

STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN 2012-2013

St. Johns County School District



www.stjohns.k12.fl.us

St. Johns County Schools will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.

**St. Johns County School District Student Progression Plan
Introduction**

To insure that St. Johns County School District is meeting the needs of students and in response to legislation, the St. Johns County School Board has established a comprehensive program for student progression which includes the following:

- standards for evaluating each student's performance, including how well he or she masters the performance standards approved by the State board of Education,
- specific levels of performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, including the levels of performance on statewide assessments*,
- appropriate alternative placement for a student who has been retained two or more years, and
- procedures for informing each student and his or her parents/guardians of the student's academic progress

The St. Johns County School District Student Progression Plan is a contract delineating what a student must know and be able to do to be promoted and what the district will do to help the student meet the requirements for promotion. The plan and the procedures for its implementation reflect clearly that promotion is based on student achievement.

The plan establishes procedures to achieve parent understanding, cooperation and acceptance of the student's placement. School attendance procedures as described in the district's Attendance Policy are considered as part of the Student Progression Plan.

The district program for student progression is based upon local goals and objectives that are compatible with the state's plan for education. Pertinent factors considered by the teacher before recommendation that a student progress from one grade to another have been prescribed by the district School Board in its plan.

The Student Progression Plan is governed by state statutes and district policy. All procedures listed in the Student Progression Plan are subject to change due to School Board or legislative action. The Student Progression Plan is updated yearly and posted on the district website.

Students will be placed in programs and levels best suited to meet their academic needs and customized learning path, with consideration given to their social, emotional and physical development.

Decisions regarding student promotion, retention and special placement are primarily the responsibility of the individual school's professional staff. District and state regulations place the responsibility for decisions regarding student placement with the principal and the Child Study Team or its equivalent.

It is the responsibility of the School Board and district administration to provide students with effective instructional and remedial programs that accomplish the following:

- monitor student progress,
- promote continuous achievement,
- make provisions for individual differences,
- promote students' assuming responsibility for their own learning and attendance
- provide effective, engaging instruction and remediation, and
- document instruction in, and student mastery of, the standards.

*A student scoring below grade level must receive remediation or be retained in an intensive program that is different from the previous year's program and addresses the student's learning style.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT PROGRESSION

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MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6-8)

I. ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, PROMOTION, PLACEMENT & TRANSFERS

A. Admission

Admission Requirements

For information about admission, please visit the District website at:

www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/os/student/enrollment

B. Enrollment and Grade Level Placement

Placement within Zoned School

The Customized Learning Path (CLP) is unique to each student and is based on his or her academic and career needs. Placement that facilitates optimum learning for each student shall be determined by established principles of growth and development, by the academic and career interests of the student and by acquisition of subject area skills and competencies. Consistent with school board rules and in accordance with state statute [1012.28 (5) F.S.], the Superintendent has designated the principal of the school as the final authority in the placement of students in programs or classes.

State Policy on Transfer of Students in the Middle Grades as stated in School Board Rule SBR 6A-1.09942

“The purpose of this rule is to establish uniform procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and courses for students entering Florida’s public schools composed of middle grades 6, 7, and 8 from out of state or out of country. The procedures shall be as follows:

(1) Grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school’s accreditation. If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary, or if the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, successful completion of courses shall be validated through performance during the first grading period as outlined in subsection (2) of this rule.

(2) Validation of courses shall be based on performance in classes at the receiving school. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and should be passing each required course at the end of the first grading period. Students who do not meet this requirement shall have courses validated using the Alternative Validation Procedure, as outlined in subsection (3) of this rule.

(3) Alternative Validation Procedure. If validation based on performance as described above is not satisfactory, then any one of the following alternatives identified in the district student progression plan shall be used for validation purposes as determined by the teacher, principal, and parent:

- (a) Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee;
- (b) Demonstrated performance in courses taken at other public or private accredited schools;
- (c) Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments;
- (d) Demonstrated proficiencies on the FCAT; or
- (e) Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students must be provided at least ninety (90) days from date of transfer to prepare for assessments outlined in paragraphs (3)(c) and (d) of this rule if required.”

Specific Authority 1003.4156(3), 1003.25(3) FS. Law Implemented 1003.25(3) FS. History–New 10-20-08.

School-to-School Placement

Whenever grade level placement of a student involves a movement from one school to another school, the processing of that movement shall begin with the Intervention Team or its equivalent of the sending school and end with the principal, or designee, of the receiving school. The receiving principal shall do the following:

- review the recommendation,
- conduct investigative activities as deemed necessary,

- render a decision, and
- notify those who have a need to know.

The referring school shall have tried interventions prior to seeking placement of a student in another school. Such interventions will be briefly described on the referral form. A student entering late is an exception to this requirement. Parents/guardians shall be invited to attend any meeting discussing school-to-school placement.

Requirements for Information Prior to Placement

Each student at the time of initial registration for school placement must note previous school expulsions, arrests resulting in a charge, arrests pending, and juvenile justice actions the student has had. Schools have the authority to honor the final order of expulsion or dismissal of a student by any in-state or out-of-state public district school board, private school or lab school, for an act which would have been grounds for expulsion according to the SJCS Code of Student Conduct, according to the following procedures:

- A final order of expulsion shall be recorded in the records of the receiving school.
- The expelled student applying for admission to the receiving school shall be advised of the final order of expulsion.

The superintendent or designee may recommend to the School Board that the final order of expulsion be waived and the student be admitted to the school district, or that the final order of expulsion be honored and the student not be admitted to the school district. If the student is admitted by the School Board, with or without the recommendation of the district school superintendent, the student may be placed in an appropriate educational program at the direction of the School Board.

Placement of Dependent Children of Active Duty Military Personnel 1000.36 F.S.

Dependent children of active duty military personnel moving into the district outside of normal application periods who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria for special academic programs shall be given special consideration for admission to such programs even if the program is being offered through a school other than the student’s home zoned school.

Placement of Students on Community Control 948.03 F.S.

For information regarding procedures when students are placed on community control, please refer to Florida Statute 948.101, *Terms and Conditions of Community Control* and Florida Statute 948.03, *Terms and Conditions of Probation*. Florida Statute 948.03 specifically states that the court shall determine the terms and conditions of probation. Conditions specified in this section do not require oral pronouncement at the time of sentencing and may be considered standard conditions of probation. These conditions may include that the probationer or offender in community control shall:

- report to the probation and parole supervisors as directed, and
- permit such supervisors to visit him or her at his or her home or elsewhere.

Placement of Pregnant, Married or Parenting Students

Students who become or have become married and students who are pregnant shall not be prohibited from attending school. These students and students who are parents shall receive the same educational instruction or its equivalent as other students, but may **voluntarily** be assigned to a class or program suited to their special needs. Pregnant or parenting teens may participate in a teenage parent program. Pregnant students may attend alternative education programs or adult education programs, provided that the curriculum allows the student to continue to work toward a high school diploma.

Parent/Guardian Role with Placement Decisions

State law provides the authority for placement of students with the school district. Placement is based on professional educators’ evaluations of how well the student is meeting the levels of performance for student progression. Such evaluations take into account whether or not the student has the knowledge and skills to move

on successfully to the more difficult work of the next grade or course. Parents may discuss a placement with school officials and ask for an explanation of the placement, and they may review the evidence the school used to make the placement.

Placement in Intensive Reading 1003.4156 (1) (b) F.S.

For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 on FCAT Reading, the student must be enrolled in an Intensive Reading course the following year. Placement of Level 2 readers in either an intensive reading course or a content-area course in which reading strategies are delivered shall be determined by diagnosis of reading needs. A one year good cause exemption from the reading remediation requirement is available for middle and high school students who score at Level 1 or Level 2 on the FCAT Reading, but who did not score below Level 3 in the previous three years. The student must have an approved Academic Improvement Plan in place. Intensive Reading courses shall be designed and offered pursuant to the District's Comprehensive Reading Plan (CRP). Please refer to the section on reading remediation on pages 12-13 of this document and to the CRP at: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cs/crp>.

Placement for Math Remediation 1003.4156 F.S.

For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year. These courses may be taught through applied, integrated, or combined courses. Remediation may also be provided within the student's regularly scheduled math class. Please refer to the section on remediation.

C. Transfers and Withdrawals

Students transferring into the district once the school year has begun shall be assessed in reading and math to determine reading proficiency and to ensure proper course and remedial instruction placement. Students will be placed into middle or high school courses based on mastery of the appropriate Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in accordance with the student's Customized Learning Path (CLP).

Placement from Accredited Schools in Grades 6-8

Students enrolling in grades 6-8 from an accredited public, private or charter school shall be placed in a grade consistent with the recommendation of the sending school and the support information provided that documents student progress and mastery of standards.

