

## 2001 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) WRITING

The purpose of the FCAT Writing is to gain information about students' ability to organize and clearly express their thoughts in writing. In February 2001, all eligible students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 participated in the FCAT Writing.

The FCAT Writing examined the proficiency of students in planning and producing a written response to an assigned topic within a 45-minute standardized testing period. Two 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.

1. For an expository paper, students provided information, explained something, clarified a process, or defined a concept.
2. For a narrative paper, students recounted an experience or told a story based on a real or imagined event.
3. 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 Florida Department of Education (FDOE). Papers were scored using the holistic method, on a six-point scale, based on the ability of the student to:

4. Focus on the topic;
5. Support ideas and elaborate;
6. Organize thoughts; and
7. Use standard conventions of English.

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

Table 2 displays the number of students participating in the February 2001 FCAT Writing.

Table 2. Number of Students Participating in the 2001 FCAT Writing

	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
<b>District</b>	28,154	26,709	22,936
<b>State</b>	187,927	174,155	145,530

## COMBINED AVERAGE SCORES

Table 3 below provides the District and state combined average writing scores for students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 in 2000 and 2001 and the differences between the 2000 and 2001 combined average scores.

Table 3. Combined Average Writing Scores\*:  
District and State Results for 2000, 2001, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>DISTRICT</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.4	3.6	+2	3.7	3.8	+1	4.0	3.9	-.1
ESE	2.0	2.1	+1	2.6	2.6	0	2.6	2.8	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.7	2.0	+3	2.1	2.1	0	2.0	2.4	+4
All students	3.2	3.4	+2	3.5	3.5	0	3.7	3.7	0
<b>STATE - All Students</b>	3.2	3.4	+2	3.7	3.7	0	3.9	3.8	-.1

\*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

Highlights of Table 3 include:

8. Standard Curriculum students' combined average scores increased at Grades 4 and 8 and decreased slightly at Grade 10.
9. ESE students' combined average scores increased at Grades 4 and 10 and remained constant at Grade 8.
10. LEP Two Years or Less students' combined average scores increased at Grades 4 and 10 and remained stable at Grade 8.
11. Comparing all students tested in the District and in the state, the District's students received the same combined average score as students statewide at Grade 4 and scored slightly lower than students statewide at Grades 8 and 10. District score trends parallel those of the state at Grades 4 and 8; however, at Grade 10, the state's scores decreased (-.1), while the District's scores held constant.

Appendix A provides the number and percent of Grades 4, 8, and 10 students in the District and state receiving each FCAT Writing score and a description of how papers are scored. Appendix B provides the percent of Grades 4, 8, and 10 students at each school receiving each FCAT Writing score.

## 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.

Table 4 provides the percent of students receiving certificates of achievement in the District and in the state for 2000, 2001, and the difference.

Table 4. Percent of Students in the District and the State Receiving FCAT Writing Certificates of Achievement in 2000, 2001, and Difference

	DISTRICT			STATE		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>Grade 4</b>	5%	10%	+5%	4%	10%	+6%
<b>Grade 8</b>	2%	2%	0	3%	3%	0
<b>Grade 10</b>	7%	5%	-2%	8%	5%	-3%

Table 4 provides the following information:

12. The percent of the District's students receiving certificates of achievement increased at Grade 4, remained stable at Grade 8, and decreased at Grade 10.
13. At Grades 4 and 10, certificates of achievement were received by an equal percent of students in the District and in the state in 2001.
14. Across all grade levels, increases and decreases in the percent of the District's students receiving certificates of achievement followed the same pattern as the percent of students receiving certificates statewide.

## COMBINED AVERAGE SCORES BY ETHNICITY

Table 5 on the following page provides the District's combined average scores, by grade level and ethnicity for 2000 and 2001 and the differences between the 2000 and 2001 combined average scores. Due to their small numbers, results for Asian students, American Indian students, and students classified as Multiracial have been combined into one group entitled "Other."

