

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

**JAMES F. NOTTER
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Telephone: (754) 321-2600

Facsimile: (754) 321-2701

Signatures on File

April 30, 2009

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Joanne W. Harrison, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
Educational Programs & Student Support

VIA: James F. Notter
Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: RELEASE OF 2009 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST
(FCAT) WRITING ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Results from the 2009 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing Assessment were released today by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). The FCAT Writing Assessment is administered annually to students in grades four, eight, and ten. The assessment consists 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.

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 include students who will not necessarily be included for school grade or adequate yearly progress (AYP) computations.

- **The combined mean score for Writing among Broward students was 4.1 for Grade 4, 4.5 for Grade 8, and 4.0 for Grade 10. These scores exceeded the state averages of 4.0 for Grade 4, 4.3 for Grade 8, and 3.8 for Grade 10.**
- **The majority of students in the fourth (89%), eighth (94%), and tenth grades (83%) scored at or above the proficient level of 3.5. These scores also exceeded the state averages of 85% for Grade 4, 90% for Grade 8, and 77% for Grade 10.**

The essay prompt directs students in fourth grade 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 1 presents these results from the 2009 FCAT Writing Assessment along with the results from the prior four school years.

Table 1

Mean FCAT Writing Essay Scores for All Curriculum Groups, 2005-2009

	Expository		Narrative/Persuasive		Combined	
	Broward	State	Broward	State	Broward	State
Grade 4						
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
2008	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.1	3.8
2009	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.0
Grade 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
2008	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.2
2009	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3
Grade 10						
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
2008	*	*	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.9
2009	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.3	3.8

*Expository was not used for Grade 10 in 2008

Broward's students outperformed students across the state in each grade level. This year's grade 4 Combined score was 4.1 in Broward compared to 4.0 statewide, 4.5 for grade 8 compared to 4.3 statewide, and 4.3 for grade 10 compared to 3.8 statewide. The performance of Broward eighth (4.4 to 4.5) and tenth (4.1 to 4.3) grade students increased compared to 2008, while fourth grade remained stable at 4.1.

Table 2 and Figure 1 show 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.

Table 2

Distribution of Broward County Students' FCAT Writing Essay Scores, 2009

	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	1	7	9	40	20	14	5	2
Grade 8	***	***	1	1	4	6	28	19	23	11	7
Grade 10	1	1	2	3	10	16	32	18	10	5	2

***Percentage is <0.5

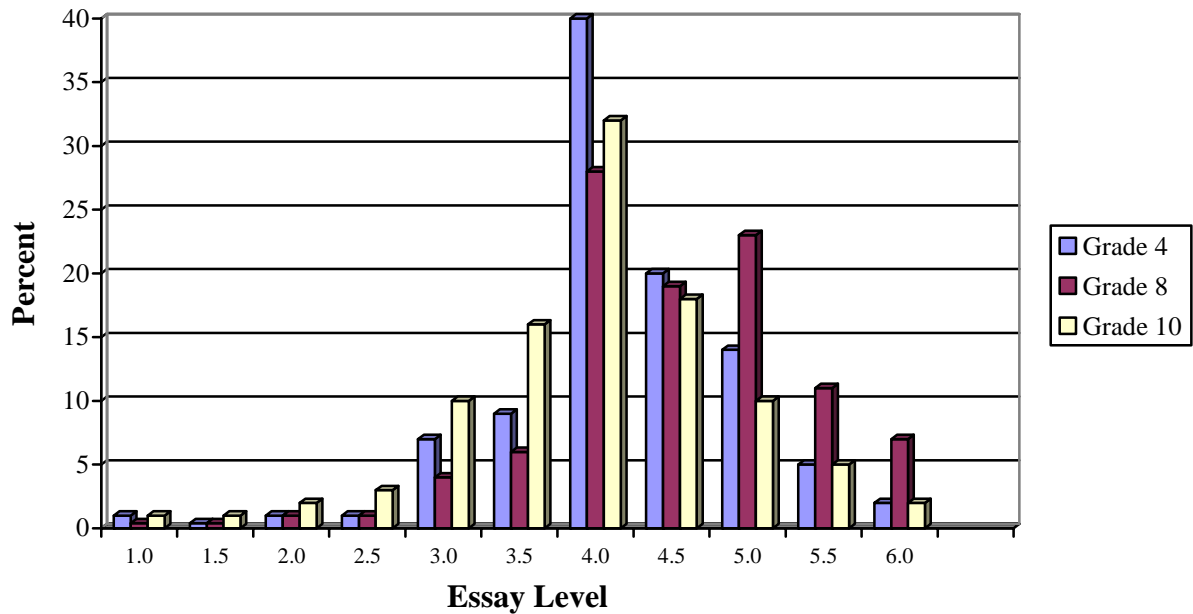


Figure 1. *Distribution of combined Writing essay scores, 2009.*

Figure 1 and Table 2 show that the majority of Broward students scored at or above the proficiency level on the FCAT Writing Assessment (3.5). Furthermore, the modal Writing score among Broward students was 4.0, demonstrating that most student scored above the proficiency level.

Table 3 presents the percent of students at each grade level who earned a score of 3.5 or higher and 4.0 or higher from 2005 to 2009. **Since 2005, the percentage of fourth grade students performing at 3.5 or higher in Writing has increased by 8 percentage points (from 81% to 89%).** The fourth grade students also registered a 16 percentage point increase in students scoring at 4.0 and above from 64% in 2005 to 80% in 2009. **The eighth grade students registered an increase of 13 percentage points in students scoring at or above 3.5 (81% in 2005 to 94% in 2009)** and an increase of 24 percentage points in students scoring at or above 4.0 (64% in 2005 to 88% in 2009). **The tenth grade students registered an increase of 2 percentage points in students scoring at or above 3.5 (81% in 2005 to 83% in 2009)** and an increase of 2 percentage points in students scoring at or above 4.0 (66% in 2005 to 68% in 2009). Note that while these tenth grade percentages are up over the five-year span, they represent a slight decrease from the 2007-08 school year.

2009 FCAT Writing Assessment Results

April 30, 2009

Page 4 of 4

Table 3

FCAT Writing Assessment Results, 2005-2009

Year	Percent at 3.5 or Above	Percent at 4.0 or Above
Grade 4		
2005	81%	64%
2006	83%	72%
2007	86%	75%
2008	87%	77%
2009	89%	80%
Grade 8		
2005	81%	64%
2006	86%	72%
2007	90%	81%
2008	92%	84%
2009	94%	88%
Grade 10		
2005	81%	66%
2006	79%	63%
2007	83%	69%
2008	84%	70%
2009	83%	68%

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. This memorandum and a school-by-school report of FCAT Writing scores are available at: <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentassessment/AssessmentReleases.htm>. Questions or comments concerning this report should be addressed to **Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research Development & Assessment at 754-321-2470** or **Paul Houchens, Director, Student Assessment & School Performance at 754-321-4257**.

JFN/JWH/KAB/PH

cc: Executive Leadership Team
 Area Directors
 Principals
 Diane Carr, Executive, Director, Core Curriculum
 Leslie Brown, Executive Director, Educational Programs
 PTA
 DAC