Placement from Home Education or Unaccredited Schools in Grades 6-8

Students seeking initial placement in grades 6-8 from a home education program or an unaccredited charter, public or private school shall be evaluated by the local school to determine the most appropriate grade level placement. Criteria to be considered shall include age and maturity, standardized achievement test results, state assessment results, progress as it relates to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and benchmarks, previous records from public or private schools and evidence from the student's portfolio of work and achievement while in home education.

In no instance shall the placement be automatic, based solely on the recommendation of the unaccredited public or private school, home educator, or age. The placement decision is subject to review and revision after school personnel have had the opportunity to observe the student's work. Should there be reasonable suspicion of a student's grades, initial assessments may be required to determine grade placement.

Withdrawal from School at Age 16

A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age, provided the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district School Board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating

school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent.

The following steps must also be taken:

- The school shall notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.
- The student's guidance counselor or other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school.
- The student shall be informed of opportunities to continue his or her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation.
- The student shall complete a survey to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

D. Homeless

A homeless student is defined as a child or youth who:

- shares the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason,
- lives in motels, travel trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations, or emergency or transitional shelters,
- is abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement, or
- lives in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

The St. Johns County School District adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. Homeless students shall be permitted to enroll in the St. Johns County Public Schools. They shall not be placed in a separate school or program within a school based on their homeless status, and shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other students enrolled in the school.

A homeless student shall be permitted to enroll immediately, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. This includes, but is not limited to, records such as previous academic records, medical and immunization records, and proof of residency.

E. Attendance

Parent and student responsibilities are:

- to be informed of school board policies and school rules about absenteeism and tardiness,
- to appeal a decision about an absence,
- to make up class work in a reasonable amount of time after an excused absence,
- to attend classes daily and be on time,
- to explain or document the reason for an absence, and
- to request make-up work after an absence and to complete it in a reasonable amount of time.

For specific information about attendance, please see the Student Code of Conduct on the District website: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/rules/conduct>.

II. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

A. Charter School

Promotion and Retention of Charter School Students

Charter schools are responsible for decisions regarding the promotion and retention of their students. Charter schools may opt to develop their own promotion and retention requirements or adopt local district procedures. When a student transfers from a charter school to a district school and a disagreement arises between the two schools regarding the promotion or retention of a student, the sending and receiving schools shall meet to resolve the issues. If the dispute is not resolved between the two schools, the sending school must retain the student or submit a referral to the Director for Instructional Services to review the case and make a recommendation for the Superintendent's approval.

B. Foreign Exchange Students

Admission of foreign exchange students is limited to students in grade 11.

C. Home Education

Florida Statute 1002.41 defines home education programs. For more information, visit FLDOE Office of Independent and Parental Choice Website at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/home_education/. To register for home education, contact the office of Home Education in the St. Johns County School District by phone or at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/os/student/homeeducation/>.

Home Education Student Participation in Public Schools S. 1006.15 F.S., S. 1002.41 F.S.

Students in home education programs may participate in public school interscholastic extracurricular activities at their home zoned school. However, public schools are under no obligation to provide home education students access to classes, programs, services, or other educational opportunities.

D. Hospital/Homebound

Programs for Students in Need of Homebound or Hospital Services

A homebound or hospitalized student is a student who has a medically diagnosed injury, a chronic physical/psychiatric condition, or has repeated intermittent illness due to a persisting medical problem. The condition, illness or medical problem confines the student to home or hospital and restricts activities for an extended period. A physician licensed in the state of Florida makes the medical diagnosis. "A physician licensed in the state of Florida," as used in this rule, is one who is qualified to assess the student's physical or mental condition. Students are dismissed from the program when the physician recommends that the student no longer requires participation in the program and is ready to return to school.

The minimum evaluation for determining eligibility is an annual medical statement, from a physician licensed in the state of Florida, including a description of the disabling condition or diagnosis with any medical implications for instruction. The report must state that the student is unable to attend school and must give an estimated duration of condition or prognosis. Students are eligible for services from their third birthday until they graduate (receive a standard diploma or G.E.D.) or until their 22nd birthday. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be developed or revised prior to assignment to the homebound or hospitalized program placement.

Hospital/homebound students are eligible for the FCAT waiver only if they have been found eligible for special education services through an eligible disability program in addition to hospital/homebound. For further information, please refer to www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/ese/homebound.

E. The Academics, Performance, Excellence (APEX) Program at St. Johns Technical High School

The APEX Program at St. Johns Technical High School customizes and delivers an appropriate learning path for each student in a supportive and responsive environment. Students who might not otherwise experience success are

encouraged to develop a strong work ethic while exploring vocational opportunities and achieving high standards in character and academics. Information is also available at the district website:
<http://www.sjths.stjohns.k12.fl.us/Apex>

Alternative Placement for Students Retained Two or More Years

An alternative placement shall be offered for a student who has been retained two or more years. The alternative placement shall provide the student with intensive, differentiated instruction designed to remediate the student's academic deficiencies and shall include opportunities for the student to be placed in small group instructional settings. The alternative placement shall, under most circumstances, be at the student's home zoned school but may involve placement at a district-designated site. The alternative placement may not be a placement in a regular program at a higher grade.

F. Virtual School 1001.42 F.S.

House Bill 7063 (2012) revised statutes related to virtual instruction programs to provide student and parental rights relative to the eligibility of Florida Virtual School full-time students to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities at certain public schools. Information on these changes is presented in the Florida Public Virtual Schools Question and Answers (2012-2013), available at the FDOE Virtual Instruction webpage <http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools>. In addition, St. Johns County School District Virtual School information is available at <http://www.sjvs.stjohns.k12.fl.us>.

Placement/Acceleration in St. Johns Virtual School (SJVS) or Florida Virtual School (FLVS)

As stipulated by the Florida K-20 Education Code (s.1002.20 F.S.), parents have the right to choose educational options such as SJVS or FLVS for their children. A student's full-time school may not deny access to virtual courses. SJVS is the provider of first choice for virtual instruction; however in situations in which SJVS cannot fulfill the need, students may qualify to access the services of FLVS.

The School Board shall provide students with access to enroll in courses available through SJVS or FLVS and shall award credit for successful completion of such courses. Access may be available to students during or after the normal school day and for FLVS, throughout the summer. Students wishing to take courses from SJVS or FLVS must work closely with their guidance counselors to ensure that courses fit in their Customized Learning Path (CLP).

SJVS or FLVS is appropriate for students who:

- have medical or behavior issues that may limit success in the traditional classroom,
- need a more flexible schedule due to training or other extra-curricular endeavors,
- need access to a course not offered at their school, or
- are home schooled.

Enrollment

Students wishing to take advantage of courses offered by SJVS or FLVS must follow the procedure outlined below:

- The student must meet with the school counselor to determine if placement in SJVS or FLVS is academically appropriate for the student based on course prerequisites, the student's academic history and age, and appropriateness of the course for the student's Customized Learning Path (CLP).
- All petitions to take a course via SJVS or FLVS must be approved by the student's guidance counselor prior to the start of a new semester or summer school.
- Once a semester has begun and the regular drop period has passed, a student may not withdraw from a school course to enroll in the same course online.
- A student may not be placed in the same course concurrently at a district middle or high school and at SJVS or FLVS.

Schools shall make every effort for a student to access SJVS/FLVS coursework on site for a student whose CLP indicates that placement in a SJVS or FLVS course during the school day is appropriate.

III. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. Regular Program—Course Requirements 1003.4156 F.S.

In order to be promoted to grade 9, students are required to complete the following successfully:

- three middle school or higher courses in English which emphasize literature, composition, and technical text,
- three middle school or higher courses in mathematics,
- three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education,
- three middle school or higher courses in science,
- one course in career and education planning to be completed in 7th or 8th grade,* and
- the equivalent of one class period per day of physical education for one semester of each year required for students enrolled in grades 6 through 8.

*The course may be taught by any member of the instructional staff; must include career exploration using Florida CHOICES for the 21st Century or a comparable cost-effective program. The program must inform students of high school graduation requirements, high school assessments, college entrance test requirements, and programs through which a high school student can earn college credit, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Advanced International Certificate of Education, dual enrollment, career academy opportunities, and courses that lead to national industry certification. (1003.4156 F.S.)

Beginning with students entering grade 6 in 2012-2013, one of the social studies courses must be at least a one semester civics education course that includes the roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local governments; the structures and functions of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government; and the meaning and significance of historic documents, such as the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Beginning in 2013-2014, each student's performance on the state Civics End-of-Course (EOC) assessment will be 30% of the final grade in the course.

Beginning in 2014-2015, a student must earn a passing score on the Civics EOC assessment in order to pass the course and be promoted from the middle grades. (1008.22 F.S., HB 1255)

The physical education requirement shall be waived for students who meet one of following criteria: (1003.455 F.S.)

