

Frequently Asked Questions About Senate Bill 1908

Yes! You can purchase FCAT test preparation materials!

Q) Can I buy FCAT test-preparation products?

A) Yes. Ms. Charlie Carraway of the Florida Bureau of Instruction and Innovation and one of the authors of Senate Bill 1908 (SB1908) stated in a phone conversation on Oct. 7, 2008, that supplemental test-preparation materials are permitted in the classroom.

Q) Can I use FCAT test-preparation products in my classroom? In outside intervention programs? In tutoring?

A) Yes. They are not to replace the normal curriculum; however, there is nothing in the law that states these materials must be completely banned from the classroom.

SB1908 also allows individualized instruction for those students who are considered "at risk." According to SB1908, FCAT test-preparation can be used when "providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, content knowledge, and skills assessed for a student who scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior statewide assessment." This refers to individualized instruction that cannot be done by suspending regular classroom instruction. Therefore, intervention programs and tutoring centers, whether they are associated with the school or not, are allowed to use FCAT test-preparation methods and materials.

Supplemental test-preparation materials also make a great source of homework. By reinforcing the Sunshine State Standards at home with supplemental test-preparation materials, teachers can maintain their scheduled curriculum in the classroom while preparing students with test-taking strategies outside of their regular teaching hours.

Q) What does SB 1908 allow?

A) According to a notice released by the Florida Department of Education Teacher Liaison Sheila Veatch on Oct. 6, 2008, SB1908 allows:

- Distributing to students the sample test books and answer keys published by the Florida Department of Education
- Providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, content knowledge and skills assessed for a student who scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior statewide assessment
- Incorporating test-taking exercises and strategies into curricula for intensive reading and mathematics intervention courses
- Administering a practice test or engaging in other test-preparation activities which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the assessment, the format of the test items, and the test directions.

Q) How can I prepare my students for the FCAT without violating SB1908 regulations?

A) As long as your test-preparation practices do not interfere with district curriculum practices, you are allowed to incorporate test preparation into the classroom as supplemental material.

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Q) Why did Florida adopt SB1908?

A) Florida lawmakers adopted SB1908 to counteract the current climate of "FCAT Frenzy." The law is meant to cease activities that the Department of Education deemed to be an inefficient use of classroom time, such as FCAT pep-rallies and assemblies. It was drafted to prevent the replacement of state-issued curriculum with FCAT test-preparation activities.

Q) So if SB1908 doesn't say, "test preparation is prohibited," why doesn't my district allow me to purchase test-preparation materials with district money?

A) The original wording of SB1908 prohibited any and all districts from utilizing educational funding for FCAT test-preparation materials, but in the final proceedings, that language was stricken from the bill. The confusion may be a result of some school districts basing their future purchasing decisions off the original text. Additionally, each school district has its own purchasing power – if a district chooses to adhere to the original standings of the law, then they have the final say over that district's purchasing practices, including whether or not a school may be allowed to purchase test-preparation materials.

The above answers were compiled from information received from the Florida Department of Education.

A summation of Senate Bill 1908 can be found on the Florida Department of Education Web site:

http://www.fl DOE.org/GR/BILL_Summary/2008/SB1908.pdf

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