



Florida's Rigorous Education Standards Will Bolster Its Future Success

High standards and relevant assessments will help make young Floridians workforce-ready, military-eligible and crime-free

What happens in our classrooms today will determine Florida's future success. But some signs are troubling: Only 33 percent of Florida 8th graders are proficient in math and 34 percent are proficient in reading.¹ Further, 22 percent of Florida's high school students do not graduate within four years.² If our young people are not well-educated, they will not be ready for college or careers, including careers in the military. There is also a link between inadequate education and crime.³

Florida's strong academic standards and aligned assessments can help ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education, so all students are prepared for success in postsecondary education, the civilian workforce, or the military, if they choose to serve.

“Florida's academic standards help ensure that students are citizen ready, either in the military or in the civilian workforce.”

George W. Norwood

Major General, USAF (Retired)



Florida needs well-educated youth

By 2020, 65 percent of jobs in Florida will require some postsecondary education, yet only 47 percent of Florida's working age population currently has this level of education.⁴ If this situation persists, our state could face a pressing skills gap in the years to come, with an insufficient number of qualified applicants to fill open jobs. The U.S. military faces a similar problem: Poor educational achievement is one of the biggest reasons why an estimated 71 percent of young Floridians are unable to join the military.⁵ Over one-fifth of young Floridians do not graduate high school on time and even among those who graduate from high school, more than one-fifth (21 percent) of those seeking to enlist in the Army cannot join because of low scores on the military's entrance exam for math, literacy and problem solving.⁶

Inadequate education also has implications for crime and law enforcement: Key research shows that long-term changes in wages and employment opportunities among non-college educated men may explain as much as half of property and violent crime rates.⁷ And there is no disputing that less educated individuals are more likely to be incarcerated: A national analysis showed that almost 7 in 10 inmates in state prisons failed to graduate from high school, compared to fewer than 3 in 10 of the general population.⁸

High education standards and relevant assessments will help Florida develop the well-prepared youth we need

The Florida Standards and aligned assessments (the Florida Standards Assessments) can help ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education, so all students are prepared for success in

“ Maintaining Florida's strong academic standards will help prepare our students for the highly-skilled jobs of the future.

Gavin Macphail

Executive Vice President, Jones Lang LaSalle



postsecondary education, the civilian workforce, or the military, if they choose to serve.

The Florida Standards establish the skills that children must achieve at each grade level, but they do not tell teachers how to teach, nor do they specify a curriculum; these important decisions remain under local control.⁹ The Florida Standards were developed by teachers, researchers and other experts, and were adopted by the Florida State Board of Education in July 2010. In February 2014 the Board adopted a package of improvements to the standards and these were implemented in the 2014-2015 school year.¹⁰

To have an impact on student outcomes, there must also be accountability. Standards must be accompanied by assessments aligned to the standards, and a system for reporting results so everyone will know how students are really faring across schools,

districts, and states and what approaches are delivering the best results. Recognizing this, the Florida Department of Education has implemented state assessments, the Florida Standards Assessments.¹¹

Student performance on the Florida Standards Assessments has been gradually improving over time, since being implemented in 2015.¹²

Conclusion

The Florida Standards, along with aligned assessments, are the clearest way to demonstrate our state's commitment to a world-class education and show measurable results.

We will be well-served by staying on this path to preparing the next generation of workforce-ready, military-eligible and crime-free Floridians to contribute to the future success of our state.

Endnotes

1 Nation's Report Card (2015).
<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov>

2 National Center for Education Statistics (2017). The condition of education 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_coi.pdf

3 Harlow, C.W. (2003, January). Education and correctional populations. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: Department of Justice. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>

4 Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N. & Strohl, J. (2013, June). RECOVERY: Job growth and education requirements through 2020. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/>; Lumina Foundation (2017). A stronger nation. Learning beyond high school builds American talent. <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2017/#nation>

5 Department of Defense. 2013 Qualified Military Available (QMA). Acquired through personal communication with the Accession Policy and Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies teams at DoD in July 2014.

6 National Center for Education Statistics (2017). The condition of education 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_coi.pdf; Theokas, C. (2010). Shut out of the military: Today's high school education doesn't mean you're ready for today's Army. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. <https://edtrust.org/resource/shut-out-of-the-military-todays-high-school-education-doesnt-mean-youre-ready-for-todays-army/>

7 See, for example: <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/003465302317331919>

8 Harlow, C.W. (2003, January). Education and correctional populations. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: Department of Justice. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>

9 Florida Standards <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/florida-standards/>

10 Florida Standards <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/florida-standards/>

11 Florida Department of Education. Florida Standards Assessments. <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fsa.shtml>

12 Florida Department of Education (2017). Florida Standards Assessments English Language Arts and Mathematics. <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5668/urlt/89FSAPacket.pdf>

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

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