



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 7, 2015

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### **We Have the Standards - Now What?**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** -- The State Board of Education (SBE) set passing rates for the new Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) Wednesday.

The debate was not about what students know and are able to do, but about how many failing students we can accept... 38% or 30%. The decision matters.

School grades and teacher evaluations are based on these scores. The image of the state is affected by the perception of the quality of our educational system. Thus, it is tempting to play with passing scores to hide the real problems.

"Manipulating passing levels and school grades is all sound and fury, signifying nothing that will help improve instruction," said **Pamela Goodman**, LWVF President. "It is time for the Governor and the Legislature to support real education reform that empowers locally elected school boards to identify and meet the needs of their communities with the necessary resources."

Florida has high standards and a rigorous examination. What is lacking are the policies and resources that can actually improve student learning. Here is what we know!

- Student achievement in Florida is stagnant. On the more recent international test (PISA), Florida's students scored well below other U.S. students in math and science and just average in reading.
- Florida's high school graduation rate is near the bottom.
- Funding for Florida's schools is among the lowest in the nation. The state is shifting more and more costs to local property taxes.
- School choice does not increase test scores, but it does increase segregation. Choice is merely a diversion.
- Florida ranks #1 for the number of four-year-olds in preschool, but 35th in funding for the program.

"We know we need to attract and retain high quality teachers. It is unlikely that careers in teaching will flourish under this test-driven, punitive environment. It's time to fix the problem, not argue over how many schools to pass or fail," Goodman concluded.

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