

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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January 26, 2010

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: District School Superintendents**

**FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock**

**SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED STUDENTS FROM HAITI**

As we watch coverage of the devastating situation in Haiti, many of us are looking for ways to assist. Due to Florida's proximity to the earthquake region, our school districts will be able to lend a hand by providing a smooth school enrollment process to displaced families that may relocate to your county. The Department of Education has been meeting with Florida's Emergency Operations Center team that includes the Department of Children and Families and Department of Health, and is prepared to work with this team to answer questions that may come up regarding enrolling and educating these students.

Please find attached the following helpful documents:

- Memo from Commissioner Smith on school enrollment (sent to superintendents on January 20, 2010)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security press release and fact sheet titled "Humanitarian Parole for Haitian Orphans"
- Overview presentation of Florida's statewide efforts titled "Operation Haiti Relief"

You may also find the following Web sites useful:

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security press release on Temporary Protected Status [http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr\\_1263595952516.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1263595952516.shtm)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Unaccompanied Children's Services [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/unaccompanied\\_alien\\_children.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/unaccompanied_alien_children.htm)
- American Psychological Association <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/>

**DR. FRANCES HAITHCOCK**  
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District School Superintendents  
January 26, 2010  
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Regarding statewide assessment, section 1008.22 (3)(c)6. of the Florida Statutes requires that all students attending public school in Florida participate in the statewide assessment program but also gives authority to the Commissioner for exceptions. Commissioner Smith is exercising this authority for all children who immigrated or have been evacuated from Haiti to Florida after the date of the recent earthquake (January 12, 2010). The Commissioner understands that these children have experienced profound trauma, may arrive with no documentation or educational records, and have received no instruction in our schools. These students will be exempt from participation in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test of Writing, Reading, Mathematics and Science, the Florida Alternate Assessment, as well as any field-test administrations of end-of-course or other assessments during the spring of 2010.

Districts must provide placement assessments for these immigrants/evacuees to determine what English language skills the children may have and administer the CELLA as appropriate.

There is no impact of excluding these students from statewide assessment in proficiency calculations for school grades or AYP because they are not full-year-enrolled students. If students are enrolled prior to Survey 3, this exclusion would impact AYP participation rate calculations for reading and mathematics. The Department will request an emergency waiver from this requirement from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the coming weeks, the Department will reach out to teachers directly through the *Just for Teachers* electronic newsletter and to parents through existing channels with parent/teacher associations in order to provide an update on the actions of our Department and the efforts of our fellow state agencies. Please feel free to contact my office or appropriate Department staff with any questions that arise during this transition period.

FH/hre