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**Superintendent**



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To concerned citizens of Levy County:

There is much concern about the abundance of testing required of our students. I assure you that the teachers and administrators share in that concern. As superintendent of schools, I have addressed this issue on multiple occasions with the Department of Education and State Legislators.

We are in receipt of several requests to “Opt Out” of state mandated assessments. Unfortunately, Florida law does not permit students to opt out of state required assessments. Florida Statute states, “Each student must participate in the statewide, standardized assessment program required by section 1008.22”.

There are several potential consequences for students who “opt out”. For example, high school students cannot graduate nor receive a diploma until they pass the required statewide assessments. Additionally, middle and high school students will not be able to earn credits in certain courses without taking the EOC for the course. This could also affect promotions, scholarship opportunities as well as extracurricular activities. At the elementary level, a student’s promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade would be at risk and at very least the student would be required to participate in a remedial program.

The school district itself would be at risk of losing both state and federal funding if it fails to administer the required assessments. School board employees, including teachers, principals, and district office personnel could face disciplinary action. The school itself may be punished by having a letter grade deducted from the state designation of school grade.

As a constitutional officer, the superintendent must not endorse the “opt out” of state assessments or the violation of any Florida Law. However, I encourage parents, educators, and all citizens to speak to state legislatures, the Governor, DOE officials and other state leaders about these concerns. Your voices should be heard, and I promise to you that I will continue to work for common sense to prevail in the education of our students.

Respectfully,

Bob Hastings, Superintendent of Schools