



# INFORMATION CAPSULE

## Research Services

Vol. 1203  
September 2012

Christie Blazer, Supervisor

## 2011-2012 Overview of M-DCPS' Academic Performance

### *At a Glance*

*This Information Capsule answers the most frequently asked questions about M-DCPS' academic performance during the 2011-2012 school year. Over the past year, the Florida Department of Education made over 28 changes to the school grading formula, including the transition to new, more rigorous assessments, new accountability components, and inclusion of students with disabilities and English language learners in all parts of the school grade calculations. In spite of these major changes, M-DCPS posted stronger than expected School Performance Grades, with almost half of the District's schools earning an "A" and only 2% of schools receiving an "F." Overall, M-DCPS earned a District Performance Grade of "B."*

*More rigorous scoring criteria used for the 2012 FCAT Writing led to decreases in the percentages of M-DCPS students passing the exam at all three grade levels tested. On the FCAT 2.0 Reading and FCAT 2.0 Science, results were mixed for M-DCPS students with performance gains noted at some grade levels but not at others. On the FCAT 2.0 Mathematics, the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at the higher achievement levels increased at all of the six grade levels tested. The percentages of M-DCPS students receiving passing scores on the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment increased at four of six grade levels. The District's middle grades students performed remarkably well, with 89-90% achieving scores required to earn high school credit.*

*The District made some progress reducing the achievement gap on the FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science, with improvements at some grade levels noted. On the FCAT Writing, however, the more stringent criteria used to score the exam led to a widening of the achievement gap at all three grade levels tested. On the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment, the gap between White students and both Black and Hispanic students decreased across all grade levels tested.*

### **What changes did the Florida Department of Education make to the calculation of School Performance Grades in 2011-2012?**

Florida's successful application to the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver to federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements resulted in significant changes to the school grading formula. The waiver allows Florida to have one accountability system instead of two (one state and one federal) and to use its own school grading system to identify struggling schools for focused intervention and support. Beginning in 2011-2012, major changes to Florida School Performance Grades included:

- Increased rigor reflected in new FCAT 2.0 cut scores.

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Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis  
1450 NE Second Avenue, Suite 208, Miami, Florida 33132  
(305) 995-7503 Fax (305) 995-7521

- Inclusion of end-of-course (EOC) assessments in secondary school grade models.
- Application of new learning gains calculations for FCAT 2.0 and EOC assessments.
- Addition of new measures at the middle school level, including acceleration.
- Inclusion of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) in their second year of instruction in all components of the school grade model.

The 2011-2012 School Performance Grades were computed using student results from the FCAT Writing in grades 4, 8, and 10; FCAT 2.0 Reading in grades 3-10; FCAT 2.0 Mathematics in grades 3-8; FCAT 2.0 Science in grades 5 and 8; and the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment for enrolled students in grades 6-12. Results reflected a one-letter-grade drop limit, imposed by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in 2011-2012 only, due to the simultaneous implementation of so many new components in the calculation of School Performance Grades.

**What performance grade did M-DCPS receive?**

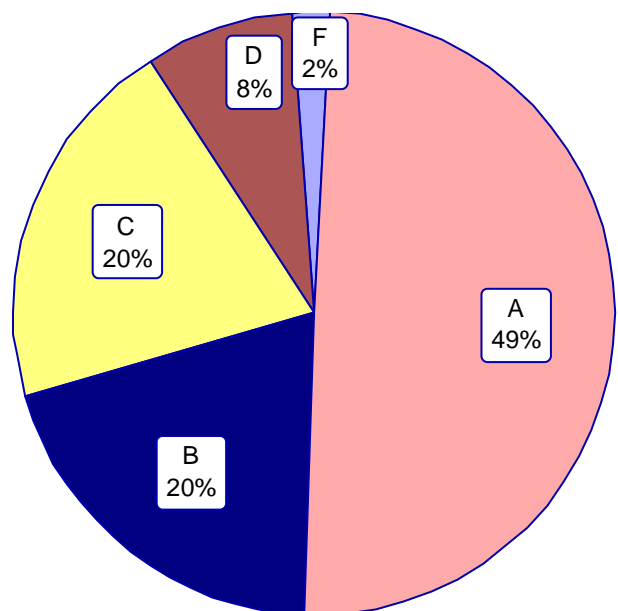
The state’s performance grading system awards points to school districts based on student achievement in writing, reading, mathematics, and science; students’ annual learning gains; and the progress made by the lowest-performing students. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) earned 512 points, or a grade of “B.” The District has earned a grade of “B” each of the last five years.

