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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Cheri Pierson Yecke, Ph.D.
J. David Armstrong, Jr.

DATE: July 27, 2006

SUBJECT: **LEGISLATIVE CHANGES RELATING TO MIDDLE GRADES PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS (HOUSE BILL 7087- A++)**

The 2006 Legislature passed House Bill 7087 (A++) which, in part, revised Florida Statutes related to middle grades promotion requirements. The purpose of this memorandum and the attachments are to assist districts and schools with the implementation of the legislative changes related to middle grades course requirements. This memorandum will summarize the statutory changes made in A++ and provide implementation options to fulfill the requirements.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Course Requirements

Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes (General requirements for middle grades promotion), is created to provide general requirements for promotion from middle school to high school. It provides that beginning with students entering grade 6 in the 2006-2007 school year, in order to be promoted to the ninth grade, students are required to complete:

- Three (3) middle school or higher courses in English. These courses shall emphasize literature, composition, and technical text.
- Three (3) middle school or higher courses in mathematics. Each middle school must offer at least one high school-level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit.

J. DAVID ARMSTRONG, JR.
Chancellor, Community Colleges and Workforce Education

CHERI PIERSON YECKE, PH.D.
Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools

- Three (3) middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.
- Three (3) middle school or higher courses in science.
- One (1) semester-long course in career and education planning to be completed in seventh or eighth grade.

Each school must hold a parent meeting either in the evening or on a weekend to inform parents about the course curriculum and activities.

For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 on FCAT Reading, the student must be enrolled in and complete an intensive reading course the following year. Placement of Level 2 readers in either an intensive reading course or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered shall be determined by diagnosis of reading needs. The Department shall provide guidance on appropriate strategies for diagnosing and meeting the varying instructional needs of students reading below grade level. Reading courses shall be designed and offered pursuant to the comprehensive reading plan.

For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year, which may be integrated into the student's required mathematics course.

These changes apply to all students in grades 6, 7, or 8, independent of the grade configuration at the school.

English Courses

Students are required to take three (3) year-long courses in English in order to be promoted to high school. The main change in this requirement is the addition of technical text as an area of emphasis in the middle grades courses.

Mathematics Courses

Students are required to take three (3) year-long courses in mathematics in order to be promoted to high school. Middle schools must now offer at least one high school-level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit. Additionally, weighted funding is available for the middle schools that offer Algebra I (1200310), Algebra I Honors (1200320), Algebra IA (1200370), or Algebra IB (1200380) for high school credit, provided that students earn a grade of 'C' or better.

Reporting High School Course Enrollment and Completion with a Grade of C or Better in the Middle Grade Years

Districts that have not been in the practice of submitting high school courses enrolled in or credits completed by students in middle grades into Florida's Automated System for Transferring Records (F.A.S.T.E.R.) must now accurately and in a timely manner report this information to ensure course credit that can be used to fulfill graduation requirements is granted. Reporting high

school course grades from the middle school in the year enrolled provides more accurate data for both financial incentives and for reporting information on student course taking achievement trends.

Science

Middle school students are required to successfully complete three (3) year-long science courses.

Social Studies and Civics Requirement

In order to meet the middle school social studies requirement, a student must complete three (3) year-long courses in social studies, of which at least one semester must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.

To meet the requirement to provide students the study of state and federal government and civics education, districts will have three options:

- 1) Offer a year-long Civics course:
 - o M/J Civics, Course Number 2106010
 - o M/J Civics Advanced, Course Number 2106020
- 2) Offer a semester-long civics course and a semester-long social studies course during the same school year. These courses are new:
 - o M/J World Geography, Course Number 2103015
 - o M/J World Geography Advanced, Course Number 2103025
 - o M/J Civics, Course Number 2106015
 - o M/J Civics Advanced, Course Number 2106025
- 3) Offer a year-long U.S. History course, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education. Inclusion of course requirements 4, 8, and 9 during a semester of this year-long course could allow this course to fulfill the requirement for the study of state and federal government and civics education.
 - o M/J United States History, Course Number 2100010
 - o M/J United States History Advanced, Course Number 2100020

Schools within a district may offer any one of these options or a combination of these courses in order to provide students the opportunities to meet the requirement to study state and federal government and civics education.

Career and Education Planning Course

As part of the requirements for middle grades promotion, each student should be enrolled in a career and education planning course in seventh or eighth grade. The course must include career exploration using CHOICES or a comparable cost effective program and education planning using the ePersonal Education Planner (ePEP) available online at www.FACTS.org. The course must result in the completion of a personalized career and education plan. This plan will allow each student to chart their courses for high school and major area of interest; set short and long term goals; record personal assessments such as interests, values, skills, aptitudes, and career options; and plan for postsecondary education.

The plan must be signed by the student, the student's parent, and the student's guidance counselor or academic advisor, and should serve as a portfolio of information that students can update as they continue their education and the career decision making process.

Districts will have nine options for adding a career exploration and planning course.

- A new course description, Career Exploration and Decision Making, has been developed as a semester long course, Course Number 1700060

The following eight courses have been updated so that districts/schools can integrate the course outcomes into an existing course. (The revised requirements are underlined in the course descriptions, which are attached.)

- M/J Career Education, Course Number 2305000
- M/J Exploratory Wheel 2, Course Number 0600010
- M/J Exploratory Career Wheel 1, Course Number 8000200
- Exploring Technology, Course Number 8600020
- Orientation to Agriscience, Course Number 8100110
- Computer Applications in Business, Course Number 8200220
- Life Choices, Course Number 8500130
- Exploration of Health Occupations, Course Number 8400210

Final approval of these courses by the State Board of Education will occur this fall. While the law states that students entering sixth grade in the 2006-2007 school year should be enrolled in a career and education planning course in seventh or eighth grade, districts may implement any of these courses beginning the second semester of school year 2006-2007. Each course description is attached.

Instructors of this course may request training on CHOICES by calling (800) 342-9271 or FACTS by calling (813) 974-2118 or electronic mail through the FACTS Help Desk at facts@admin.usf.edu. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Zelda Rogers at Zelda.rogers@fldoe.org.

Standardized Grading Scale

Section 1003.437, Florida Statutes, has been amended to create a uniform grading system for public schools in grades 6-12. The statewide grading scale applies to all public school students in grades 6-12 and requires schools to use the same grading system and interpretation of letter grades that is currently in effect for high school students. The grading scale is:

- A= 90-100%
- B= 80-89%
- C= 70-79%
- D= 60-69%
- F= 0-59%

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General Contact Information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Alan Ramos, Educational Policy Consultant, by telephone at (850) 245-0745 or by electronic mail at Alan.Ramos@fldoe.org.

This memorandum and the attachments will be available online at www.fldoe.org/APlusPlus along with all other documents published by the Department of Education pertinent to House Bill 7087 (A++). This site is designed to serve as a tool for you to access at your convenience and will be updated regularly.

We appreciate your commitment to educational excellence.

CPY/ar

Attachments:

- Technical Assistance Paper
- First-Time Milestones for Secondary Reform
- Proposed New Courses Available for Middle Schools