



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: April 18, 2025

It's that time of year—pencils are sharpened, computer carts are rolled out, and a quiet buzz fills the hallways. Testing season has arrived.

Whether your child is in elementary, middle, or high school, the weeks ahead include critical statewide assessments that help us measure growth, evaluate readiness, and better support every student's learning journey.

Florida's primary assessment system is the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST). These progress monitoring assessments are given three times per year—PM1, PM2, and PM3—and offer educators and families timely data about student progress. The final and most comprehensive testing window, PM3, is just around the corner.

- Grades K–2 will participate in FAST Reading and Math assessments between April 14 and May 30.
- Grades 3–10 will take FAST ELA Reading and Grades 3–8 FAST Mathematics from May 1 to May 30.

These assessments help us reflect on student learning throughout the school year and make meaningful instructional decisions for the year ahead.

In addition to FAST testing, students in grades five and eight will take the Statewide Science Assessment, and students enrolled in specific middle and high school courses will take End-of-Course (EOC) exams in Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology 1, Civics, and U.S. History—also between May 1 and May 30. These EOCs often count as part of the final course grade; in some cases, a passing score is required for high school graduation.

Florida also offers the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) for students with significant cognitive disabilities. These performance tasks cover English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, Writing, and Civics, depending on grade level, and are administered in a flexible window between February 24 and April 25.

In addition, depending on their courses and academic track, students may participate in the Florida Civic Literacy Exam (FCLE), ACCESS for ELLs (for English Language Learners), Dual-Enrolled Exams, and Advanced Placement (AP) Exams.

With so many important assessments on the horizon, we are asking families to help us in one simple but powerful way:

Make regular and on-time attendance a top priority.

Each day in class provides valuable review, preparation, and support. Consistent attendance—especially during testing season—ensures that students feel confident, well-prepared, and ready to show what they’ve learned. Please avoid scheduling vacations, appointments, or early checkouts during your child’s testing days, and contact your school if you have any questions about the schedule or expectations. We’re here to help, so please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have questions or need assistance for your student.

Our students have worked hard all year, and we are so proud of them. These specific state-required assessments are an opportunity to demonstrate that hard work, and we are confident they will rise to the occasion.

Thank you for your continued partnership as we support student success across Bay District Schools. Together, we’re putting the ‘A’ back in Bay—through Accountability, Attendance, Academics, Arts, and Athletics.