

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

**DR. FRANK TILL
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Telephone: (954) 765-6271

Facsimile: (954) 760-7483

Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

June 18, 2003

TO: School Board Members

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

VIA: Frank Till
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **2003 GRADING OF SCHOOLS**

Today Governor Bush and Education Commissioner Horne released the 2002-03 school grades. As you recall, school grade data are drawn from student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests measuring the Sunshine State Standards (FCAT SSS) in Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. Schools new to the school accountability system will receive a line of data but no school grade. In addition, schools that have fewer than 30 eligible students with valid FCAT SSS scores in Reading and Mathematics in the current and previous year do not qualify for a school performance grade. Similar to last year, the grading formula includes individual student learning gains, as well as higher standards. As we can see, some schools, particularly high schools across the state, continue to struggle. However, it is also important to see that we have some very positive results as well. As can be seen in Table 1:

- 61 elementary schools, 17 middle, 5 high schools, and one combination middle/high school received a grade of A for a total of 84 schools, up from 75 last year,
- 37 elementary, 11 middle, 3 high schools, and one combination school received a grade of B for a total of 52 schools, up from 49 last year,
- 24 elementary, 8 middle, and 11 high schools received a grade of C for a total of 43 schools, down from 53 last year,
- 9 elementary and 8 high schools received a grade of D for a total of 17 schools, up one from last year,
- 5 elementary and 1 high school received a grade of F for a total of six schools, up from one last year. Of the four non-charter schools that received an F grade, two schools scored one point away from a D with a total of 279 points, and
- Although not in the table, it is important to note that one school, Lauderhill Middle, received an I due to a packing error at the school site. An appeal is being filed.

Table 1
 2003 School Grades by Level

Grade	Elementary			Middle			High			Combination			Total		
	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
A	52	48*	61	5	20	17	4	5	5		1	1	61	75	84
B	14	38	37	8	7	11	0	4	3		0	1	22	49	52
C	46	31	24	20	10	8	16	12	11		0	0	82	53	43
D	15	11	9	3	0	0	7	5	8		0	0	25	16	17
F	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	1		0	0	0	1	6

*Park Ridge Elementary School was originally designated an A school for the 2002 school year. However, the State has recently replaced the A with an I due to an ongoing investigation based on issues of teacher intervention.

Figure 1 below shows the number of “A” through “F” schools in 2002-2003.

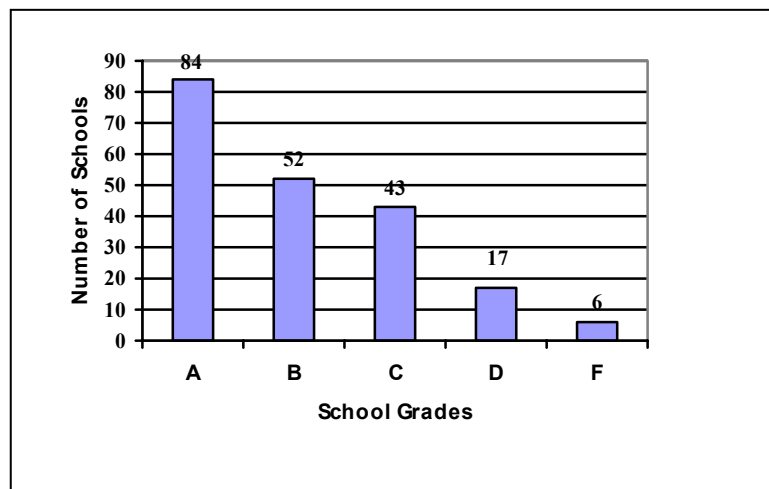


Figure 1. Distribution of School Grades in 2003

The importance of progress up the grading ladder is just as important as the number of schools earning the highest grades of A and B. **In this area, 33 (26%) elementary schools, 2 (6%) middle schools, and 2 (7%) high schools improved their grade by at least one letter grade.**

Making progress with the lowest 25% of students in Reading is another area of importance. **In this regard, 119 (88%) elementary schools, 36 (100%) middle schools, 20 (71%) high schools and 2 (100%) combination schools made adequate progress, which is defined as having been met when 50% of the lowest 25% make gains in Reading.**

New this year is the impact on school grades for schools not making adequate progress with their lowest 25% of students in Reading for two years in a row. Seventeen elementary and nine high schools did not make adequate progress as defined by the State A+ Plan. If a school, otherwise graded C or B, does not demonstrate adequate progress for two years in a row, the final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Two schools (Driftwood Elementary and Deerfield Beach High) had their grade reduced.

