

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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TO: School Board Members

FROM: Joanne W. Harrison, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
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VIA: James F. Notter
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY
SCHOOLS' ANNUAL REPORT, *BEATING THE ODDS IX***

On March 22, 2010, the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) released their annual urban-schools achievement report, *Beating the Odds*. For the ninth time, the report reviewed “the performance of the Great City Schools on assessments used by the states to measure student achievement and to hold districts and schools accountable under the federal No Child Left Behind Act” (Uzzell, Simon, Horowitz, Hyslop, Lewis, & Casserly, 2010, p. 7). The report examined reading and mathematics achievement data for the 2005-06 through the 2008-09 school years for 65 major city school districts in the United States (U.S.), which represented 37 states and the District of Columbia. Again this year, the report strongly suggests that urban districts are making substantial progress in both reading and mathematics. Despite the fact that the majority of CGCS districts continue to score below state averages on fourth and eighth grade mathematics and reading assessments, urban districts have demonstrated important gains in performance and faster rates of improvement than their states. The analyses also suggest that CGCS districts have shown progress in reducing reading and mathematics achievement gaps between race and economically disadvantaged groups. These gains have been achieved in an urban context that is largely unchanged in recent years. Urban schools continue to enroll disproportionately large numbers of minority students, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

Once again, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) has been recognized in this annual report as a district making important gains. Along with Anchorage, Charleston, New Orleans, Palm Beach County, and Portland, **BCPS was one of only six districts with both fourth and eighth grade scores equal to or greater than their respective states in both reading and mathematics.**

Council of the Great City Schools Performance

The 2008-09 district-level data indicate that reading achievement is improving in urban schools. Seventy-three percent of districts increased the percentage of fourth grade students who scored at or above proficiency levels in reading since 2005-06. Similarly, 71% of districts increased the percentage of eighth grade students who scored at or above proficiency in reading during the same time period. From 2005-06 to 2008-09, 49% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for reading between their fourth grade Black students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 53% of CGCS districts narrowed the Black-White gap for their eighth grade students. During the same time period, 57% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for reading between their fourth grade

Hispanic students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 53% percent of CGCS districts narrowed the Hispanic-White achievement gap in reading for their eighth grade students. Finally, 43% of CGCS districts narrowed the reading achievement gap for economically disadvantaged (as measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch—FRL) fourth and eighth grade students (Uzzell et al., 2010).

In 2008-09, BCPS was one of only 13 CGCS districts with fourth grade reading scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), **Broward County (FL)**, Charleston (SC), Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC), Clark County (NV), District of Columbia (DC), Long Beach (CA), Palm Beach County (FL), Portland (OR), San Diego (CA), San Francisco (CA), and Seattle (WA). Similarly, BCPS was one of only six CGCS districts with eighth grade reading scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), **Broward County (FL)**, Charleston (SC), Palm Beach County (FL), and Portland (OR). Along with Albuquerque, Anchorage, Charleston, Palm Beach County, and Portland, **BCPS was one of only six districts with both fourth and eighth grade reading scores equal to or greater than their respective states (Uzzell et al., 2010). BCPS has maintained this achievement for eight of the last nine years for fourth grade and for each of the last nine years for eighth grade.**

Mathematics gains and achievement gaps were also reported for fourth and eighth grades. The 2008-09 data indicate that mathematics achievement is also improving in urban schools. Seventy-nine percent of CGCS districts increased the percentage of fourth grade students who scored at or above proficiency levels in mathematics since 2005-06. Similarly, 88% of CGCS districts increased the percentage of eighth grade students who scored at or above proficiency levels in mathematics in the same time period. From 2005-06 to 2008-09, 67% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for mathematics between their fourth grade Black students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 62% of districts narrowed the Black-White achievement gap in mathematics for their eighth grade students. During the same time period, 76% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for mathematics between their fourth grade Hispanic students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 69% of districts narrowed the Hispanic-White achievement gap in mathematics for their eighth grade students. Finally, 67% of CGCS districts narrowed the mathematics achievement gap for economically disadvantaged (FRL) fourth grade students, while 60% narrowed this gap for eighth grade students.