**What performance grades did M-DCPS schools receive?**

School Performance Grades have only been released for elementary, K-8, and middle schools. The passage of Senate Bill 1908 during the 2008 legislative session significantly changed the way senior high schools were graded. The bill requires high school performance grades to include alternative measures of student achievement in addition to the FCAT. 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. High School Performance Grades will be released in late fall when the results of these additional indicators are available.

Figure 1 shows the proportions of grades assigned to M-DCPS schools. A total of 344 M-DCPS elementary, K-8, and middle schools, including charter schools, received a 2012 School Performance Grade. Despite the transition to new, more rigorous assessments, the addition of new accountability components, and the expansion to include all students in both performance and growth components of the grading formula, M-DCPS posted stronger than expected School Performance Grades. Almost half of the District’s schools received an “A,” and only 2% of schools (5 traditional and 1 charter) received an “F.”

Figure 1  
Proportions of Grades Assigned to M-DCPS in 2012



Note: Percentages are based on the 344 M-DCPS schools that received a 2012 School Performance Grade and exclude the three M-DCPS schools that received an Incomplete.

A comparison of the distribution of M-DCPS and statewide School Performance Grades in 2011 and 2012 indicates:

- The percentage of “A” schools in M-DCPS decreased by 6% (from 55% to 49%), while “A” schools across Florida fell by 10% (from 58% to 48%).
- The percentage of “D” schools in M-DCPS increased by only 1% (from 7% to 8%); “D” schools across Florida increased by 3% (from 5% to 8%).
- The percentage of “F” schools in M-DCPS did not increase (2% in both years), while “F” schools across Florida increased by 1% (from 1% to 2%).

**How did M-DCPS students perform on the FCAT Writing?**

Nearly 77,500 M-DCPS students in grades 4, 8, and 10 participated in the spring 2012 FCAT Writing Assessment. Students are required to write an essay on an assigned topic: either narrative or expository at grade 4, and either persuasive or expository at grades 8 and 10. Scores are reported as traditional rubric scores, ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 6. Because two readers scored each essay in 2012, as opposed to only one in 2011, intermediary scores (such as 1.5, 2.5, and 3.5) are again possible. Students’ essays are scored on four elements of writing: focus, organization, support, and conventions.

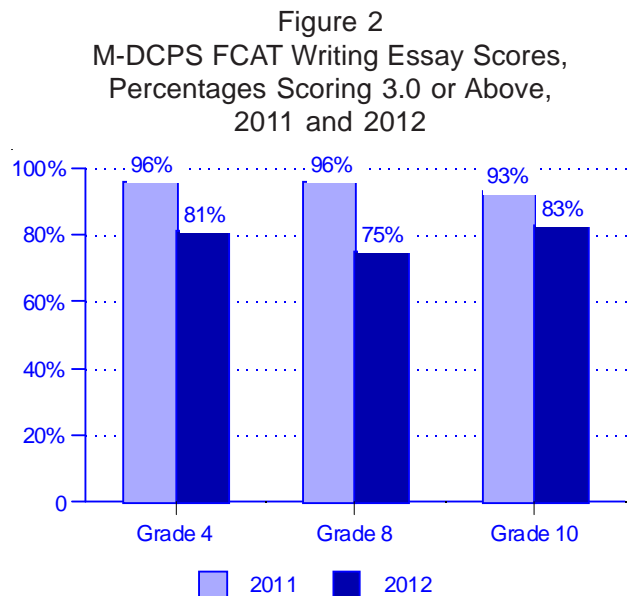
Last year, the FLDOE established revised Calibration Scoring Guides which resulted in more stringent scoring of the 2012 FCAT Writing. Greater emphasis was placed on proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar, as well as the way students include supporting details in their essays. However, an unexpectedly large drop in students’ scores prompted the State Board of Education to convene an emergency meeting and vote to align the Writing passing score with NCLB requirements. The Writing passing score, which the state had raised to 4.0 for school grade calculations, reverted to 3.0 for the 2011-2012 school year.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at 3.0 or above on the 2011 and 2012 FCAT Writing decreased at all three grade levels. These decreases have been attributed to the more rigorous scoring requirements that were introduced this year.

