

Florida PTA Requests Changes to Florida's Accountability Assessment System

September 17, 2014

Over the past several years, Florida's system of educational accountability has been in a state of perpetual flux. Numerous accountability changes along with the implementation of yet another new test is resulting in uncertainty and angst among students, parents, teachers, and community members.

Florida PTA believes that valid assessment does not consist of only a single test score, and that at no time should a single test be considered the sole determinant of a student's academic or work future. PTA believes that student assessments should identify how instruction and learning can be improved and should be used to help parents and teachers determine the specific academic needs of students and increase opportunities for student learning.

The Florida PTA has initiated and led many discussions about restoring reasonable testing instruments and schedules for our children as well as fair calculations of accountability grades.

As a way forward to end the confusion, Florida PTA recommends that the Florida Department of Education and the state:

- Allow for proper field-testing and test development in areas with similar demographics to Florida's diverse demographics;
- Suspend the issuance of school letter grades until performance data has been deemed reliable;
- Allow additional testing and calculation flexibility to students with disabilities and students who speak limited English;
- Consider using multiple years of a new exam as a baseline for generating school grades and teacher evaluations.

The simple suggestions mentioned above represent Florida PTA's ongoing advocacy efforts for a fair educational accountability and assessment process, which effectively informs and improves teaching and learning.

Without a reasonable transitional time to adapt to yet more new accountability standards, and without a fair calculation of accountability grades, the future of our children will remain in flux and the viability of Florida's accountability system will remain in question.