

FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION ON ASSESSMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY

WHEREAS, Florida school districts strongly support accountability on the school, district, and state level for the delivery of the uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools guaranteed by the Constitution of Florida; and

WHEREAS, testing is one of many tools that can play a role in measuring student achievement and learning gains, in identifying areas of weakness, and in informing students and their parents of a student's overall educational progress; and

WHEREAS, Florida's accountability system has developed into a system of high stakes testing that uses student performance on standardized tests to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators, schools, and school districts; and

WHEREAS, since 1998, the number of assessments required, directly or indirectly, by the state to be administered each year has substantially increased, thus reducing instructional time; and

WHEREAS, the over-emphasis on standardized testing has resulted in a variety of unintended consequences that diminish the quality of the educational program, including stifling student engagement, narrowing the curriculum, reducing student access to elective and other desired courses, and impeding the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers and administrators; and

WHEREAS, under Florida's assessment and accountability structure, a student who scores poorly on a statewide assessment may be – among other things – retained in grade, required to take extensive remediation courses, denied access to upper level courses, denied any credit for a course, and/or have a standard high school diploma withheld, regardless of the student's performance on other course tests, reports, course work, projects, and other indicators of the student's abilities, and

WHEREAS, under Florida's assessment and accountability structure, an educator whose work or instruction is not assessed by a statewide assessment, can be evaluated based, in part, on the performance of students that the teacher may have never met or taught; and

WHEREAS, under Florida's assessment and accountability structure, a school's grade may be based, in part, on the performance of students who do not attend the school and who have not been taught by teachers in the school; and

WHEREAS, Florida's high stakes testing instruments are not correlated to any national or international assessment instruments to allow for a comparison of both student achievement and progress in Florida with student achievement and progress with other states and countries; and

WHEREAS, Florida's previous assessment system was plagued by constant revisions to standards, cut scores, testing time frames, scoring criteria, and other elements of the testing structure, making it impossible to track student learning gains or identify areas of weaknesses from one year to the next, or provide timely results for diagnostic purposes, thus defeating the original purpose of such testing; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida intends to administer new statewide assessments to measure mastery of the newly adopted Florida State Standards in the same year that the Standards are first being introduced and implemented across all grades and subjects; and

