

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

**JAMES F. NOTTER
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Telephone: (754) 321-2600

Facsimile: (754) 321-2701

Signatures on File.

Revised April 26, 2007

April 26, 2007

TO: School Board Members

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

VIA: James F. Notter
Interim Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **RELEASE OF 2007 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST
(FCAT) WRITING+ ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Today the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) released results from the 2007 Florida Comprehensive Assessment 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 3.5 demonstrates proficient writing skills. In addition, beginning in 2005-06 the Writing Assessment was 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 spring 2007 FCAT administration marked the first time FCAT SSS Writing+ performance is reported by Achievement Levels based on scale scores. For FCAT Writing+, students receive a whole-test score between 100 and 500 as well as a subscore on a rubric of 0 to 6 for the essay. The FCAT SSS Writing+ Achievement Levels were approved by the State Board of Education on January 25, 2007 and are displayed in Table 1 with the corresponding scale score ranges.

Table 1
2007 FCAT SSS Writing+ Achievement Levels

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	100-239	240-289	290-364	365-426	427-500
8	100-249	250-298	299-355	356-415	416-500
10	100-249	250-299	300-341	342-402	403-500

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 following pages you will see that:

- The combined mean score for Writing among Broward students was 4.0 for Grade 4, 4.3 for Grade 8, and 4.1 for Grade 10. These scores equaled or exceeded the state averages.
- A majority of students at the fourth (86%), eighth (90%), and tenth grades (83%) scored at or above the proficient level of 3.5.
- Broward students mean Writing+ scale score exceed the state at all grade levels.
- Broward students equaled or exceeded student performance statewide on the new multiple-choice part of the Writing+ Assessment, except for Conventions at Grade 4.

The essay portion of the fourth grade Writing+ Assessment directs students to write either in Expository or Narrative style while the eighth and tenth grade students are directed 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 2 presents these results from the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment along with the results from the prior five school years.

Table 2

Mean FCAT Writing+ Essay Scores for All Curriculum Groups, 2002-2007

	Expository		Narrative/Persuasive		Combined	
	Broward	State	Broward	State	Broward	State
Grade 4						
2002	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4
2003	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6
2004	3.7	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.8	3.7
2005	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.7
2006	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.7	4.0	3.9
2007	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.9
Grade 8						
2002	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
2003	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9
2004	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8
2005	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.8
2006	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0
2007	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.1
Grade 10						
2002	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.8
2003	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8
2004	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8
2005	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8
2006	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9
2007	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9

For the sixth consecutive year Broward’s fourth grade students outperformed students across the state, by 0.1 point with this year’s Broward Combined score at a 4.0 compared to 3.9 statewide. Similarly, for the sixth consecutive year Broward’s eighth and tenth grade students equaled or outperformed students across the state, by 0.2 point with this year’s Broward Combined score at a 4.3 for grade 8 and by 0.2 point with this year’s Broward Combined score at 4.1 for grade 10. The performance of Broward eighth and tenth grade students increased compared to 2006 (0.3 point increase for grade 8 and 0.2 point increase for grade 10).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of essay 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 3.

