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Superintendent:
Diane S. Kornegay, M.Ed.

School Board Members:
District 1
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Tyler Brandeburg
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Marc Dodd
District 4
Mollie Cunningham
District 5
Stephanie Luke

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Dennis Baxley
FROM: Diane S. Kornegay, Superintendent
Lake County Schools
Date: April 12, 2023

RE: Projected High School Graduation Rates, Concordant and Comparative Scores

Florida's District School Superintendents are collectively requesting that the Legislature correct a potentially serious issue before it unfairly and irrevocably keeps thousands of our high school seniors from graduating this year. Since 2010, high school seniors have had the option to use [Rule 6A-1.09422: Concordant and Comparative Scores](#) to meet graduation requirements for the State of Florida. However, this rule changed previously to require the Class of 2023 to meet a higher concordant score in order to graduate. In Lake County alone, this change could mean that over 300 seniors will not walk across the graduation stage with their peers. At a time when Florida's impressive graduation rates are being celebrated across the nation, we know this is going to mean a significant drop in the graduation rate not only in our community, but across the state. We are asking you to take steps today to prevent this tragedy before it becomes a reality.

The following facts about the Class of 2023 are important:

- The Class of 2023 began high school during the Covid-19 Pandemic. While we did our best to transition to digital learning, these students struggled and missed needed learning opportunities for more than one-fourth of their 9th grade year. Those who took Algebra 1 that year, were not able to complete the course or take the Algebra 1 EOC during the year that they took the course.
- As a result of Covid, this class did not have regular testing opportunities in the 10th grade, so they have had fewer makeup options and less support than previous classes despite our best efforts.
- The Class of 2023 has done everything we've asked to include attending intervention classes, afternoon tutoring, Saturday School, Night School, online and in-person boot camps and SAT and ACT tutoring classes, but some are still struggling.

We believe in accountability and stretch goals, and we have no issue with a gradual increase in the concordant scores, but someone has to stand up for these students before it's too late. Once a senior leaves high school, the likelihood that he or she will return to meet additional requirements diminishes greatly.

We estimate that our district graduation rate will drop to 80 percent or below as a result of these new guidelines, a decrease of 11 percent from the 2021-2022 graduation rate of 91 percent. This is despite our constant efforts to support these students and help them graduate.

Along with school districts and superintendents around the state, we are respectfully requesting that you pass legislation to delay the increase in concordant scores another year until the 'new tests' begin based on

the new BEST state standards. Doing so will also provide more time to continue to address the learning losses and educational disruptions that resulted from the global pandemic.

If no action is taken to stop the increase in the concordant score requirement, the following will happen:

- Our state, district, and individual school graduation rates will experience a serious dip, and the negative publicity associated with that will not be indicative of the great strides in teaching and learning that are being made in our great state.
- More importantly, the lives and futures of thousands of young men and women will be severely impacted and disrupted for years, perhaps decades, due to the missed opportunity to graduate on time with their peers.

While we currently face many educational challenges, I cannot think of one with more potential for harm or disruption than applying new concordant scores to the Class of 2023. So please, do all you can to ensure these students do not suffer more than they already have.

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration.