

2000 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) WRITING

The FCAT Writing (formerly the Florida Writing Assessment) assesses students' ability to organize and clearly express their thoughts in writing. The Florida Writing Assessment was incorporated into the FCAT in February 2000 and renamed FCAT Writing. The assessment remained unchanged from previous years. The FCAT Writing was administered to all eligible students in Grades 4, 8, and 10.

The FCAT Writing examined the proficiency of students in planning and producing a written response to an assigned topic within a standardized testing period (45 minutes). Two different types of writing were assessed at each grade level. Grade 4 students were asked to write either expository or narrative papers; Grades 8 and 10 students were asked to write either expository or persuasive papers.

- For an expository paper, students provided information, explained something, clarified a process, or defined a concept.
- For a narrative paper, students recounted an experience or told a story based on a real or imagined event.
- For a persuasive paper, students convinced someone to accept a point of view or to take a specific action.

The scoring of student papers was coordinated by the FDOE. Papers were scored using the holistic method, on a six-point scale, based on the ability of the student to:

- Focus on the topic;
- Provide supporting ideas and elaboration;
- Organize thoughts; and
- Use standard conventions of English.

Each student's paper was scored by two readers who had been trained by the FDOE.

In February 2000, the number of students who participated in the 2000 FCAT Writing is as follows:

- State: 184,568 students at Grade 4; 170,865 students at Grade 8; and 145,454 students at Grade 10.
- District: 28,179 students at Grade 4; 25,776 students at Grade 8; and 23,071 students at Grade 10.

COMBINED AVERAGE SCORES

Table 2 below provides the district and state combined average Writing scores for students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 in 1999 and 2000, as well as the difference between the 1999 and 2000 combined average scores.

Table 2. Combined Average Writing Scores*:
District and State Results for 1999, 2000, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.
DISTRICT									
Standard Curriculum	3.1	3.4	+3	3.3	3.7	+4	3.5	4.0	+5
ESE	1.7	2.0	+3	2.2	2.6	+4	2.4	2.6	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.1	1.7	-4	1.9	2.1	+2	2.0	2.0	0
All students	2.9	3.2	+3	3.2	3.5	+3	3.4	3.7	+3
STATE - All Students	3.0	3.2	+2	3.3	3.7	+4	3.5	3.9	+4

*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

Highlights of Table 2 include:

- Standard Curriculum students' combined average Writing scores increased at all grade levels from 1999 to 2000.
- ESE students' combined average Writing scores increased at all grade levels from 1999 to 2000.
- LEP Two Years or Less students' combined average Writing scores decreased at Grade 4, increased at Grade 8, and remained stable at Grade 10 from 1999 to 2000.
- Comparing all students tested in the district and in the state in 2000, the district's students received the same combined average Writing score as students statewide at Grade 4, but scored slightly lower than students statewide at Grades 8 and 10. Across all grade levels, the district's gains from 1999 to 2000 closely parallel those of the state.

Appendices A, B, and C at the conclusion of this report provide the number and percent of students in the district and state receiving each 2000 FCAT Writing score and a description of the typical characteristics of papers at each score point. Appendix A provides this information for Grade 4 students; Appendix B provides this information for Grade 8 students; and Appendix C provides this information for Grade 10 students.

CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT

Personalized certificates for outstanding and notable performance were distributed to students in recognition of their exceptional performance on the FCAT Writing. These certificates are provided by the FDOE for Grade 4 students who achieved a score of 5.0 or higher and for Grades 8 and 10 students who achieved a score of 5.5 or higher. This year, 3,406 Miami-Dade County students received a certificate of achievement. Certificates were awarded to 4.4% of the district's students tested in 2000, compared to 1.7% of the district's students tested in 1999. Large increases in the number of students receiving certificates were noted at all grade levels, especially at Grade 10:

- The percent of Grade 4 students receiving certificates increased from 2.3% in 1999 to 4.8% in 2000.
- The percent of Grade 8 students receiving certificates increased from 0.7% in 1999 to 1.6% in 2000.
- The percent of Grade 10 students receiving certificates increased from 2.1% in 1999 to 7.1% in 2000.

COMBINED AVERAGE SCORES, BY ETHNICITY

Table 3 on the following page provides the district's combined average scores, by grade level and ethnicity for 1999 and 2000, as well as the difference between the 1999 and 2000 combined average scores. Due to their small numbers, results for Asian students, American Indian students, and students classified as Multiracial have been collapsed into one group entitled "Other."