- The student is enrolled or required to enroll in a remedial course.
- The student's parent indicates in writing to the school district that
 - ❖ the parent requests that the student enrolls in another course from among those courses offered as options by the school district, or
 - ❖ the student is participating in physical activities outside the school day which are equal to or in excess of the mandated requirement.

Students are required to receive 300 minutes of instruction during the school day. Physical activities outside the school day do not release students from the 300 minutes of instruction requirement. A student must take an approved, alternative middle school course if physical education course is waived.

District Initiatives include:

- electives as appropriate to the student's Customized Learning Path (CLP),

- the *Character Counts! Program* is integrated into all subject areas, and
- all middle school students are encouraged to take part in service learning/volunteer opportunities.

Required instruction (1003.42 F.S.) is detailed in the Appendix.

Grade-Level Classification Requirements:

- **Classification for 6th Grade** - promotion from 5th grade
- **Classification for 7th Grade** - successful completion of 6th grade language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
- **Classification for 8th Grade** - successful completion of 7th grade language arts, mathematics, science and social studies

Additional Requirements:

- completion of one course in career and education planning, and
- the equivalent of one class period per day of physical education for one semester of each year for students enrolled in grades 6 through 8, unless student is eligible for a state-approved waiver.

Student grade level classification at the end of the first semester will determine which grade level Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is administered.

Replacement of Middle School Courses

Course replacements for middle school students shall be made on a case-by-case basis upon petition to the middle school principal. Upon completion of a possible replacement course for a previously failed middle school course, students/parents/guardians must supply documentation consisting of the following items:

- proof of the accreditation status of the school at which the replacement course was completed, (See listing of regional accreditation agencies in **Awarding of New Credit** section. <http://www.elearners.com/resources/agencies.asp>.)
- documentation of mastery of the appropriate benchmarks of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for the replacement course
 - ❖ a portfolio of work representative of the content of the course, or
 - ❖ Academic Recovery Lab record.

Academic Recovery Lab

A review of student academic and attendance records will be conducted prior to the start of school and at the end of each semester. Students meeting the criteria listed below shall be considered for an opportunity to participate in the Academic Recovery Labs:

- students who are two or more years older than their peers,
- students who are performing two or more years below grade level,
- students who are not mastering specific skills,
- students in need of remediation beginning after the first interim report,
- students who are in danger of failing at the end of the first semester,
- students with an IEP, or
- students who have a grade of F at the semester.

The middle school principal, upon receipt and verification of the required documentation of mastery, shall approve the replacement course, and the student's record shall be amended to reflect the replacement grade. When the student's record is amended to reflect the replacement grade, the student may be reclassified from 6th to 7th or 7th to 8th grade. In the event of insufficient verification evidence, the grade for the course failed shall remain.

B. Academic and Career Plans 1003.4156, F.S.

Each middle school student prior to entering grade 9 shall develop a four- to five- year academic and career plan based on postsecondary and career goals. Students and their parents shall choose an academic path from among the following:

- four-year college or university, community college plus university or military academy degree,
- two-year postsecondary degree,
- postsecondary career certificate,
- immediate employment or entry-level military service, or
- a combination of the above.

Each student's plan will include a "path" of core courses and a recommended group of electives. Each school shall make provision for a teacher, school administrator, other school staff member, or a community volunteer to be assigned to a student as an "academic advocate" if deemed necessary. Student academic and career plans shall be reviewed annually and may be changed if a student's Customized Learning Path changes.

The career and education planning course may be taught in sixth, seventh or eighth grade, by any member of the instructional staff and is designed to help students become aware of the relationships that exist between education and career achievement as outlined in s. 1003.4156, F.S. Students are introduced to educational alternatives and course options as they prepare for the transition to high school. For more information, visit the Educator's Toolkit on Career and Education Planning at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/ced>.

The career and education planning course must do the following:

- result in a completed personalized academic and career plan for the student
- emphasize technology or the application of technology in career fields.

Although statute does not require each school to hold a parent meeting, each school must inform parents about the course curriculum and activities.

School-to-Work Transition

All elementary, middle, and high schools shall document the manner in which they have prepared students to enter the workforce, including information regarding the provision of accurate, timely career and curricular counseling to students.

This information shall include a delineation of available career opportunities, educational requirements associated with each career, educational institutions that prepare students to enter each career, and student financial aid available to enable students to pursue any post-secondary instruction required to enter that career.

Schools shall also delineate school procedures for identifying individual student interests and aptitudes which enable students to make informed decisions about the curriculum that best addresses their individual interests and aptitudes while preparing them to enroll in post-secondary education and enter the workforce.

Beginning in grade 6, students shall receive information which includes recommended high school coursework that prepares students for success in college-level work. The information shall be made known to parents and students annually through inclusion in the school's handbook, manual, or similar documents or other communications regularly provided to parents and students.

C. Advanced Courses/Honor Roll

Each middle school offers Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) options: whole-grade and mid-year promotion, subject matter acceleration, virtual instruction in higher grade-level subjects, and the

Credit Acceleration Program. Program specifics are available through each school's guidance department. Such placement shall be made after review by guidance personnel and administration. 1002.3105 F.S.

High School Credit in Middle School 1003.4156 F.S., 1008.22 (3)(c)2.a. F.S.

Middle school students may be enrolled appropriately in high school credit-earning courses. Courses will adhere to high school grading policy which may be found in the high school program section of the Student Progression Plan.

Beginning in 2012-2013, students taking Algebra I, Geometry or Biology or an equivalent high school course in middle school must take and pass the EOC assessment in order to earn the high school credit and it will be 30% of the final grade in the course.

Middle school students earning high school credit shall simultaneously be credited with meeting the requirements for the appropriate corresponding pre-grade 9 courses. High school courses taken below grade 9 are included in student's cumulative GPA and may be used to satisfy high school graduation requirements and Bright Futures award requirements.

Credit Acceleration Program 1003.4295, F.S.

The Credit Acceleration Program (CAP) authorizes secondary students to earn high school credit in a course that requires a statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessment if the student attains a specified score on the EOC. For 2012-13, these courses include Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology.

The district shall award course credit to a student who is not enrolled in the course, or who has not completed the course, if the student attains a score indicating satisfactory performance, as defined in F.S. 1008.22(3)c 5 on the corresponding EOC. Students interested in this option should confer with their counselor. 1003.4295 F.S.

The requirements and eligibility process is as follows:

- The EOC will be administered only at the times established by the state assessment calendar.
- The score necessary to earn credit will be determined by the state and applied in all situations.
- Only credit (no grade) will be earned by meeting the passing score on the EOC.
- The student and parent must complete a Mastery Exam Request (MER) form.
The MER is accessible on line at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cs/> and at all middle and high schools.
- The school guidance counselor and principal's signatures (or designee) are required for MER processing.
- Complete MER forms must be received by the Director of Instructional Services 9 weeks (45 school days) prior to the administration of the EOC:
 - For the May testing date, MER should be received by **last day of February**.
 - For the July testing date, MER should be received by the **last day of May**.
 - For the December testing date, MER should be received by the **last day of September**.
- As part of the MER, students will be required to supply evidence that they are prepared to sit for the EOC or that there is reasonable justification for the request. This evidence includes but is not limited to previous FCAT scores and grade in the most recent math or science course taken.
- If a student takes the EOC and does not earn credit, the student will not be eligible to apply for further CAP testing for the same course until additional preparation has been documented and evaluated.
- The *Guide to Preparing for the Florida Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment* provides sample questions and resources and is accessible on line at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cs/> and at all middle and high schools.

Grade Forgiveness of High School Credit by Middle School Students 1003.428 (4) (d) F.S.

Middle school students who have taken high school courses may receive grade forgiveness if they have earned a grade or the numerical equivalent of a C, D or F. In such cases, the district forgiveness policy must allow the replacement of the grade with a grade or the numerical equivalent of a C or higher, earned subsequently in the

same or comparable course. For a grade of A or B, the course and grade cannot be forgiven; it will appear on the student's high school transcript, and will be used in the calculation of high school grade point average and for Bright Futures. (Section 1003.428(4)(d), F.S.)

Eligibility for Honor Roll in Middle School

Middle school honor roll, as defined by the St. Johns County School District, is comprised of students who earn the grades of A or B for a particular grading period. Students who earn honor roll may receive the St. Johns County School District Honor Roll Card.