In 2008-09, BCPS was one of only 13 CGCS districts with fourth grade mathematics scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), **Broward County (FL)**, Charleston (SC), Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC), Clark County (NV), District of Columbia (DC), Long Beach (CA), Palm Beach County (FL), Portland (OR), San Diego (CA), San Francisco (CA), and Seattle (WA). Similarly, BCPS was one of only six CGCS districts with eighth grade mathematics scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), **Broward County (FL)**, Charleston (SC), Palm Beach County (FL), and Portland (OR). Along with Albuquerque, Anchorage, Charleston, Palm Beach County, and Portland, **BCPS was one of only six districts with both fourth and eighth grade mathematics scores equal to or greater than their respective states (Uzzell et al., 2010). BCPS has maintained this achievement for each of the last nine years for both fourth and eighth grades.**

As in previous years, *Beating the Odds IX* also reports demographic trends and factors unique to large urban school districts that impact urban education. For example, CGCS member districts accounted for 14% of the nation's total student enrollment in the 2007-08 school year (the most recent year for which federal data are available). However, CGCS districts disproportionately accounted for the nation's Black, Hispanic, Asian, English language learners, and low socioeconomic status students (Uzzell et al., 2010). Indeed, 78% of CGCS students were of a race or ethnicity that would be considered "minority,"

as compared to 43% nationally. Approximately, 26% of all students of color in the nation are enrolled in CGCS districts. Furthermore, 60% of CGCS students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to 41% nationally. Also, about 21% of the nation’s students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are enrolled in CGCS districts. These characteristics define students who have historically struggled in their academic endeavors. The report suggests that the gains that have been realized “come from cities doing what the nation has agreed is likely to work—higher standards, strong and stable leadership, better teaching, more instructional time, regular assessments, stronger accountability, and efficient management” (Uzzell et al., 2010, p. 34).

Broward County Public Schools Performance

Beating the Odds IX district profiles provide individual summaries for each member district. Comparisons of achievement, achievement gaps, and demographic information are made between each member district and their respective state. BCPS data are summarized below.

Proficiency in reading and mathematics, for BCPS and Florida students, is defined by the percentage of students scoring at or above Level 3 on the FCAT-SSS. Table 1 indicates that, from 2007-08 to 2008-09, grades 3, 9, and 10 showed a slight decrease in the percentage of students scoring at proficiency in reading. All other grades showed an increase from 2007-08 to 2008-09 in both reading and mathematics except grades 3 and 6. Grade 3 registered stable performance in mathematics, while grade 6 registered an increase in mathematics and stable performance in reading.

Table 1
Percent of Students at or Above Level 3 on the FCAT-SSS by Grade Level for 2007-08 and 2008-09

Grade	Reading		Mathematics	
	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09
3	72	71	80	80
4	70	76	76	79
5	66	72	67	69
6	67	67	59	61
7	67	70	65	67
8	56	57	69	70
9	47	46	68	70
10	38	37	71	72

The data in Table 2 indicate that BCPS students generally compared favorably to their peers across the state on the 2008-09 FCAT-SSS Reading subtest. With the exception of grade nine only, all other BCPS grades registered a percentage of students scoring at proficiency that was greater than or equal to the state. BCPS students in grade nine registered one percentage point less than the state. On the FCAT-SSS Mathematics subtest, again this year, all BCPS grades registered a higher percentage of students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to the state. BCPS mathematics scores ranged from two percentage points higher in grades three and nine, to seven percentage points higher in grades five and seven.

Table 2
Percent of Students at or Above Level 3 on the 2008-09 FCAT-SSS by Grade Level for Broward and Florida

Grade	Reading		Mathematics	
	Broward	Florida	Broward	Florida
3	71	71	80	78
4	76	74	79	75
5	72	71	69	62
6	67	66	61	55
7	70	67	67	60
8	57	54	70	66
9	46	47	70	68
10	37	37	72	69

Table 3 depicts the percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) in grades four and eight who scored at or above Level 3 on reading and mathematics subtests of the FCAT-SSS for all years since 2002-03. Data are depicted for Broward and for the state. Again this year, these data indicate that, across all years and across both grades, a larger percentage of BCPS ELL students have scored at or above Level 3 in reading and mathematics, compared to their peers across the state. Across the years, the BCPS advantage for ELL in reading ranges from 4 to 14 percentage points for grade four and from 8 to 10 percentage points for grade eight. Similarly, the BCPS advantage in mathematics for this group of students ranges from 7 to 17 percentage points for grade four and from 11 to 17 percentage points for grade eight. Across all years, the difference between students' mathematics performance in Broward and the state was largest for eighth grade in 2008-09. From 2007-08 to 2008-09, Broward increased the level of achievement in reading and in mathematics in both fourth and eighth grade, while the state increased the level of achievement in reading and in mathematics only in fourth grade. During the same time period, eighth grade students across the state maintained the same level of achievement in reading (10%) and decreased two percentage points in mathematics (29% to 27%).

Table 4 represents the percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) in grades four and eight who scored at or above Level 3 in reading and mathematics on the FCAT-SSS for school years 2001-02 through 2008-09. Data are presented for Broward and for the state. These data indicate that, with the exception of fourth grade performance in reading in 2004-05, across all years and across both grades, a larger percentage of BCPS students have scored at or above Level 3 in reading and mathematics, compared to their peers across the state.

Table 3
Percent of English Language Learners Scoring at or Above Level 3 on the FCAT-SSS, by Grade Level and Year

Year	Reading		Mathematics	
	Broward	Florida	Broward	Florida
Fourth grade				
2002-03	36	22	43	27
2003-04	47	34	50	38
2004-05	47	39	52	38
2005-06	43	33	57	40
2006-07	40	34	58	43
2007-08	40	36	55	45
2008-09	49	42	59	52
Eighth grade				
2002-03	19	9	37	24
2003-04	17	9	39	27
2004-05	15	7	42	26
2005-06	19	9	43	27
2006-07	18	10	40	27
2007-08	18	10	40	29
2008-09	20	10	44	27

Table 4
Percent of Students with Disabilities Scoring at or Above Level 3 on the FCAT-SSS, by Grade Level and Year

Year	Reading		Mathematics	
	Broward	Florida	Broward	Florida
Fourth grade				
2001-02	28	24	30	24
2002-03	30	28	32	27
2003-04	44	42	45	38
2004-05	40	42	45	38
2005-06	41	35	52	40
2006-07	42	39	54	44
2007-08	44	40	54	45
2008-09	51	46	56	50

(table continues)

Across the years, the BCPS advantage for SWD in reading ranges from 2 to 6 percentage points for grade four (excluding 2004-05) and from 1 to 4 percentage points for grade eight. Similarly, the BCPS advantage in mathematics for this group of students ranges from 5 to 12 percentage points for grade four and from 1 to 7 percentage points for grade eight.

Table 4 (continued)

Year	Reading		Mathematics	
	Broward	Florida	Broward	Florida
Eighth grade				
2001-02	14	13	19	18
2002-03	18	15	22	18
2003-04	14	13	21	19
2004-05	17	14	26	22
2005-06	16	13	24	22
2006-07	17	16	28	25
2007-08	23	20	35	30
2008-09	25	21	39	32

