

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

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Approved Memorandum with Signatures on File
April 20, 2006

TO: School Board Members

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

VIA: Frank Till
Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: RELEASE OF 2006 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ACHIEVEMENT
TEST (FCAT) WRITING+ ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Today the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) released results from the 2006 Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) Writing+ Assessment. The FCAT Writing+ Assessment is administered annually to students at grades four, eight, and ten. For previous years' administrations, the assessment consisted of an essay written by the student with scores reported on a scale ranging from 1.0 to 6.0, where a score of 3.0 demonstrates proficient writing skills. The essay scores are continuing to be reported this year, with the proficiency level raised to 3.5. In addition, the Writing Assessment has been revised to include a multiple-choice section that measures students' abilities with regard to focus, organization, support, and conventions. The essay and multiple-choice sections both contribute to an overall reported score on a 100 to 500 point scale. The FDOE will set achievement levels tied to this scale in September 2006. The achievement levels will be reported for the 2007 administration and incorporation into the school grading formula beginning in 2008.

The data summarized below encompasses all students who were tested this year, including exceptional student education (ESE) students and limited English proficient (LEP) students regardless of amount of time in the District. Therefore, these data summaries include students who will not necessarily be included for school grade computation.

In the forthcoming pages, you will see that:

- **The combined mean score for Writing among Broward students was 4.0 for Grades 4 and 8, and 3.9 for Grade 10. These score equaled or exceeded the state averages.**
- **A majority of students at the fourth (83%), eighth (86%), and tenth grades (79%) scored at or above the proficient level of 3.5.**
- **Broward students equaled or exceeded student performance statewide on the new multiple-choice part of the Writing+ Assessment.**

The essay portion of the fourth grade Writing Assessment directs students to write either in Expository or Narrative style. The eighth and tenth grade Writing Assessments direct 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 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment along with the results from the prior three school years.

Table 1

Mean FCAT Writing Assessment Scores for 2002-2005 For All Curriculum Groups

	Expository				Narrative				Combined			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Grade 4												
BROWARD	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0
STATE	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.9
Grade 8												
BROWARD	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0
STATE	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0
Grade 10												
BROWARD	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9
STATE	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9

For the fourth consecutive year Broward’s fourth grade students outperformed students across the state, by .1 point with this year’s Broward Combined score at a 4.0. At the eighth grade level, the Combined writing scores have held steadily above proficient over the past four years prior to increasing by 0.1 point in 2006. The tenth grade Combined writing score has remained at 3.9 from 2004 to present, with students statewide registering a small gain this year to bring them in line with our districts performance.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Writing scores among fourth, eighth, and tenth grade students in Broward. The percent of students in each point category, for each grade level, is illustrated in the figure. The percent of students attaining each score are provided in Table 2.

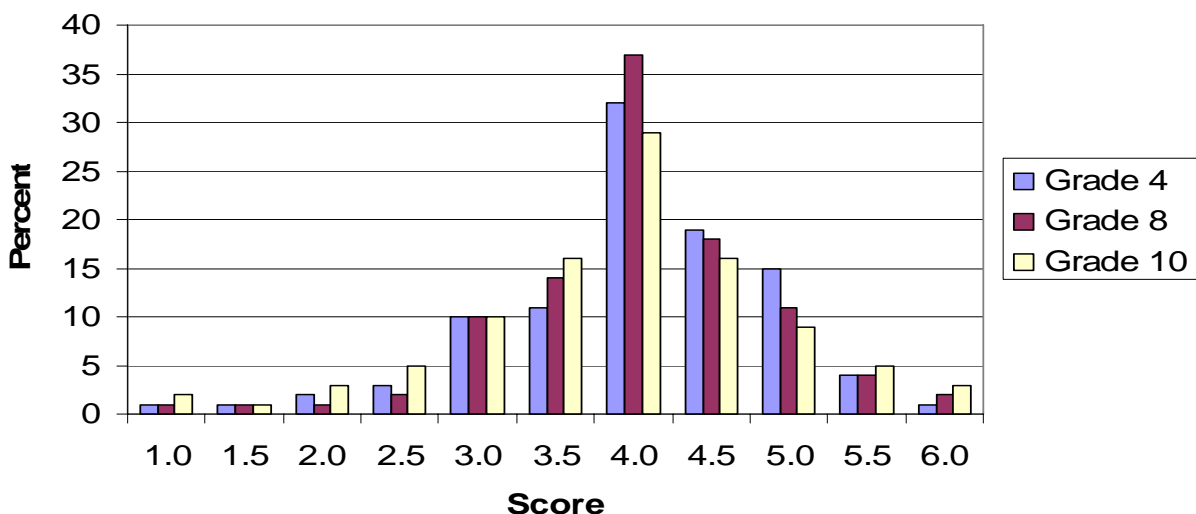


Figure 1. *Distribution of combined Writing+ essay scores, 2006.*

Table 2

Distribution of Broward County Students' FCAT Writing+ Essay Scores, 2006

	Essay Score										
	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0
Grade 4	1	1	2	3	10	11	32	19	15	4	1
Grade 8	1	1	1	2	10	14	37	18	11	4	2
Grade 10	2	1	3	5	10	16	29	16	9	5	3

Figure 1 and Table 2 shows that the vast majority of Broward students are performing at or above the proficient level of the FCAT Writing+ Assessment (3.5). The modal Writing score among Broward students was 4.0, demonstrating that most students scored above the proficiency level.

