

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

SUBJECT: PREPARING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) STUDENTS FOR A NEW GENERATION OF COMPUTER-BASED ASSESSMENTS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

During the 2022-2023 school year, all Florida schools transitioned to the Florida Benchmark for Excellence Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) content standards for English Language Arts (ELA) Reading and Mathematics, including End-Of-Course (EOC) assessments in Algebra 1 and Geometry, and the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) for Grades 3-10 ELA Reading and Grades 3-8 Mathematics.

Most students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students, enrolled in the tested grade levels or courses participate in FAST test administration. The FAST grades 3-10 ELA Reading and 3-8 Mathematics and B.E.ST. Algebra 1 and Geometry EOC assessments are computer-based tests (CBT). Grades 4-10 B.E.S.T. Writing assessments are delivered, and student responses are recorded via a computer-based test (CBT) platform called the Test Delivery System (TDS). Allowable accommodations are provided to ESE students who have accommodations documented on their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans. Paper-based accommodated test forms are provided for students who have a paper-based accommodation listed on their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Accommodation paper-based forms include regular print, large print, braille, and one-item-per-page. Computer-based accommodations include answer masking and test-to-speech (TTS). Florida uses the ACCESS for ELLs suite of assessments as a tool to measure English Language Learners (ELLs) proficiency in English language, ensuring the skills needed in school to achieve at high levels academically.

For Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2, the Pre-K-2 Star Literacy, Star Reading, and Star Mathematics (Learning's Star Assessments) are administered. All FAST assessments are computer-based, and headphones are required for Star Early Literacy and Star Mathematics.

As our society continues to evolve in the digital age, computer-based testing reflects the changing landscape of education and the job market. Proficiency in technology has become an essential skill, making it imperative that we equip our students with the necessary tools and confidence to excel in this environment.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), like many other school districts, faces the challenge of safeguarding that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, can perform at their best during computer-based assessments. As school districts face this new reality, it is important for an online assessment to capture a student's level of learning rather than that student's ability to navigate technology. While many praise the new "21st century assessments," teachers are wondering how to best prepare their students so that the assessment is a measure of what students know, and not how skilled they are at using devices.

Some children, especially young children, may find it more difficult to “type” than to handwrite their answers to test questions. Hand-eye coordination, the ability to perform movements with the hands while being guided by the eyes, is a joint effort between the sensory system and motor skills. Young children may not have fully developed their hand-eye coordination which is key in the application of computer-based assessment. They may also become more fatigued when reading text on a computer screen than on paper.

These assessments can have far-reaching implications on students’ educational pathways. To ensure the success of our students in these assessments, especially those in their formative years, it is our obligation to empower them with the support, strategies, and resources they need to thrive in this testing and learning environment.

Our students' future success depends on our commitment to make sure they are well-prepared for these assessments and the technological demands of the 21st century.

The item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel’s Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent of Schools to review current practices, strategies, and skills necessary in the application of computer-based assessments and provide a report to the Board by December 12, 2023, with recommendations as to how to prepare students, especially students in grades Pre-K-2, to successfully apply learned skills, knowledge, and practice while responding and applying technological skills in the statewide assessment program.