

FAQs about DOE EO2021-02: State Waivers

- Q. Does this emergency order mean that my school will not get a school grade?**
- A. Not necessarily. The emergency order provides districts with flexibility. Districts can opt schools in for 2021 grades or opt them out and keep the 2019 school grade.
- Q. Will the district have the flexibility to opt-in for grades for all district schools?**
- A. Only schools that test 90% or higher of eligible students will have the potential for the district to file an application to receive a school grade.
- Q. Is the decision to opt in or opt out of school grades a districtwide decision applied to all schools or can a different decision be made for each school within the district?**
- A. A separate decision whether to opt in or opt out will be made for each school by the district.
- Q. If a school tests at least 90% of the students, are they automatically eligible to file for a school grade?**
- A. The district may apply for a grade for schools that test between 90% and 94.5% of students; however, those applications will be reviewed by the state to ensure those students tested are representative of the entire student population to protect the integrity of the process. Applications for schools that test 94.5% or more of the students will be automatically approved.
- Q. When will the district make the decisions whether to receive a school grade for each school?**
- A. The emergency order requires that districts make any decision to receive a school grade within 30 days after the release of the state assessment data. This will allow us to make the most informed decision about our options.
- Q. If my school does not receive a school grade, does that mean that we won't be able to receive information regarding the performance of the school?**
- A. Schools not receiving a school grade will still have student aggregate data published on the state accountability website. The only difference is no summative rating (school grade) will be associated with the school.

ABOUT STUDENT SCORES:

Q. Does the emergency order automatically give districts the authority to implement the flexibilities identified in the emergency order?

A. No. The district will evaluate students on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Does the state waiver for third grade reading mean all third-grade students will automatically be promoted?

A. No. The emergency order gives districts the flexibility to waive the state assessment for third graders if there is other data that demonstrates the student is performing at an assessment level 2 or higher. Districts are instructed to develop additional performance criteria for consideration to make that determination, as detailed in our student progression plan.

<https://www.manateeschools.net/cms/lib/FL02202357/Centricity/Domain/1115/policy/SD MC StudentProgressionPlan 2020-2021 ENG.pdf>

Q. Should third grade students take the Florida State Assessment (FSA)?

A. Yes. This assessment provides much information regarding a student's level of performance and is an important part of a student's academic profile. However, we do understand that there are valid reasons that may cause a student to miss the FSA, and this waiver provides districts with the flexibility to use other criteria for determining proficiency.

Q. How will decisions be made to retain a student?

A. The student progression plan will be followed.

<https://www.manateeschools.net/cms/lib/FL02202357/Centricity/Domain/1115/policy/SD MC StudentProgressionPlan 2020-2021 ENG.pdf>

Recommendations for retention will be made after careful review of a student's academic record (i.e., report card grades, portfolios, benchmark assessment scores), with input from parents, the student, teachers, and school leaders.

Q. Does this mean that students in high school do not need to meet the state assessment requirements for graduation?

A. No. There are several important points regarding the high school graduation criteria.

1. The emergency order provides districts *flexibility* in waiving the assessments required for graduation on a case-by-case basis. The waiver is not automatically applied to every student who has not yet passed the required reading or math assessment.
2. Districts are required to create performance criteria to be applied in place of the state assessment. The criteria must be consistently applied across all district schools, including charter schools, to evaluate prospective graduates on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Does this mean state EOC assessments are no longer required for students enrolled in an EOC course (Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology, Civics, US History)?

A. No. Students enrolled in an EOC course, who are not graduating in 2021, will still be held accountable for all state assessment requirements. Florida Statute 1003.4282

The graduation requirement is only waived for students who are graduating in the spring of 2021.

There are several important points regarding final grades for courses with State EOC exams.

1. Students enrolled in state tested EOC courses will still be expected to take the state EOC exams.
2. However, the emergency order provides districts *flexibility* in determining promotion and final course grades in courses with state EOC exams on a case-by-case basis focusing solely on the student's performance in the course.
3. After the state EOC exam results are received by the district, the final grades in courses with state EOC exams will be recomputed using the formula required by state statute. If the final grade is higher using the state EOC data, the final grade will be replaced with the new grade using state EOC exam data. If the final grade is the same or lower, the final grade will not be adjusted.
4. **In addition, the EOC performance is considered in placement for advanced courses for high school and is a graduation requirement for all students who are not expected to graduate in the spring of 2021, as per our student progression plan.**

Q. Does this mean all seniors will automatically graduate?

A. No. Seniors still need to meet all graduation criteria for their diploma option, including GPA, course credit hours, and mandatory credits in each area. In addition, seniors who have not met assessment score requirements for graduation should continue to take all assessment options, such as the ACT and SAT, to earn a score which meets graduation requirements.

Q. I heard that the state said that they are waiving school grades. Does that mean the students will not receive grades in their classes?

A. No. The flexibility of the waiver refers to state accountability ratings for schools, not for individual students. Students will still receive quarterly and final grades in all subject areas.

ABOUT TEACHER EVALUATION:

Q. Does this mean that the student performance portion of the teacher evaluation will be eliminated for this school year?

A. No. The state emergency order provides flexibility for what districts may use as a measure for student performance. The state has specifically listed a 3-year average of VAM, a 2-year average of VAM, a single year of VAM, or a local measure of student progress. It is not clear whether the student performance portion of the evaluation can be eliminated altogether. It is also important to note that any changes will require approval by our bargaining units and may require a school board waiver of policy.