



APPENDIX D: PARTICIPATION IN FCAT COMMITTEES

The development and implementation of the FCAT have been shaped by the active involvement of thousands of Florida educators serving on FCAT committees. Since 1996, educators have guided the development of the *Sunshine State Standards*, the determination of which benchmarks to assess and how to assess them on the FCAT, and how essays as well as other performance tasks should be scored. All FCAT test items have been reviewed and accepted by committees of Florida educators. The DOE maintains open communication with Florida educators regarding how the FCAT and the various associated processes and activities might be improved. Educators may be nominated to FCAT committees by their District Superintendent, district-level administrators, or by peers serving on FCAT committees.

Standing Committees

Rotating membership

Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committee—This committee has 15–20 members representing educators, school district personnel, and university faculty. They advise the DOE about K–12 assessment and accountability policies. Their recommendations may relate to standards for FCAT Achievement Levels, school grading policies, and alternative assessments. The committee meets once a year.

Reading Content Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 15–20 reading and/or language arts professionals from schools, school districts, and universities. They advise the DOE about the scope of the reading assessment. Their recommendations may include which benchmarks should be assessed on FCAT Reading, the item types recommended for each benchmark, the types of reading materials to be used, the range of difficulty for passages to be used on the FCAT, and the number of benchmarks, passages, and items to be assessed per grade level. This committee meets once or twice a year.

Writing Content Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 15–20 writing or language arts professionals from schools, school districts, and universities. They advise the DOE about the scope of the writing assessment, including the benchmarks that should be assessed and the item types recommended for each benchmark. In years prior to 2000, this committee was constituted as separate grade-level committees and was used to advise the DOE about the implementation of the Florida Writing Assessment Program. In 2000–2001, the title FCAT Writing was used and their discussions were broadened to include an expanded assessment of writing assessment topics (FCAT Writing+). This committee meets once or twice a year.

Mathematics Content Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 15–20 mathematics professionals from schools, school districts, and universities. They advise the DOE about the scope of the mathematics assessment. Their recommendation may relate to the benchmarks that should be assessed on FCAT Mathematics and the item types recommended for each benchmark. This committee meets once or twice a year.

Science Content Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 15–20 science professionals from schools, school districts, and universities. They advise the DOE about the scope of the science assessment. Their recommendations may relate to the benchmarks that should be assessed on FCAT Science and the item types recommended for each benchmark. This committee meets once or twice a year.

Interpretive Products Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 8–10 professionals that represent the many audiences for which FCAT materials are prepared. Members from Florida school districts and the private sector bring experience related to exceptional student education, ESOL, vocational education, post-secondary education, and parent involvement. This committee meets no more than once a year to review FCAT publications and provide input to the DOE for future products.

Technical Advisory Committee—This committee is composed of 10–15 professionals with expertise in psychometrics. The members include Florida district test directors, representatives from the FCAT Content Advisory Committees, Florida university faculty members, and representatives of universities and state agencies outside of Florida. In addition, the psychometric advisors of the DOE's contractors participate in the meetings of this committee. Committee members assist the DOE by reviewing technical decisions and documents, and by providing advice regarding the approaches the DOE should use to analyze and report FCAT data. This committee meets once or twice a year.

Annual and Ad Hoc Committees

Prompt Review Committee—This committee reviews the prompts and student responses from the FCAT Writing pilot test. The review ensures that prompts selected for the FCAT employ clear wording, are of appropriate difficulty and interest level, and are unbiased. The purpose of the committee is to select prompts for the FCAT Writing Field Test. Participants include language arts teachers from the targeted grade level, and school and district curriculum specialists. This committee meets each year in the fall after the pilot test.

Community Sensitivity Committee—Florida citizens associated with a variety of organizations and institutions review all passages, prompts, and items for issues of potential concern to members of the community at large. This review ensures that the primary purpose of assessing achievement is not undermined by inadvertently including in the test any material that may be deemed inappropriate by parents and other citizens. Reviewers are asked to consider whether the subject matter and language of each reading passage, writing prompt, or test item will be acceptable to Florida students, their parents, and other members of Florida communities. Participants in these committees include representatives of statewide religious organizations, parent organizations, community-based organizations, and cultural groups (e.g., Hispanic or Native American), school boards, school district advisory council members, and leaders in business and industry from across the state. Each Community Sensitivity Committee meets once a year.

