

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

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Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

May 2, 2003

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Katherine Blasik, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent
Office of Research and Evaluation

VIA: Frank Till
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **RELEASE OF 2003 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST
(FCAT) WRITING ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Today the Florida Department of Education released district and state-wide results from the 2003 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing Assessment. The FCAT Writing Assessment is administered annually to students at grades four, eight, and ten. Scores are reported on a scale ranging from 1.0 to 6.0, where a score of 3.0 demonstrates proficient writing skills.

In the forthcoming pages, you will see that:

- Broward's students are either doing **as well or better** than students statewide in all areas of the Writing Assessment.
- Overwhelmingly, a majority of students at fourth and eighth grade (**93%**), and tenth grade (**90%**) scored at or above the proficient level.
- In fourth grade, there has been a dramatic increase in the percent of students scoring at 3.0 and above (**+9%**) and 3.5 and above (**+17%**). Additional increases were noted at the 8th grade level with a gain of 3% for students scoring 3.0 and 4% for students scoring 3.5 and above. Tenth grade scores dipped slightly at a 2% decrease for those scoring 3.0 and above as well as 3.5 and above. It is noted that the number of students tested at tenth grade increased by 1,650 students this year when compared to 2002.

These results reflect students from all curriculum groups who took FCAT Writing this year, and therefore include students who participate in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs and/or have limited English proficiency (LEP). The fourth grade Writing Assessment directs students to write either in Expository or Narrative style. The eighth and tenth grade Writing Assessment directs students to write either in Expository or Persuasive style. Results are reported by grade level as mean scores for Expository and Narrative/Persuasive style, and also as Combined scores. Table 1 presents these results from the 2003 FCAT Writing Assessment.

Table 1 provides expository, narrative and persuasive scores for the FCAT Writing Assessment. For the second year in a row, Broward's fourth grade students slightly outperformed students across the state by .1 with this year's Broward combined score at a 3.7. At both grade 8 and 10, mean scores for Broward were in line with the state average at 3.9 for grade 8 and 3.8 for grade 10. The grade 10 combined writing score represents a .1 decrease over the 2002 scores.

Table 1:			
Mean FCAT Writing Assessment Scores for 2003 All Curriculum Groups			
<i>(2002 Scores are Shown in Parentheses)</i>			
<i>Grade 4</i>	<u>Expository</u>	<u>Narrative</u>	<u>Combined</u>
BROWARD	3.6 (3.4)	3.8 (3.6)	3.7 (3.5)
STATE	3.5 (3.3)	3.8 (3.5)	3.6 (3.4)
<i>Grade 8</i>	<u>Expository</u>	<u>Persuasive</u>	<u>Combined</u>
BROWARD	4.0 (3.9)	3.9 (3.8)	3.9 (3.9)
STATE	3.9 (3.8)	3.8 (3.8)	3.9 (3.8)
<i>Grade 10</i>	<u>Expository</u>	<u>Persuasive</u>	<u>Combined</u>
BROWARD	3.9 (4.0)	3.8 (3.7)	3.8 (3.9)
STATE	3.8 (4.0)	3.7 (3.7)	3.8 (3.8)

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Writing scores among fourth, eighth, and tenth grade students in Broward. The percent of students in each scoring point, for each grade level, is illustrated in the figure.

Figure 1:
Distribution of 2003 Writing Assessment Scores (Combined)

