



RESEARCH CAPSULE

Research Services

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2005-06 Overview of M-DCPS Academic Performance

At A Glance

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) earned a performance grade of "B" for the second year in a row and was just seven points short of the points required to earn an "A." This Research Capsule summarizes several key elements that contributed to the district's achievement. Results indicate that, in most cases, students' levels of academic achievement have increased and that some progress has been made toward narrowing the achievement gap.

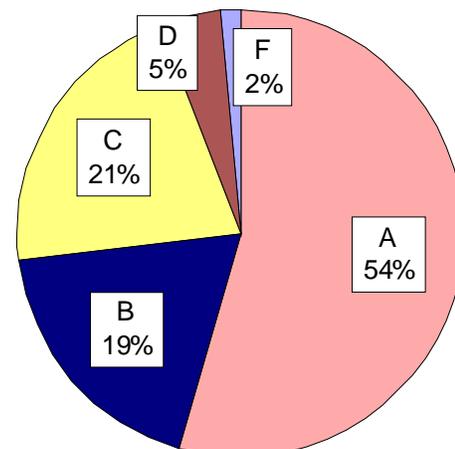
PERFORMANCE GRADING SYSTEM

The state's performance grading system for school districts awards points for high scores on the FCAT and for students' annual learning gains. M-DCPS received a 2005-06 performance grade of "B" for the second year in a row. The district earned 403 points, up 15 points from 2004-05 and just seven points less than the 410 points required to earn a performance grade of "A."

For the first time, the majority of M-DCPS' schools (54 percent) earned a performance grade of "A." Last year, 48 percent of the district's schools earned an "A." The percent of schools earning a "B" also increased (from 15 to 19 percent), while the percent of schools earning a grade of "C" or "D" decreased (from 34 to 26 percent). In addition, 56 percent of School Improvement Zone schools (22 of 39) raised their letter grade from 2004-05 to 2005-06.

Figure 1

Proportion of Grades Assigned to The District in 2006



NOTE: Percents do not equal 100 due to rounding.

FCAT Writing+ (Grades 4, 8, and 10)

For the 2006 administration of the FCAT Writing, a multiple choice section was added to the traditional essay portion of the test (now called FCAT Writing+). The new multiple choice portion of the test includes sections on focus, organization, support, and conventions. The state released two scores from the administration of the 2006 FCAT Writing+: an overall scale score (ranging from 100 to 500), representing students' performance on both portions of the assessment, and a separate subscore for the essay portion of the test (ranging from 1 to 6). The essay subscore is the score that the state reported for all previous administrations of the FCAT. Because 2006 was the first year for which overall scale scores were reported, longitudinal comparisons are not possible. Additionally, achievement levels corresponding to the FCAT Writing+ scale scores have not yet been set by the state. Year-to-year comparisons can be made, however, using the essay subscores.

Analyses of the 2005 and 2006 essay subscores revealed that the district's combined average writing score increased at grades 4 and 8 (Figure 2). At grade 4, M-DCPS' combined average score matched the state average. At grades 8 and 10, the district's combined average score was within 0.1 point of the state average.

The percent of M-DCPS students scoring 3.5 and above increased at grade 8 and the percent of students scoring 4.0 and above increased at grades 4 and 8 (Figure 3). Compared to students statewide, a higher percent of the district's grade 4 students

