

Broward County Public Schools

State Release of Elementary and Middle School Grades

To access Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) individual school grades and/or district level data, visit:

BCPS Student Assessment and Research Department

http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/releases/memos/2013_School_Grades.xls

Florida Department of Education

<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/>

Talking Points For Principals

Core Message:

- Our students are making academic gains as the District focuses on learning toward mastery.
 - Learning toward mastery measures the academic success of individual students and what they know and can demonstrate as related to state standards.

Supporting Messages:

- While we support school accountability, the state's criteria for school grades has changed numerous times in recent years, making it impossible to compare 2013 school grades to previous year's grades (not apples to apples).
 - Since 2012 alone, at least 34 changes were made to how school grades were calculated (source: SUNSPRA).
- Keeping the same writing standard from 2012 to 2013, **Broward's students show improvement**. However, changing the criteria for school grades from 3.0 to 3.5 resulted in a decrease in points applied to the writing component for the school grade.
- In 2013, statewide data shows the number of "A" schools has *decreased* among Florida's 67 school districts and the number of "D" and "F" schools has *increased*.
- Despite the decline in school grades caused by the numerous, inconsistent and nuanced changes by the state to the school grading system, student performance data on the FCAT and End of Course exams shows BCPS students performed slightly better or as well as last year.
- Best practices for academic achievement will be identified and shared among schools in the upcoming school year.
- The performance of ELL students in Reading, Math, Writing and Science is included in the school grade calculation if an ELL student who has had at least one year of instruction in U.S. schools (*regardless of the student's English language proficiency*).
- Schools, with support from the District, continue to analyze the FCAT data to identify student academic needs.
- For schools penalized a letter grade due to the bottom 25%:
 - A school that earns enough FCAT 2.0 points for an "A" grade will be penalized one letter grade if the school's lowest performing students do not meet state requirements for learning gains in reading and math.
 - However, a school that earns enough FCAT points for a "B" or "C" will be penalized one letter grade if the school's lowest performing students do not meet state requirements for learning gains for *two* consecutive years.

Note: Some school districts are using the following basketball analogy to explain changes to proficiency levels by the state (e.g., the change in FCAT 2.0 writing from a 3.0 to a 3.5):

- In basketball, the NCAA moved the 3-point line farther out so that what used to be a (proficient) 3-point shot from 19 feet 9 inches is now a (non-proficient) 2-point shot. Even though there may be an increase in the number of students reaching the 2-point shot line (making learning gains), since the line has been moved, the new NCAA – 3-point line is where we must aspire.