


MEMORANDUM

May 8, 2008

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: STATE RELEASE OF RESULTS FOR THE SPRING 2008 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) WRITING+: GRADES 4, 8, AND 10

Today the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released results from the Spring 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing+, administered to students in Grades 4, 8, and 10. The FCAT Writing+ reports released today provide summary data based on the scores of all students tested; **these results do not reflect the groupings that will be used by the state for accountability purposes.**

The 2008 FCAT Writing+ includes an essay and a multiple-choice portion. Three scores are reported: a whole-test total scale score, associated achievement levels, and a separate "rubric" score for the essay portion. Only the essay rubric score will be used in the calculation of school grades. The 2007 administration was the first administration for which Writing+ achievement levels were reported and the 2008 administration will be the last, as the multiple-choice portion is being phased out. Note that the FCAT Writing+ graduation requirement for a standard diploma has also been revoked.

Approximately 74,000 Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 participated in the Spring 2008 FCAT Writing+ assessment. M-DCPS students' growth exceeded that of students in the state at all tested grade levels, based on increases in average total Writing+ scale scores by as much as 17 points in Grade 8. Highlights of the results and District summary tables are attached.

Complete District, State, and school level summary reports are available online at: <http://oda.dadeschools.net/FCAT/FCAT.asp>. Printed school and individual student reports for the Spring 2008 FCAT Writing+ assessment will be forwarded to schools as soon as they are received in the District. The individual student reports should be distributed to parents as soon as they are available. Additional reports of FCAT results will be released as they become available in the next few weeks. School performance grades are expected in mid-July.

Should you have any questions about the attached results, please contact Ms. Antoinette Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction, at 305-995-1451, or Ms. Gisela Feild, Administrative Director, Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, at 305-995-7512.

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Attachments

cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Senior Staff

**Highlights of the Florida Department of Education's
Spring 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Summary Report
Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS)
Grades 4, 8, and 10 FCAT Writing+**

- M-DCPS students' average Writing+ total scale scores increased in all grades tested from 2007 to 2008, consistently exceeding growth statewide. District total scale scores increased by as much as 17 points in Grade 8.
- Grade 4 students in M-DCPS outperformed students statewide on the FCAT Writing+ across all measures: essay scores, total scale scores, and percent scoring in levels 3 and above.
- M-DCPS Grade 8 students' FCAT Writing+ essay scores were similar to those of students statewide.
- While a sizable increase was observed in the average total scale scores for M-DCPS Grade 10 students, both these scores and the average essay scores¹ fell slightly short of students' scores statewide.
- From 2007 to 2008, the average essay scores increased for M-DCPS students in Grade 4, remained stable for students in Grade 8, and decreased slightly for students in Grade 10.
- The percentage of students scoring a 3.5 or above on the essay portion increased in Grade 8 and remained stable in Grades 4 and 10.
- Overall, average essay scores have remained relatively constant and comparable to the state across all tested grades.

¹Note: In 2008, only one type of essay prompt was administered to students in Grade 10, a persuasive prompt.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Summary of District and State Results for the
Spring 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)
Grades 4, 8, and 10 FCAT Writing+

On May 8, 2008, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released State and District summary data from the Spring 2008 administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing+ assessment. The summary data include results for all students tested in Grades 4, 8, and 10.

District Spring 2008 FCAT Writing+ results are based on the following numbers of students tested: 25,050 in Grade 4, 22,719 in Grade 8, and 26,130 in Grade 10, for a total of 73,899. These figures include students from all curriculum groups and do not represent the groupings that will be used by the state for accountability purposes.

This is the third year in which FCAT Writing+ has included both essay and multiple-choice portions¹, and the second year for which total scale scores and achievement levels are reported that include both portions. Reported scores for the Spring 2008 FCAT Writing+ include: a total scale score for both portions of the test (scores can range from 100 to 500), an achievement level based on the total scale score (scores can range from 1 to 5); and a traditional “rubric” score for the essay portion (scores can range from 1 to 6).