Figure 2

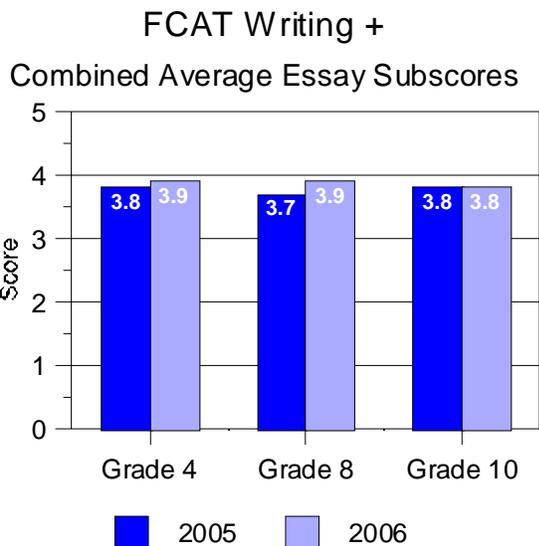
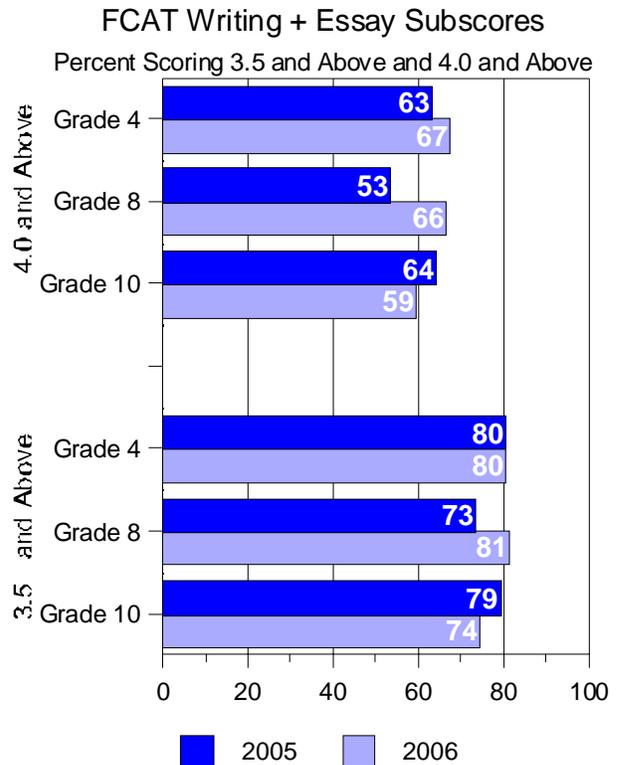


