

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
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TO: School Board Members

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

VIA: James F. Notter
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SUBJECT: **FALL 2006 COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING
ASSESSMENT (CELLA) RESULTS**

In order to meet the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the United States Department of Education has mandated that states administer an annual assessment to measure the English proficiency of English language learners (ELL) in Kindergarten through grade 12. In response to this requirement, five states (Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee) cooperated with Education Testing Services to develop the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA). This instrument assesses reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The CELLA was administered to all ELL students in Florida for the first time in August 2006. The CELLA is scheduled to be administered again beginning April 23, 2007. The results of the 2006-07 administrations will be used as baseline data to establish a scoring rubric for future administrations. Pending the successful establishment of CELLA baseline data and modification of Florida's Meta Consent Decree with the United States Department of Education, the Metropolitan Assessment Test, Eighth Edition (MAT-8) will continue to be administered to ELL students. Thereafter, the annual assessment will be based on CELLA only.

Results from the Fall 2006 administration revealed that Listening/Speaking is the strongest area for ELL students in Broward County, followed by Reading and then Writing, relative to state-defined criteria. While these findings are of interest, it should be noted that CELLA is in a development phase as FDOE continues working towards a final scale that may not reflect the current data. This memorandum and the attached report can be accessed on the Student Assessment & School Performance website located at: <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/AssessmentReleases.htm>. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at 754-321-2470 or Dr. Russell Clement, Director of Student Assessment & School Performance, at 754- 321-4257.

JFN/KB/RC/:pwh
Attachment

cc: Senior Management
Area Directors
Principals



Assessment Brief

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Report from the Office of the Superintendent

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Fall 2006 Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment Results

The United States Department of Education requires states to administer an annual assessment that measures the English proficiency of English language learners (ELL) in grades K-12. Among Florida's school districts, at least seven different instruments are used to assess ELL students. This wide variety of assessments does not provide a common basis for determining progress toward English language proficiency in Florida. As a solution to this problem, the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) was developed to provide a statewide assessment for students, schools, and districts. CELLA provides:

- information about how well schools and districts are meeting the needs of ELL students,
- a consistent measure of English proficiency statewide,
- parents, students, and teachers with a gauge of how much English a student is learning,
- criteria indicating whether students are ready to exit the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, and
- education agencies and the public with information about the English proficiency and progress of ELL students.

The CELLA is the product of a joint effort of Educational Testing Service (ETS), Accountability Works, and five states (Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee). The instrument assesses four skill areas including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Four levels of the test were developed to assess specific grade ranges (Level A, Grades K-2; Level B, Grades 3-5; Level C, Grades 6-8; and Level D, Grades 9-12). However, students in grades 3 through 12 known to have English skills commensurate with the grade levels below their assigned level may take a below-level Reading and/or Writing assessment. The decision to administer an off-grade assessment is based on teacher discretion and/or the results of a locator test. The Listening, Reading, and Writing sections of the test are administered in group sessions. However, the Speaking section is administered in a fifteen minute one-on-one interview with a teacher. The entire test is administered in individual one-on-one sessions to kindergarten students. Each skill area is assessed using a variety of multiple-choice and/or constructed-response items.

The CELLA was administered to all ELL students in Florida for the first time in August 2006. The results of the 2006 administration will provide the baseline data necessary to establish the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) required by NCLB. The AMAOs, are similar to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and will assist the state in determining the progress made by the ELL population in attaining English language proficiency. Currently, districts are still required to use their approved listening/speaking and reading/writing assessments for ELL/LEP (limited English proficient) student placement (entry or exit), as described in the approved District LEP Plan. Consequently, both CELLA and the district's existing annual ELL assessment, Metropolitan Assessment Test, Eighth Edition (MAT-8) will be administered until

Florida's Meta Consent Decree with the US Department of Education is modified. Thereafter, the annual assessment will be based on CELLA only.

Table 1 provides the on-level results for the Fall 2006 CELLA administration. While students in grades 3 and above were able to take a lower level Reading or Writing assessment, less than 1% of students in Broward were assessed below grade level in these subject areas; therefore, the off-grade level data are not provided herein.¹

Table 1
State and District Fall 2006 CELLA Results.

Test Level	Grade Level		Listening/Speaking			Reading			Writing		
			<i>n</i>	%	Mean Scale Score	<i>n</i>	%	Mean Scale Score	<i>n</i>	%	Mean Scale Score
A	KG	Broward	1,052	100	620	959	100	419	974	100	557
		Florida	28,171	100	611	25,697	100	396	26,299	100	545
	1	Broward	2,413	100	648	2,270	100	555	2,298	100	622
		Florida	29,526	100	648	28,056	100	555	28,438	100	627
	2	Broward	2,053	100	673	2,017	100	648	2,074	100	665
		Florida	23,741	100	672	22,782	100	648	23,462	100	669
B	3	Broward	1,978	100	685	1,916	99	678	1,947	99	674
		Florida	20,015	100	687	17,464	91	682	17,735	89	680
	4	Broward	1,589	100	701	1,558	99	705	1,588	99	694
		Florida	14,677	100	699	12,852	91	705	12,991	89	698
	5	Broward	1,569	100	709	1,550	99	719	1,554	99	708
		Florida	13,212	100	706	11,574	90	719	11,727	89	709
C	6	Broward	1,469	100	718	1,514	99	727	1,503	99	715
		Florida	11,278	100	710	9,703	83	722	9,600	83	715
	7	Broward	1,378	100	716	1,413	99	729	1,390	99	716
		Florida	10,258	100	710	8,652	82	727	8,519	82	718
	8	Broward	1,412	100	719	1,444	100	739	1,427	99	723
		Florida	10,806	100	711	9,147	82	734	9,005	82	722
D	9	Broward	1,656	100	718	1,702	99	742	1,659	99	712
		Florida	10,815	100	711	9,053	79	740	8,775	79	712
	10	Broward	1,432	100	721	1,463	99	749	1,443	99	718
		Florida	10,187	100	716	8,377	78	746	8,124	79	717
	11	Broward	1,186	100	734	1,243	99	760	1,236	99	727
		Florida	8,408	100	723	7,209	81	754	7,057	82	722
12	Broward	1,001	100	736	1,035	100	763	1,025	99	729	
	Florida	5,898	100	729	5,247	84	758	5,154	85	724	