The following tables summarize District results on the 2008 FCAT Writing+. Displayed are the mean total scale scores and percentage of students scoring in each achievement level, by grade level (Tables 1 and 2, respectively). Also provided are summaries of students’ performance for 2006, 2007, and 2008 on the essay portion, including: mean essay scores, essay scores by prompt type, and the percentages of students scoring 3.5 or above on the essay portion (Tables 3, 4, and 5 respectively).

¹ Beginning in Spring 2009, the FLDOE will discontinue the inclusion of the multiple-choice portion as part of the FCAT Writing+.

**Table 1
FCAT Writing+
State and District, 2007 and 2008
Mean Total Scale Scores**

	STATE			DISTRICT		
	2007 Mean Scale Score (N)	2008 Mean Scale Score (N)	Difference 2007 - 2008	2007 Mean Scale Score (N)	2008 Mean Scale Score (N)	Difference 2007 - 2008
Grade 4	302 (193,796)	304 (190,008)	+2	304 (25,695)	307 (25,050)	+3
Grade 8	291 (196,771)	300 (184,559)	+9	279 (26,059)	296 (22,719)	+17
Grade 10	296 (187,743)	302 (188,733)	+6	284 (27,075)	292 (26,130)	+8

Note: Results include all students tested, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

**Table 2
FCAT Writing+
State and District, 2008
Percentages Scoring in Achievement Levels 1 through 5**

	STATE						DISTRICT					
	Percent Level 1	Percent Level 2	Percent Level 3	Percent Level 4	Percent Level 5	Percent 3 and above	Percent Level 1	Percent Level 2	Percent Level 3	Percent Level 4	Percent Level 5	Percent 3 and above
Grade 4	17	22	42	15	4	61	16	21	43	16	4	63
Grade 8	22	29	29	15	6	50	24	28	28	15	5	48
Grade 10	20	27	27	20	7	53	25	28	25	17	5	47

Note: Results include all students tested, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

**Table 3
FCAT Writing+
State and District, 2006, 2007, and 2008
Mean Essay Scores**

	STATE				DISTRICT			
	2006 Mean Essay Score (N)	2007 Mean Essay Score (N)	2008 Mean Essay Score (N)	Difference 2007 - 2008	2006 Mean Essay Score (N)	2007 Mean Essay Score (N)	2008 Mean Essay Score (N)	Difference 2007 - 2008
Grade 4	3.9 (189,589)	3.9 (193,796)	3.8 (190,008)	-0.1	3.9 (25,870)	3.9 (25,695)	3.9 (25,050)	0
Grade 8	4.0 (198,247)	4.1 (196,771)	4.2 (184,559)	+0.1	3.9 (26,755)	4.1 (26,059)	4.2 (22,719)	+0.1
Grade 10	3.9 (187,939)	3.9 (187,743)	3.9 (188,733)	0	3.8 (27,595)	3.9 (27,075)	3.8 (26,130)	-0.1

Note: Essay scores can range from 1 to 6. Results include all students tested, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

**Table 4
FCAT Writing+
District 2006, 2007, and 2008
Mean Essay Scores by Prompt Type¹**

	EXPOSITORY				NARRATIVE			
	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008
Grade 4	4.1	3.9	3.8	-0.1	3.7	3.8	3.9	+0.1
	EXPOSITORY				PERSUASIVE			
	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008
Grade 8	3.9	4.0	4.2	+0.2	3.9	4.1	4.2	+0.1
Grade 10	3.8	3.7	-	-	3.7	3.9	3.8	-0.1

Note: Results include all students tested, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

¹ Two types of prompts are used at Grades 4 and 8, although each student is tested on only one prompt. Prompt types are: Expository and Narrative at Grade 4; and Expository and Persuasive at Grade 8. Only one prompt type was used in Grade 10 in 2008: Persuasive.

Table 5
FCAT Writing+
State and District, 2006, 2007, and 2008
Percentages of Students Scoring 3.5 and Above on the Essay Portion

	STATE				DISTRICT			
	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008	2006	2007	2008	Difference 2007 - 2008
Grade 4	76%	78%	77%	-1	80%	82%	82%	0
Grade 8	83%	86%	88%	+2	81%	84%	88%	+4
Grade 10	78%	79%	78%	-1	74%	77%	77%	0

Note: Results include all students tested, including students with disabilities and English language learners.