Figure 3



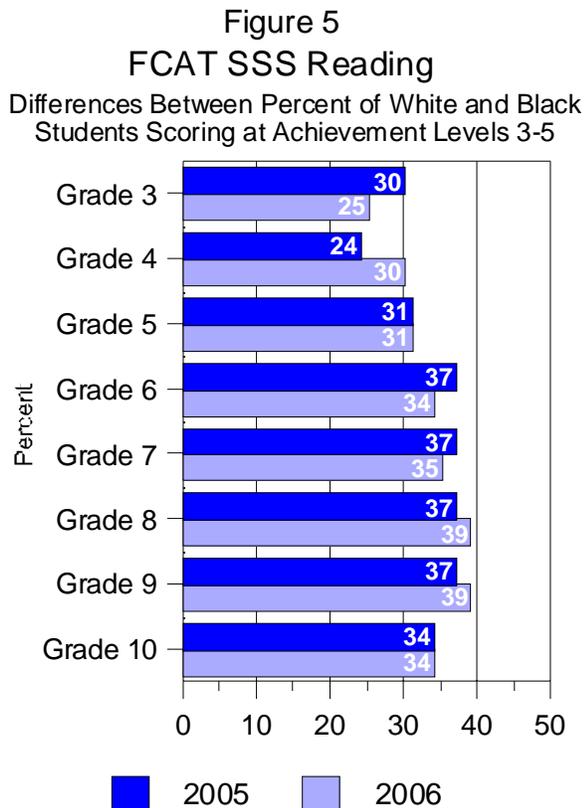
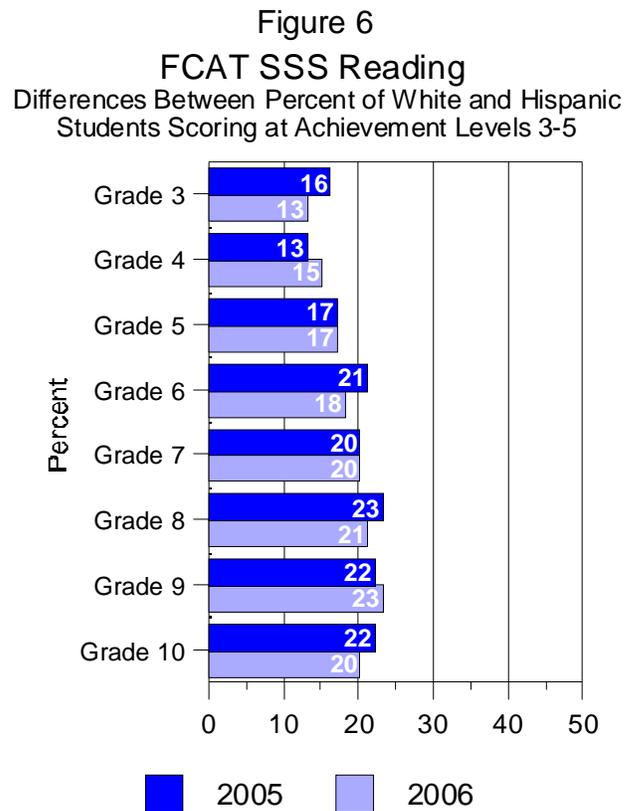
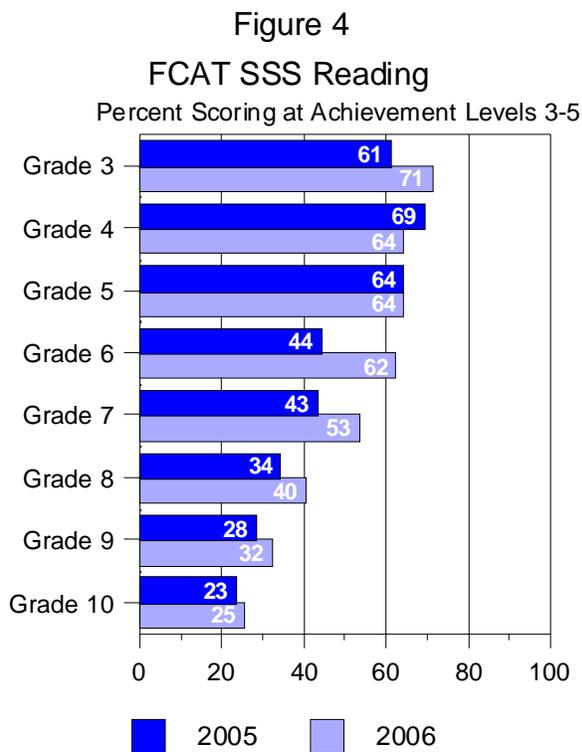
scored 3.5 and above and 4.0 and above. At grade 8, the district's gains in the percent of students scoring both 3.5 and above and 4.0 and above exceeded those of students statewide.

Scores analyzed by ethnic group indicated that the combined average scores of Black, Hispanic, and White students increased at grades 4 and 8. At grade 10, White students' combined average score increased, while Hispanic students' average score remained stable and Black students' average score decreased by 0.1 point. No progress was made in narrowing the achievement gap, as White students' combined average scores increased by an equal or greater amount than the scores of Black and Hispanic students at all three grade levels.

FCAT Writing+ data for School Improvement Zone schools as an individual group are not yet available for inclusion in this report.

FCAT Reading SSS (Grades 3-10)

The percent of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Level 1 (the lowest level) decreased at all grade levels except grade 4. As can be seen in Figure 4, the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 (the highest levels) increased at six of the eight grade levels tested.



NOTE: (Figure 6) Values represent the difference between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in 2005 and 2006, not the actual percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5. For example, at grade 3 in 2005, 63 percent of Hispanic students and 79 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 16 percent). In 2006, 73 percent of Hispanic students and 86 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 13 percent). Therefore, the gap between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Levels 3-5 is closing.

The district's score patterns were similar to those of the state, with the percent of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increasing more than the percent of students statewide at five grade levels.