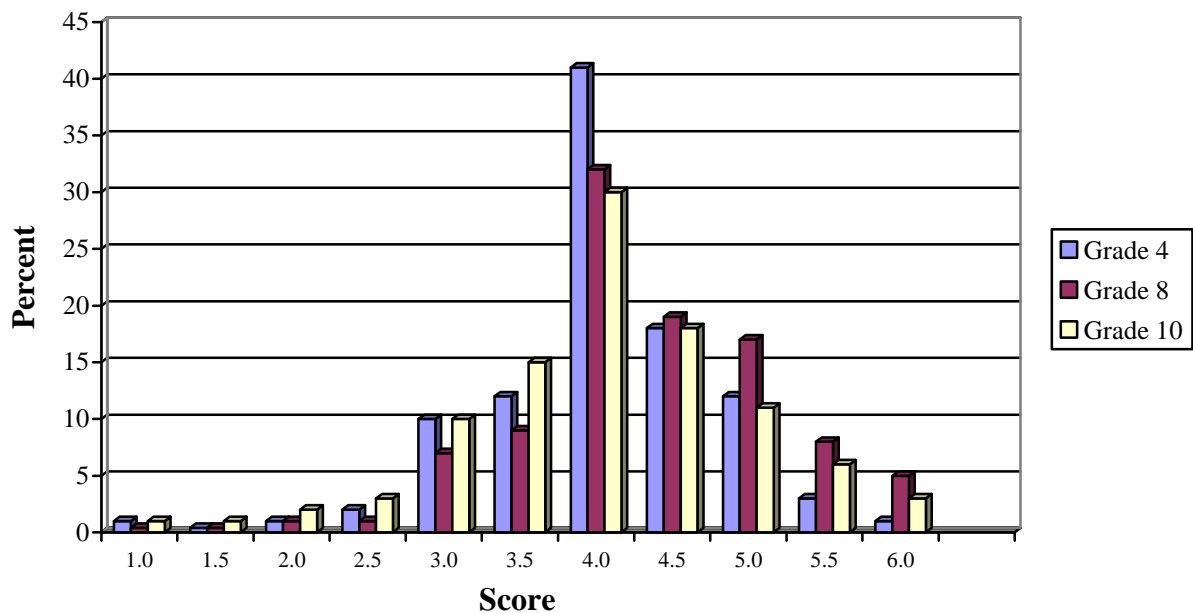


Figure 1. *Distribution of combined Writing+ essay scores, 2007.*

Table 3

Distribution of Broward County Students’ FCAT Writing+ Essay Scores, 2007

	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	10	12	41	18	12	3	1
Grade 8	***	***	1	1	7	9	32	19	17	8	5
Grade 10	1	1	2	3	10	15	30	18	11	6	3

***Percentage is <0.5

Figure 1 and Table 3 show that the majority of Broward students scored at or above the proficient level on the essay portion of the FCAT Writing+ Assessment (3.5). The modal Writing score among Broward students was 4.0, demonstrating that most student scored above the proficiency level.

2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment Results

April 26, 2007

Page 4 of 7

Table 4 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 2007. In addition, the percent of students at or above 4.0 from 2004 to 2007 are also provided. **Since 2002, the percentage of fourth grade students performing at 3.5 or higher in Writing has increased by 30 percentage points (from 56% to 86%).** The fourth grade students also registered a 14 percentage point increase in the percent of students scoring at 4.0 and above from 61% in 2004 to 75% in 2007. **The eighth grade students registered an increase of 15 percentage points in the percent of student scoring at or above 3.5 (75% in 2002 to 90% in 2007)** and an increase of 21 percentage points in student scoring at or above 4.0 (60% in 2004 to 81% in 2007). **The tenth grade students registered an increase of 2 percentage points in the percent of student scoring at or above 3.5 (81% in 2002 to 83% in 2007)** and an increase of 5 percentage points in student scoring at or above 4.0 (64% in 2004 to 69% in 2007).

Table 4
FCAT Writing Assessment Results, 2002-2007

	Percent at 3.0 or Above		Percent at 3.5 or Above		Percent at 4.0 or Above	
	Broward	State	Broward	State	Broward	State
Grade 4						
2002	84%	81%	56%			
2003	93%	90%	73%			
2004	94%	90%	78%	69%	61%	49%
2005	93%	90%	81%	74%	64%	55%
2006	93%	89%	83%	76%	72%	63%
2007	97%	92%	86%	78%	75%	64%
Grade 8						
2002	90%	90%	75%			
2003	93%	91%	79%			
2004	91%	89%	77%	73%	60%	54%
2005	94%	92%	81%	76%	64%	57%
2006	95%	94%	86%	83%	72%	68%
2007	97%	95%	90%	86%	81%	74%
Grade 10						
2002	93%	90%	81%			
2003	91%	88%	79%			
2004	92%	90%	81%	79%	64%	62%
2005	91%	90%	81%	79%	66%	63%
2006	89%	89%	79%	78%	63%	62%
2007	93%	91%	83%	79%	69%	64%

In addition to the essay, the new FCAT Writing+ Assessment incorporated a multiple-choice section that measure students' abilities with regard to focus, organization, support, and conventions. Focus refers to how clearly a written passage presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point. Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the relationship of one point to another. Support refers to the quality of details used to explain, clarify, or define. Conventions refer to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure. Table 5 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 5 also provides the 2007 scale scores for Broward County and the State of Florida.