In addition, under the federal legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools must meet the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standard. Any school rated an F under the A+ Accountability Plan in the 2001-02 school year has been identified as not meeting AYP for 2002. For this school year, any school identified as an F or D under the State A+ Plan is automatically deemed as not meeting AYP under the Federal Plan. Schools receiving Federal Title funds that do not meet AYP for two consecutive school years will be required to offer students a Public School Choice option the following year. Across the State there were 50 F-rated Title I schools last year. Forty-eight of these schools did not meet AYP this year. In Broward, one school, Dillard High School, has been identified as not meeting AYP for 2 consecutive years due to an F rating in 2002 and a D rating in 2003. Parents of students who attended Dillard in 2003 will be contacted by the District in July as to their options for Public School Choice for the 2004 school year.

Even with these results – a large number of school grades at the highest categories of A and B and the significant number of schools that increased at least one grade level – we know that additional work remains. Twenty-three of our schools, 17 D and 6 F, still demand our intensive support. The data are already being reviewed to identify support needed to ensure increased learning gains for their students.

Figure 2 shows how the number of “A” through “F” schools has changed from 2000 to 2003. The number of Broward schools receiving an “A” or “B” grade has increased, the number of schools receiving a “C” grade decreased, however the number of schools receiving a “D” or “F” grade has decreased from 2000 to 2002 but has increased in 2003.

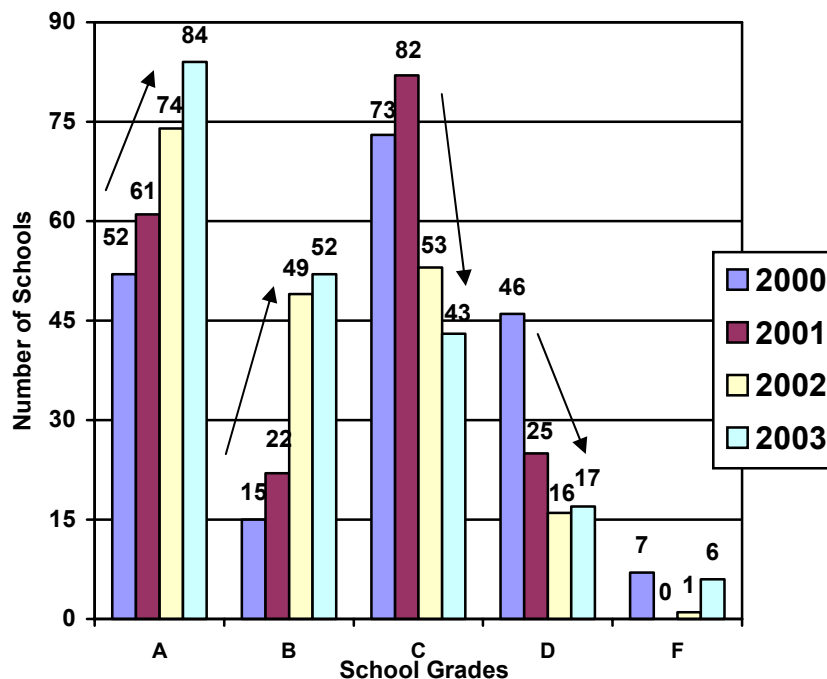


Figure 2. Shift of school grades by year

An Information Brief providing additional information will be issued as early as possible. Included as part of future analysis will be a comprehensive review of all schools evidencing significant decreases in school grades (two or more grade categories) or not meeting adequate

yearly progress. The analysis will include a comparison review of NRT and SSS scores of cohort students over the past two years. Additionally, after the appeal process is concluded, information about student performance in each separate grade level will be forthcoming.

School grades can be accessed through the Florida Department of Education's website at www.firn.edu/doe/schoolgrades/. This website provides a report for all schools who received a school grade. This report provides the percent of students: (1) meeting high standards in Reading, Mathematics, and Writing, (2) making learning gains in Reading and Mathematics, and (3) in the lowest 25% in Reading in the school making adequate progress. Additionally, attached is the 2003 School Accountability Report Guide Sheet that explains how school grades are determined.

If you have 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:jp
Attachments

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