


# MEMORANDUM

April 20, 2006

**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 THE SPRING 2006 FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) WRITING+, GRADES 4, 8, AND 10 RESULTS**

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released today the Spring 2006 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing+ results for students in grades 4, 8, and 10. More than 80,000 Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) students participated in the Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ assessment. The grades 4, 8, and 10 FCAT Writing reports released today provide summary data based on the scores of **all students tested; these are not the scores that will be used for accountability purposes.** The FLDOE will release the 2006 School Performance Grades in late June 2006.

The Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ administration is the first for which the reported scores include the results on both the essay and the multiple-choice portion. Reported scores for the Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ include a whole-test scale score, ranging from 100 to 500; points earned out of the total possible points on the multiple-choice section in the areas of focus, organization, support, and conventions; and a rubric subscore for the essay portion alone ranging from 1 to 6.

### ***Highlights of the Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment Results***

- ▶ *District students demonstrated gains in their combined average writing scores at grades 4 and 8 and remained stable at grade 10, while state students increased at all grade levels.*
- ▶ *The percent of students scoring at or above 3.5 remained stable at grade 4, increased at grade 8 and decreased at grade 10. Most notable was the eight percentage-point gain in District students scoring at 3.5 and above at grade 8. Statewide, the percentages increased at grades 4 and 8 and declined at grade 10.*
- ▶ *The percent of District students scoring 4.0 or above increased at grades 4 and 8 and declined at grade 10. Most notable was the 13-point increase in District students scoring at or above 4.0 at grade 8. District trends parallel those of the state.*

The Spring 2006 grades 4, 8, and 10 FCAT Writing+ District and state summary scores are presented in the attachment, *District Highlights and Summary Tables*, included with this memorandum. School level reports are available online for viewing or printing as PDF files at <http://oada.dadeschools.net/06FCAT.asp>.

School shipments of the Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ school and individual student reports have not yet been received in the District. These will be processed and delivered to schools as soon as possible once they arrive. The FCAT Sunshine State Standards (SSS) Reading and Mathematics scores for grade 3 and retake students are expected next week. The remaining FCAT results, including the Norm Referenced Test (NRT) scores for students in grades 3-10, the FCAT SSS Reading and Mathematics scores for students in grades 4-10, and the FCAT SSS Science results for students in grades 5, 8, and 11, are due to be released incrementally throughout May 2006.

A new FLDOE initiative will allow school administrators to access their school lists of student results via a secure website. An additional initiative, the FCAT Parent Network, provides parents with a different secure website to access their child's individual scores. However, the Writing+ scores will not be available online. For the Spring 2006 FCAT administration, only the Reading and Mathematics SSS individual student test results will be available online on the Parent Network website.

A comprehensive report detailing information on District FCAT scores, including results by curriculum group and ethnicity and school trends, will be transmitted to the School Board as soon as it is available.

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

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Attachment

cc: School Board Attorney  
Superintendent's Senior Staff  
Assessment and Data Analysis Staff

**SPRING 2006 FCAT WRITING+ RESULTS**  
**DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY TABLES**

The Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ administration included both the usual essay section and a new multiple choice section that assesses the areas of focus, organization, support, and conventions. The Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ student scores reflect both the essay portion and the new multiple choice portion. Student scores were reported as an overall whole-test scale score between 100 and 500, as well as separate subscores, on a scale from 1 to 6, for the essay portion, and subscores (points earned out of total points possible) for the multiple choice items. Please note that achievement levels have not yet been set for the overall scale score on the FCAT Writing+.

District Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ results are based on the total number of students tested, as follows: 25,870 in grade 4, 26,755 in grade 8, and 27,595 in grade 10, for a total of 80,220. The number tested in 2006 represents approximately a 4% decrease in the population of students tested from 83,328 in 2005.

Because 2006 is the first administration for which whole-test scale scores are reported on the FCAT Writing+, year-to-year comparisons are not possible. It is appropriate, however, to compare the results for District and state students for the current year. Additionally, as the state continues to report a separate subscore for the essay portion of the FCAT Writing+ test, longitudinal comparisons are possible for that portion of the test.

Table 1. Spring 2006 FCAT Writing+ Whole-Test Mean Scale Scores for the District and the State, and Difference, for All Students Tested

	GRADE 4	GRADE 8	GRADE 10
<b>District</b>	299	285	282
<b>State</b>	296	295	295
<b>Diff.</b>	+3	-10	-13

Note: Scores range from 100 to 500.

Table 1 provides the following information:

- The overall writing performance of District students was highest at grade 4, while state students were level across the grades tested.
- At grade 4, District students performed better than the state average, while the reverse pattern held for grades 8 and 10.