Table 5 illustrates the achievement gaps, from 2000-01 through 2008-09, in both reading and mathematics for Black and Hispanic subgroups and those students who were eligible to receive FRL in fourth and eighth grade. Ethnic achievement gap data reflect the difference between the percentage of students in the local subgroup (i.e., Black or Hispanic) who scored at or above proficiency and the subgroup of White students who were proficient at the state level. Similarly, the socioeconomic gap was measured as the difference between the percentage of proficient local students eligible for FRL and the subgroup of proficient non-FRL students at the state level. In 2008-09, BCPS decreased achievement gaps in reading in fourth grade for all groups. BCPS also decreased mathematics gaps in fourth grade for the Black-White groups and for the FRL/Non-FRL group. The mathematics gap for the Hispanic-White group remained stable at 2 percentage points. Achievement gaps were variable across groups for eighth grade students in 2008-09. Black students registered a one percentage point increase in reading gaps (from -25 to -26); and FRL students registered a three percentage point increase in reading gaps (from -24 to -27). Hispanic eighth grade students registered a one percentage point decrease in reading gaps (from -10 to -9). In mathematics, all eighth grade groups registered decreased achievement gaps that ranged from 2 percentage points (from -26 to -24 for Black students) to 3 percentage points (from -7 to -4 for Hispanic students), and from -23 to -20 for FRL students.

Table 5

Achievement Gap (Level 3 and Above) Data for Black-White, Hispanic-White, and FRL/Non-FRL Groups, Grades 4 and 8, FCAT-SSS, by Year

Year	Black-White		Hispanic-White		FRL/Non-FRL	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Fourth grade						
2000-01	-27	-29	-15	-10	--	--
2001-02	-23	-24	-13	-8	-27	-25
2002-03	-29	-28	-13	-7	-31	-27
2003-04	-23	-21	-10	-4	-25	-22
2004-05	-25	-21	-12	-3	-27	-22
2005-06	-19	-12	-7	1	-21	-12
2006-07	-24	-16	-11	-1	-24	-15
2007-08	-26	-18	-10	-2	-25	-18
2008-09	-19	-16	-7	-2	-21	-16

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Year	Black-White		Hispanic-White		FRL/Non-FRL	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Eighth grade						
2000-01	-32	-33	-18	-12	--	--
2001-02	-29	-33	-13	-13	-27	-31
2002-03	-28	-29	-14	-12	-29	-28
2003-04	-25	-27	-13	-8	-27	-25
2004-05	-26	-27	-11	-7	-26	-24
2005-06	-24	-25	-8	-6	-23	-21
2006-07	-26	-27	-9	-7	-25	-23
2007-08	-25	-26	-10	-7	-24	-23
2008-09	-26	-24	-9	-4	-27	-20

In 2008-09, for fourth graders in reading, the gap was smallest (-7) for Hispanic students, followed by Black students (-19) and students who were FRL recipients (-21). For fourth graders in mathematics, the gap was again smallest (-2) for Hispanic students, and the same for Black students and for students who are FRL recipients (-16 for both). For eighth grade students in reading, the achievement gap was smallest (-9) for Hispanic students, but similar for Black students (-26) and for students who qualified for FRL (-27). Similarly, for eighth graders in mathematics, the gap was smallest (-4) for Hispanic students and largest (-24) for Black students, with FRL recipients (-20) again showing an achievement gap that was similar to that of Black students. The 2008-09 data indicated that, in both reading and mathematics, achievement gaps were smaller for fourth grade students, compared to eighth grade students for all groups (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and FRL).

The full *Beating the Odds IX* report is available at the CGCS Web site (<http://www.cgcs.org/>). Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to **Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research Development & Assessment, at 754-321-2470** or **Dr. Maria Ligas, Research Specialist, Research Services at 754-321-2500**.

Reference

Uzzell, R., Simon, C., Horowitz, A., Hyslop, A., Lewis, S. & Casserly, M. (2010). *Beating the odds. Analysis of student performance on state assessments and NAEP: Results from the 2008-09 school year*. Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC. Retrieved March 24, 2010, from <http://www.cgcs.org/Pubs/BT9.pdf>

JFN/JWH/KAB/MRL:mrl

cc: Executive Leadership Team
Area Directors
Principals