



Contact: Erika Ross

ERoss@forstudentsuccess.org or 571-458-7925

Majority of Teachers and Parents Haven't Reviewed New Academic Standards

Education Experts Call for a Delay in Process

February 11, 2020 – A new poll by the Collaborative for Student Success suggests Florida teachers and parents want to put the brakes on new education standards proposed by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) because they have not had time to review them and they would like an opportunity to do so.

Less than two weeks after the FLDOE released the proposed Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking—or “B.E.S.T.” standards—the Florida State Board of Education is poised to rubber stamp these critical education guidelines. The move would make sweeping changes to Florida’s standards and has blindsided teachers, parents and education experts who recognize that the standards have not been properly vetted by Florida’s educators and independent experts.

“While we respect Governor DeSantis’ intentions to provide Floridians with the highest academic standards in the nation, we urge him and the FLDOE to first heed the expert input from Florida teachers and parents and consider the results of a full and independent review,” said Jim Cowen, Executive Director of the Collaborative for Student Success.

New Poll of Teachers and Parents

“Our new poll echoes the concerns already raised by many educators and stakeholders, so we ask that the decision be delayed. The proposal is more than 400 pages long, and a postponement is necessary because the vast majority of educators and independent reviewers have yet to provide meaningful analysis on the overall quality of the proposed standards and the potential impact on Florida students,” continued Cowen.

An independent review has already been commissioned by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute—the preeminent, nonpartisan reviewer of standards across all states. “We expect to complete our official review of Florida’s standards by the end of March,” wrote Fordham Institute President Michael J. Petrilli in a tweet. “We won’t be shy about saying whether other states should adopt them (or not).”

The Collaborative for Student Success sponsored a Google Survey between February 7–11 of Florida parents and teachers.

- Of 246 teacher respondents, 76% indicated that they have not had an opportunity to review the standards and 83% would like an opportunity to do so.

- Of 222 parent respondents, 78% have not an opportunity to review the standards and 81% would like an opportunity to do so.

Preliminary Analysis and Recommended Changes

According to a preliminary analysis, the proposed standards have eliminated certain critical skills and knowledge that Florida students are expected to acquire. They also appear to remove valuable benchmarks designed to help teachers reach all students. Furthermore, there is a very real possibility that the high-quality curriculum options that are tied to the existing Florida standards are completely misaligned to the proposed ones, which could create massive teacher confusion and costly disruption to what Florida students are taught in their classrooms.

Further Review is Necessary

Cowen added, “We implore state education officials to pause the adoption process until such time as an independent review of the standards can be completed, or until the state education department can provide assurances that high-quality curriculum in use across the state will not be jeopardized. Florida must not rush through this adoption process at the expense of lowering the bar for Florida students.”

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More About the Collaborative For Student Success:

The Collaborative for Student Success is a non-profit advocacy organization that works to defend high standards, high-quality assessments, and strong systems of accountability, to ensure that all kids are prepared for college or career. Through capacity-building efforts with in-state organizations and collaboration with national partners, we promote fact-based public discourse and fight to advance policies that promote best practices and ensure equitable outcomes for all students. See www.ForStudentSuccess.org

More About the Google Survey:

The aforementioned Google Survey was conducted between February 7 – 11, 2020. This [polling method](#) asked desktop and smartphone internet users to answer survey questions before accessing high-quality content around the web, such as news coverage and weather reports. Florida parents and teachers were identified using a preliminary screening question before answering the remainder of the survey. For each survey, Google evaluates the representativeness of a survey by balancing its sample demographics to match the demographics of the target population: adult (18 or older) internet users. Google matches based on three demographic dimensions: age, gender, and geography. In the US, Google uses estimates for the national internet population from the US Census Bureau’s [2017 Current Population Survey \(CPS\) Computer and Internet Use Supplement](#).