Table 5

Broward and State of Florida's 2007 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	8	8	18
Broward	312	Mean Earned	6	5	5	12
State	302	Mean Earned	6	5	5	13
Grade 8						
		Possible	11	7	9	17
Broward	303	Mean Earned	7	5	6	10
State	291	Mean Earned	7	4	5	10
Grade 10						
		Possible	9	8	9	18
Broward	301	Mean Earned	6	5	5	11
State	296	Mean Earned	6	5	5	11

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 312, compared to 302 statewide. Broward's eighth grade students scored at 303, compared to 291 statewide. The tenth grade scores were closer with Broward's students scoring five points higher than the state at 301 vs. 296.** With regard to performance in each of the reporting categories, Broward's students matched or exceeded students' statewide performance in all areas except in conventions at the fourth grade level. The fourth grade students earned, on average, one point less (mean points=12) than did students statewide (mean points=13).

Table 6 summarizes overall student writing proficiency as reported by achievement level on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ assessment. The table displays results as the percent of students in each Achievement Level and for Achievement Levels 3 and higher. A review of these data reveals that a greater proportion of Broward students scored at proficiency (achievement levels 3, 4, and 5) than did students statewide. At fourth and eighth grade Broward students outperformed the state in proficiency rate by seven percentage points. At the fourth grade 67% of students scored at 3 or above compared with 60% statewide. Similarly, in eighth grade 52% of Broward students were proficient compared with 45% statewide. Broward's tenth grade students registered a proficiency rate of 52%, three percentage points higher than the state. As previously noted, Broward's students registered higher mean scores than did students statewide in grades 4, 8, and 10. Additionally, the percent of Broward students in Achievement Level 3 or higher outperforms the state in all grade levels.

Table 6

Broward FCAT Writing+ Results, 2007

	Mean Scale Score	Percent of Students in Each Achievement Level					
		1	2	3	4	5	3 or Higher
Grade 4							
Broward	312	13	20	46	17	4	67
State	302	17	23	43	14	3	60
Grade 8							
Broward	303	22	26	27	18	7	52
State	291	27	28	26	14	5	45
Grade 10							
Broward	301	21	27	26	20	7	52
State	296	23	28	24	18	6	49

Examination of the school level summary of writing scores revealed that six elementary schools (Bayview, Everglades, Chancellor Charter at Weston, Embassy Creek, Indian Trace, and Riverglades) registered more than 90% of students scoring at Achievement Level 3 or higher. One of these schools, Bayview Elementary, had 100% of students scoring at 3.5 or higher on the essay portion of the assessment. One middle school, Flacon Cove, had 82% of students scoring at proficiency on the test overall with 99% scoring 3.5 or higher on the essay. Pompano Beach High School registered the greatest proportion of proficient students at the tenth grade (87%) with 96% scoring at 3.5 or higher on the essay.

A preliminary examination of writing scores registered by the Superintendent's Schools revealed progress at many of these sites. As shown in Table 7, many of the 38 Superintendent's Schools registered increase proportions of students scoring at or above each criterion. The Superintendent's Schools registering the most progress were: Pompano Beach Elementary (65% of scores at or above 4.0), Oriole Elementary (71% of scores at or above 4.0), and Park Lakes Elementary (69% of scores at or above 4.0).

Table 7

Superintendent's Schools Registering Gains Writing Scores from 2006 to 2007.

Criteria	Increasing	
	<i>n</i>	%
3.0 and Above	26	70
3.5 and Above	26	70
4.0 and Above	28	76

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. However, the new information provided by the multiple choice section of the test and achievement levels denoting overall performance has brought to light a discrepancy between writing mechanics and essay

2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment Results

April 26, 2007

Page 7 of 7

performance. Curriculum & Instruction, Area Office, Student Assessment & School Performance, and school staffs will review these data and writing instruction practices to ensure that the appropriate content and focus are implemented at each 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/AssessmentReleases.htm>).

Friday, April 27, 2007, is the projected date that parents will be able to view students' FCAT Writing+ scores via the FCAT Parent Network (for further information, please see the FCAT Parent Network Web site at www.fcatparentnetwork.com). This secure site also includes detailed information on the meaning of the scores and provides resources to improve student performance in the future. **If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact me at 754-321-2470 or Dr. Russell Clement, Director, Student Assessment & School Performance at 754-321-4250.**

JFN/KAB/RC

cc: Senior Management
Area Directors
Principals
Diane Carr, Executive, Director, Core Curriculum
Frank Vodolo, Executive Director, Educational Programs
Dr. Marcia Baldanza, Principal on Task Assignment, Superintendent's Schools
PTA
DAC