

EMERGENCY ORDER FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



Waiving Assessments for Graduation, Grade Promotions and Additional Flexibility



On April 9, 2021, Florida Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran released Emergency Order 2021-E0-02 providing flexibility to school districts across the state in addressing testing for students in Spring 2021 due to the challenges of the pandemic. Among other topics, the emergency order addresses graduation for current seniors, student promotion and retention decisions, and Bright Future awards.

In order to provide guidance to families in Franklin Academy about the implications of the emergency order, we have prepared the following questions and answers.

1. How does this Emergency Order affect students who are not graduating in the spring of 2021?

Franklin Academy encourages the participation of all students in state assessments to ensure proper placement in courses and to ensure that appropriate support services are aligned for the next school year. This Emergency Order only provides flexibility regarding the testing requirements for third-grade promotion and for students who are graduating in the spring of 2021. The testing requirements are still in place for all other graduation cohorts.

2. What will happen if a third-grade student is unable to take the Florida Standards Assessment in English Language Arts (FSA ELA)? Will he/she be promoted to fourth grade?

As stated above, Franklin Academy encourages the participation of all students in state assessments to ensure proper placement in courses. However, if a third-grade student is unable to take the state assessment, Franklin Academy will use other locally administered assessments or tools, such as portfolio, to determine if the student can be promoted to fourth grade. As per the Emergency Order, a student may be promoted to grade four if schools are able to determine that a student is performing at least at level 2 on the ELA assessment through the good cause exemption process provided in s. 1008.25, Fla. Stat., or other means reasonably calculated to provide reliable evidence of a student's performance. Franklin Academy will be scheduling individual parent meetings for students who are currently not on pace to be promoted to fourth grade based on current progress.

3. What will be used to determine if a high-school senior can graduate?

Students who are expected to graduate in the spring of 2021 will be able to do so if they have met all the graduation requirements except the testing requirements (the 10th Grade English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment and the Algebra I End-of-Course Exam). As per the Emergency Order, schools are authorized to waive the required state assessments for graduation, if the school determines on a case-by-case basis that the student's high school record establishes a comparable level of achievement.

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4. What will happen to the requirement of completing volunteer hours to be eligible for the Bright Future scholarships (Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars awards)?

Students will be considered to have met this requirement if they 1) completed the service hours; 2) had planned for, and intended to, complete the service hours prior to the student's high school graduation, but were unable to do so because the pandemic created a lack of access to volunteer opportunities; or 3) if, due to health concerns, students fell short of the volunteer service hours. Documentation of any of these circumstances shall be considered as evidence that students have completed the required number of volunteer service hours for scholarship eligibility. Students should contact their school counselor at the high school for more information.

5. Will the SAT/ACT testing deadline for students applying for Bright Future scholarships be extended?

Yes, the SAT/ACT/PERT testing deadline for students graduating in the 2020-21 academic year and applying for Bright Future scholarships has been extended until no later than December 1, 2021. Sections of the SAT and ACT from different test dates may continue to be used to meet the test criteria through December 1, 2021. Students should contact their school counselor for more information.

6. If a student is taking a class this year that has an End-of-Course (EOC) exam that determines 30% of the final course grade, what will the consequences be if the student is unable to take the EOC?

Promotion and final course grades for classes that have an EOC will be determined by the student's performance in the course. The 30% EOC requirement will be applied to a student's final grade in the course only if it IMPROVES the student's final grade. This applies solely to courses students successfully completed in the 2020-21 school year. Final exams will be administered to those students whose performance in the course warrants the opportunity to improve their grade (grade less than A). If your student is earning less than an A in the course, they will sit for a final exam.

7. Will graduating high school seniors be able to receive diploma designations if they are unable to take state assessments this year?

Students who are expected to graduate in the spring of 2021 and have been unable to take state assessments will still be able to receive the diploma designations that they are eligible for if they have met all the other requirements. The requirement to use state assessments has been waived. Students should contact their school counselor for more information.

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8.

How will school grades be determined?

Schools may opt in to have their 2020-2021 school grades or school improvement ratings apply for all statutory purposes. In order to be eligible to opt in, a school must test 90 percent or more of its eligible students. Schools that do not opt in will retain pre-COVID school grades or school improvement ratings. Schools must apply to opt in within thirty days after the release of all state testing data. Franklin Academy will not have the data related to the percentage of students tested until scores are released in July 2021.