Advanced Course Placement Criteria

Consistent with school board rules and in accordance with state statute [1012.28 (5) F.S.], the Superintendent has designated the principal of the school as the final authority in the placement of students in programs or classes. The following criteria represent consensus of all middle school and district administrators:

- **Grades - A grade of C or better in the previous honors or advanced course**
Students earning a grade of A in the previous standard course may be recommended for honors or advanced course placement. Teachers will conference with students to offer guidance for appropriate placement;
- OR**
- **FCAT - Level 4 or 5 in appropriate area and not less than a Level 3 in any area**
 - ❖ On Mathematics FCAT for placement in honors or advanced mathematics and science classes.
 - ❖ On Reading FCAT for placement in honors or advanced English, social studies, or foreign language;
- OR**
- In the case of extenuating circumstances, petition may be made on a case-by-case basis to the principal (or designee) for review of criteria to ensure proper course placement.

Specific math placement criteria were developed to aid in the transition from elementary school to middle school.

Middle School Mathematics Placement Criteria					
A student in:	if they meet the following criteria:				could be placed in:
	grade in class	teacher rec required	placement test	FCAT score	
5th grade	A or B	no	n/a	4 or 5	M/J 1 Advanced
M/J 1 Advanced	A or B	yes	n/a	3, 4 or 5	M/J 2 Advanced
M/J 1 Advanced	A	no	mastery level	5	Algebra 1 Honors
M/J 2 Advanced	A or B	yes	n/a	4 or 5	Algebra 1 Honors
M/J 2 Advanced	C	yes	n/a	3,4 or 5	Pre-Algebra Advanced
M/J 2 Advanced	D	n/a	n/a	n/a	Pre-Algebra Advanced

D. Assessment, Remediation and Progress Monitoring

State Assessments 1008.25 (2) (b), 1 F.S.

Participation in the statewide testing program, which consists of the FCAT 2.0, State End-of Course (EOC) assessments and alternate assessments, is mandatory for all K-12 students attending public schools. The assessment of reading shall be administered annually in grades 3-10. The assessment of math shall be administered annually in grades 3-8. The assessment of writing shall be administered at least once at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The writing assessment is given in grades 4, 8, and 10, and the science assessment is given in grades 5 and 8.

Beginning in 2012-2013, middle school students taking Algebra I, Geometry, or Biology 1 or an equivalent course in middle school must take and pass the State End-of-Course (EOC) to receive credit and it will be 30% of the final grade in the course. These students are not required to take the corresponding grade-level FCAT assessment.

In 2012-13, the Civics End of Course (EOC) exam will be field tested in selected schools. In 2013-14, Civics EOC exams will count as 30% of the final grade for 7th grade students. In 2014-15, 7th grade students must pass the Civics EOC exam to be promoted from middle school. All students who do not pass the Civics EOC exam may re-take it in 8th grade.

State Assessments for Transfer Students

If a student transfers into a Florida middle school from out of country, out of state, a private school, or a home school, and that student's transcript shows credit received in Algebra I or an equivalent course, Geometry or an equivalent course, or Biology I or an equivalent course, the decision as to whether the student must take Florida's EOC assessment in Algebra I, Geometry or Biology I, respectively, shall be made by the school principal as follows:

- A transfer student with high school credit in Algebra I or Geometry will not take Florida's Algebra I End-of-course (EOC) Assessment or Geometry EOC Assessment if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school; achieved a passing score on the high school statewide assessment in mathematics required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or if the student achieves an equivalent score on another assessment as identified pursuant to s. 1008.22(11).
- A transfer student with high school credit in Biology I will not take Florida's Biology I EOC Assessment if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, or if the student achieves an equivalent score on another assessment as identified pursuant to s. 1008.22(11), F. S.
- A transfer student will take Florida's EOC assessments in Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology I under all other circumstances and must pass the EOC assessment in order to earn credit in the course, consistent with the student's ninth grade cohort.

No Assessment Exemptions Based on Attendance

Schools shall not exempt students from academic performance requirements, such as final exams, based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement.

Assessment Opportunities for Private School Students

Private school students are not eligible for state and district level standardized assessments through the St. Johns County School District.

Remediation Requirements 1008.25 (4) (b) F.S.

Each student who does not meet specific levels of performance in reading, writing, science and/or mathematics shall be provided with scientifically research-based interventions as indicated by additional diagnostic assessments

used to determine the nature of the student's difficulty and areas of academic need. Remedial instruction shall continue until performance expectations are met as documented by demonstrating mastery, passing the state assessment(s) or graduating from high school.

Remedial Instruction

All schools offer supplemental learning opportunities. Student eligibility is based primarily on below-grade-level performance.

Consistent with St Johns County Comprehensive Reading Plan, middle school students who score at Level 1 or Level 2 on the FCAT Reading test and have decoding and text efficiency needs will receive immediate intensive intervention by:

- 90 minutes of Intensive Reading (IR) and 45 minutes of grade level Language Arts; or,
- 45 minutes of IR and 45 minutes of a grade level Language Arts.

Level 1 students who do not have decoding and text efficiency needs may be served by:

- 45 minutes of IR and 45 minutes of a grade level Language Arts class.

Level 2 students who do not have decoding and text efficiency needs may be served by:

- 45 minutes of IR and 45 minutes of a grade level Language Arts class; or,
- 45 minutes of reading remediation delivered by a CAR-PD trained social studies or science teacher within the content area class and 45 minutes of a grade level Language Arts class; or,
- 45 minutes of reading remediation delivered by a CAR-PD trained or reading endorsed/certified language arts teacher within the language arts class.

A middle school student who scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on the FCAT Reading but who did not score below Level 3 in the previous three years may be granted a one-year exemption from the reading remediation requirement; however, the student must have an approved academic improvement plan in place by the beginning of the academic school year, signed by appropriate school staff and the student's parent(s), for the year which the exemption is granted [1003.4156(1)(b) F.S.].

For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year. This remediation may be integrated into the student's required mathematics course, may be through pull-outs, or before or after school programs.

**Student Reading Placement, Grades 6-8
Just Read, Florida! 2012 – 2013**

Student's Reading Status	Reading Intervention Required?^	Extended Time in Reading Intervention Required?+	Intensive Reading or Intensive Language Arts Required? #	May Districts Offer Content Area Reading Intervention?	Teacher Certification/ Professional Development Required
L1 No decoding or text reading efficiency issues*	Yes	No	Yes	No	RE RC
L1 Decoding or text reading efficiency issues	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RE RC
L2 No decoding or text reading efficiency issues*	Yes	No	District Determined	Yes	RE RC CAR-PD NGCAR-PD
L2 Decoding or text reading efficiency issues	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RE RC

* Data must be provided to show that L1 and L2 students do not have decoding or text reading efficiency issues based on district placement criteria.

^ A one year good cause exemption from the reading intervention requirement is available for middle school students who score at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading, but who did not score below Level 3 in the previous 3 years. An approved academic improvement plan must be in place for these students.

+ Extended time may include, but is not limited to, students reading on a regular basis before and after school with teacher support, or for students two or more years below grade level a double block of reading to accelerate foundational reading skills.

Development Language Arts through ESOL (R) or Reading: 6-8, which require RE or RC, may also be used.

RE = Reading Endorsement/RC = Reading Certification

Teachers with elementary certification are considered highly qualified to teach sixth grade reading intervention courses.

CAR-PD = Content Area Reading Professional Development/NGCAR-PD = Next Generation Reading Professional Development

Progress Monitoring is required for ALL students needing reading intervention.

All requirements listed are from State Board Rule 6A-6.054 K-12 Student Reading Intervention Requirements

<http://www.justreadflorida.com/docs/6A-6-054.pdf>

Technical Assistance Paper - Reading Intervention Waivers

<http://info.fldoe.org/docu:share/dsweb/GetDocument-6118/dps-2011-99.pdf>



Just Read, Florida! K-12 Comprehensive Research Based Reading Plans

https://app1.fldoe.org/Reading_Plans/Narrative/NarrativeList.aspx

Content of Remedial Instruction

All remedial instruction shall include effective, research-based, standards-driven instruction. Each school shall use the materials listed in its section of the district's Comprehensive Reading Plan as resources for remediation in reading. Any additional resources must be scientifically research-based and approved by the Curriculum Services Department prior to use. Intensive instruction in reading shall be continued until a student's reading deficiency is remediated and shall include the following components:

- diagnosis/prescription targeted to specific skill development,
- variety of opportunities for repetitions (repeated exposures),
- smaller chunks of text or content,
- guided and independent reading practice,
- skill development and practice integrated into all activities,
- frequent monitoring, and
- criterion-based evaluation of success

Duration of Remediation

Each student who does not meet minimum performance expectations for the statewide assessment tests in reading, writing, science, and mathematics must continue remedial instruction or supplemental instruction until expectations are met or the student graduates from high school or is not subject to compulsory school attendance.

Progress Monitoring 1008.25 (4) (b) 1,2,3 F.S.

One of three types of progress monitoring shall be developed in consultation with the parent/guardian for any student not meeting district or state proficiency levels in reading, writing, science or math. Consultation is defined as a conference, a conversation via email, phone, or written exchange. School personnel shall use all available resources to achieve parent understanding of, and cooperation with, the progress monitoring requirements.