Table 5. Combined Average Writing Scores\* by Ethnicity:  
District Results for 2000, 2001, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>BLACK</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.3	3.5	+2	3.5	3.6	+1	3.8	3.7	-.1
ESE	1.8	1.9	+1	2.3	2.3	0	2.2	2.5	+3
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.9	2.2	+3	2.1	2.2	+1	2.5	2.6	+1
All Black Students	3.1	3.3	+2	3.3	3.4	+1	3.6	3.6	0
<b>HISPANIC</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.4	3.7	+3	3.7	3.8	+1	3.9	3.9	0
ESE	2.1	2.2	+1	2.7	2.7	0	2.7	2.9	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.6	1.9	+3	2.1	2.1	0	1.9	2.4	+5
All Hispanic Students	3.1	3.3	+2	3.5	3.5	0	3.7	3.7	0
<b>WHITE</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.6	3.9	+3	4.0	4.1	+1	4.4	4.3	-.1
ESE	2.3	2.5	+2	2.9	2.9	0	3.1	3.3	+2
LEP Two Yrs/Less	2.4	2.9	+5	2.9	2.6	-.3	3.0	2.7	-.3
All White Students	3.4	3.7	+3	3.9	4.0	+1	4.3	4.2	-.1
<b>OTHER</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.5	3.8	+3	3.8	4.0	+2	4.1	4.0	-.1
ESE	1.8	2.1	+3	2.6	2.4	-.2	2.1	2.9	+8
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.3	2.4	+1.1	1.9	2.1	+2	1.6	2.4	+8
All "Other" Students	3.2	3.6	+4	3.6	3.8	+2	3.8	3.9	+1

\*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

Highlights of Table 5 include:

- The combined average scores of Standard Curriculum students at Grades 4 and 8 increased, regardless of ethnicity. At Grade 10, the scores of Black, White, and “Other” Standard Curriculum students decreased slightly, while Hispanic Standard Curriculum students’ scores remained stable.
- The combined average scores of Grades 4 and 10 ESE students increased, regardless of ethnicity. At Grade 8, the scores of Black, Hispanic, and White ESE students remained stable, while the scores of “Other” ESE students decreased.
- LEP Two Years or Less students’ scores increased across all ethnic groups at Grade 4. At Grade 8, Black and “Other” LEP students’ scores increased. At Grade 10, Black, Hispanic, and “Other” LEP students’ scores increased.

AVERAGE SCORES, BY TYPE OF WRITING PROMPT

Table 6 below provides the District and state average expository writing scores for Grades 4, 8, and 10 students in 2000 and 2001, as well as the difference between the 2000 and 2001 average expository writing scores.

Table 6. Average Expository Writing Scores\*:  
District and State Results for 2000, 2001, and Difference

	Grade 4 Expository			Grade 8 Expository			Grade 10 Expository		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>DISTRICT</b>									
<b>Standard Curriculum</b>	3.4	3.7	+3	3.8	4.0	+2	4.1	4.0	-.1
<b>ESE</b>	2.0	2.2	+2	2.8	2.8	0	2.7	3.0	+3
<b>LEP Two Yrs/Less</b>	1.6	2.1	+5	2.2	2.3	+1	2.1	2.5	+4
<b>All students</b>	3.2	3.4	+2	3.6	3.7	+1	3.8	3.8	0
<b>STATE - All Students</b>	3.2	3.5	+3	3.8	3.8	0	3.9	4.0	+1

\*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

An examination of Table 6 reveals:

- Standard Curriculum students’ average expository scores increased at Grades 4 and 8 and decreased slightly at Grade 10.
- ESE students’ average expository scores increased at Grades 4 and 10 and remained stable at Grade 8.

- LEP Two Years or Less students' average expository scores increased at all grade levels.
- Comparing all students tested in the District and in the state, the District's students scored lower than students statewide at all grade levels. District score trends closely parallel those of the state.

