

What is a developmental scale?

A developmental scale, also called a vertical scale, allows the comparison of student academic progress over time in a particular subject by linking assessments at adjacent grades together. The FCAT 2.0 developmental scale represents the success students demonstrate over time with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) content assessed. Without the FCAT 2.0 developmental scale, students would still receive a score for each year in which they took the test; however, they would not be able to chart their progress over time on the same scale.

The developmental scale was created using linking items – items that appeared identically on the assessments of adjacent grade levels – to relate the scores from one grade to those in the grades one grade level above and one grade level below it. With the scale score from each grade level successfully linked to those above and below it, a single scale was created. Linking items did not contribute to a student’s score if items were not on grade level.

Which content areas use a developmental scale?

FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics scores are reported using a developmental scale. Developmental scales can only be used for content areas that are assessed in consecutive grades. For example, FCAT 2.0 Science is assessed only in grades 5 and 8, which means FCAT 2.0 Science scores are reported as scale scores and not as developmental scale scores (DSS). Results for the End-of-Course Assessments are also reported as scale scores.

What is the relationship between the developmental scale scores and the Achievement Levels?

Each developmental scale score is placed into one of five categories, called Achievement Levels. Achievement Levels give meaning to the developmental scale by defining the level of success a student has with the NGSSS on the FCAT 2.0 by scale score. As the table below indicates, these Achievement Levels range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), with performance in Level 3 representing satisfactory performance in the assessed grade and subject. For students entering grade nine during the 2010-2011 school year and beyond, the passing score for all assessments required for high school graduation or for course credit is the minimum scale score in Achievement Level 3.

FCAT 2.0 Achievement Level Policy Definitions	
Level 5	Students at this level demonstrate mastery of the most challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
Level 4	Students at this level demonstrate an above satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
Level 3	Students at this level demonstrate a satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
Level 2	Students at this level demonstrate a below satisfactory level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .
Level 1	Students at this level demonstrate an inadequate level of success with the challenging content of the <i>Next Generation Sunshine State Standards</i> .

With input from classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, education administrators, policymakers, and other interested citizens, the State Board of Education approved the following developmental scale score ranges for each Achievement Level.

FCAT 2.0 Reading Developmental Scale Scores (140 to 302)					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	140-181	182-197	198-209	210-226	227-260
4	154-191	192-207	208-220	221-237	238-269
5	161-199	200-215	216-229	230-245	246-277
6	167-206	207-221	222-236	237-251	252-283
7	171-212	213-227	228-242	243-257	258-289
8	175-217	218-234	235-248	249-263	264-296
9	178-221	222-239	240-252	253-267	268-302
10	188-227	228-244	245-255	256-270	271-302

FCAT 2.0 Mathematics Developmental Scale Scores (140 to 298)					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	140-182	183-197	198-213	214-228	229-260
4	155-196	197-209	210-223	224-239	240-271
5	163-204	205-219	220-233	234-246	247-279
6	170-212	213-226	227-239	240-252	253-284
7	179-219	220-233	234-247	248-260	261-292
8	187-228	229-240	241-255	256-267	268-298

More information about Achievement Levels and the passing score for FCAT 2.0 Grade 10 Reading is available at: <http://fcats.fldoe.org/fcat2/pdf/achlevel.pdf>.

How can I use the developmental scale to understand my student's performance?

The intended use of the developmental scale is to monitor the progress of individual students over time, in addition to making annual grade-level placement decisions. By comparing a student's scores and Achievement Levels in the same FCAT 2.0 subject for two or more years, it is possible to determine whether a student's relative performance improved, declined, or remained the same.

Can the developmental scale score predict how my student will perform at a different grade level?

While the developmental scale scores overlap across grades, the developmental scale is NOT intended to make claims about a student's future grade-level performance or to compare the achievement of different students in different grade levels. Instead, the developmental scale is intended to inform whether a student has met the grade-level expectations and is on a path to meeting more rigorous standards in each subsequent grade. It is generally expected that a student's developmental scale score will continue to increase each year.

The developmental scale should not be used to make predictions about future performance because the items used to link the tests are not representative of the broad spectrum of content at other grade levels. For example, a grade 6 student's score of 242 on Grade 6 FCAT 2.0 Mathematics cannot be compared to a grade 8 student's score of 242 because the content of the Grade 8 FCAT 2.0 Mathematics is different from the content at grade 6. For both of these students, what will be important is whether their developmental scale scores over the next several years indicate improved performance. Similarly, a grade 9 student scoring a 245 or higher on the Grade 9 FCAT 2.0 Reading assessment has not met the graduation requirement until he or she has received a 245 on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading assessment.

The developmental scale scores are aligned with the content of the NGSSS in each grade and subject, and are based on the assumption that a student will have received instruction in the grade-specific curriculum prior to taking the assessment.

Where can I find my student's developmental scale score?

The developmental scale score is provided in the FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics student reports. Spring 2012 is the first time that student scores are being reported on the new developmental scale, which was approved by the State Board of Education in December 2011. If a student was tested and received a score in 2011, his or her 2012 student report will show the 2011 score placed on the new developmental scale. This converted score is provided for parent reference only.