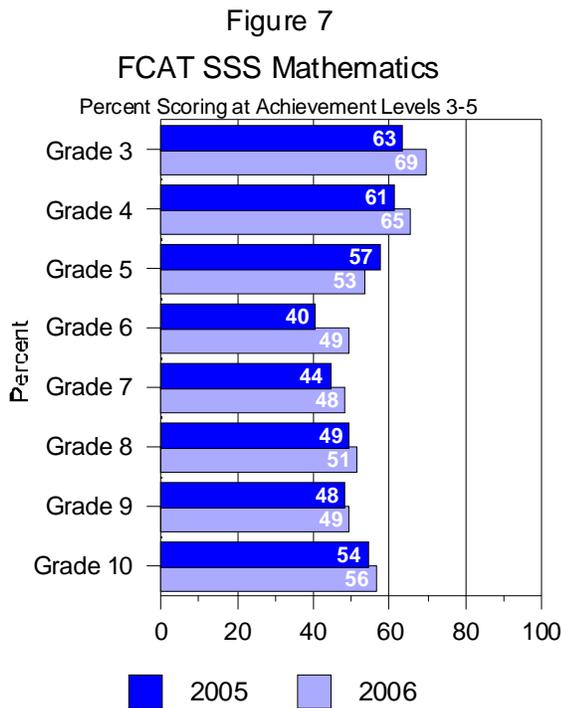
Scores disaggregated by ethnic group indicated that a higher percent of White students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 when compared to Black and Hispanic students at all grade levels. The percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at grades 3 and 6-10, regardless of ethnicity. Differences between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 decreased at three grade levels. Differences between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 decreased at four grade levels (Figures 5 and 6). These results indicate that the district is making some progress in reducing the achievement gap in reading.

NOTE: (Figure 5) Values represent the difference between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in 2005 and 2006, not the actual percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5. For example, at grade 3 in 2005, 49 percent of Black students and 79 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 30 percent). In 2006, 61 percent of Black students and 86 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 25 percent). Therefore, the gap between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Levels 3-5 is closing.

School Improvement Zone students performed at higher achievement levels in 2005-06, although they still performed at lower levels than students districtwide. The percent of Zone school students scoring at Achievement Level 1 decreased from 57 to 50 percent, while the percent scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased from 22 to 27 percent.

FCAT Mathematics (Grades 3-10)

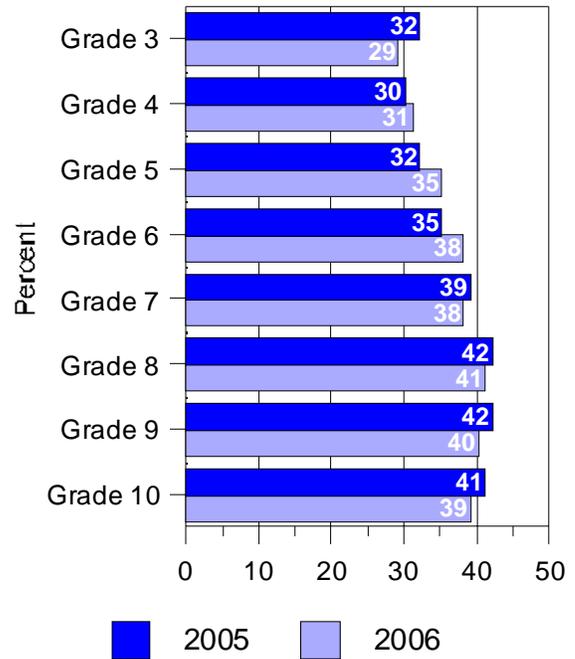
The percent of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Level 1 decreased at six of the eight grade levels tested. The percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at seven grade levels (Figure 7). The district's score patterns were similar to those of the state, with the percent of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increasing more than the percent of students statewide at six grade levels.



Scores disaggregated by ethnic group indicated that a higher percent of White students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 when compared to Black or Hispanic students at all grade levels. The percent of Black students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at all except one grade level. The percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at six grade levels. Differences between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 decreased at five grade levels. Differences between the percent of Hispanic and White

students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 decreased at four grade levels (Figures 8 and 9). These results indicate that the district is also making some progress in reducing the achievement gap in mathematics.