Highlights of Table 3 include:

- The combined average Writing scores of Standard Curriculum students at all grade levels, regardless of ethnicity, increased from 1999 to 2000.
- The combined average Writing scores of Hispanic and White ESE students at all grade levels increased from 1999 to 2000. The combined average Writing scores of Grades 4 and 8 Black ESE students also increased.
- The combined average Writing scores of Black LEP Two Years or Less students increased from 1999 to 2000 at all grade levels. The combined average Writing scores of Hispanic and Other LEP students increased at Grade 8, while the combined average Writing score of White LEP students increased at Grades 8 and 10.

Table 3. Combined Average Writing Scores*:
District Results by Ethnicity for 1999, 2000, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.
BLACK									
Standard Curriculum	2.8	3.3	+5	3.1	3.5	+4	3.3	3.8	+5
ESE	1.5	1.8	+3	1.9	2.3	+4	2.2	2.2	0
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.8	1.9	+1	1.7	2.1	+4	1.9	2.5	+6
All Black Students	2.7	3.1	+4	3.0	3.3	+3	3.2	3.6	+4
HISPANIC									
Standard Curriculum	3.1	3.4	+3	3.4	3.7	+3	3.5	3.9	+4
ESE	1.7	2.1	+4	2.4	2.7	+3	2.5	2.7	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.0	1.6	-4	1.9	2.1	+2	2.0	1.9	-1
All Hispanic Students	3.0	3.1	+1	3.2	3.5	+3	3.4	3.7	+3
WHITE									
Standard Curriculum	3.4	3.6	+2	3.7	4.0	+3	3.9	4.4	+5
ESE	2.0	2.3	+3	2.5	2.9	+4	2.9	3.1	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	3.0	2.4	-6	2.7	2.9	+2	2.5	3.0	+5
All White Students	3.3	3.4	+1	3.6	3.9	+3	3.8	4.3	+5
OTHER									
Standard Curriculum	3.3	3.5	+2	3.4	3.8	+4	3.7	4.1	+4
ESE	1.8	1.8	0	2.6	2.6	0	2.6	2.1	-5
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.8	1.3	-1.5	1.7	1.9	+2	2.2	1.6	-6
All "Other" Students	3.2	3.2	0	3.3	3.6	+3	3.7	3.8	+1

*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

AVERAGE SCORES, BY TYPE OF WRITING PROMPT

Table 4 below provides the district and state average expository Writing scores for Grades 4, 8, and 10 students in 1999 and 2000, as well as the difference between the 1999 and 2000 average expository Writing scores.

**Table 4. Average Expository Writing Scores*:
District and State Results for 1999, 2000, and Difference**

	Grade 4 Expository			Grade 8 Expository			Grade 10 Expository		
	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.
DISTRICT									
Standard Curriculum	2.9	3.4	+5	3.4	3.8	+4	3.5	4.1	+6
ESE	1.6	2.0	+4	2.3	2.8	+5	2.5	2.7	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.0	1.6	-4	2.1	2.2	+1	2.0	2.1	+1
All students	2.8	3.2	+4	3.2	3.6	+4	3.4	3.8	+4
STATE - All Students	2.8	3.2	+4	3.3	3.8	+5	3.5	3.9	+4

*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

An examination of Table 4 reveals:

- Standard Curriculum students' average expository Writing scores increased at all grade levels from 1999 to 2000.
- ESE students' average expository Writing scores increased at all grade levels from 1999 to 2000.
- LEP Two Years or Less students' average expository Writing scores increased at Grades 8 and 10 from 1999 to 2000 but decreased at Grade 4.
- Comparing all students tested in the district and in the state in 2000, the district's students received the same average expository Writing score as students statewide at Grade 4, but scored slightly lower than students statewide at Grades 8 and 10. Across all grade levels, the district gains from 1999 to 2000 closely parallel those of the state.

Table 5 on the following page presents the district and state average narrative and persuasive Writing scores for students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 for 1999 and 2000, as well as the difference between the 1999 and 2000 average scores.