Table 2. Combined Average Writing Scores  
for 2004, 2005, 2006, and Difference 2005 to 2006, for All Students Tested

	GRADE 4				GRADE 8				GRADE 10			
	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06
<b>District</b>	3.8	3.8	3.9	+1	3.7	3.7	3.9	+2	3.8	3.8	3.8	0
<b>State</b>	3.7	3.7	3.9	+2	3.8	3.8	4.0	+2	3.8	3.8	3.9	+1

Note: Scores range from 1 to 6.

Table 2 provides the following information:

- District students demonstrated gains in their combined average writing scores at grades 4 and 8, and remained stable at grade 10, while state students increased at all grade levels.
- Gains made by District students matched those of students statewide at grade 8.
- The combined average writing scores of District students matched the state average at grade 4, and were within one-tenth of a point (.1) of the state average at grades 8 and 10.

Table 3, below, provides information on the percent of students attaining scores of 3.5 and above.

Table 3. Percent of Students Scoring 3.5 and Above in Writing  
for 2004, 2005, 2006, and Difference 2005 to 2006, for All Students Tested

	GRADE 4				GRADE 8				GRADE 10			
	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06
<b>District</b>	77%	80%	80%	0	71%	73%	81%	+8	79%	79%	74%	-5
<b>State</b>	69%	74%	76%	+2	73%	76%	83%	+7	79%	79%	78%	-1

Table 3 provides the following information:

- The percent of students scoring at or above 3.5 remained stable at grade 4, increased at grade 8, and decreased at grade 10.

- Most notable was the eight (8) percentage point gain in District students scoring at 3.5 or above at grade 8.
- The District's grade 4 students outperformed the state in the percent of students scoring 3.5 and above, while the reverse held true at grades 8 and 10.

Table 4, below, provides information on the percent of students attaining scores of 4.0 and above.

Table 4. Percent of Students Scoring 4.0 and Above in Writing for 2005, 2006, and Difference 2005 to 2006, for All Students Tested

	GRADE 4			GRADE 8			GRADE 10		
	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06	2005	2006	Diff. 05-06
<b>District</b>	63%	67%	+4	53%	66%	+13	64%	59%	-5
<b>State</b>	55%	63%	+8	58%	68%	+10	63%	62%	-1

Table 4 provides the following information:

- The percent of District students scoring 4.0 or above increased at grades 4 and 8 and declined at grade 10. Most notable was the 13 percentage point increase in District students scoring at or above 4.0 at grade 8.
- The District's grade 4 students outperformed the state in the percent of students scoring 4.0 and above, while the reverse held true at grades 8 and 10.
- At grade 8, District gains in the percent of students scoring 4.0 and above exceeded state gains.

Table 5, on the following page, provides information on student performance in writing, by prompt type, at each grade level tested. There are two types of prompts at each grade level, but each student is tested on only one prompt. Prompt types are: Expository at grades 4, 8, and 10, Narrative at grade 4, and Persuasive at grades 8 and 10.

**Table 5. Average Writing Scores by Prompt Type  
for 2004, 2005, 2006, and Difference 2005 to 2006, for All Students Tested**

GRADE 4	EXPOSITORY				NARRATIVE			
	2004	2005	2006	Difference 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Difference 05-06
<b>District</b>	3.6	3.8	4.1	+3	3.9	3.8	3.7	-.1
<b>State</b>	3.6	3.7	4.0	+3	3.7	3.7	3.7	0
GRADE 8	EXPOSITORY				PERSUASIVE			
	2004	2005	2006	Difference 05-06	2004	2005	2006	Difference 05-06
<b>District</b>	3.8	3.7	3.9	+.2	3.6	3.6	3.9	+.3
<b>State</b>	3.9	3.9	4.0	+.1	3.7	3.7	3.9	+.2
GRADE 10	EXPOSITORY				PERSUASIVE			
	2004	2005	2006	Difference 05-06	2004	2005		Difference 05-06
<b>District</b>	3.7	3.7	3.8	+.1	3.9	3.9	3.7	-.2
<b>State</b>	3.8	3.7	3.9	+.2	3.9	4.0	3.8	-.2

Note: Scores range from 1 to 6.

Table 5 provides the following information:

- The District's average expository score increased at all grades tested, while the performance of District students on the narrative/persuasive prompts was mixed, with decreases at grades 4 and 10, and an increase at grade 8.
- The greatest performance in writing for District students was at grade 8, with increases noted on the average writing scores earned for both prompts.
- At both the District and state levels, in general, students performed better on the expository prompts than on the narrative or persuasive prompts.
- Overall, the performance of District students is very similar to that of students statewide, across all grade levels and prompts, with scores equal to or within one-tenth of a point (.1) of the state scores.