

Transition from FSA to FAST Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Have any of the high-stakes consequences associated with testing been removed as a result of SB 1048?

A: No. All of the high-stakes nature of testing will remain in effect, including third grade retention, high school graduation, teacher pay and school grades.

Q: Currently, students in grades 3-10 (ELA) and grades 3-8 (math) take one statewide assessment. How many statewide assessments will those students take as a result of SB 1048?

A: Three statewide assessments each in grades 3-10 ELA and grade 3-8 math for a total of six statewide assessments in those subjects. That is in addition to the current statewide assessments in science (grades 5 and 8), Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, United States History and Civics.

Q: Well, that doesn't sound like a reduction in testing. But at least the tests will be shorter. How long will each student spend testing?

A: That currently is unknown. SB 1048 was silent on the length of tests. However, the law is clear that the end-of-year test is "comprehensive." So there is no reason to believe it will be shorter than the current end-of-year test.

Q: Wait — you're telling me the law increases the number of statewide standardized tests and it does not make any provision for reducing the length of tests?

A: Correct. Once the bill becomes law (July 1, 2022), the Department of Education will initiate new assessment systems. But there is absolutely no guarantee that what they implement will result in reduced testing time. In fact, there is every reason to believe students will spend more time testing next school year.

Q: But, we do get students' test results back more quickly now, right? At least that made it into law?

A: Not really. For the start-of-the-year and midyear progress monitoring tests, results will be returned to teachers "within one week." So, that is likely longer than it takes for teachers to get progress monitoring results back using the current system.

When it comes to the big end-of-year comprehensive test, results still will not be returned until after the end of the school year.

Q: So, what has changed?

A: The name of the test. It will now be called Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST).

Q: That's it? Just the same test with a new name?

A: Not just a new name. Remember there will also be more testing — there will be a FAST at the beginning of the year, a midyear FAST and an end-of-year comprehensive FAST.

Q: What can I do about this?

A: Vote in August and November! But, democracy requires much more than voting. Regardless of the outcome of elections, it important to stay involved all year long so that your locally elected officials know teachers want there to be more joy and less testing in their classrooms. Talk to your local union president about how to stay involved and informed all year-round. It's never too soon to think about advocating for less testing during the 2023 legislative session.