



January 23, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

After each FCAT administration, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) evaluates assessment policies and procedures and implements changes when necessary. Parent awareness and support is a crucial part of the assessment process, and we would like to inform you of an important change that was made, beginning with the Fall 2007 Retake, which could impact your student.

Students have not historically been permitted to have electronic devices in their possession during testing. However, there was previously some flexibility regarding the policy, which stated that violation *may* result in test invalidation. Due to concerns based on actual security violations involving camera phones, the policy has been revised to state that violation *will* result in test invalidation. This means that if your child is found with an electronic device that reproduces, transmits, calculates, or records (e.g., cell phone, camera, ipod, pager) in his or her pocket, at his or her desk, or within his or her reach during testing, their test **will** be invalidated, whether the student uses the device or not.

It is not the DOE's intention to restrict student privileges or alter existing district policies but to work within the framework of existing laws to maintain the security of the FCAT. When addressing the issue of cell phones, it should be noted that while Section 1006.07(2), Florida Statutes, states that "a student may possess wireless communication devices while on school property or at school functions," it also states that, "the regulation of when and how such devices may be used during such times may still be determined by the district school board."

As always, it is our goal to keep you well informed as to how you can best support your students to maximize their performance on the FCAT. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school's guidance office.

Sincerely,

Colleen L. Risner

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