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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 12, 2009

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Response To Governor Charlie Crist's Remarks
At Joint Meeting Of State Board of Education and Board of Governors
-Florida House Democrats Call For Expanding Accountability Measures-

TALLAHASSEE --- Florida House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston) issued the following statement in response to remarks made today by Governor Charlie Crist at a joint meeting of the State Board of Education and Board of Governors:

“Governor Crist appears to be slowly recognizing that public education in Florida has suffered for more than a decade because of a misguided education accountability system that focuses too greatly on how students perform on a single-day standardized test.

“Today, the governor acknowledged certain shortcomings of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, and by his remarks, seems to be signaling support for significant portions of the education reforms recently proposed by Florida House Democrats.

“A strong but fair accountability system is needed for Florida’s students, educators and schools. My colleagues and I in the 44-member Florida House Democratic Caucus are offering a new strategy for how schools can be assessed and graded. These changes are outlined in a formal comment to the state Department of Education pertaining to Florida’s application for federal Race to the Top Initiative

grants.

“The current accountability system is shortsighted because it is based almost exclusively on how well students score on the FCAT. Our plan improves the system by phasing in a combination of end-of-course assessment exams.

“For too long, our children have only been taught to pass the FCAT instead of allowing teachers to concentrate on a variety of curriculum. Our suggestions would measure each student’s academic progress from the beginning to the end of a school year rather than a one-day snapshot of their learning.

“Much more must be done to improve Florida, its economy and our system of public education. Florida House Democrats are pleased to bring ideas for making our state better.”

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