Table 3 presents the percent of students at each grade level who earned a score of 3.0 or higher, and 3.5 or higher from 2002 to 2006. In addition, the percent of students scoring at or above 4.0 from 2004 to 2006 are also provided. **Since 2002, the percentage of fourth grade students performing at 3.5 or higher in Writing has increased dramatically by 27 percentage points (from 56% to 83%).** The fourth grade students also registered an 11 percentage point increase in the percent of students scoring at 4.0 and above from 61% in 2004 to 72% in 2006. **The eighth grade students registered an increase of 11 percentage points in the percent of students scoring at or above 3.5 (75% in 2002 to 86% in 2006)** and an increase of 12 percentage points in students scoring at or above 4.0 (60% in 2004 to 72% in 2006). **From 2002 to 2005, the percent of tenth grade students scoring at or above level 3.5 remained steady at 81%, prior to declining two percentage points to 79% this year.** The percent of tenth grade students registering scores of 4.0 or higher also declined slightly from 64% in 2004 to 63% in 2006.

Table 3

FCAT Writing Assessment Results, 2002-2006

	Percent at 3.0 or Above	Percent at 3.5 or Above	Percent at 4.0 or Above
Grade 4			
2002	84%	56%	
2003	93%	73%	
2004	94%	78%	61%
2005	93%	81%	64%
2006	93%	83%	72%
Grade 8			
2002	90%	75%	
2003	93%	79%	
2004	91%	77%	60%
2005	94%	81%	64%
2006	95%	86%	72%
Grade 10			
2002	93%	81%	
2003	91%	79%	
2004	92%	81%	64%
2005	91%	81%	66%
2006	89%	79%	63%

In addition to the essay, the new FCAT Writing+ Assessment incorporated a multiple-choice section that measures students' abilities with regard to focus, organization, support, and conventions. Table 4 summarizes student performance in each of the tested areas as the average number of points earned. The number of points possible is provided for reference. The multiple-choice section, along with the essay, contributes to an overall scale score. Student performance on the test overall is reported on a 100 to 500 point scale, similar to the Reading and Mathematics sections of the FCAT. Table 4 provides the 2006 scale scores for Broward County and the State of Florida.

Table 4

Broward and State of Florida's 2006 FCAT Writing+ Mean Score and Mean Points Earned by Multiple-Choice Reporting Category

Mean Writing+ Score (100-500)		Points	Mean Points Earned by			
			Multiple-Choice Reporting Category			
			Focus	Organization	Support	Conventions
Grade 4						
		Possible	10	10	8	16
Broward	307	Mean Earned	7	7	6	10
Florida	296	Mean Earned	7	7	6	10
Grade 8						
		Possible	13	6	10	15
Broward	299	Mean Earned	9	5	6	9
Florida	295	Mean Earned	9	5	6	9
Grade 10						
		Possible	11	8	9	16
Broward	296	Mean Earned	7	6	6	9
Florida	295	Mean Earned	8	6	6	9

Review of the table revealed that for fourth, eighth, and tenth grades, Broward's students registered higher mean scores than did students statewide. **In fourth grade, Broward's students scored at 307, compared to 296 statewide. Broward's eighth grade students scored at 299, compared to 295 statewide. The tenth grade scores were closer with Broward's students scoring one point high than the state at 296 vs. 295.** With regard to performance in each of the reporting categories, Broward's students matched students' statewide performance in all areas except in focus at the tenth grade level. The tenth grade students earned, on average, on point less (mean points=7) than did students statewide (mean points=8).

A preliminary examination of writing scores registered by the Superintendent Schools revealed progress at many of these sites. As shown in Table 5, many of the 38 Superintendent Schools registered increase proportions of students scoring at or above each criterion. The Superintendent Schools registering the most progress were: Robert C. Markham Elementary (78% of scores at or above 4.0), Park Ridge Elementary (77% of

Table 5

Superintendent School Registering Gains Writing Scores from 2005 to 2006.

Criteria	Increasing	
	<i>n</i>	%
3.0 and Above	16	42
3.5 and Above	17	45
4.0 and Above	21	55

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scores at or above 4.0), and Lauderdale Manors Elementary (76% of scores at or above 4.0).

Overall, the results of the FCAT Writing+ Assessment show that Broward continues to make progress in this important area of academic achievement. Broward's students have equaled or exceeded performance of students across the State of Florida. Writing will continue to be the focus of instruction to ensure continued gains, with additional emphasis at the tenth grade level. This memorandum and a school-by-school report of FCAT Writing+ scores are available on the Student Assessment & School Performance Web site (<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment>).

The individual student reports will not be posted to the online FCAT Parent Network, which will only include information on Reading and Mathematics performance (for further information, please see the FCAT Parent Network Web site at www.fcatparentnetwork.com). The FDOE has indicated that individual student results will arrive in the District early next week. These reports will be transferred to the schools by mid-week for immediate distribution to parents. **If you have any questions regarding this release, please contact me at 754-321-2470 or Dr. Russell Clement, Director, Student Assessment & School Performance at 754-321-4250.**

cc: Senior Management
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Principals
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DAC