

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

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Approved memorandum with signatures is on file.

May 20, 2005

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Katherine Blasik, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent
Research, Evaluation, Assessment & Boundaries

VIA: Frank Till
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **RELEASE OF 2005 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST
(FCAT) SCIENCE RESULTS FOR GRADES 5, 8, AND 11**

Yesterday, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) released results of the 2005 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading and Mathematics assessments for students in Grades 4 through 10. These results reflected that the achievement of students in Broward County in Reading and Mathematics has improved in almost all grade levels over the four-year period from 2002 to 2005. Today, the FDOE released statewide, district, and school-by-school results of the 2005 FCAT Science Assessment for Grades 5, 8, and 11. For the Science subtest of the FCAT, Achievement Level cut scores have yet to be identified by the FDOE, and results are reported as mean scaled scores that range from 100 to 500 at each grade level.

In previous years, the FCAT Science assessment was administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 10. In 2005, this test was administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 11. Changing the administration from Grade 10 to Grade 11 grade was predicated on the fact that many high school students have not completed biology or chemistry by the time the test is administered in Grade 10. Because the FCAT measures achievement in these essential areas, the FCAT Science Assessment was moved from Grade 10 to Grade 11 in 2005. As a result, direct comparisons of the 2005 Science subtest at the high school level to results from previous years would not be appropriate.

A review of these data showed:

- In Science, Broward students in Grades 5 and 8 demonstrated increased scores relative to last year's scores. Specifically, Grade 5 students earned average scores that were 7 scale score points higher than last year, and Grade 8 students earned average scores that were 6 scale score points above last year. Grade 11 scores cannot be compared to the previous year's data, as the FCAT Science assessment was administered at Grade 10 prior to 2005.

- At Grade 8, Broward students earned average scores that were slightly higher (1 scale score point) than the statewide average. In Grades 5 and 11, Broward students scored slightly below the statewide average (1 and 3 scale score points, respectively).

Broward FCAT Results in Science

Table 1 summarizes the results of the FCAT Science test for students in Broward County. Note that this is only the third year of administration for the Science assessment. Table 1 displays Grade 10 results from 2003 and 2004, but these should not be directly compared to Grade 11 results from 2005.

Table 1: Broward FCAT SSS Science Results, 2003-2005

Grade Level	School Year	Mean Scale Score
5	2003	281
	2004	288
	2005	295
8	2003	286
	2004	286
	2005	292
10*	2003	289
	2004	286
11*	2005	290
*In 2003 and 2004, FCAT Science was administered at Grade 10. In 2005, Science was administered at Grade 11.		

In Broward County, average Science scaled scores increased at both Grade 5 (7 points) and Grade 8 (6 points) from 2004 to 2005. Further, when the FCAT Science results are compared over the three-year period shown in Table 1, substantial increases in student achievement are noted in Grade 5 (14 scale score points). As mentioned, because the Science assessment at the high school level was previously administered to Grade 10 students and is now administered at Grade 11, direct comparisons between 2005 results and prior year data are not possible.

Comparisons to Statewide Results and Other Large Districts in Florida

The results released today reflect that students in Broward County continue to demonstrate achievement in Science comparable to statewide averages, and achievement levels at or above the performance of students in other large districts throughout the state. Table 2 presents comparative data for Broward County, Florida as a whole, and four other of the largest school districts in the state (Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Orange, and Palm Beach). When comparing the performance of students in Broward with that of students statewide in 2005, Broward students scored slightly above the statewide average in Grade 8 (1 point above) and slightly below the statewide average at Grades 5 (1 point below) and 11 (3 points below).

Table 2: Comparisons between Broward, the State, and Other Large Districts in Florida on the 2005 FCAT Science Assessment

District/State	FCAT Science SSS Mean Scale Score		
	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
State	296	291	293
Broward	295	292	290
Miami-Dade	286	272	275
Hillsborough	290	294	298
Orange	290	286	291
Palm Beach	303	294	287

As seen in Table 2, Broward fifth grade students earned higher average scores in Science than students in Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, and Orange counties, but produced lower mean scores than their counterparts in Palm Beach County. At Grade 8, Broward student performance on the Science test exceeded that of students in Miami-Dade and Orange counties, but was below that of students in Hillsborough and Palm Beach Counties. Broward Grade 11 students earned higher average scores in Science than their counterparts in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties, but produced lower mean scores than students from Hillsborough and Orange Counties.

This memorandum can be accessed on the Student Assessment & School Performance Department website at <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/reports.htm>. School-by-school results, as well as state and district summary data, may be found on the Florida Department of Education website at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/>. Individual Student Reports are expected to arrive in the District during the week of May 23, 2005 and will be distributed to schools as quickly as possible. **If you have any questions regarding this release, please contact me at (754) 321-2470, or Kimberley Kraft, Director of Student Assessment & School Performance, at (754) 321-4250.**

FT/KAB/KEK/SL:jh

cc: Senior Management
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