

MEMORANDUM

May 23, 2014

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

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools *AMC/VJB*

SUBJECT: STATE RELEASE OF RESULTS FOR THE SPRING 2014 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) 2.0 WRITING: GRADES 4, 8, AND 10

Today the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released results from the Spring 2014 administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) 2.0 Writing to students in Grades 4, 8, and 10.

During the administration of FCAT 2.0 Writing, students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 are required to write an essay on an assigned topic within a 60 minute session: either narrative or expository at Grade 4, and either persuasive or expository at Grades 8 and 10. Reported scores for FCAT 2.0 Writing are traditional "rubric" scores, with four elements of writing (focus, organization, support, and conventions) evaluated using a holistic scoring method. Essay scores can range from a low of 1 to a high of 6.

In all, 78,276 Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 participated in the Spring 2014 FCAT 2.0 Writing assessment. District summary tables are attached.

- After much controversy regarding changes to the FCAT Writing program across the last three years, the results were mixed in 2014, the last year the assessment will be administered, with 8th grade students exhibiting the most improvement.
- M-DCPS 8th grade students' FCAT 2.0 Writing scores improved in 2014, with the percent scoring 3.5 or above reaching 53% in 2014, up from 49% in 2013.
 - The level of improvement for students in grade eight was twice that seen statewide.
- Statewide, 4th grade students' scores declined from 2013 to 2014, possibly attributable to the type of prompt the students received (narrative in 2013; expository in 2014).
 - M-DCPS 4th grade students scored on par with their counterparts statewide, with 53% scoring 3.5 or above on the FCAT 2.0 Writing assessment.
- FCAT 2.0 Writing scores for 10th grade students were on par with other Florida students in 2014, with 64% scoring in levels 3.5 or above.

The FLDOE issued a press release this morning congratulating both Miami-Dade and Broward for improved student performance. Commissioner Pam Stewart noted that "These impressive gains are the result of district leaders providing teachers with the tools and training they need to succeed." A copy of the press release is attached.

Please note that the FCAT 2.0 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. Complete District, State, and school summary reports will be posted as they become available on the FLDOE website. School shipments of Individual Student Reports are being forwarded to schools as they are received.

If you have any questions about the attached results, please contact Ms. Marie Izquierdo, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Academics and Transformation, at 305 995-1451, or Ms. Gisela Feild, Administrative Director, Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, at 305 995-2943.

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Attachments

cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet
Superintendent's Senior Staff
Ms. Gisela Feild

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Summary of District and State Results for the
Spring 2014 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) 2.0
Grades 4, 8, and 10 FCAT 2.0 Writing

On May 23, 2014, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released District and State summary data from the Spring 2014 administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) 2.0 Writing assessment. The summary data include results for all students tested in Grades 4, 8, and 10.

District Spring 2014 FCAT 2.0 Writing results are based on the following numbers of students tested: 25,103 in Grade 4, 27,051 in Grade 8, and 26,122 in Grade 10, for a total of 78,276 students. These figures include students from all curriculum groups and do not represent the groupings that will be used by the State for accountability purposes.

Since Spring 2010, only one prompt has been used at each grade level: either narrative (writing to tell a story) or expository (writing to explain) at Grade 4, and either persuasive (writing to convince) or expository at Grades 8 and 10. In 2012-13, allotted time for the Writing tests was expanded from a 45 minute session to a 60 minute session. In Spring 2014, expository prompts were presented to students at all three grade levels.

New FLDOE Calibration Scoring Guides were provided in August 2011, which established expanded expectations for students' essays. Specifically, scoring included increased attention to the correct use of Standard English conventions and increased focus on specific support. These more stringent scoring criteria were implemented beginning in Spring 2012. Writing prompt descriptions and scoring guides with sample essays may be accessed at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/writing-prompts.asp>.

