

## **FUTURE FCAT TO BE HARDER TO PASS**

*Changes in scoring are expected to lower student and school grades.*

The State Board of Education held a workshop on Monday at the Florida State College in Jacksonville to discuss new achievement levels for the recently revised FCAT standardized test.

The Board will raise scores for Florida students to pass the FCAT, but members and panel participants are divided as to how much of a score increase is required to ensure students are ready for college.

Florida students are facing increased rigor and the test has been made more difficult to obtain a passing score. The change in the cut scores also will translate into more schools and districts earning a lower grade.

Students took a new test, the FCAT 2.0 for the first time in the Spring, 2011. "New cut scores, or the lowest score a student must make in order to make a certain level on the FCAT, are necessary due to changes in the test and content", said Kris Ellington, Department of Education deputy commissioner. She defines "standards" as what we want to achieve, adding that the scores are "noble, but achievable."

The FCAT test is rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with a score of a 3 denoting in most cases "satisfactory" performance. State Board of Education members debated if "satisfactory" translated to "proficient" in the subject.

Dixie County Superintendent of Schools Mark Rains said his district is focused on student achievement, and working to increase the number of students who perform higher than a 3. "We understand that from this point forward, our students could continue to make learning gains, but our school and district grades may become lower. That is, in a nutshell, what this boils down to."