

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

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Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

May 5, 2003

TO: School Board Members

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

VIA: Frank Till  
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **THIRD GRADE FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST  
(FCAT) RESULTS FOR 2003**

Last week, the Florida Department of Education released the 2003 Writing results for grades 4, 8, and 10. As you recall, Broward students performed as well or better than students statewide in all areas of the writing assessment. Scores for 4<sup>th</sup> graders who performed at 3.5 or above increased by 17% while 8<sup>th</sup> grade scores at the same level increased 4%. Tenth grade student scores dipped slightly but were still well aligned with the state scores overall.

Today, scores for third grade FCAT Reading and Mathematics Sunshine State Standards (SSS) and the Norm Referenced Test (NRT) have been released. Student scores are viewed in terms of percent scoring in Achievement Levels 1-5 for the SSS portion and median national percentile ranks for the NRT portions of the test.

The results indicate that:

- The percent of third grade students scoring at Achievement Level 3 or higher has remained consistent in Reading (**63%**) and Mathematics (**66%**) as compared to the 2002 school year. Broward's results place us first in relation to other large Districts in Mathematics (Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Orange, and Palm Beach) and above three of the other large Districts in Reading (Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Orange). In addition, Broward is in line with the results from Hillsborough in Reading.
- **77%** (15,866 students) of Broward third graders scored in Achievement Level 2 or higher on the SSS Reading subtest and have thereby successfully met the FCAT criteria for promotion into the fourth grade.
- **23%** (4,739 students) of Broward third graders scored in Achievement Level 1 on the SSS Reading subtest. Determination about promotion for these students will be made from further analysis of alternate promotion methods.
- **1%** (259 students) of Broward third graders who scored in Achievement Level 1 or who did not take the SSS Reading test, scored at or above the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile on the Norm Referenced section of the FCAT---thereby successfully meeting the promotion criteria into the fourth grade.

Table 1 shows that for the 2003 FCAT, 77% of Broward's third grade students scored in Achievement Level 2 or higher on the SSS Reading subtest. Further, 61.6% of Broward third grade students scored at or above the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile on the NRT Reading subtest. The median national percentile rank for Broward students increased by three percentile points in Reading from last year.

**Table 1:  
Broward Third Grade Student Performance in Reading  
Subtest of FCAT SSS and NRT**

School Year	FCAT SSS			FCAT NRT
	% in Achievement Level 1	% in Achievement Level 2 or Higher	% in Achievement Level 3 or Higher	Median National Percentile Rank
2002	23% (4,686)	77% (15,687)	62% (12,631)	59
2003	23% (4,739)	77% (15,866)	63% (12,981)	62

Table 2 presents the results for third graders on the FCAT Mathematics subtest for 2002 and 2003. Note that the Mathematics subtest is not used as part of promotion criteria to fourth grade. These results show that there was a slight increase in the number of students scoring at each Achievement Level. Most notably, the number of third grade students who scored at Achievement Level 3 or above in Mathematics increased by 169 students from 2002 to 2003. The median national percentile rank in the norm referenced portion of the FCAT Mathematics test increased by two percentile points from 2002.

**Table 2:  
Broward Third Grade Student Performance in Mathematics  
Subtest of FCAT SSS and NRT**

School Year	FCAT SSS			FCAT NRT
	% in Achievement Level 1	% in Achievement Level 2 or Higher	% in Achievement Level 3 or Higher	Median National Percentile Rank
2002	17% (3,462)	84% (17,107)	66% (13,441)	67
2003	17% (3,506)	83% (17,115)	66% (13,610)	69

### **Florida A+ Plan and School Grades**

The Florida A+ Plan calculates school grades based upon percent of students scoring Achievement Level 3 or higher. The 2003 percent scoring at Achievement Level 3 and higher is consistent with the 2002 rates of achievement and directly in line with the state rate of level 3 and above in Reading (63%) while slightly higher than the Florida rate in mathematics (63%).

Table 3 presents Broward third grade student performance on the FCAT SSS on both Mathematics and Reading subtests for 2002 and 2003.