The three types of progress monitoring from which to choose are as follows:

- a federally required student plan such as an individual education plan (IEP),
- a school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students, or
- individualized progress monitoring.

All progress monitoring shall be tailored to identify the individual assistance deemed necessary to remedy a student's diagnosed deficiencies. The progress monitoring must clearly identify:

- the specific diagnosed academic need(s) to be remediated,
- the success-based intervention strategies to be used,
- how, when, how often, by whom and how long intensive remedial instruction is to be provided, and
- the monitoring and reevaluation activities to be employed.

Schools shall monitor the progress of students needing reading intervention a minimum of three times a year and adjust interventions based on data.

Required Remediation through Progress Monitoring and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports 1008.25 (4) (b) 1, 2, 3 F.S.

Students in grades 6-8 who score at Level 1 or 2 on FCAT reading and/or mathematics or below criterion on progress monitoring assessments in reading and/or math shall receive remediation through a MTSS in the appropriate subject(s).

Parent Refusal for Remediation through Progress Monitoring and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

The school district has the authority and responsibility to advise a student's course of study. Statute requires a school to develop a MTSS in consultation with the parent, but it does not require parental approval, nor does it give the parent the right to veto a MTSS. The school is held accountable for the student's success and may implement a MTSS without a parent's approval. Students whose progress monitoring plan is an IEP, however, must have parent approval of the plan.

If the parent refuses to participate in the remedial strategies detailed in the MTSS because he or she believes the strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent may appeal to the principal. The principal shall provide a hearing officer, and the hearing officer shall make a recommendation for final action to the principal. Consistent with school board rules and in accordance with state statute [1012.28 (5)F.S.], the Superintendent has designated the principal of the school as the final authority in the placement of students in programs or classes. For more specific requirements, refer to the District's Comprehensive Reading Plan on the SJCS website: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cs/crp>.

V. GRADING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Importance of Grading

Grading practices can vary greatly, according to research by Reeves, Marzano, and others. Grading inconsistencies can result in honor roll or high GPA students scoring Level I on the FCAT, students failing for non-completion of homework, students passing courses and moving grade to grade with inflated averages due to participation, homework, effort or extra credit grades.

St. Johns County School District offers a standards-based curriculum and strives for consistency so that a course grade at one school equates to the same course grade and level of mastery at another school. The curriculum in all schools in St. Johns County is based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards specify what students should know and be able to do. In a standards-based system, grades should be an indication of the level of mastery as determined by summative assessments.

Summative assessments are those assessments that are administered at the end of a learning sequence after ample practice or rehearsal of essential knowledge. Summative assessments indicate mastery of benchmarks and standards. Examples of summative assessments include:

- chapter tests
- reading selection tests
- quizzes (only if ample practice/rehearsal has been provided prior to the quiz)
- performance assessments evaluated by a rubric shared with students prior to the assessment.

Teachers also use *formative assessments*, which are frequent, in-progress checks for understanding, on a regular basis. Formative assessments are used to inform instruction, to provide ongoing and helpful feedback (1) to alert teachers to what challenges students are still facing, and (2) to inform students about where they are in relation to mastery of the standard. Examples of formative assessments include:

- guided and independent practice activities – classwork and homework
- workbook exercises as a direct follow-up to instruction
- quizzes to spot check for understanding
- observing students at work and noting progress or need for re-teaching
- students and teachers communicating about a topic by talking or writing (teachers informally assess what students know and are able to do and determine next steps for instruction).

Examples of formative/summative assessments and multiple opportunities to improve can be found in everyday life. A child falls while attempting to ride a bicycle – this is formative feedback (1) for the child, who may need to sit up straight, maintain balance or pedal faster, and (2) for the parent who is teaching the child to ride. What matters is not the number of times the child fell, but if the child is now able to ride the bicycle. Similarly, some people fail their initial test for a driver’s license, but no one cares as long as they can ultimately demonstrate knowledge of the necessary driving skills by passing the test.

Grades should be clear, undiluted indicators of what students know and are able to do at the conclusion of the learning sequence.

A. State Grading Scale 1003.437 F.S.

The following grading scale is used by all schools in St. Johns County:

Grades	Descriptor
A= 90-100	Outstanding Progress
B=80-89	Above Average Progress
C=70-79	Average Progress
D=60-69	Lowest Acceptable Progress
F=0-59	Failure

B. Progress Reports

Report Cards 1003.33 F.S.

Report cards provide the student and the student's parents with an objective evaluation of scholastic achievement with indicators of progress. Report cards shall clearly depict and evaluate the following:

- the student's mastery of Next Generation Sunshine State Standards,
- the student's academic performance in each class or course in grades K through 12 based on examinations as well as other appropriate academic performance items,
- the student's performance at his or her grade level,
- the student's conduct and behavior, and
- the student's attendance, including absences and tardies.

All schools shall use the district's approved report card as the primary means of reporting student progress. Report cards shall be issued at the end of each grading period on uniform dates as adopted annually on the official school year calendar. Students transferring into the district after the midpoint of a reporting period may be assigned grades based on records/grades from the sending school.

Interim Progress Reports 1008.25 F.S.

Interim progress reports shall be issued to all students in grades 1-12 at the midpoint of each regularly established grading period on uniform dates as adopted annually on the official school calendar. Interim reports may be done via parent conferences as well as through reporting forms.

Annual Reporting of Student Progress in Local Newspaper 1008.25 (8) (b) F.S.

Each year, by September 1, the district shall publish in the local newspaper and report in writing to the State Board of Education, the following information on the prior school year:

- the provisions of the law relating to student progression and the district School Board's policies and procedures on student retention and promotion,
- by grade, the number and percentage of all students in grades 3-10 performing at Levels 1 and 2 on the reading portion of the FCAT,
- by grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in grades 3-10,
- information on the total number of students who are promoted for good cause by each category of good cause, and
- any revisions to the district School Board's policy on retention and promotion from the prior year.

District Report on Enrollment and Completion of High School Courses Completed in Middle School

Schools shall report in Florida's Automated System for Transferring Records (FASTER) the enrollment and completion with a grade C or higher all high school courses taken by middle school students.

C. Promotion Requirements 1003.4156 F.S.

To be promoted to high school, the middle school student must successfully complete:

- three middle school or higher courses in English. These courses shall emphasize literature, composition, and technical text,
- three middle school or higher courses in mathematics. Each middle school must offer at least one high school level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit,
- three middle school or higher courses in social studies,
- three middle school or higher courses in science, and
- one course in career and education planning to be completed in sixth, seventh or eighth grade.

Beginning in 2014-2015, a student must earn a passing score on the Civics State End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment in order to pass the course and be promoted from the middle grades. For more information, see Regular Program – Course Requirements on page 7. (1008.22 F.S., HB 1255)

No Social Promotion/Administrative Placement 1008.25 (6) (a) F.S.

Florida statute prohibits the assignment of a student to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion or administrative placement at the next grade level without regard for student mastery of the appropriate Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. A student fails to meet the state portion of levels of performance for student progression when the student fails to achieve Level 3 on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in Reading, Mathematics and/or Science. As the FCAT is not the sole determiner of promotion or retention, the Intervention Team or its equivalent shall base a promotion or retention decision on the preponderance of evidence reviewed.

Promotion under Unique Circumstances

In limited, unique circumstances, a student may be promoted without meeting the specific assessment performance levels prescribed by the district and the state. Promotion may be recommended by a principal working with the Intervention Team or its equivalent if the student is able to demonstrate mastery of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards through alternate assessments with the preponderance of evidence indicating that the student's achievement is equivalent to the designated levels of performance for student progression. This provision does not eliminate the 2014-2015 requirement that a student must earn a passing score on the Civics State End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment in order to pass the course and be promoted from the middle grades.

Promotion of Late-in-the-Year Transfer Students

The promotion of students transferring into St Johns County during the last grading period shall be determined primarily by the grades and records received from the sending school.

D. Mid-Year Promotion

Mid-Year Promotion of Retained Students from 6th to 7th or 7th to 8th

In middle school, mid-year promotion is defined as promotion of a retained student at any time during the year of retention once the student has successfully completed the four (4) core grade academic requirements (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) of the preceding grade level. Student grade level classification at the end of the first semester will determine which grade level Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is administered.

E. Retention 1008.25 (2) (b) F.S.

Retention may occur when the school's instructional staff, through its Intervention Team or its equivalent, determines that the student demonstrates the need for additional time to attain appropriate academic knowledge and skills in order to meet required district and/or state performance standards.

A student who is retained must be provided with instructional experiences different from those in the previous year's program, taking into consideration the student's individual learning needs and learning style. Only in exceptional cases will a student be assigned to any one grade more than two consecutive years. The district shall provide an appropriate alternative placement for a student who has been retained two or more years.