Table 7 presents the District and state average narrative and persuasive writing scores for students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 for 2000 and 2001, as well as the difference between the 2000 and 2001 average scores.

Table 7. Average Narrative and Persuasive Writing Scores\*:  
District and State Results for 2000, 2001, and Difference

	Grade 4 Narrative			Grade 8 Persuasive			Grade 10 Persuasive		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>DISTRICT</b>									
Standard Curriculum	3.4	3.6	+2	3.5	3.6	+1	3.9	3.8	-.1
ESE	2.1	2.0	-.1	2.4	2.4	0	2.4	2.7	+3
LEP Two Yrs/Less	1.7	1.9	+2	1.9	2.0	+1	1.9	2.3	+4
All students	3.2	3.3	+1	3.3	3.4	+1	3.6	3.6	0
<b>STATE - All Students</b>	3.2	3.4	+2	3.5	3.5	0	3.8	3.7	-.1

\*Note: Score scale ranges from 1 - 6.

Table 7 provides the following information:

- Standard Curriculum students' average narrative scores increased at Grade 4. Standard Curriculum students' average persuasive scores increased at Grade 8 and decreased slightly at Grade 10.
- ESE students' average narrative score decreased at Grade 4. ESE students' average persuasive scores remained stable at Grade 8 and increased at Grade 10.
- LEP Two Years or Less students' average narrative and persuasive scores increased at all grade levels.
- Comparing all students tested in the District and in the state, the District's students scored lower than students statewide at all grade levels; however, at Grade 8, the District's average persuasive score increased from 2000 to 2001 while the state's average score remained stable. At Grade 10, the District's average persuasive score remained stable while the state's average score decreased.

A comparison of students' performance on expository writing prompts and narrative or persuasive writing prompts in 2001, as portrayed in Tables 6 and 7, indicates:

- At all grade levels, Standard Curriculum students received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in narrative or persuasive writing.
- ESE students at all grade levels received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in narrative or persuasive writing.
- At all grade levels, LEP Two Years or Less students received higher average scores in expository writing than they received in narrative or persuasive writing.
- The performance of all students tested in the District on the two types of writing prompts per grade level follows a pattern similar to the performance of all students tested statewide.

PERCENT SCORING 3.0 AND ABOVE

Table 8 provides the percent of students in the District and the state who achieved a writing score of 3.0 and higher in 2000 and 2001, as well as the difference between 2000 and 2001.

Table 8. Percent Scoring 3.0 and Above on FCAT Writing:  
District and State Results for 2000, 2001, and Difference

	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 10		
	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.	2000	2001	Diff.
<b>DISTRICT</b>									
Standard Curriculum	86%	90%	+4%	93%	92%	-1%	89%	91%	+2%
ESE	26%	33%	+7%	52%	48%	-4%	48%	57%	+9%
LEP Two Yrs/Less	24%	36%	+12%	39%	33%	-6%	34%	41%	+7%
All students	76%	80%	+4%	86%	83%	-3%	82%	84%	+2%
<b>STATE - All Students</b>	78%	83%	+5%	90%	87%	-3%	86%	88%	+2%

Highlights of Table 8 include:

- At Grades 4 and 10, the percent of Standard Curriculum students scoring 3.0 and above increased, most notably at Grade 4.
- ESE and LEP Two Years or Less students showed the most movement toward higher score points at Grades 4 and 10.

- Increases and decreases in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above are similar across each curriculum group and across all students tested: the percents increased at Grades 4 and 10 and decreased at Grade 8.
- When comparing all students tested in the District and in the state, the District's percent of students scoring 3.0 and above was lower than the state's percent of students scoring 3.0 and above at all grade levels; however, the District's increases and decreases closely parallel those of the state at all grade levels.

### SCHOOL LEVEL RESULTS FOR THE THREE CURRICULUM GROUPS

Appendix C provides the 2000 and 2001 FCAT Writing average expository scores, the average narrative or persuasive scores, the combined average scores, and the total number of Grades 4, 8, and 10 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).

