**One-Paragraph Overview**

Our world is changing, and so is the way that we’re preparing students for the future. Ensuring that every child is ready to be succeed will make our city strong, and we’re already seeing great progress. Five years ago, it used to be that nearly half of students in Duval County didn’t graduate on time — now that figure is 74 percent! And more students than ever are graduating prepared for college, career and the 21st Century workforce. Today, students and teachers are adjusting to another big shift: The new Florida Standards, which are guidelines for what students should be able to do at every grade level, that were first implemented in schools in 2014-2015. That also means a new way of assessing student performance. The Florida Standards Assessment was given in 2015, and that means new scores and new school grades will be released in January. All of these changes are a little like renovating a house — there’s dust and noise that we have to live through, but the end result will be worth it when our students are better prepared for college and the workforce.

**Talking Points - Primary Messages**

* Our world is changing, we don’t know what tomorrow’s jobs will look like. But we do know that our future will depend on having a strong workforce, and we want our children to be prepared for it. That’s why we are shifting what we want our students to know and be able to do. In our state, these guidelines are known as the Florida Standards.
  + Because of these shifts, our statewide test must change as well. That’s why we have the new Florida Standards Assessment, which students took for the first time in spring 2015. It replaced the old FCAT 2.0.
* Starting this fall, you’ll hear people talking about new baseline test scores that reflect those changes. Those scores won’t be released until January or February 2016.
  + As you know, schools are graded on an A-F system, but last year’s school grades were delayed because of this new test. When they come out in January, the grades will be based on the new tests.
  + The new scores and grades aren’t comparable to earlier years. The school grades and FSA scores that come out in January will establish a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time.
  + Just like the standards they measure, these tests are more challenging, and the scores and grades will reflect that.
* When talking to your friends and neighbors, be an advocate for your local school(s) by explaining that students and teachers at your local school need time to adjust to the new standards — and they need your support.
  + (*For direct service providers, this is the perfect place to issue a call to action for volunteers to serve students through your organization*.)
* Ultimately, these new scores and new school grades will provide important information to help the community better understand where students are excelling and where they are struggling, so we can improve instruction.
* That way, we can make sure that every child in our school system is prepared for success in the future, ready to enter college or the workforce.