Options for Students Not Meeting Promotion Standards 1008.25 (2) (c) F.S.

There are two options if a student does not meet district or state promotion standards. Those options are as follows:

- remediate before the beginning of the next school year and promote based on the student's demonstrated mastery of appropriate grade level expectations/standards, or
- retain in a different program that takes into account a student's unique academic needs and learning style.

F. Homework

The book Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement by Marzano, Pickering and Pollick (2001) identifies nine instructional strategies that have a probability of enhancing student achievement at all levels. The following strategies are in the order of effect sizes:

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing efforts and providing recognition
4. ***Homework and practice***
5. Non-linguistic representations
6. Cooperative learning
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Questions, cues and advance organizers

As homework is a proven strategy in improving student achievement, it is important to look at the recommendations from the research. The research study identifies four areas to guide teachers in assigning homework: (1) the effect size of homework on student achievement, (2) purposes for homework, (3) the importance of providing feedback to students and (4) parental involvement. Assigning homework from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school should follow a normal predictable progression.

Homework Policy for Middle Schools

1. Amount

The amount of homework assigned in middle school has a larger effect size on student achievement than in elementary school, with a gain of about 12 percentile points (Marzano, 2001). The St. Johns School District Office for Instructional Services recommends that students in grades 6, 7 and 8 receive 10 minutes of homework per grade level. A sixth grade student should have no more than a total of 60 minutes of homework, a seventh grade student 70 minutes and an eighth grade student 80 minutes. The amount of homework assigned should be non-negotiable and monitored by teachers, parents and administration.

Because middle school students have several teachers, it is not advisable for each teacher to assign 70-90 minutes of homework daily. The team of middle school teachers should collaborate and develop a homework plan. Possibilities include but are not limited to: a scheduled day of the week for each content area, short targeted homework from each teacher (1/6 of 70-90 minutes each), or an integrated approach (two classes could assign homework together, for example, math and science, or a writing assignment in social studies, etc.).

2. Purpose

Homework should have a specific purpose, be familiar and connected to the standards being studied, and be relevant. The purpose could be for students to (1) *practice or rehearse*, to begin (2) *preparation for the introduction of new content*, or to (3) *deepen knowledge and understanding* (Marzano, 2001). Homework

assignments can be differentiated; that is, teachers could assign some high cognitive level work for the students who understand and can apply new concepts readily. This helps students to think more critically and creatively on a much broader and deeper scale. Assigned homework for an elementary student could typically be reading each night and 3-5 math problems *differentiated* (Marzano, The Art and Science of Teaching, "Chunking Content into Digestible Bites", 2007).

3. Grading

According to the research, homework must be commented on to be of value. When the teacher provides specific feedback on student work in writing, it enhances their achievement by 30 percentile points (Marzano, 2001). When it is checked by the teacher, even if checked through whole group discussion and participation, there is a gain of 28 percentile points in learning. Homework check takes little time if the guidelines for the amount given are closely followed. It is important for teachers to check and discuss homework to gather data and reteach as necessary.

There must be time to celebrate success and effort even in middle school (Marzano, 2001). Middle school students should not be given a grade for homework; or if a grade is given, it should be a no more than 5 percent of the student's overall grade. Procedures for checking homework should be communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the school year. School homework policy could be posted on the website, and included in the parent handbook and/or newsletters.

G. Parent and Student Notifications 1008.25 (8) (a) F.S.

Parent Notification of Student's Annual Progress

Each year, schools shall provide parents with a report of the progress of the student toward achieving state and district expectations for proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics, including the student's results on each statewide assessment test. This report traditionally accompanies the last report card of each year but may be sent at an earlier date as determined by the school. In addition, progress reporting information shall be provided to parents.

Parent Notification of Student Retention

Parents shall be notified in writing when it is apparent that the student may need to be retained. Documentation shall be kept, and an acknowledgment of such notification shall be obtained. Ongoing communication with the parents shall be maintained.

Parent Notification of Remediation

Parent notification shall be documented when a student is being remediated in reading, writing, science and/or math and is being considered for retention. School personnel shall use available resources to achieve parent understanding and cooperation regarding a student's remediation, progress monitoring plan, and possible retention. Parents shall be informed of student progress via quarterly report cards and conferences as deemed necessary by the school.

Parent Notification of Non-Participation in FCAT

The school must notify the student's parents/guardians in writing that their child is not participating in the statewide assessment (FCAT) and provide the parent with information regarding the expected proficiency levels in reading, writing, math, and science. The school is also responsible for administering an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. Parents must also be notified that students with disabilities who take an alternate assessment instead of the FCAT will not be eligible for a standard high school diploma.

Parent Notification of Student Assignment to Remedial Classes in Middle School

Parents of middle school students with Level 1 or Level 2 FCAT scores in reading and/or math shall be notified when their student is placed in an intensive reading or intensive mathematics class or a content-area class focused

on reading strategies in lieu of an elective. The notification shall explain that placement in the course is based on the student's need to master Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in reading and/or math as evidenced by a score of Level 1 or Level 2 on the most recent FCAT.

Parent Notification of Career Course Curriculum and Activities

Each middle school shall inform parents about the required career education course curriculum and activities.

Parent/Student Notification of Graduation Program Options 1003.429 (3) F.S.

Beginning in 2011-2012, HB 1255 requires that each school provide students in grades six through twelve and their parents with information concerning the three-year and four-year high school graduation options. The information shall include a timeframe for achieving each graduation option.

Parent Notification of Classroom Instructional Accommodations Not Allowed on FCAT

If a student is provided with instructional accommodations in the classroom that are not allowed as accommodations in the statewide assessment program, as described in the test manuals, the school must:

- Inform the parent in writing, and
- Provide the parent with information regarding the impact on the student's ability to meet expected proficiency levels in reading, writing, and math.

Teacher Notification of Students on Community Control

If a juvenile on community control attends a regular educational school program, then the identity of the juvenile and the nature of the felony offense shall be made known to each of the student's teachers and appropriate district staff.

V. EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (GRADES 6-8)

The St. Johns County School District actively seeks to locate exceptional students and maintains information on those students screened and identified as "exceptional." The term "exceptional student" includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- students who have intellectual disabilities
- students with speech and language impairments
- students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- students who are blind or visually impaired
- students who have orthopedic impairments
- students who have traumatic brain injuries
- students who have other health impairments
- students who have emotional or behavioral disorders
- students who have specific learning disabilities
- students who are gifted
- students who have autistic spectrum disorders
- students who are developmentally delayed

Information gathered may include the student's social, emotional, physical, psychological, academic and communication behaviors and abilities. Information is collected through screening programs, checklists, teacher observations, standardized tests, and from such individuals as parents, teachers, psychologists, audiologists, social workers, physicians, other professional personnel, and the child himself. Information is used to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs for exceptional students and for reports to state and federal agencies. Students are screened periodically for vision, hearing, speech, and academic achievement at the initial step in the process of identifying those students with suspected exceptionalities. If a child is selected for further testing, the parent will be notified of the content of the evaluation and the procedural safeguards available.

A. Admission and Placement of Students

Eligibility for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Services 1003.43 (11) (a) F.S.

All students having difficulty meeting promotional requirements shall be monitored carefully by the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Intervention Team or its equivalent. Eligibility for an Exceptional Student Education may be considered upon completion of appropriate interventions and activities. State law requires that students with learning problems in reading and/or math must have been on an intervention plan for a reasonable amount of time as a general education intervention prior to beginning the referral process for Exceptional Student Education. St. Johns County has defined the reasonable length of time as a minimum of 45 school days for most students. Exceptions do apply in extreme/emergency situations, and interventions already in place before the start of a new school year do apply toward the 45 days. Eligibility for Exceptional Student Education is determined by the staffing committee in accordance with current eligibility criteria.

Placement for Students with Disabilities enrolled in Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams determine the appropriate ESE program placement for ESE students based on their individual needs. School administrators determine which classroom(s) and teacher(s) within the school in which the student will receive instruction in the ESE program that the IEP team determined appropriate. ESE students shall be placed in appropriate courses as dictated by their IEP. Specially designed instruction will be provided by an ESE teacher or other service provider in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as determined by the IEP team. In most cases, this will be in the regular education classroom with their non-disabled peers but some ESE students may require instruction in a separate environment for some portion of the day.

Placements within a School

Whenever class placement of a student involves movement within a school center, the processing of that movement shall be the responsibility of the school administrators and their designees. The personnel involved include the assistant principal as Local Education Agency (LEA) representative and/or principal, guidance counselor(s), and teacher(s) involved with the student, plus any staff members designated by the principal.

