

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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**ACTION BY:
Information Only**

TO: All Principals

FROM: Judith Klinek, Chief Academic Officer 

SUBJECT: ACCEPTABLE MARKS ON ANSWER DOCUMENTS

In FY11, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) analyzed and provided districts a report on schools where an unusually large number of erasures occurred on the paper-based FCAT 2.0. The report was based on the count of the number of filled-in and erased bubbles for each test item on an answer document. The scanner is sensitive enough to read both erased and filled-in bubbles for a test item, and to distinguish between them by reading the darkest of the bubbles as the intended answer.


When some districts looked into this phenomenon, they determined an unusually large number of erasures occurred when students were instructed to use a strategy that required students to fill in a bubble when they were unsure of an answer and to later return to that question to review and reconsider their choice.

To avoid this phenomenon, we have compiled the attached examples of possible ways to mark unanswered or skipped items on an answer document. You may find it helpful to review these examples and use one or more of the acceptable alternatives.

WFM:JK:MB:bls

Attachment

Approved: _____


E. Wayne Gent, Superintendent

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The following are examples of **acceptable and non- acceptable** marks on test answer documents when students respond within the test booklet.

12 Read this sentence from the article "Birds Do It! Recycle!"

Yarn is big on an oriole's shopping list when nest building.

The author is comparing an oriole to a

- F bird that can write.
- G bird that collects paper.
- H person who lives in a house.
- I person who buys things at a store.

Students MAY NOT make stray marks in this area.

13 Read this sentence from the article.

Twigs, long grass, moss, dried bark, spider's silk and mud are some of the natural ingredients that are good for nests, too.

In this sentence, the word *ingredients* means

- A ~~colors.~~
- B ~~nets.~~
- C ~~pieces.~~
- D strings. X

Marks similar to these **will not** affect scoring.

14 Birds probably choose white yarn over other colors because the white yarn

- A ~~is soft.~~
- B is warm.
- C ~~looks like cotton in the wild.~~
- D looks like lint from a clothes dryer.

Marks similar to these **will** affect scoring.

Teachers/staff CANNOT erase any stray marks on students' answer documents, even if students eliminate answers incorrectly and mark within the area of the bubbles.

The following are examples of acceptable and non- acceptable ways for students to designate unanswered or skipped items on test answer documents when students respond on an answer sheet or answer folder.

1 [A] [B] [C] [D] ← Students MAY NOT make stray marks in this area.

2 [X] [F] [G] [H] [I] ← Marks similar to these **will not** affect scoring & will remind students not to bubble these items until they have gone back and checked their response.

3 [★] [A] [B] [C] [D] ←

4 [→] [F] [G] [H] [I] ←

5 [A] [B] [C] [D] [?] ←

6 [F] [X] [X] [X] [I] ← Marks similar to these **will** affect scoring.

7 [A] [B?] [C] [D] ←

Teachers/staff CANNOT erase any stray marks on students' answer documents, even if students eliminate answers incorrectly and mark within the area of the bubbles.