

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Update**  
October 28, 2015

**SUBJECT:** K-12 Public Schools – Superintendent Kurt Browning, on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

N/A

**AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION**

N/A

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An update will be provided by Superintendent Browning, Pasco County Public Schools on issues relating to K-12 education initiatives.

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** N/A

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Kurt Browning, Superintendent, Pasco County Public Schools

State Board Meeting  
9 a.m. Wednesday, October 28, 2016  
Hyatt Regency Orlando Airport  
Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools

Good morning, Board members and Commissioner Stewart. Thank you for allowing me this time to address you on behalf of Florida's superintendents. I'd like to thank and recognize some of my colleagues who are in the audience today...

First, I would like to briefly tell you about Pasco County Schools. Pasco is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest school district in Florida, with 71,690 students and 10,223 employees. Pasco's vision is that every student is prepared for college, career, and life. To achieve that, we have aligned our focus on three priorities:

1. High impact instruction
2. Data-driven decisions, and
3. Collaborative culture

All decisions, including our District's Success Plan, are aligned with these three priorities.

We opened our first magnet school this year and have plans to increase the number of magnet schools and programs beginning next school year.

Our construction and design team collaborated with our instructional team to build a unique facility focused on STEAM instruction. Sanders Memorial Elementary STEAM Magnet School opened with 719 students, less than half of the 1,689 applications we received for the school.

Another successful choice program is the Tampa Bay Regional Aeronautics Academies, which include the Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough districts. Pasco's program at Sunlake High School is a dual enrollment program with Embry Riddle Aeronautical University that has been made possible with the support of the Florida Legislature and Governor Scott. We'd love to take any of you on a tour; you'll be impressed by the flight simulators, robotics classes, and the unmanned aerial systems instruction. These types of programs keep our students engaged while teaching the math and science skills that tie back to real life experiences.

The state funding has allowed us to create programs at elementary and middle schools feeding into Sunlake, too. We have 5<sup>th</sup> graders who will blow you away with their piloting skills.

Pasco also has embraced and is expanding our career and technical programs at high schools. With the help of the Pasco Education Foundation, we are working to get more local businesses involved in our academies and more student internships in the community.

Programs like these, combined with our standards-aligned instructional program, are examples of our emphasis on our collaborative culture and high impact instruction focus areas. Our data-driven decisions focus brings us full circle.

We have created a system of levels for our schools, with a differentiated monitoring plan that will help us provide supports for schools at different achievement levels through quarterly data checks. The leveling is calculated using the schools' success in each of the three priorities.

As superintendent, I am serious about holding our schools, school staff, district staff – and myself – accountable for meeting these high expectations. If the schools and staff are not successful, I have not been an effective leader.

Similarly, I support the state having a strong system of public school accountability. I can say with confidence that my colleagues in school districts across Florida share my support.

What we can't support is a flawed accountability system. That is why Florida Superintendents unanimously agreed to issue a statement, and why I joined Superintendents Mike Grego and Jeff Eakins in writing an editorial outlining our concerns.

Superintendents have consistently defended and supported accountability, the Florida Standards, and the need to accurately measure student performance. But we are not alone in our belief that the 2015 administration of the Florida Standards Assessment was flawed, and resulted in questionable results.

Superintendents believe the data from the 2015 assessment should not be used for decisions on student progression and graduation, or teacher evaluations and school grades.

Yes, the law requires school grades to be issued. The law also requires that those school grades be based, in part, on student learning gains from one year to the next.

Yes, the law permits a school grade to be issued without all of the required components. So, yes, a school grade can be issued without learning gains. In my mind, this is not an accurate school grade, but is really an Incomplete. Not all of the required components are represented, so how can it not be an Incomplete? It's like telling a student that his or her grade depends on attendance, class participation and chapter test scores. Then, the student can't attend class for half the semester due to an illness...no matter...we are going to grade you anyway. The student would fail! Grading schools without including all the components is not an accurate reflection of the work of students or teachers. It is not valid, nor is it fair!

There is no way for the Department of Education to accurately measure student gains on the FSA because it is our students' first time taking it.

Add to that the results of the Alpine independent evaluation of the FSA's validity, mandated by the Legislature, which provided evidence that our concerns were valid, stating, "The spring 2015 administration of the FSA did not meet the normal rigor and standardization expected with a high-stakes assessment program like the FSA."

If you must issue a grade, make it an I, for Incomplete, for all Florida schools. Other states have paused their stated plans in order to allow for the results of the first year of their new standards assessment to be used as a baseline. I sincerely do not understand Florida's reluctance to hit the pause button for one year. We continue to forge ahead with a wealth of data, parental concerns and professional dissent, suggesting we are on the wrong course.

I also want to address the superintendents' statement in reference to using NAEP proficiency levels. I recently asked the FADSS board members if any of them had heard before the commissioner's remarks at the recent FADSS meeting in September that there had been discussion about aligning our cut scores with NAEP levels, and not a single one had. Had we known that there had been discussion centered on incrementally reaching NAEP proficiency levels, we may have had a different response.

Superintendents stand by our call to have a comprehensive review of the current accountability laws. I truly believe that in trying to improve our accountability system, we have complicated it to the extent that it no longer has the impact or meaning it originally was intended to have.

Additionally, whether real or perceived, parents, teachers, school-based administrators and many in our business community are concerned about the consequences of issuing school grades based on the 2015 FSA data.



A single pause in releasing school grades and using FSA data for VAM scores until the second administration of the FSA would go a long way in restoring confidence in our state's accountability system. It would be right for the students we serve and our teachers that work tirelessly to educate them.

I understand that this will mean that the Governor and/or Legislature may have to take action in order to give schools an "I". However, with your leadership, we can make this happen.

I say all of these things in the hope that we can work together to regain Florida's status as the leader in school accountability, and most importantly, to restore the faith of Florida's citizens in public education.

Thank you.