### SCHOOL LEVEL GAIN ANALYSES FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP

The Accountability Group is comprised of Standard Curriculum students who were in attendance at the same school during both the October and the February FTE periods. This differs from the data presented in previous sections of the report, which were based on all students tested. The Accountability Group has been selected for conducting gain analyses because they represent a stable group of students upon whom meaningful comparisons can be based.

The term Accountability Group is used in this report to identify the data set used by the FDOE for school accountability. Although some of the data upon which comparisons are based represent the criteria used by the FDOE for the grading of schools, the data that follow do not represent schools' performance grades. The criteria used by the FDOE for assigning school performance grades is complex and goes beyond the data elements presented in this report.

The tables on the following pages present performance comparisons between the 2000 and 2001 Accountability Groups. The percent of students scoring 3.0 and above corresponds to the FCAT Writing proficiency level established by the Commissioner of Education. 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 9 presents the number and percent of schools that increased, maintained, or decreased their combined average writing score, based on the 2000 and 2001 Accountability Groups.

**Table 9. Number and Percent\* of Schools Increasing, Maintaining, and Decreasing Combined Average Writing Scores: 2000 Accountability Group, 2001 Accountability Group, and Difference**

	Total # of Schools**	Schools Increasing		Schools Maintaining		Schools Decreasing	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Elementary</b>	198	163	82%	17	9%	18	9%
<b>Middle</b>	52	36	69%	7	13%	9	17%
<b>Senior</b>	32	7	22%	7	22%	18	56%

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

\*\*Note: Data are based on schools with both 2000 and 2001 combined average writing scores.

Highlights of Table 9 include:

- Of the 198 regular elementary schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 163 (82%) showed an increase in the combined average writing score.
- Of the 52 regular middle schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 36 (69%) showed an increase in the combined average writing score.
- Of the 32 regular senior high schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 7 (22%) showed an increase in the combined average writing score.

Table 10 provides the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above at Grades 4, 8, and 10, based on the Accountability Group for 2000, 2001, and the difference.

**Table 10. Percent of Students Scoring 3.0 and Above for 2000 Accountability Group, 2001 Accountability Group, and Difference**

	2000 Accountability Group	2001 Accountability Group	Difference
<b>Grade 4</b>	86%	91%	+5%
<b>Grade 8</b>	94%	93%	-1%
<b>Grade 10</b>	89%	92%	+3%

Table 10 provides the following information:

- The percent of students scoring 3.0 and above increased at Grades 4 and 10, but declined by 1% at Grade 8.

Table 11 presents the number and percent of schools that increased, maintained, or decreased their percent of students scoring 3.0 and above, based on the Accountability Group for 2000, 2001, and the difference.

Table 11. Number and Percent\* of Schools Increasing, Maintaining, and Decreasing Percent Scoring 3.0 and Above in Writing: 2000 Accountability Group, 2001 Accountability Group, and Difference

	Total # of Schools**	Schools Increasing		Schools Maintaining		Schools Decreasing	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Elementary</b>	198	142	72%	11	6%	45	23%
<b>Middle</b>	52	20	38%	7	13%	25	48%
<b>Senior</b>	32	20	63%	5	16%	7	22%

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

\*\*Note: Data are based on schools with both 2000 and 2001 FCAT writing scores.

Highlights of Table 11 include:

- Of the 198 regular elementary schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 142 (72%) showed an increase in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above.
- Of the 52 regular middle schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 20 (38%) showed an increase in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above.
- Of the 32 regular senior high schools that participated in the 2000 and 2001 assessments, 20 (63%) showed an increase in the percent of students scoring 3.0 and above.

Appendix D provides a comparison of the 2000 and 2001 Accountability Groups, based on the percent of Grades 4, 8, and 10 students scoring 3.0 and above on the FCAT Writing, by individual schools.