Figure 8
FCAT SSS Mathematics
Differences Between Percent of White and Black Students Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5



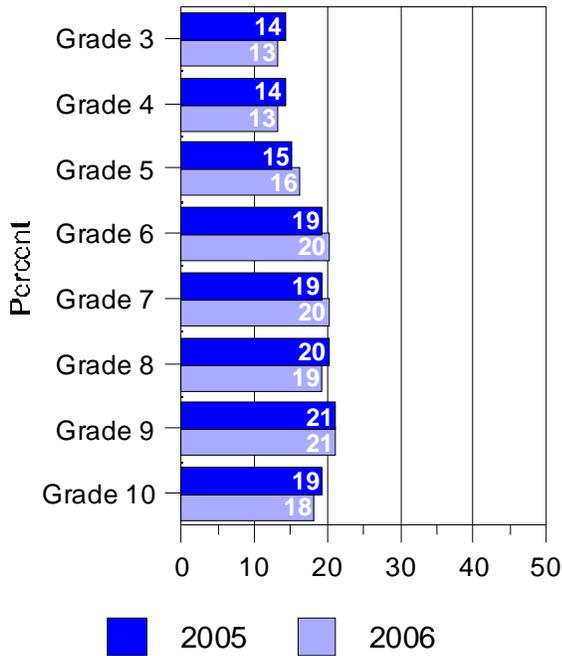
NOTE: (Figure 8) Values represent the difference between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in 2005 and 2006, not the actual percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5. For example, at grade 3 in 2005, 49 percent of Black students and 81 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 32 percent). In 2006, 56 percent of Black students and 85 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 29 percent). Therefore, the gap between the percent of Black and White students scoring at Levels 3-5 is closing.

School Improvement Zone students performed at higher achievement levels in 2005-06, although they still performed at lower levels than students districtwide. The percent of Zone school students scoring at Achievement Level 1 decreased from 47 to 42 percent. The percent of Zone school students moving out of Achievement Level 1 surpassed the percent of students moving out of Level 1 districtwide (-5 percent versus -3 percent, respectively). The percent of Zone school students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased from 28 to 31 percent. This three percent increase equaled the increase in the percent of the district's students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5.

Figure 9

FCAT SSS Mathematics

Differences Between Percent of White and Hispanic Students Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5



NOTE: (Figure 9) Values represent the difference between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in 2005 and 2006, not the actual percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5. For example, at grade 3 in 2005, 67 percent of Hispanic students and 81 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 14 percent). In 2006, 72 percent of Hispanic students and 85 percent of White students scored at Levels 3-5 (a difference of 13 percent). Therefore, the gap between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring at Levels 3-5 is closing.

SUMMARY

Several key indicators of academic performance showed that M-DCPS students' levels of academic achievement, as measured by the FCAT, are improving. For the first time, the majority of the district's schools earned a performance grade of "A." In 2005-06, more M-DCPS schools earned an "A" or "B" and fewer schools received a grade of "C" or "D." The district's average FCAT Writing+ essay subscores increased in two of the three grade levels tested. The percent of M-DCPS students scoring at the lowest achievement level decreased at seven of the eight grade levels tested on the FCAT Reading and at six grade levels on the FCAT Mathematics. The percent of the district's students scoring at the highest achievement levels increased more than the percent of students statewide at five grade levels in Reading and at six grade levels in Mathematics.

Black and Hispanic students continued to perform at lower levels when compared to White students. Some progress was made in narrowing the achievement gap on the FCAT Reading and Mathematics, as evidenced by smaller differences between the percent of White versus Black and Hispanic students scoring at the higher achievement levels at several grade levels. School Improvement Zone students performed at lower levels than non-Zone students, but the gap continued to close. On the FCAT Mathematics, for example, a higher percent of Zone school students moved out of Achievement Level 1 than students districtwide.

Data were provided by the Division of Student Assessment and Educational Testing. The reader interested in school-level data and more extensive discussion of testing results is directed to the reports available from this department of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (<http://oada.dadeschools.net/SAET/ASSESSMENT.asp>).