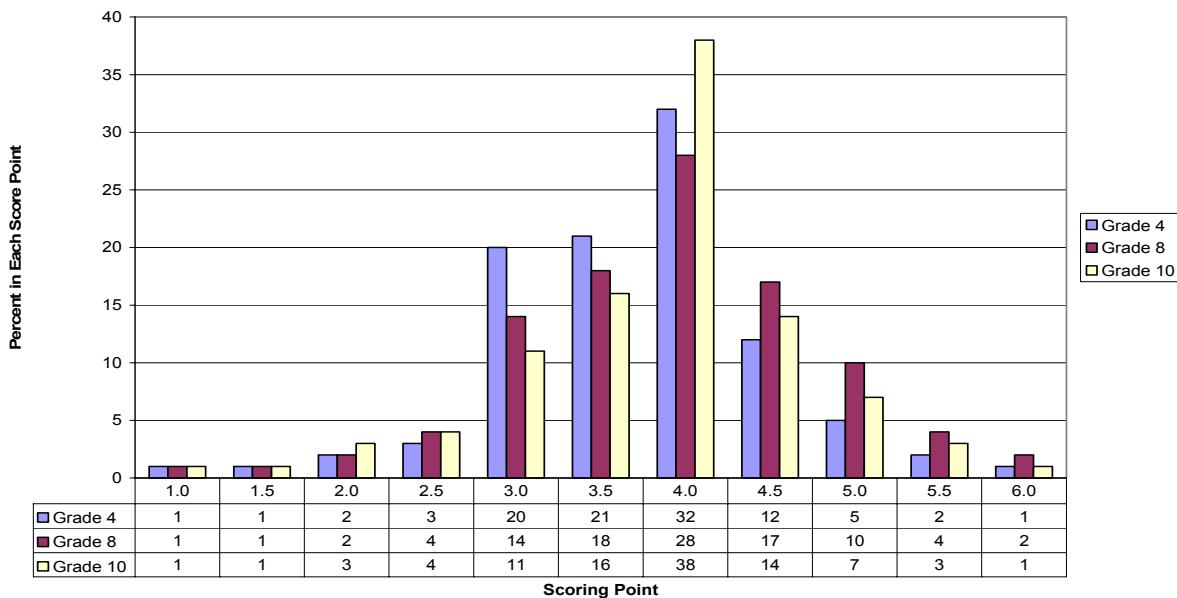


Figure 1 shows that the vast majority of Broward students are performing at or above the proficient level of the FCAT Writing Assessment. This figure also helps clarify the results

presented in Table 1. For example, it can be seen in Figure 1 that 38% of tenth graders, 28% of eighth graders, and 32% of fourth graders in Broward received a Writing score of 4.0.

The Florida A+ Plan identifies FCAT writing assessment scores of 3.0 and above and 3.5 and above as the measures of successful writing for the school grade calculation. Table 2 presents the number of students at each grade level who earned a score of 3.0 or higher, and 3.5 or higher in 2002 and 2003. The percentage of fourth grade students who scored at 3.0 and above increased substantially from 84% to 93% (9% increase) from 2002 to 2003. A dramatic increase (17%) is seen in fourth graders scoring at 3.5 or higher. The increase at this level advances the 4th grade scores from slightly over 1/2 of 4th grade students scoring 3.5 or above to almost 3/4 of the class scoring 3.5 or above.

In addition, improvements are noted at the eighth grade level for students scoring at 3.0 and above (3%) and 3.5 and above (4%) Although tenth grade scores in dipped slightly, (2% decrease at 3.0 and above as well as 3.5 and above), it should be noted that the number of students tested at tenth grade increased by 1,650 students.

Table 2: FCAT Writing Assessment Results, 2002-2003		
	Percent at 3.0 or Above	Percent at 3.5 or Above
Grade 4		
2002	84%	56%
2003	93%	73%
Grade 8		
2002	90%	75%
2003	93%	79%
Grade 10		
2002	93%	81%
2003	91%	79%

School-by-school results and District Reports can be found on the Department of Education website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcpress.htm>.

Overall the results of the FCAT Writing Assessment show that Broward continues to make progress in this important area of academic achievement. **If you have any questions regarding this release, please contact me at (954) 760-7342, or Anne Dilgen, Director of Student Assessment, at (954) 940-7627.**

FT/KB/AD/SL:jp
Attachments

- cc: Senior Management
- Area Directors
- Principals
- Diane Carr, Executive, Director, Core Curriculum
- Frank Vodolo, Executive Director, Educational Programs
- PTA
- DAC