


**MEMORANDUM**

**August 6, 2010**

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

**FROM:** Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

**SUBJECT: 2009-10 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES**

After a delay of more than six weeks, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) released School Performance Grades today for the 2009-10 school year. Preliminary analysis of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCAT) results generated statewide recognition of anomalies in the data, which could substantially impact School Performance Grades across the state. As a result, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) asked the FLDOE for a full audit of the scores by an independent organization. Audits of the FCAT program were performed by Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), an organization with a controversial liaison to the embattled testing company, Pearson Assessment, and by the Center for Assessment. Unfortunately, the recently published reports (available at <http://www.fl DOE.org/schoolgrades.asp>) failed to address many of the concerns identified by the Districts, and the FLDOE has proceeded with the release of the School Performance Grades at this time.

The School Performance Grades were only released for elementary, K-8 and middle schools. During the 2008 legislative session, Senate Bill 1908 was passed which significantly changed the way senior high schools were to be graded beginning with the 2009-10 school year. The bill required high school grades to include alternate measures of student achievement in addition to the vital foundation of FCAT results in Grades 9, 10, and 11. The additional measures provide an equal focus on college readiness access to and performance on accelerated coursework and graduation rates for all students and those who are academically at-risk. Since the results of these additional indicators are not available until the fall, high schools will not receive School Performance Grades until late fall. At this point, the FLDOE has released only the total points earned by each high school on the FCAT components. These points only represent 50 percent of the final School Performance Grades for senior high schools; however, these points will be used to determine the FLDOE's Differentiated Accountability School Status in the interim.

Despite overwhelming evidence that M-DCPS students' achievement met high standards on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and that student growth on FCAT surpassed that of students' statewide, the results released today fall short of fully capturing that success. Declines in student gains, which contribute half of the points to the calculation of School Performance Grades, were cited as a primary concern in the request for an independent audit of FCAT scores and the accountability system. The FLDOE acknowledged volatility in this measure from year-to-year, however student gains still remain in the calculation. While M-DCPS fared better than the state overall, individual schools were impacted to a greater extent by this anomaly, particularly at the elementary level. Notwithstanding these challenges, M-DCPS schools excelled, as revealed by the following highlights, summarized from the attached tables:

- **76% of all M-DCPS schools maintained or increased their School Performance Grade from 2008-09 to 2009-10, as compared to only 72% statewide.**
  - **The number of M-DCPS middle schools receiving an “A” increased from 36 in 2008-09 to 38 in 2009-10.**
  - **At the elementary level, cited for problems with student gains, 33% of schools across the state experienced a decline, compared to 25% in the District.**
- **Of the 10 schools receiving an “F” in 2009-10, only five are traditional M-DCPS schools. This represents only 1.8% of the 272 schools operated by the District that received a grade.**
  - **Five of the 48 charter schools in Miami-Dade County received an “F,” representing 10.4% of the charter schools that received a grade.**
  - **The number of traditional M-DCPS schools receiving an “F” decreased from eight to five, while the number of Charter Schools increased from two to five.**
- **Of eight selected Differentiated Accountability (DA) schools that received School Performance Grades, four improved by at least one letter grade, and three remained stable from 2008-09 to 2009-10.**
- **More than three-quarters of the District’s senior high schools received FCAT-component points in the highest point range used to determine DA status.**

In addition, 30 alternative education centers chose to receive school performance grades in 2009-10, instead of school improvement ratings. State policy regarding the attribution of enrolled students’ scores changed beginning with 2008-09 school year. Three alternative education centers that are operated as charter schools opted to receive school improvement ratings in 2009-10.

During the FLDOE’s conference call to discuss the 2009-10 School Performance Grades with district superintendents, Commissioner Smith acknowledged that increased poverty and decreased funding are contributing factors to the decline in performance observed in so many schools across the state. In the middle of the current recessive economy, these factors have been felt more strongly in the M-DCPS than in most other districts. We will continue to voice our concerns about the soundness of the 2009-10 accountability measures to the FLDOE, and encourage them to revise the methodology used going forward.

Attachments include highlights of the District’s performance and a summary of the results. Individual school performance grade results are available on the District website at: <http://oada.dadeschools.net>. Should you have any questions regarding the results, please contact 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  
Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis Staff

**Table 1**  
**School Performance Grade Distributions for**  
**Elementary/K-8 Center, Middle, and Senior High Schools**

School Level:	C										F										
	A			B			D				E		F								
	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10					
<b>Elementary/ K-8 Centers</b>	117	123	158	144	24	37	31	22	60	48	31	53	12	14	10	14	9	5	3	3	4 Traditional 5 Charter
<b>Middle</b>	19	33	36	38	15	10	12	12	16	24	19	17	12	6	7	10	6	1	1	1	1 Traditional
<b>Senior</b>	6	15	16	NA	5	9	12	NA	14	12	13	NA	10	7	9	NA	12	7*	6	6	NA
<b>All Levels**</b>	142	171	210	182	44	56	55	34	90	84	63	70	34	27	26	24	27	13	8	8	5 Traditional 5 Charter
<b>Percent</b>	42%	49%	58%	57%	13%	16%	15%	11%	26%	24%	17%	22%	10%	8%	7%	8%	8%	4%	3%	3%	3%

\* Includes one alternative education center that had sufficient membership to receive a school performance grade in 2007-08 and one in 2009-10.  
 \*\* The total number of schools listed by School Performance Grade in 2009-10 cannot be directly compared to previous years because senior high schools did not yet receive grades, pending release of new high school accountability components.

**Table 2**  
**School Performance Grades: FCAT- Component Points, 2009-10**  
**Senior High Schools and Alternative Centers**

	<395 points*		395-434 points*		>434 points*	
	# Schools	% Schools	# Schools	% Schools	# Schools	% Schools
Senior High Schools	3	5%	12	19%	49	77%
Alternative Centers	14	100%	0		0	

\* The point ranges presented in this table represent the criteria for determining high school Differentiated Accountability status based on only the FCAT-component of School Performance Grades.

Note: The District's 33 alternative education centers have the option of receiving school performance "grades" or school improvement "ratings." Due to changes in the state's policy implemented in 2008-09 regarding the attribution of enrolled students' scores, 30 of the alternative education centers opted to receive grades this year, while only three centers that are operated as charter schools opted to receive ratings. In 2008-09, only one alternative education center had sufficient numbers of students to receive a School Performance Grade, and 14 received FCAT-component points only.

**Table 3  
District Schools Designated as "F" for 2009-10**

<b>Traditional Schools Operated by M-DCPS</b>		
1.	0081	Lenora Braynon Smith Elementary
2.	1361	Fredrick Douglass Elementary
3.	4401	Kelsey L. Pharr Elementary
4.	5931	Phillis Wheatley Elementary
5.	6361	Jose De Diego Middle
<b>Alterative Center Operated by M-DCPS</b>		
6.	8119	The 500 Role Models Academy
<b>Charter Schools</b>		
7.	0113	Balere Language Academy
8.	0215	Lawrence Academy Charter
9.	2060	The Gibson Charter School
10.	5025	Lincoln Marti Charter
11.	5032	Excelsior Charter Academy