

FCAT HANDBOOK— A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS



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Dear Florida Educator,

The *FCAT Handbook* provides Florida educators with a broad spectrum of information on many aspects of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). As the FCAT has grown in terms of subjects, grades, and students tested, as well as its prominence in Florida's system of school accountability, it has become increasingly important for educators to have a thorough understanding of what the FCAT measures, its methodology, and what its results mean. Such an understanding is crucial for explaining test results to students and their parents and for building confidence in the program.

One prominent feature of the FCAT that is highlighted throughout the *Handbook* is the extent to which Florida educators and other citizens are involved in every aspect of the test, from fine-tuning test items to establishing criteria for scoring student work. Extensive educator involvement helps ensure that the FCAT is an accurate reflection of the learning goals that Florida educators established for their students, contained in the *Sunshine State Standards*.

The attention given to the FCAT and its results should not obscure the fact that it is only one of several factors used to measure the progress of students, schools, and districts. Other important factors include locally-developed expectations and classroom-level assessments of student progress. While no single test can completely describe student and school progress, the various FCAT components (reading, mathematics, science, and writing) work together to provide an effective means for assessing progress and for guiding instruction.

I hope you find this publication a useful resource. Thank you for your efforts to help all Florida students reach the high standards that have been set for educational achievement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Winn".

John Winn

Commissioner, Florida Department of Education