

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Press Release on behalf of 20 Florida organizations on the urgent need for equity in accountability policy

All children, including Florida's quarter-million English learners, deserve schools with policies that help them to achieve their highest potential. Forcing children to experience repeated failure on high-stakes tests in a language they don't understand causes students to feel incompetent and less likely to try. It robs them of their hope, steals their opportunity to achieve the American dream, and drives children away from school. Policymakers, teacher preparation institutions, and instructional leaders are left with inaccurate test results as the only data to guide their planning.

We are disappointed that the 2020 Florida Legislature did not heed the requests of the public or the leadership of the bipartisan and diverse group of sponsors and cosponsors of native language assessment bills. These bills would have required the Florida Department of Education to provide state content assessments in languages that students understand. We request that all newspapers and other organizations conducting interviews for this fall's elections ask candidates for state office to declare their position on this issue. Voters deserve to know what to expect from those who seek their support.

We are confident state policymakers will not continue to block schools from doing right by 10 percent of our students. We will be back in 2021 to ask the governor and legislators to give them tests in a language they can understand. Our students deserve legislative outcomes that advance equity and policies that produce improved outcomes for ALL students. Anything short of this fails our students.

Save their hope, help them dream, let them show what they can do.

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For additional information on native language assessment, visit:
ESOLFLORIDA.ORG