**Table 3:  
 Broward Third Grade Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics\***

	SSS Achievement Levels				
	1	2	3	4	5
FCAT SSS Mathematics					
<b>2002</b> (Total=20,365)	17% (3,462)	18% (3,666)	33% (6,720)	24% (4,888)	9% (1,833)
<b>2003</b> (Total= 20,621)	17% (3,506)	17% (3,506)	33% (6,805)	24% (4,949)	9% (1,856)
FCAT SSS Reading					
<b>2002</b> (Total = 20,373)	23% (4,686)	14% (2,852)	34% (6,927)	23% (4,686)	5% (1,019)
<b>2003</b> (Total = 20,605)	23% (4,739)	14% (2,885)	34% (7,006)	24% (4,945)	5% (1,030)

\*Due to rounding procedures and scoring issues, sums of percentages may not equal 100% and sums of number of students may not equal total number of students.

### Comparison to State and Other Large Districts in Florida

Table 4 presents the percentages of students in each Achievement Level in Reading for Broward, Florida, and four of the largest districts. It can be seen that Broward has matched Hillsborough County and the State in terms of the total percentage of students scoring at Achievement 3 or above in Reading. Broward has also surpassed the three other largest districts in Reading.

**Table 4: FCAT Reading Percent Scoring  
 in Each Achievement Level 2003**

District/State	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% Scoring Level 3 or Above
<b>Broward</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>State</b>	23%	15%	33%	25%	5%	63%
Miami-Dade	31%	15%	31%	19%	3%	53%
Orange	26%	15%	32%	22%	4%	58%
Palm Beach	24%	15%	33%	24%	5%	62%
Hillsborough	22%	16%	33%	25%	5%	63%

Table 5 presents the percentages of students in each Achievement Level in Mathematics for Broward, Florida, and four of the largest districts. It can be seen that in Mathematics, the proportion of Broward students scoring at Achievement Level 3 or above surpasses the four other large districts and the State.

**Table 5: FCAT Mathematics Percent Scoring in Each Achievement Level 2003**

District/State	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% Scoring Level 3 or Above
<b>Broward</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>State</b>	19%	19%	34%	22%	7%	63%
Miami-Dade	25%	19%	31%	19%	6%	56%
Orange	21%	19%	32%	21%	6%	59%
Palm Beach	19%	19%	35%	21%	7%	63%
Hillsborough	17%	19%	34%	23%	8%	65%

**Next Steps**

It is important to note that third grade students who have not yet met the FCAT criteria for promotion into the fourth grade will have additional opportunities to demonstrate readiness prior to the next school year. Retention of third grade students is based in part on the requirements of Florida Statute 1008.25 (5) (b) that requires third grade students to be retained if they have not met Achievement Level 2 on the FCAT SSS Reading assessment. The criteria for promotion from the third to the fourth grade requires that students either (a) score in Achievement Level 2 or higher in the area of Reading on the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) portion of the FCAT, or (b) demonstrate an exemption from this criteria through good cause. Among the available exemption methods for demonstrating readiness for promotion into the fourth grade are:

- Scoring at or above the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile on the Reading subtest on the Norm Referenced portion of the FCAT.
- Scoring at or above the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile on the Reading subtest of an alternative assessment, the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9). This test will be administered on May 20, 2003 at the child's home school.
- For those third grade students who still do not demonstrate readiness for promotion with the SAT-9, an initial Portfolio reading assessment will be conducted beginning June 6, followed by a Reading Camp from July 7 to August 1. Another Portfolio assessment will be administered following the Reading Camp.

Overall, Broward third grade results demonstrated an increase for Norm-Referenced Reading and Mathematics tests, and the SSS Reading and Mathematics scores were consistent with 2002 results. In addition, Broward County students outperform their counterparts in other large districts throughout the state on the SSS Reading and Mathematics.

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School-by-school results and District Reports can be found on the Department of Education website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcpres.htm>. Individual student reports are expected to be delivered to schools early the week of May 12, 2003. If you have any questions regarding this release, **please contact me at (954) 760-7342, or Anne Dilgen, Director, Student Assessment, at (954) 940-7627.**

FT/KB/AD/SL:jp

cc: Senior Management  
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