Comparisons of mean scale scores should be limited to within subtest only. That is, comparisons across Listening/Speaking, Reading, and Writing are not valid because of differences in the scales used for each subtest. The table shows that in most cases Broward students' mean scale score equaled or exceeded the mean scale score statewide (grade levels and subtests where Broward students scored lower than their statewide peers are indicated in bold font).

While Table 1 provides a comparison of CELLA scores between Broward students and the state, it does not identify what these scores mean in terms of English ability. Table 2 provides the

¹ In contrast, up to 22% of students statewide were assessed below level. These data are not summarized in the present report as they are not comparable to the Broward population. These are available in the district and state reports, respectively.

scale score anchor points for each of the CELLA subtests and a description of a student’s ability at that score.

Table 2
CELLA Subtest Scale Score Anchor Points and Description.

Subtest	Scale Score	Description of Ability
Listening/Speaking	620	Students usually have a small vocabulary and know only a little grammar. They are still learning how to ask and answer basic questions.
	660	Students have a basic vocabulary. They can ask and answer basic questions but are still learning how to participate in conversations.
	700	Students know enough vocabulary and grammar to take part in conversations. They are still learning to use English to understand what is being taught in class.
	740	Students have a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. They can participate in most conversations and can use English to learn new ideas in their classes.
Reading	620	Students are just beginning to read. They can recognize many common words in English and can read and understand some very simple sentences.
	660	Students are still learning to read, but are close to becoming independent readers. They can read and understand short passages written in very simple language.
	700	Students are developing as independent readers. They can easily read short passages written in very simple language and are learning to read passages that are moderately complex.
	740	Students are independent readers developing their skills. They can easily read and understand short passages that are moderately complex and are learning to read challenging short passages.
	780	Students are capable independent readers. They have a good vocabulary and are learning to read challenging short passages with thorough comprehension.
Writing	620	Students are learning to write letters and single words.
	660	Students can write letters and single words and are learning to write sentences independently.
	700	Students can write sentences and are learning to write simple paragraphs. Their writing may contain errors which make it hard to understand.
	740	Students can write simple paragraphs and are learning to write more complex paragraphs. Their writing still contains some errors, but can usually be understood.
	780	Students can write simple or complex paragraphs. Their writing can be understood easily and shows a strong vocabulary and the ability to use advanced grammar.

For the Listening/Speaking subtest the mean scale score of Broward students was at or above the minimum anchor point (620) for all grade levels. The average student in all grades showed at least a small vocabulary and some grammar knowledge. Furthermore, as grade level increased the mean scale score also increased. In Grades 2 and 3 the mean scale score surpassed the second anchor point (660), demonstrating students had a basic vocabulary and ability to answer questions. In grades 4 through 10, the mean scale score showed students had conversational vocabulary and grammar abilities. Finally, in grades 11 and 12 the mean scale score approached the final Listening/Speaking anchor point (740). This indicates the average students showed a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, could participate in most conversations, and could use English to learn new concepts in class.

In Reading, the mean scale score was below the minimum anchor point (620) for Kindergarten and first grade. In second grade the mean scale score approached the second anchor point.

These students showed beginning reading skills, recognized common words, and understood simple sentences. The mean scale score was beyond the second anchor point for third grade – students were still learning but approaching the ability to read independently. In grades 4 through 7 the mean scale score surpassed the third anchor point (700), showing students’ ability as independent readers. For grades 8 through 12 the mean scale score was at or above the fourth anchor point (740). These students were independent readers with the ability to read moderately complex passages learning to read more complex material.

Writing scores for Kindergarten and first grade were at or below the minimum anchor point (620). However, in grades 2 and 3 the mean scale score was above the second anchor point. At this point students were writing letters and single words and were learning to form sentences. Mean scale scores in grade 4 were approaching the third anchor point (700), and grade 5 through 12 surpassed that point. Students were moving from writing sentences to writing paragraphs; however, their writing was difficult to understand due to errors.

To conclude, Listening/Speaking is the strongest area for ELL students in Broward County, followed by Reading and then Writing, relative to the state-defined anchor points. While mean scores approached the final anchor point for Listening/Speaking (grades 11 and 12), in Reading and Writing the average student failed to approach the final anchor point. In fact, the highest two anchor points were not achieved at any grade level in Writing. While these findings are of interest, it should be noted that these data are being used by FDOE as a baseline to develop a useful assessment scale. CELLA will be administered again in Spring 2007 to accumulate additional data for development of the assessment scale. The administration is scheduled for April 23 through May 25. The results from either of these administrations may not correspond to the entry and exit criteria that will be in place once CELLA is finalized and deployed for those purposes.

References

Educational Testing Service (2006). *CELLA Interpretive Guide*. Retrieved January 20, 2007, from http://www.firn.edu/doe/aala/pdf/interpretive_english.pdf

Florida Department of Education (2006). *CELLA Informational Flyer*. Retrieved January 20, 2007, from http://www.firn.edu/doe/aala/pdf/infolyer_english.pdf

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