

**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**

May 4, 2011

**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 2011 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST  
(FCAT) WRITING ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Results from the 2011 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 to 6. While a score of 3 is considered proficient for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a 4 is used for proficiency in Florida's school grading system. This is an increase from 3.5 in prior years. Beginning in 2010, FDOE changed from two prompts and two scorers per grade to a single prompt and scorer due to budget constraints, meaning that half-point scores (1.5, 2.5, etc...) are no longer possible.

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. Moving to a single prompt for each grade means that only Expository or Narrative/Persuasive scores are available for each grade in any given year.

**The mean score for Writing among Broward students was 4.2 for Grade 4, 4.3 for Grade 8, and 4.1 for Grade 10. These scores exceeded the state averages. A majority of students in the fourth (97%), eighth (97%), and tenth grades (95%) scored at or above the AYP proficient level of 3 or higher. In terms of School Grade, 86% of grade 4, 86% of grade 8, and 80% of grade 10 students were proficient (a score of level of 4 or higher).**

The data summarized in this memorandum encompass all students who were tested this year, including exceptional education students (ESE) and limited English proficient (LEP) students regardless of amount of time in the District. Therefore, these data include students who will not be included for school grade or AYP computations. Table 1 presents the results from the 2011 FCAT Writing Assessment along with the results from the prior four school years.

Table 1

*Mean FCAT Writing Essay Scores for All Curriculum Groups, 2007-2011*

School Year	Expository		Narrative/Persuasive	
	Broward	State	Broward	State
<b>Grade 4</b>				
2007	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.8
2008	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.8
2009	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0
2010	*	*	4.0	3.8
2011	4.2	4.0	*	*
<b>Grade 8</b>				
2007	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.1
2008	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.2
2009	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3
2010	4.3	4.1	*	*
2011	4.3	4.2	*	*
<b>Grade 10</b>				
2007	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.0
2008	*	*	4.1	3.9
2009	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8
2010	*	*	4.1	3.9
2011	4.2	4.0	*	*

\*Prompt not administered for this grade level in this year.

**Broward students outperformed the statewide averages in each grade level.** This year's grade 4 average score was 4.2 in Broward compared to 4.0 statewide, 4.3 for grade 8 compared to 4.2 statewide, and 4.1 for grade 10 compared to 4.0 statewide. Since the mode of the writing prompt changed from 2010 to 2011 in grades 4 and 10, the results are not comparable for those grades; however, grade 8 performance remained stable on the expository style prompt from 2010 to 2011. Table 2 displays the percent of students at each grade level who earned a score of 3 or higher, and 4 or higher from 2007 to 2011.

Table 2

*FCAT Writing Assessment Results, 2007-2011*

	2007	2008	2009	2010*	2011
<b>Grade 4</b>					
Percent at 3 or Above	97	95	97	96	97
Percent at 4 or Above	75	77	80	79	86
<b>Grade 8</b>					
Percent at 3 or Above	97	97	98	97	97
Percent at 4 or Above	81	84	88	83	86
<b>Grade 10</b>					
Percent at 3 or Above	93	93	93	95	95
Percent at 4 or Above	69	70	68	78	80

\*Beginning in 2010, FDOE moved from two to one scorer for the essays.

Since 2007, the percentage students scoring 3 or higher in Writing has remained stable or increased slightly to be at or above 95% in 2011. **More importantly, the percentage of students writing at a higher level (4 or higher) has increased by 5 or more percentage points in each grade.**

- Fourth grade registered an 11 percentage point increase in students scoring at 4 and above from 75% in 2007 to 86% in 2011.
- Eighth grade registered an increase of 5 percentage points in students scoring at or above 4 (81% in 2007 to 86% in 2011).
- Tenth grade registered an 11 percentage point increase in students scoring at or above 4 (69% in 2007 to 80% in 2011).

Table 3 provides the percentage of students scoring 3 and above as well as 4 and above for the state and five largest districts. For each grade, the proportion of students scoring 3 and above was similar in each of the five largest districts and the state. In grade 4, the percentage of students scoring 4 or above in Broward (86%) equaled or exceeded the state and three of the four other large districts (Hillsborough had 90%). In grade 8, the percentage of students scoring 4 or above in Broward (86%) equaled or exceeded the state and the four other large districts. In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring 4 or above in Broward (80%) equaled or exceeded the state and three of the four other large districts (Palm Beach had 82%).

Table 3

*2011 Writing Proficiency for the State and Five Largest Districts*

	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	% 3 and above	% 4 and above	% 3 and above	% 4 and above	% 3 and above	% 4 and above
State	97	81	97	82	94	75
<b>Broward</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>80</b>
Miami-Dade	96	80	96	79	93	73
Hillsborough	98	90	97	86	94	75
Orange	97	81	96	80	94	74
Palm Beach	97	85	97	86	95	82

Overall, the results of the FCAT Writing Assessment show that Broward continues to make progress in this important area of academic achievement. **In general, Broward 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 **Paul Houchens, Director, Student Assessment & School Performance at 754-321-4257.**

JFN/JWH:ph

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