

Duval County Public Schools: Key Statewide Educational Goals

1. Evolve the next generation of FCAT in grades 2-8 to measure *true* academic growth. Using the test to assess academic improvement annually (as opposed to determining simple compliance) would ensure that the educational progress of every single student is tracked, and actual growth—or lack thereof—is identified. This is the only way to ensure a year or more in growth for a year of service for every student and every teacher’s class—more for those who are behind.
2. Replace HS FCAT by following the recommendations of advocates William Bennett and Rod Paige and establish the SAT as the high-stakes exam for high school accountability and graduation. SAT is a nationally-respected exam. This would enable us to measure our students’ academic abilities against students nationwide. Current testing is insular and fails to provide a clear means of determining true student performance in a meaningful way. Florida students must now compete nationally for higher education opportunities and for jobs—we must measure their academic performance accordingly.
3. Utilize the influence and authority of the Governor’s Office to support local school boards, the Attorney General’s Office and local prosecutors in enforcing “zero tolerance” for not only weapons and drugs, but also for parental neglect. Expand the definition of “truancy” to include failure to send a child to school for 1 week or more without a health care provider’s note. Expand the definition of “abuse and neglect” to include:
 - a. Failure to send kids to school (without a medical reason).
 - b. Repeated failure to send kids to school:
 - i. Clean
 - ii. On time
 - iii. With homework done
4. Hold schools accountable by setting specific expectations—then butt out. Reduce the Legislature’s and Florida Department of Education’s (FLDOE’s) micromanagement. (Ex: recent legislation¹ may inadvertently prohibit a district from requiring a student to take an AP (Advanced Placement) exam at the end of his or her AP course—even if the district is paying for that exam—if the course is also identified as “dual enrollment.” In addition to lacking logic, micromanagement of this sort—including almost daily directives from all corners of the FLDOE—undermines focus and effort school districts are engaged in to elevate student achievement. To improve school accountability, standardize the *goals*—not the means of attaining them.

Contact: Ed Pratt-Dannals, Superintendent of Schools, (904) 390-2115

¹ FL Statute 1007.272, s.358, ch 2002-387