THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
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TO: School Board Members

FROM: Joanne W. Harrison, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
Educational Programs & Student Support

VIA: James F. Notter
Superintendent of Schools

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

On March 19, 2011, the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) released their annual urban-schools achievement report, *Beating the Odds*. For the tenth 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, Amelga, Lewis, & Casserly, 2011, p. 9). The report examined reading and mathematics achievement data for the Spring of 2007 through the Spring of 2010 for 65 major city school systems in the United States (U.S.), which represented 36 states and the District of Columbia. Data from this report indicate that urban school districts are making overall 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 (ELL), 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 Albuquerque, Anchorage, Charleston, 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 2010 district-level data indicate that reading achievement is improving in urban schools. Sixty-six percent of districts increased the percentage of fourth grade students who scored at or above proficiency levels in reading since 2007. Similarly, 84% of districts increased the percentage of eighth grade students who scored at or above proficiency in reading during the same time period. From 2007 to 2010, 62% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for reading between their fourth grade Black students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 54% of CGCS districts narrowed the Black-White gap for their eighth grade students. During the same time period, 78% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap in reading between their fourth grade Hispanic students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 63% percent of CGCS districts narrowed the Hispanic-White

achievement gap in reading for their eighth grade students. Finally, 63% of CGCS districts narrowed the reading achievement gap for economically disadvantaged (as measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch—FRL) fourth grade students, while 66% of CGCS districts narrowed this gap for economically disadvantaged eighth grade students (Uzzell et al., 2011).

In 2009-10, BCPS was one of only fourteen CGCS districts with fourth grade reading scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), Austin (TX), **Broward County (FL),** Charleston (SC), District of Columbia (DC), Jackson (MS), Long Beach (CA), Orange County (FL), Palm Beach County (FL), Portland (OR), San Diego (CA), San Francisco (CA), and Seattle (WA). Similarly, BCPS was one of only twelve 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), Hillsborough (FL), New York City (NY), Orange County (FL), Palm Beach County (FL), Portland (OR), San Diego (CA), San Francisco (CA), and Seattle (WA). Along with Albuquerque, Anchorage, Charleston, Orange County, Palm Beach County, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle, **BCPS was one of only ten districts with both fourth *and* eighth grade reading scores equal to or greater than their respective states** (Uzzell et al., 2011)**. BCPS has maintained this achievement for nine of the last ten years for fourth grade and for each of the last ten years for eighth grade.**

Mathematics gains and achievement gaps were also reported for fourth and eighth grades. The 2010 data indicate that mathematics achievement is also improving in urban schools. Eighty-three percent of CGCS districts increased the percentage of fourth grade students who scored at or above proficiency levels in mathematics since 2007. Similarly, 84% 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 2007 to 2010, 66% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for mathematics between their fourth grade Black students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 70% of districts narrowed the Black-White achievement gap in mathematics for their eighth grade students. During the same time period, 66% of CGCS districts narrowed the achievement gap for mathematics between their fourth grade Hispanic students and fourth grade White students statewide, while 67% of districts narrowed the Hispanic-White achievement gap in mathematics for their eighth grade students. Finally, 62% of CGCS districts narrowed the mathematics achievement gap for economically disadvantaged fourth grade students, while 56% of districts narrowed this gap for economically disadvantaged eighth grade students.

In 2009-10, BCPS was one of only 14 CGCS districts with fourth grade mathematics scores equal to or greater than their state. These districts were Albuquerque (NM), Anchorage (AK), Austin (TX), **Broward County (FL),** Charleston (SC), Clark County (NV), District of Columbia (DC), Guilford (NC), 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., 2011)**. BCPS has maintained this achievement for each of the last ten years for both fourth and eighth grades.**

As in previous years, *Beating the Odds X* also reports demographic trends and factors unique to large urban school districts that impact urban education. For example, CGCS member districts accounted for 16% of the nation's total student enrollment in the 2008-09 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., 2011). Indeed, 80% of CGCS students were of a race or ethnicity that would be considered "minority," as compared to 44% nationally. Approximately, 29% of all students of color in the nation were enrolled in CGCS districts in 2008-09. Furthermore, 65% of CGCS students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to 44% nationally. Also, about 24% of the nation's students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were 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., 2011, p. 36).

Broward County Public Schools Performance

Beating the Odds X 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 achievement 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 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test—Sunshine State Standards (FCAT-SSS). Table 1 indicates that, from 2008-09 to 2009-10, grade four showed a decrease in the percentage of students scoring at proficiency in reading and in mathematics. However, grade eight registered an increase in proficiency from 2008-09 to 2009-10 in both reading and mathematics.