Bias Review Committee—Groups of Florida educators representative of Florida's regional, racial/ethnic, and cultural diversity review passages, prompts, and items for potential bias. Reviewers look for the following types of bias: gender, racial/ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic. A test item (or prompt or passage) is considered biased if characteristics of the item, unrelated to the skill being measured, result in an unfair advantage or disadvantage for a particular group of students. (In addition to this professional judgment model, differential item functioning [DIF statistic] is examined for all FCAT items.) Participants in these committees include representatives of Florida school districts, universities, and statewide organizations that serve the various groups that are potentially affected by the types of bias described, such as Title I, ESOL, and EEO. Every attempt is made by the DOE to represent the various groups potentially affected by bias at a level at or above their representation in the general population. Each Bias Review Committee meets once a year.

Item Content Review Committee—Content reviews are conducted for reading passages and reading, mathematics, science, and writing test items to determine whether the passages and items are appropriate for the grade level for which each is proposed. In addition, participants are asked to evaluate whether the items measure the benchmark, are clearly worded, have one and only one correct answer, or are of appropriate difficulty. Participants include teachers from the targeted grade level and subject area, and school and district curriculum specialists. The Item Content Review Committees usually meet during late fall each year.

Science Expert Review Committee—Due to the theory-based nature of the content area, all potential science test items undergo an extra level of scrutiny. Participants in this committee review newly developed science test items to ensure the accuracy and currency of the science content. Participants include practicing scientists from the private sector and university-level science researchers and faculty. The Science Expert Review Committee usually meets during late fall each year.

Rangefinder Committee—After performance items (short- and extended-response) and writing prompts are field tested on the FCAT, scoring of a representative set of student responses for each item/prompt is conducted to establish guidelines for the handscoring of all students' responses. Participants establish the range of responses that represent each score point of the rubric for each item or prompt. As a result of these meetings, training materials for handscorers are assembled. Participants include teachers from the targeted grade level and subject area, and school and district curriculum specialists. Participants will have served on other FCAT committees, such as Item Content Review Committee, prior to serving on a Rangefinder Committee. The Rangefinder Committees meet after spring testing and prior to handscoring of field-test performance items.

Rangefinder Review Committee—After performance items and writing prompts are selected for use on the FCAT, a scoring and review of a representative set of student responses is conducted to establish guidelines for the handscoring of all responses. Participants discuss and verify the range of student responses that represent each score point of the rubric for each item or prompt. As a result of these meetings, training materials for handscorers are reviewed and, if necessary, revised. Participants include teachers from the targeted grade level and subject area, and school and district curriculum specialists. Participants will have served on other FCAT committees, such as the Rangefinder Committee, prior to serving on a Rangefinder Review Committee. The Rangefinder Review Committees meet in the late fall.

Gridded-Response Adjudication Committee—A review of all field-test responses to gridded-response questions is conducted to determine whether all possible correct answers have been included in the scoring key. The various responses are examined and judged as either incorrect or correct. Committee members are asked to evaluate the possibility of finding the answer through an alternate process and determine if resulting answers are acceptable. Based on their advice, the DOE establishes rules for how each gridded-response item will be scored. Participants include teachers from the targeted grade level and subject area, and school and district curriculum specialists.

Standards Setting Committees—From time to time the DOE seeks the advice of district educators and business/community representatives to recommend Achievement Level standards for the FCAT. For example, committees were used to recommend the Achievement Levels for FCAT Reading and Mathematics currently in place. For these committees, members are selected from persons familiar with the FCAT from prior committee participation and persons who may be unfamiliar with the FCAT but have an interest in the standards being established. Participants include teachers from the targeted grade level and subject area, school and district curriculum specialists, school and district administrators, university faculty from the discipline area, and business and community leaders.

Special Ad Hoc Committees—On occasion, groups of parents, teachers, school/district administrators, and others are convened to review various aspects of the testing program and to advise the DOE on appropriate courses of action. These committees provide advice on such issues as score reporting, norm-referenced tests, and interpretive products.