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Subject: Exit Exam Requirement Information

Attachments: High School Exit Exam Policy - Center for American Progress.pdf
FL story grad and dropout rates 2011 slides (2).pptx

Rachel:

Per our discussion on HB 3919, here is some information connected to the importance of keeping a high school exit exam requirement in place. If you or any your colleagues have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Higher Standards Contribute to Higher Graduation Rates and Lower Remediation Rates:

- The attached slides show Florida's graduation rate increase between 1999 and 2011, followed by the reading and math remediation rates for high school graduates entering community college.
- In 1999, the Legislature passed the A+ Plan for education which set a higher bar for graduation from an 8th grade exit exam (called the HSCT) to the 10th grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
- Opponents said more students will drop out, fewer will graduate.
- In 2002, effective in 2004, the State Board of Education raised the FCAT reading and FCAT math cut score for high school graduation.
- Time and time again, Florida officials have raised the bar and opponents have said students, especially minority students, will drop out.
- The **opposite** has been true. Since 1998, Florida has seen high school graduation rates consistently increase for all students, for Hispanic students and for African American students. The dropout rates during the same period have consistently decreased for all students, for Hispanic students and for African-American students. Note that Florida's graduation rate improvement accelerated after 2003, when the higher cut scores went into effect.
- Meanwhile, the percentage of high school graduates enrolling in community college who need remediation in reading and/or mathematics has steadily declined since 2003.

Importance of Exit Exams:

- Rigorous high school exit exams provide quality control to ensure that a high school diploma means something and employers can rely on it.
- Rigorous high school exit exams verify that students have the requisite skills and competencies that employers need and want.
- Due to the potential differences in rigor across classrooms, a passing grade in an Algebra 1 course does not guarantee that a student has mastered the subject. An objective assessment is the best way to ensure that each student has achieved a level of mastery in the tested subject area.

Our Recommendations:

- Leave HSAP in place and create a transition schedule based on common core implementation where another exam (SBAC ELA/Math; ACT or SAT) that is aligned to the standards can replace the HSAP as the must-pass exit exam.
- Remove the HSAP and make Algebra 1 and English end-of-course (EOC) exams as the must-pass exit exam.

Center for Education State-by-State Report on High School Exit Exams:

- The PDF report attached details the number of states that require passage of either comprehensive assessments or end-of-course exams for high school graduation.
- Twenty-seven of the 31 states with current or planned exit exams are participating in one or both of the state consortia to develop common assessments that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards intended to measure college and career readiness. Of these 27, at least 16 plan to replace their current exams with consortia assessments and at least 16 of the 27 states expect the consortia assessments to be more rigorous

- than their current assessments.

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