School to School Placement

Whenever an LEA at a student's current/home-zoned school questions whether the ESE program that an IEP team determines a student needs is not available at the student's current/home-zoned school, the LEA will work with District ESE Review Committee (DRC) to review the current placement and services that are being provided. The DRC will provide input to the IEP team about possible instruction/interventions that may be implemented to determine whether the student's needs can be met in the current school. If review by the DRC indicates that resources at the current/home-zoned school have been exhausted, the administrators at the student's current/home-zoned school will work with district ESE staff to identify the closest school that houses the needed program. The LEA will then contact the receiving school to schedule an IEP meeting to discuss appropriate placement.

Parents/guardians shall be invited to attend any meeting discussing school-to-school placement. The admission and placement procedures for the enrollment of students into Exceptional Student Education (ESE) are documented in the Policies and Procedures for Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services for Exceptional Students.

B. Curriculum and Instruction

Instructional Accommodations for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Students

Accommodations are changes to the way a student with disabilities accesses curriculum, demonstrates learning, or how he or she is tested. Accommodations do not change the content of the standards, but may require a change of instructional methods, materials, assignments, time demands and schedules, learning environments, and special

communications systems or assistive technologies. These accommodations must be identified and documented on the student's IEP.

Most students with disabilities can achieve general state content standards pursuant to rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C. Effective accommodations must be in place to support involvement of students with disabilities in general education and modified technology courses. Exceptional education students who are using general state content standards to attain a standard diploma will have to meet the same requirements as do regular education students. The student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will address the areas of academic need and accommodations to the general curriculum. Students with disabilities participate in the district's K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan and supplemental and intensive instructional supports as appropriate.

The general state content standards are the foundation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all Florida students. However, students with significant cognitive disabilities utilize Access Points to access the general curriculum. Access Points consist of foundation skills that are clearly linked to the general education content. The content is reduced in depth and complexity to provide access to the standards, while still providing rigor and challenging academic expectations. Access points were developed with three levels of complexity to ensure that all students have access to the general state content standards. The three levels of complexity are Independent, Supported and Participatory.

ESE students who are following the Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities will participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). IEP Teams are responsible for determining whether students with disabilities will be assessed with the FCAT/End of Course (EOC) assessments or with the FAA based on criteria outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943(4), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) The IEP team should consider the student's present level of educational performance in reference to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards/Common Core State Standards. The IEP team should also be knowledgeable of FCAT guidelines and the use of appropriate testing accommodations. In order to be eligible to participate in the FAA, the following criteria must be met:

- The student has a significant cognitive disability.
- The student is unable to master the grade-level general state content standards.
- The student is participating in a curriculum based on the state standards access points,
- The student requires direct instruction in academics based on access points in order to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills across settings.

C. Reporting Student Progress

Notification of IEP Goals

All parents will be notified of their child's achievement during the school year with at least the same frequency as that of a non-disabled peer enrolled in the same school. Progress toward IEP goals will be reported to the parent at the time designated on the IEP.

Report Cards and Grading

- A student's placement in an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program may not be designated on the report card due to FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act).
- ESE students must receive a report regarding progress toward IEP goals and objectives along with the report card. The final report card for the year shall contain a statement indicating end-of-the-year status or performance, or non-performance, at grade level; acceptable or unacceptable behavior and attendance and promotion or non-promotion.
- Students may not be discriminated against in grading because of their disability. Teachers may not unilaterally decide to use an individual grading system for a student with disabilities.

- An ESE student shall not be penalized with a lower grade for using accommodations.

In very limited cases where the district report card would be ineffective in communicating progress of an ESE student, an alternative to the district report card, approved by the Director for Exceptional Student Education, may be used.

D. Statewide Assessment - Assessment of Students with Disabilities Enrolled in Exceptional Student Education

All students, including Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students, must participate in the state's assessment and accountability system. ESE students who are following the general education program and pursuing a standard diploma shall participate in the same state and district assessments as their general education peers, including the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and End of Course (EOC) exams. If ESE students receive testing accommodations, the accommodations must be listed in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and utilized regularly during classroom instruction and assessment. Allowed accommodations are listed in the procedures manual for each specific assessment.

Legislation provides for a waiver of the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 as a requirement for graduation with a standard high school diploma for students with disabilities whose abilities cannot be accurately measured by the statewide assessments after attempting each required assessment at least twice. The individual educational plan (IEP) team may request a waiver of the FCAT/FCAT 2.0 requirement for a standard high school diploma for those students with disabilities identified in the Enhanced New Needed Opportunity for Better Life and Education for Students with Disabilities Act (ENNOBLES) who also meet the requirements set forth in Sections 1003.43(11)(b) or 1003.428(8)(b), Florida Statutes. Students with disabilities with Section 504 plans are not eligible for a waiver.

Students with disabilities enrolled in courses for which a statewide EOC assessment is required are expected to participate in the Florida EOC Assessments. Waivers are available for an EOC requirement for students who have IEPs. The IEP team must determine that an EOC assessment cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations. The student may have the EOC assessment results waived for the purpose of determining the student's course grade and credit.

To be considered for an FCAT or EOC waiver, the student must:

- Be identified as a student with a disability (S.1007.02(2)F.S.)
- Have an IEP
- Have been provided instruction to prepare the student to demonstrate proficiency in the core content knowledge and skills necessary for grade to grade progression and high school graduation (S.1003.428(8)(a)).
- Have taken FCAT with appropriate accommodations at least twice (once in 10th grade, once in 11th grade.
- Be progressing toward meeting the state credit, GPA and district graduation requirements.

ESE students who are following the Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities will participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). IEP Teams are responsible for determining whether students with disabilities will be assessed with the FCAT or with the FAA based on criteria outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943(4), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) The IEP team should consider the student's present level of educational performance in reference to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards/Common Core State Standards. The IEP team should also be knowledgeable of FCAT guidelines and the use of appropriate testing accommodations. In order to be eligible to participate in the FAA, the following criteria must be met:

- The student has a significant cognitive disability.
- The student is unable to master the grade-level general state content standards.
- The student is participating in a curriculum based on the state standards access points,

- The student requires direct instruction in academics based on access points in order to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills across settings.

A student with a disability may be allowed a special exemption from participating in FCAT 2.0 or FAA due to extraordinary circumstances that affect the student's ability to communicate in acceptable modes for statewide assessment. A specific process and timeline must be followed as outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943(5)F.A.C.

Parent Notification of Classroom Instructional Accommodations Not Allowed on FCAT

If a student is provided with instructional accommodations in the classroom that are not allowable as accommodations in the statewide assessment program, as described in the test manuals, the school must:

- inform the parent in writing, and
- provide the parent with information regarding the impact on the student's ability to meet expected proficiency levels in reading, writing, and math.

This notification is documented on the student's individual educational plan.

E. Promotion, Assignment, and Retention of Exceptional Students for Standard Diploma

Promotion of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Students

Students who receive ESE services and are following the general education program, take the state assessment (FCAT) and are working toward a standard diploma, fall under the same guidelines for promotion as non-handicapped students.

Promotion of ESE students who are following the Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities will be determined by the IEP team and based on the achievements of the students' goals and objectives.

Retention of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Students

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students who are pursuing a regular education diploma are affected by the same guidelines for retention as are students in regular education. Refer to the sections of this document for general education promotion requirements. Retention decisions for ESE students who are following the Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities are made on an individual basis by the IEP team.

F. Additional Programs

Extended School Year

Extended School Year means specially designed instruction and related services beyond the normal school year of the district; these are provided to a student with a disability, in accordance with the student's IEP, at no cost to the parent. Specific requirements and procedures must be followed. Refer to the Exception Student Education Policies and Procedures (SP&P).

Hospital Homebound

Information is also available on our website: www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/ese/homebound/.

A homebound or hospitalized student is a student who has a medically diagnosed injury, a chronic physical/psychiatric condition, or has repeated intermittent illness due to a persisting medical problem. The condition, illness or medical problem confines the student to home or hospital and restricts activities for an extended period of time. A physician licensed in the state of Florida makes the medical diagnosis. "A physician licensed in the state of Florida" as used in this rule, is one who is qualified to assess the student's physical or mental condition. Students are dismissed from the program when the physician recommends that the student no longer requires participation in the program and is ready to return to school.

The minimum evaluation for determining eligibility is an annual medical statement, from a physician licensed in the state of Florida, including a description of the disabling condition or diagnosis with any medical implications for instruction. The report must state that the student is unable to attend school and gives an estimated duration of condition or prognosis. Students are eligible for services from their third birthday until they graduate (receive a standard diploma or G.E.D.) or through their 22nd birthday. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be developed or revised prior to assignment to the homebound or hospitalized program placement.