Table 1
Percent of Students at or Above Level 3 on the FCAT-SSS by Grade Level for 2008-09 and 2009-10

	Reading		Mathematics	
Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2008-09	2009-10
4	76	72	79	76
8	57	60	70	72

The data in Table 2 indicate that BCPS students compared favorably to their peers across the state on the 2009-10 FCAT-SSS Reading and Mathematics subtests. On the FCAT-SSS Reading subtest, BCPS grade eight registered a higher percentage of students scoring at proficiency than the state, while grade four equaled the state's level of proficiency. On the FCAT-SSS Mathematics subtest, grade four and grade eight registered a higher percentage of students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to the state.

Table 2
Percent of Students at or Above Level 3 on the 2009-10 FCAT-SSS by Grade Level for Broward and Florida

	Reading		Mathematics	
Grade	Broward	Florida	Broward	Florida
4	72	72	76	74
8	60	55	72	68

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. These data indicate that, across all years, a larger percentage of BCPS ELL students in grade eight have scored at or above Level 3 in reading and mathematics, compared to their peers across the state. Also, for seven of the last eight years, BCPS ELL students in grade four have scored at or above Level 3 in reading and mathematics, compared to their peers across the state. The exception was 2009-10, when grade four ELL students scored one percentage point below the state in reading and performed at the same level as the state in mathematics.

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

	Reading		Mathematics	
Year	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
2009-10	42	43	50	50
		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
2009-10	17	11	39	30

Across the years, the BCPS advantage for ELL in reading ranges from 4 to 14 percentage points for grade four and from 6 to 10 percentage points for grade eight. Similarly, the BCPS advantage in mathematics for this group of students ranges from 0 to 17 percentage points for grade four and from 9 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 2008-09 to 2009-10, Broward decreased the level of achievement in reading and mathematics in fourth and eighth grade, while the state increased the level of achievement in reading in fourth and eighth grade and in mathematics in eighth grade.

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 2009-10, for Broward and 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.

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

	Reading		Mathematics	
Year	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
2009-10	48	42	54	49
		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
2009-10	27	23	38	34

Table 5 illustrates the achievement gaps, from 2000-01 through 2009-10, 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 2009-10, BCPS decreased slightly the achievement gap in reading in fourth grade for the Hispanic-White group. However, BCPS increased achievement gaps in reading for the other subgroups. Similarly, BCPS increased mathematics gaps in fourth grade for the Black-White, the Hispanic-White, and the FRL/Non-FRL groups. Achievement gaps were considerably reduced across groups for eighth grade students in 2009-10. Black students registered five percentage point decrease in reading gaps (from -26 to -21); and FRL students registered a five percentage point decrease in reading gaps (from -27 to -22). Hispanic eighth grade students registered a six percentage point decrease in reading gaps (from -9 to -3). In mathematics, all eighth grade groups registered decreased achievement gaps by 1 percentage point (from -24 to -23, for Black students; and from -4 to -3, for Hispanic students). There was no change in mathematics achievement gap 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

	Black-White		Hispanic-White		FRL/Non-FRL	
Year	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
2009-10	-21	-20	-6	-4	-22	-20
			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
2009-10	-21	-23	-3	-3	-22	-20

In 2009-10, for fourth graders in reading, the gap was smallest (-6) for Hispanic students, followed by Black students (-21) and students who were FRL recipients (-22). For fourth graders in mathematics, the gap was again smallest (-4) for Hispanic students, and the same for Black students and for students who are FRL recipients (-20 for both). For eighth grade students in reading, the achievement gap was smallest (-3) for Hispanic students, but similar for Black students (-21) and for students who qualified for FRL (-22). Similarly, for eighth graders in mathematics, the gap was smallest (-3) for Hispanic students and largest (-23) for Black students, with FRL recipients (-20) again showing an achievement gap that was similar to that of Black students. The 2009-10 data indicated that, in both reading and mathematics, achievement gaps were much smaller for fourth grade students, compared to eighth grade students for all groups (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and FRL).

The full *Beating the Odds X* report is available at the CGCS Web site (**http://www.cgcs.org/**). Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to **Dr. Maria Ligas, Research Specialist, Research Services at 754-321-2500.**

Reference

Uzzell, R., Simon, C., Horowitz, A., Hyslop, A., Lewis, S. & Casserly, M. (2011). *Beating the odds. Analysis of student performance on state assessments and NAEP: Results from the 2009-10 school year.* Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC. Retrieved March 30, 2010, from http://www.cgcs.org/Pubs/BTOX.pdf

JFN/JWH/MRL:mrl

cc: Executive Leadership Team
Area Directors
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