



EMERGENCY ORDER

FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Waiving Assessments for Graduation, Grade Promotions and Additional Flexibility



On April 9, 2021, Florida Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran released Emergency Order 2021-EO-02 providing flexibility to school districts across the state in addressing testing for students in Spring 2021 due to the challenges of the pandemic. Among other topics, the emergency order addresses graduation for current seniors, student promotion and retention decisions, and Bright Future awards.

In order to provide guidance to families in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) about the implications of the emergency order, our District has prepared the following questions and answers.

1. How does this Emergency Order affect students who are not graduating in the spring of 2021?

The district recommends the participation of all students in state assessments to ensure proper placement in courses and the provision of appropriate support services. This Emergency Order only provides flexibility regarding the testing requirements for third-grade promotion and for students who are graduating in the spring of 2021. The testing requirements are still in place for all other graduation cohorts.

2. What will happen if a third-grade student is unable to take the Florida Standards Assessment in English Language Arts (FSA ELA)? Will he/she be promoted to fourth grade?

As stated above, the district recommends the participation of all students in state assessments to ensure proper placement in courses and the provision of appropriate support services. However, if a third-grade student is unable to take the state assessment, the school district will use other locally administered assessments or tools, such as portfolio, to determine if the student can be promoted to fourth grade. As per the Executive Order, a student may be promoted to grade four if the district is able to determine that a student is performing at least at level 2 on the ELA assessment through the good cause exemption process provided in s. 1008.25, Fla. Stat., or other means reasonably calculated to provide reliable evidence of a student's performance.

3. What will be used to determine if a high-school senior can graduate?

Students who are expected to graduate in the spring of 2021 will be able to do so if they have met all the graduation requirements except the testing requirements (the 10th Grade English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment and the Algebra I End-of-Course Exam). As per the Executive Order, a school district is authorized to waive the required state assessments for graduation, if the district determines on a case-by-case basis that the student's high school record establishes a comparable level of achievement. Students should contact their school counselor to make sure they have met all graduation requirements.



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- 4.** What will happen to the requirement of completing volunteer hours to be eligible for the Bright Future scholarships (Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars awards, Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award, and Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award)?

Students will be considered to have met this requirement if they 1) completed the service hours; 2) had planned for, and intended to, complete the service hours prior to the student's high school graduation, but were unable to do so because the pandemic created a lack of access to volunteer opportunities; or 3) if, due to health concerns, students fell short of the volunteer service hours. Documentation of any of these circumstances shall be considered as evidence that students have completed the required number of volunteer service hours for scholarship eligibility. Students should contact their school counselor for more information.

- 5.** Will the SAT/ACT/PERT testing deadline for students applying for Bright Future scholarships be extended?

Yes, the SAT/ACT/PERT testing deadline for students graduating in the 2020-21 academic year and applying for Bright Future scholarships has been extended until no later than December 1, 2021. Sections of the SAT, ACT or PERT (the PERT only applies to the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award) from different test dates may continue to be used to meet the test criteria through December 1, 2021. Students should contact their school counselor for more information.

- 6.** If a student is taking a class this year that has an End-of-Course (EOC) exam that determines 30% of the final course grade, what will the consequences be if the student is unable to take the EOC?

Promotion and final course grades for classes that have an EOC will be determined by the student's performance in the course. The 30% EOC requirement will be applied to a student's final grade in the course only if it IMPROVES the student's final grade. This applies solely to courses students successfully completed in the 2020-21 school year.

- 7.** Will graduating high school seniors be able to receive diploma designations if they are unable to take state assessments this year?

Students who are expected to graduate in the spring of 2021 and have been unable to take state assessments will still be able to receive the diploma designations that they are eligible for if they have met all the other requirements. The requirement to use state assessments has been waived. Students should contact their school counselor for more information.



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8. How will school grades be determined?

School districts may opt in to have one or more 2020-2021 school grades or school improvement ratings apply for all statutory purposes. In order to be eligible to opt in, a school must test 90 percent or more of its eligible students. Schools that do not opt in will retain pre-COVID school grades or school improvement ratings. Schools must apply to opt in within thirty days after the release of all state testing data.

9. How will instructional personnel be evaluated this year?

The Executive Order continued the statutory requirement to include student performance indicators in instructional personnel evaluations. As a result, M-DCPS will collaborate with the United Teachers of Dade to determine whether to utilize VAM or alternative District data for student performance indicators to ensure instructional personnel evaluations consider these temporary assessment conditions. M-DCPS intends to provide instructional personnel summative evaluations in the fall once all data has been reviewed and analyzed.

10. How will school-site administrators be evaluated this year?

The Executive Order continued the statutory requirement to include student performance indicators in school-site administrator evaluations. As a result, M-DCPS will determine whether to utilize VAM or alternative District data for student performance indicators to ensure that school-site administrator evaluations consider these temporary assessment conditions. M-DCPS intends to provide school-site administrators their summative evaluations in the fall once all data has been reviewed and analyzed.



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