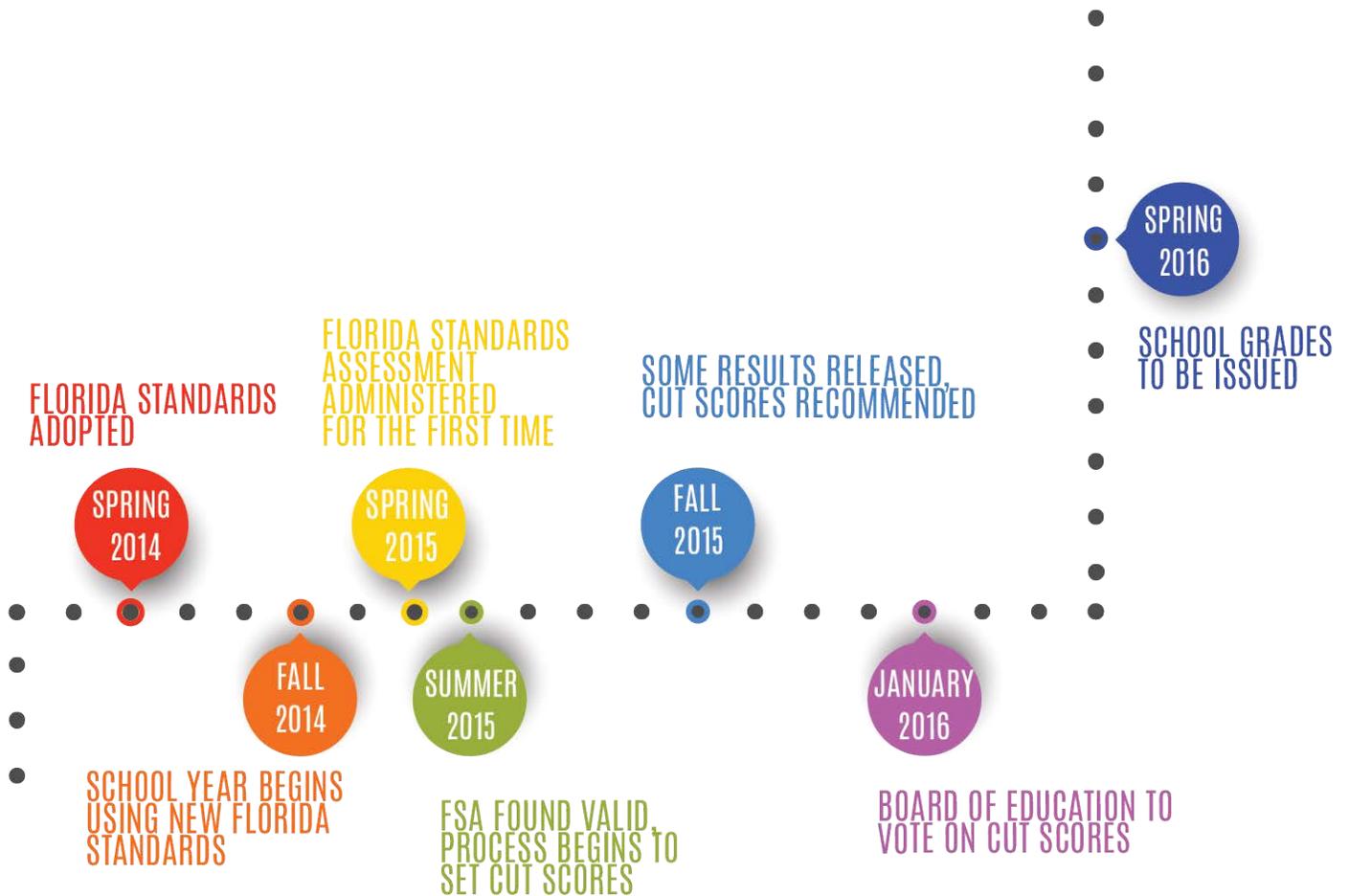
Duval County Public Schools and the Jacksonville Public Library offer homework. For more information, visit www.duvalschools.org/Page/17284, www.duvalschools.org/domain/5447 or www.tutor.com/jacksonville (make sure to enter your library card number).

- **Parent letters for each grade level**

Parents can go to this link and get downloadable resources for each grade level: www.duvalschools.org/Page/16648.

TIMELINE

An overview of past developments and future events, one horizontal and one vertical.



SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY IN FLORIDA

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SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS USING NEW FLORIDA STANDARDS

In the 2014-2015 school year, Florida public schools begin to use the Florida Standards.

FSA FOUND VALID, PROCESS BEGINS TO SET CUT SCORES

Over the summer, the validity study commissioned by the Florida Legislature found that the administration of the test, while flawed, was valid for use in school accountability and other uses. Meanwhile, the Florida Department of Education began convening panels of educators and other community members to begin the process of reviewing where "cut scores," or where to set proficiency levels and the impact of each scenario.

BOARD OF EDUCATION TO VOTE ON CUT SCORES

The Florida Board of Education will vote on cut scores in January of 2016. The cut scores are what determine what performance a student must achieve in order to score a Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5. Any score of Level 3 or above is considered proficient or passing, and usually is the bar used for school accountability and third grade retention.

SPRING 2014

FLORIDA STANDARDS ADOPTED

The Florida Board of Education adopted the Florida Standards, which are guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at every grade level in math and English language arts. Soon after, the state contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop a new state-wide standardized test, the Florida Standards Assessment to replace the FCAT 2.0.

FALL 2014

SPRING 2015

FLORIDA STANDARDS ASSESSMENT ADMINISTERED FOR THE FIRST TIME

In the spring of 2015, students took the Florida Standards Assessment for the first time. The test, which many students took via computer, ran into some glitches as some districts experienced trouble logging on. That spring, the Florida Legislature ordered an independent validity study to review the administration of the test.

SUMMER 2015

FALL 2015

SOME RESULTS RELEASED, CUT SCORES RECOMMENDED

The Florida Department of Education releases an early type of results of the Florida Standards Assessment, known as T-scores. These scores show how students performed relative to other students in each school and district. Parents will also receive a similar report in October. In the meantime, Education Commissioner Pam Stewart issued recommended cut scores, which are similar to the recommendation of reactor panels convened over the summer. The State Board of Education will vote on the cut scores in January.

JANUARY 2016

SCHOOL GRADES ISSUED

Sometime after the Florida Board of Education sets cut scores in January, it will decide on a way to issue school grades for the 2014-2015 school year. School grades are A-F grades issued to every public and charter school in Florida and typically based both on proficiency, or how many students are at Level 3 and above, as well as growth, which means how well students improve from one year to the next. Because there is no way to measure growth between the old FCAT 2.0 and the new FSA, it is currently unclear whether and how growth will be a part of the calculation.

SPRING 2016



CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact us for more information, editable files or feedback, questions and suggestions.

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This toolkit is regularly updated. It and its individual components are available for download at jaxpef.org/toolkit.

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