On May 15, 2012, the State Board of Education passed an emergency rule to adjust the writing scores used in the calculation of Florida School Grades in 2012 to accommodate the new scoring requirements. The criteria used in the calculation of Florida School Grades had gradually become more stringent over time since the inception of the program, beginning with the percentage scoring 3.0 or above, and increasing to the percentage scoring 4.0 or above in 2011. In 2012, the criteria were readjusted to the percentage scoring 3.0 or above to accommodate the change in scoring requirements. However, a revision to State Board of Education Rule established that the percentage of students scoring 3.5 or above would be used in 2013 and will continue to be used 2014 for the Writing proficiency component of school grade calculations.

The following tables summarize 2014 FCAT 2.0 Writing results for the District and State. Displayed are summaries of students' performance for 2013 and 2014 on the essay portion, including mean essay scores and the percentages of students scoring at or above 3.5 and 4.0.

Table 1
FCAT 2.0 Writing
District and State, 2013 and 2014
Mean Essay Scores

	DISTRICT			STATE		
	2013 Mean Essay Score (N)	2014 Mean Essay Score (N)	Difference 2013 - 2014	2013 Mean Essay Score (N)	2014 Mean Essay Score (N)	Difference 2013 - 2014
Grade 4	3.4 (25,441)	3.3 (25,103)	-0.1	3.4 (192,206)	3.3 (195,308)	-0.1
Grade 8	3.2 (26,974)	3.3 (27,051)	+0.1	3.3 (196,719)	3.4 (199,204)	+0.1
Grade 10	3.5 (26,175)	3.4 (26,122)	-0.1	3.5 (191,028)	3.5 (190,535)	0

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

Table 2
FCAT 2.0 Writing
District and State, 2013 and 2014
Percentages of Students Scoring at or above 3.5

	DISTRICT		STATE	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
Grade 4	58%	53%	57%	53%
Grade 8	49%	53%	54%	56%
Grade 10	66%	64%	62%	64%

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

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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MIAMI-DADE, BROWARD MAKE STEADY IMPROVEMENTS ON FCAT 2.0 WRITING AND THIRD GRADE READING AND MATH

MIAMI, Fla., May 23, 2014 – Today, Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart congratulated teachers and educators in Miami-Dade and Broward counties for impressive gains in FCAT 2.0 results.

“These impressive gains are the result of district leaders providing teachers with the tools and training they need to succeed,” said Commissioner Stewart. “I am confident that with new standards and assessments next year replacing the FCAT, our students will continue to succeed.”

- While the state’s performance in Grade 3 Reading remained unchanged from 2013, both **Miami-Dade** and **Broward** counties were up 3 percentage points
- **Miami-Dade** improved from 53 percent scoring Level 3 and above in 2013 to 56 percent.
- **Broward** improved from 54 percent scoring Level 3 and above in 2013 to 57 percent.
- While the state improved by 2 percentage points in Grade 8 Writing, both **Miami-Dade** and **Broward** counties were up 4 percentage points.
- **Miami-Dade** improved from 49 percent scoring Level 3.5 and above in 2013 to 53 percent.
- **Broward** improved from 60 percent scoring Level 3.5 and above in 2013 to 64 percent.

Florida’s recent academic gains have received national attention. The Sunshine State jumped from 11th to 6th in the nation for educational quality in 2013. Florida has the highest graduation rate in the nation for Hispanic students. In the past decade, the number of Florida graduates participating in AP courses has more than doubled, and the number of low-income graduates taking AP courses has increased tenfold. And Florida’s graduation rate is 75.6% for 2012-13 – an increase of 1.1 percentage points over the prior year and up five percentage points since 2010-11.

Next year, a new assessment based on the Florida Standards will replace the FCAT 2.0. The Florida Standards for mathematics and English language arts stress a broader approach for student learning, including an increased emphasis on analytical thinking. With the new and more rigorous standards, a new assessment was needed to measure student progress.

For more information on third grade reading requirements, visit [Read to Learn](#).

The 2014 FCAT 2.0 Writing and third grade FCAT 2.0 Reading and Mathematics results are available at [2014 Statewide Assessment Scores](#).

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For more information about the Florida Department of Education, visit www.fldoe.org.