Hospital/homebound students are eligible for the FCAT waiver only if they have been found eligible for special education services through an eligible disability program in addition to hospital/homebound. For additional information on the SJCS D hospital homebound program

VI. ENGLISH for SPEAKERS of OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

Assessment

Students in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program are commonly referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs). In general, all ELLs participate in the statewide assessment. As part of the No Child Left Behind legislation, all ELLs shall be assessed annually in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Placement

ELLs shall be placed in appropriate courses designed to provide ESOL instruction in English and mathematics, science, social studies and computer literacy.

The ELL Committee, which is composed of the principal or designee, an ESOL/language arts teacher, the guidance counselor, and any other instructional personnel responsible for the instruction of ELLs, shall make recommendations concerning the appropriate placement, promotion and retention of ELLs. Parents/guardians of students being reviewed shall be invited to participate in the meetings.

Criteria to be utilized in making appropriate placement decisions include the following:

- academic performance and progress of a student based on formal and/or alternate assessments in English and/or the student's native language,
- progress, attendance and retention reports,
- number of years the student has been enrolled in the ESOL Program, and
- student's English proficiency level.

Promotion

Promotion of an ELL is based on satisfactory student performance in reading, writing, mathematics and other requirements as set by the district and the state. ELLs not meeting district promotion criteria due to their limited English proficiency may be recommended for promotion by the Intervention Team or its equivalent, which will meet jointly with the ELL Committee. The student's parent/guardian shall be invited to attend.

The other academic progress and benchmark mastery of an ELL in reading, writing and mathematics, and on requirements set forth by the district and the State of Florida, are determined through appropriate modifications to formal and informal assessments and on modifications to instruction provided to the ELL.

Retention

Retention of an ELL is based on unsatisfactory performance in reading, writing and mathematics as determined by the Intervention Team or its equivalent, in conjunction with the ELL Committee.

For more information on the ESOL Plan, please visit the St Johns County School District ESOL website:
<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/is/esol/>.

Appendix

- **Middle School Course Sequence**
- **Required Instruction**

Middle School Course Sequence

Language Arts			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard	M/J Language Arts I	M/J Language Arts II	M/J Language Arts III
Advanced	M/J Language Arts I Advanced	M/J Language Arts II Advanced	M/J Language Arts III Advanced

Mathematics			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard	M/J Math I	M/J Math II	M/J Math III
Advanced	M/J Math I Advanced	M/J Math II Advanced	M/J Math III Advanced or Algebra I Honors
Highly Advanced	M/J Math I Advanced	Algebra I Honors	Geometry Honors

Science			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard	M/J Science I	M/J Science II	M/J Science III
Advanced	M/J Science I Advanced	M/J Science II Advanced	M/J Science III Advanced

Social Studies			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard	M/J World History	M/J Civics	M/J US History
Advanced	M/J World History Adv.	M/J Civics Advanced	M/J US History Advanced

Visual Arts			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard			
Visual Art	M/J Orientation to Art/2D	M/J Art 2D-1	M/J Art 2D-2
Computer Art		M/J Digital Art & Design I	M/J Digital Art & Design II
Advanced			
Art			Drawing & Painting I (High School Credit)

Music/ Performing Arts			
	6th	7th	8th
Standard			
Instrumental	M/J Band I M/J Instrumental Ensemble I M/J Guitar I	M/J Band II M/J Keyboard I M/J Instrumental Ensemble II M/J Guitar I	M/J Band III/M/J Keyboard II M/J Instrumental Ensemble III M/J Guitar II
Chorus	M/J Chorus I	M/J Chorus II	M/J Chorus III
Dance	M/J Dance Appreciation M/J Dance I or II	M/J Dance II or III	M/J Dance IV
Theater	M/J Theater I	M/J Theater II	
Advanced		M/J Band III M/J Band IV	M/J Band V M/J Band VI
		M/J Dance V	M/J Dance IV

REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

Introduction

The requirements for instruction are designed to conform to the vision, mission and objectives of St. Johns County Schools. The procedures herein are consistent with Florida Statute and recognize the unique characteristics and needs of St. Johns County students.

Based on State Standards

Instruction that complies with the State Board of Education adopted Student Performance Standards shall be offered in each school. These standards are incorporated into appropriate courses in all subject areas in grades K-Adult and are the basis for curriculum, instruction and evaluation of student performance in the district.

Equity in Classroom Instruction and Extra-Curricular Activities

Provisions shall be made for all students to participate fully in classroom instruction and extra-curricular activities. No student shall be denied participation because of age, sex, race, handicap, religion, national origin, or for any other reason not related to his or her individual capabilities.

Federal Required Instruction

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (TITLE 36.1.A.1 § 106)

- September 17 is designated as Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day commemorate the formation and signing on September 17, 1787, of the Constitution and recognize all who, by coming of age or by naturalization, have become citizens.
- Proclamation.— The President may issue each year a proclamation calling on United States Government officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day and inviting the people of the United States to observe Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies.
- State and Local Observances.— The civil and educational authorities of States, counties, cities, and towns are urged to make plans for the proper observance of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day and for the complete instruction of citizens in their responsibilities. Educational agencies who receive federal funds are required to participate in the observance of Constitution Day.

In instances when September 17th does not fall on a school day, the observance of Constitution Day will occur on the school day prior or after.

State Required Instruction K-12 1003.42 F.S.

(1) Each district school board shall provide all courses required for middle grades promotion, high school graduation, and appropriate instruction designed to ensure that students meet State Board of Education adopted standards in the following subject areas: reading and other language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, health and physical education, and the arts.

(2) Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction, the following:

(a) The history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property, and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government

- To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded, the last full week of classes in September shall be

recognized in public schools as Celebrate Freedom Week. Celebrate Freedom Week must include at least 3 hours of appropriate instruction in each social studies class, as determined by each school district, which instruction shall include an in-depth study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence.

- To emphasize the importance of this week, at the beginning of each school day or in homeroom, during the last full week of September, public school principals and teachers shall conduct an oral recitation by students of the following words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."
- Student recitation of this statement shall serve to reaffirm the American ideals of individual liberty.
- Upon written request by a student's parent, the student must be excused from the recitation of the Declaration of Independence. 1003.421F.S.

(b) The history, meaning, significance, and effect of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States and amendments thereto, with emphasis on each of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights and how the constitution provides the structure of our government

(c) The arguments in support of adopting our republican form of government, as they are embodied in the most important of the Federalist Papers

(d) Flag education, including proper flag display and flag salute

(e) The elements of civil government, including the primary functions of and interrelationships between the Federal Government, the state, and its counties, municipalities, school districts, and special districts

(f) The history of the United States, including the period of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, the Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present boundaries, the world wars, and the civil rights movement to the present. American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence

(g) The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.

(h) The history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society

(i) The elementary principles of agriculture

(j) The true effects of all alcoholic and intoxicating liquors and beverages and narcotics upon the human body and mind

(k) Kindness to animals

(l) The history of the state

(m) The conservation of natural resources.

(n) Comprehensive health education that addresses concepts of community health; consumer health; environmental health; family life, including an awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of teenage pregnancy; mental and emotional health; injury prevention and safety; nutrition; personal health; prevention and control of disease; substance use and abuse; dating violence and abuse in grades 9 – 12; and Internet safety

(o) Such additional materials, subjects, courses, or fields in such grades as are prescribed by law or by rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board in fulfilling the requirements of law

(p) The study of Hispanic contributions to the United States

(q) The study of women's contributions to the United States

(r) The nature and importance of free enterprise to the United States economy

(s) A character-development program in the elementary schools, similar to Character First or Character Counts, which is secular in nature. Beginning in school year 2004-2005, the character-development program shall be required in kindergarten through grade 12. Each district school board shall develop or adopt a curriculum for the character-development program that shall be submitted to the department for approval. The character-development curriculum shall stress the qualities of patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty; charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; and cooperation

(t) In order to encourage patriotism, the sacrifices that veterans have made in serving our country and [protecting democratic values worldwide. Such instruction must occur on or before Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. Members of the instructional staff are encouraged to use the assistance of local veterans when practicable

(3) Any student whose parent makes written request to the school principal shall be exempted from the teaching of reproductive health or any disease, including HIV/AIDS, its symptoms, development, and treatment. A student so exempted may not be penalized by reason of that exemption. Course descriptions for comprehensive health education shall not interfere with the local determination of appropriate curriculum which reflects local values and concerns.

(4) Instruction shall expand each student's knowledge, the understanding and the awareness of individuals with disabilities, the history of disabilities and the disability rights movement (1003.4205, F.S.).

(5) SB 1096, the Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act, passed by the 2010 Florida Legislature includes revisions to section 1003.41, F.S. This legislation states that beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the reading portion of the language arts curriculum shall include civics education content for all grade levels. The intent of this new legislation is that selected civics benchmarks be taught in the English language arts curriculum, not separately, but naturally woven in to fit whatever reading topics are taking place in the classroom.

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