**Table 5. Average Narrative and Persuasive Writing Scores*:
District and State Results for 1999, 2000, and Difference**

	Grade 4 Narrative			Grade 8 Persuasive			Grade 10 Persuasive		
	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.
DISTRICT									
Standard Curriculum	3.2	3.4	+.2	3.3	3.5	+.2	3.5	3.9	+.4
ESE	1.8	2.1	+.3	2.1	2.4	+.3	2.4	2.4	0
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.2	1.7	-.5	1.7	1.9	+.2	2.0	1.9	-.1
All students	3.1	3.2	+.1	3.1	3.3	+.2	3.4	3.6	+.2
STATE - All Students	3.1	3.2	+.1	3.2	3.5	+.3	3.5	3.8	+.3

*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

Table 5 provides the following information:

- Standard Curriculum students' average narrative and persuasive Writing scores increased at all grade levels from 1999 to 2000.
- ESE students' average narrative Writing score increased at Grade 4 from 1999 to 2000. ESE students' average persuasive Writing score increased at Grade 8 and remained stable at Grade 10.
- LEP Two Years or Less students' average narrative Writing score decreased at Grade 4 from 1999 to 2000. LEP students' average persuasive Writing score increased at Grade 8, but decreased at Grade 10.
- Comparing all students tested in the district and in the state in 2000, the district's students received the same average narrative Writing score as students statewide at Grade 4, but received slightly lower persuasive Writing scores than students statewide at Grades 8 and 10. Across all grade levels, the district gains from 1999 to 2000 closely parallel those of the state.

A comparison of students' performance on expository writing prompts and narrative or persuasive writing prompts in 2000 indicates:

- Grade 4 Standard Curriculum students received equal scores in expository and narrative writing. Grade 8 and 10 Standard Curriculum students received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in persuasive writing.
- ESE students at all grade levels received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in narrative or persuasive writing.

- At Grade 4, LEP Two Years or Less students received a slightly higher average score in narrative writing than they received in expository writing. At Grades 8 and 10, LEP students received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in persuasive writing.
- The performance of all students tested in the district on the two types of writing prompts follows the same pattern as the performance of all students tested statewide.

PERCENT SCORING 3.0 AND ABOVE

Table 6 provides the percent of students in the district and the state who achieved a writing score of 3.0 and higher in 1999 and 2000, as well as the difference between 1999 and 2000. District scores are provided for all students tested and for each curriculum group.

Table 6. Percent Scoring 3.0 and Above on FCAT Writing:
District and State Results for 1999, 2000, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.	1999	2000	Diff.
DISTRICT									
Standard Curriculum	71%	86%	+15%	84%	93%	+9%	85%	89%	+4%
ESE	14%	26%	+12%	34%	52%	+18%	44%	48%	+4%
LEP Two Yrs/Less	38%	24%	-14%	28%	39%	+11%	25%	34%	+9%
All students	66%	76%	+10%	78%	86%	+8%	80%	82%	+2%
STATE - All Students	67%	78%	+11%	82%	90%	+8%	84%	86%	+2%

Highlights of Table 6 include:

- Across all grade levels, the percent of Standard Curriculum students scoring 3.0 and above increased from 1999 to 2000, especially at Grade 4.
- Across all grade levels, the percent of ESE students scoring 3.0 and above increased from 1999 to 2000, especially at Grade 8.
- The percent of LEP Two Years or Less students scoring 3.0 and above increased at Grades 8 and 10 from 1999 to 2000, but decreased at Grade 4.
- When comparing all students tested in the district and in the state in 2000, the percent of district students scoring 3.0 and above was lower than the percent of students in the state scoring 3.0 and above at all grade levels; however, the district's gains from 1999 to 2000 parallel those of the state at all grade levels.

SCHOOL LEVEL RESULTS FOR THE THREE CURRICULUM GROUPS

Appendices D, E, and F at the conclusion of this report provide the 2000 FCAT Writing average expository score, the average narrative/persuasive score, the combined average score, and the total number of students tested for individual schools. Results are provided for all students tested at each school and for each curriculum group separately (Standard Curriculum, ESE, and LEP Two Years or Less). Appendix D provides this information for students in Grade 4; Appendix E provides this information for students in Grade 8; and Appendix F provides this information for students in Grade 10.

SCHOOL LEVEL GAIN ANALYSES FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP

Tables 7-10 present performance comparisons between the 1999 Accountability Group and the 2000 Accountability Group, by elementary, middle, and senior high school. The term "Accountability Group" is used in this report to identify the data set used by the FDOE for school accountability. This differs from the data presented in previous sections of the report, which were for all students tested.

Please note that different criteria were used to determine the 1999 and the 2000 Accountability Groups. The 1999 Accountability Group consisted of all Standard Curriculum students tested at a school, whereas the 2000 Accountability Group was comprised of Standard Curriculum students who were in attendance at the same school during both the October 1999 and the February 2000 FTE periods. Therefore, comparisons between the 1999 and the 2000 Accountability Groups should be made with caution since the two Accountability Groups are comprised of different populations of students.

