

From: Smith, Kevin
Sent time: Thursday, November 10, 2011 4:01:02 PM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; Webster, Melinda; Lee, Laurie
Subject: RE: SP Times: Florida's new FCAT cut score proposal grows contentious

Cari,

Thanks for sharing. I had not seen this.

Have a great weekend! ☺

Sincerely,

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From: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]
Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2011 3:46 PM
To: Webster, Melinda; Smith, Kevin; Lee, Laurie
Subject: FW: SP Times: Florida's new FCAT cut score proposal grows contentious

From: Jaryn Emhof (jaryn@afloridapromise.org)
Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2011 3:38 PM
To: Patricia Levesque (patricia@afloridapromise.org); Deirdre Finn (dfinn@afloridapromise.org); Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@Afloridapromise.org); Cari Miller (Cari@afloridapromise.org)
Cc: Celeste Lewis (Celeste@afloridapromise.org); Clare Crowson (Clare@afloridapromise.org)
Subject: SP Times: Florida's new FCAT cut score proposal grows contentious

Florida's new FCAT cut score proposal grows contentious

The Florida Department of Education's [proposal to change FCAT cut scores](#) for the five performance levels is encountering some resistance as the State Board of Education prepares to have a workshop on the issue this coming Monday.

Several superintendents met via conference call on Thursday morning to talk about their worries that board members and the DOE brass appear on a course to reject recommendations that would smoothe out the curve of students attaining each level 1-5 at every grade level.

Many district leaders have complained over the years that the [cut scores make high schools look bad](#). The new proposal they support aims

to change that equation.

There's talk that some of them plan to head to Jacksonville for Monday's meeting to try to convince the board to leave the new recommended cut scores alone.

They should expect some resistance from at least one board member. John Padgett, a retired superintendent, told the Gradebook via e-mail that he was dissatisfied with some of the proposal.

"Based on the information I've seen, the educator panel, the reactor panel, and the draft rule lowers the cut scores for reading in the 8th, 9th, and 10th grade. I can't support any lowering," Padgett said. "Florida needs more highly-qualified career- and college-ready graduates to power our economy; that need trumps everything else. The simple fact that almost 70% of our high school graduates require remediation in math or reading or both at the college level tells us that our high school students have to do more, not less."

Commissioner Gerard Robinson signaled that the cut scores might prove controversial back in late October, when he held a hastily called conference call with reporters to say he was [withholding his recommendation on the reading scores for eighth, ninth and tenth grades](#). It wasn't clear at the time where Robinson was headed, as he offered little insight into his action.

Robinson told the Gradebook that he has not yet come down on either side of the debate. He's heard both sides, but wants to have the workshop conversation before offering his final advice.

With the decision looming -- a final vote is set for Dec. 5 -- the details are becoming clearer and dispute looks likely. Word from several sources is that Patricia Levesque and Jeb Bush's education foundation are involved in the conversation, too. Should be interesting to see how this all shakes out if the educators and the politicians clash.