Differences between the Accountability Group results presented in this report and those presented in the Florida Accountability Report are the result of the district's final editing process, which took place following the FDOE's release of FCAT data.

Table 7 provides the combined average Writing score of the 1999 Accountability Group, the 2000 Accountability Group, and the difference. School level analyses are based on schools with two years of FCAT Writing data and exclude charter schools and alternative education, specialized education, and vocational centers.

**Table 7. School Level Combined Average Writing Scores*:
1999 Accountability Group**, 2000 Accountability Group, and Difference**

	1999 Accountability Group	2000 Accountability Group	Difference
Elementary Schools	3.1	3.4	+.3
Middle Schools	3.3	3.7	+.4
Senior High Schools	3.5	4.0	+.5

*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

**Note: 1999 Accountability Group = All Standard Curriculum students tested at a school. 2000 Accountability Group = Standard Curriculum students who were in attendance at the same school during both the October 1999 and the February 2000 FTE periods.

Table 7 provides the following information:

- Elementary, middle, and senior high schools increased their combined average Writing scores, based on comparisons between the 1999 and 2000 Accountability Groups.

Table 8 presents the number and percent of schools that increased, maintained, or decreased their combined average Writing score, based on the 1999 and 2000 Accountability Groups.

**Table 8. Number and Percent* of Schools Increasing, Maintaining,
and Decreasing Combined Average Writing Scores: 1999
Accountability Group, 2000 Accountability Group, and Difference**

	Total # of Schools	Schools Increasing		Schools Maintaining		Schools Decreasing	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Elementary	198	171	86%	14	7%	13	7%
Middle	50	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Senior	31	30	97%	1	3%	0	0%

*Note: Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

Highlights of Table 8 include:

- Of the 198 regular elementary schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments, 171 (86%) showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in combined average Writing score, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.

- All of the 50 regular middle schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in combined average Writing score, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.
- Of the 31 regular senior high schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments, 30 (97%) showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in combined average Writing score, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.

Table 9 provides the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above at elementary, middle, and senior high schools, based on the 1999 Accountability Group and the 2000 Accountability Group for 1999, 2000, and the difference.

Table 9. School Level Writing Results: Percent Scoring 3.0 and Above for 1999 Accountability Group*, 2000 Accountability Group, and Difference

	1999 Accountability Group	2000 Accountability Group	Difference
Elementary Schools	71%	86%	+15%
Middle Schools	84%	94%	+10%
Senior High Schools	85%	89%	+4%

*Note: 1999 Accountability Group = All Standard Curriculum students tested at a school. 2000 Accountability Group = Standard Curriculum students who were in attendance at the same school during both the October 1999 and the February 2000 FTE periods.

Table 9 provides the following information:

- Elementary, middle, and senior high schools increased their percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, based on comparisons between the 1999 and 2000 Accountability Groups.

Table 10 below presents the number and percent of schools that increased, maintained, or decreased their percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, based on the 1999 Accountability Group and the 2000 Accountability Group, for 1999, 2000, and the difference.

Table 10. Number and Percent* of Schools Increasing, Maintaining, and Decreasing Percent Scoring 3.0 and Above in Writing: 1999 Accountability Group, 2000 Accountability Group, and Difference

	Total # of Schools	Schools Increasing		Schools Maintaining		Schools Decreasing	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Elementary	198	180	91%	4	2%	14	7%
Middle	50	49	98%	1	2%	0	0%
Senior	31	26	84%	1	3%	4	13%

*Note: Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

Highlights of Table 10 on the previous page include:

- Of the 198 regular elementary schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments, 180 (91%) showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.
- Of the 50 regular middle schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments, 49 (98%) showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.
- Of the 31 regular senior high schools that participated in the 1999 and 2000 assessments, 26 (84%) showed an increase from 1999 to 2000 in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, when comparing the 1999 Accountability Group to the 2000 Accountability Group.

Appendices G, H, and I at the conclusion of this report provide a comparison of the 1999 Accountability Group and the 2000 Accountability Group, based on the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above on the FCAT Writing, by individual school. Appendix G provides this information for schools with students in Grade 4; Appendix H provides this information for schools with students in Grade 8; Appendix I provides this information for schools with students in Grade 10.