M-DCPS students’ achievement on the 2012 FCAT Writing paralleled that of students statewide, reflecting a systematic decrease in scores across the state. In addition, a comparison of M-DCPS and statewide 2011 and 2012 FCAT Writing scores indicates that the percentages of students scoring at 3.0 or above decreased by similar amounts at each of the three grade levels tested.

**How did M-DCPS students perform on the FCAT Reading?**

In 2011, the FLDOE transitioned from the FCAT to FCAT 2.0 in reading to align with new academic content specified in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The FCAT 2.0 Reading was administered to students in grades 3-10. In spring 2012, approximately 212,000 M-DCPS students took the FCAT 2.0 Reading test.



FCAT 2.0 Reading results are reported in terms of Achievement Levels that range from Level 1 (low) to Level 5 (high). Level 3 indicates satisfactory performance. In order to facilitate comparisons across time, the FLDOE retrofitted the spring 2011 scores to the new FCAT 2.0 scale. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at five of the eight grade levels tested. Substantial increases at grades 5 and 8 were offset by declines at grades 6 and 10.

At four of the grade levels tested (grades 3, 5, 8, and 9), the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at the higher achievement levels (Levels 3-5) increased by more than those of students statewide from 2011 to 2012.

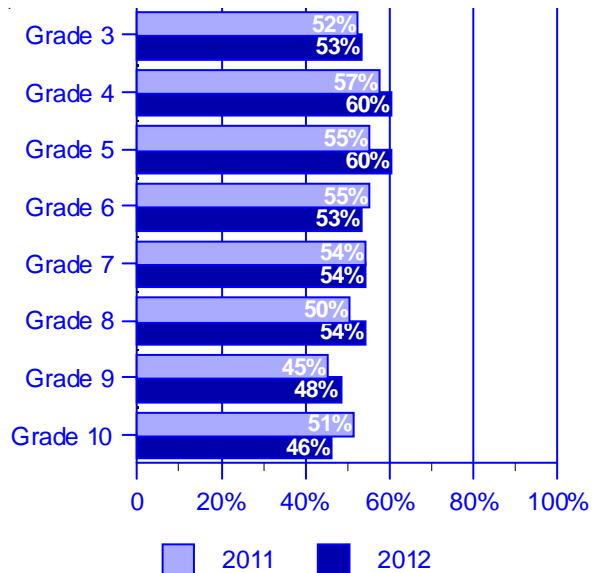
**How did students perform on the FCAT Mathematics?**

In 2011, the FLDOE transitioned from the FCAT to FCAT 2.0 in mathematics to align with new academic content specified in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The FCAT 2.0 Mathematics was administered to students in grades 3-8. In spring 2012, close to 159,000 M-DCPS students took the FCAT 2.0 Mathematics test. Senior high school students no longer participate in the comprehensive FCAT Mathematics testing. Instead, these students take Florida’s End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments in Algebra 1 and Geometry, which target specific course content and are administered to all students taking the applicable course, without regard to grade level.

FCAT 2.0 Mathematics results are reported in terms of Achievement Levels that range from Level 1 (low) to Level 5 (high). Level 3 indicates satisfactory performance. In order to facilitate comparisons across time, the FLDOE retrofitted the spring 2011 scores to the new FCAT 2.0 scale. As can be seen in Figure 4, the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at all grade levels tested.

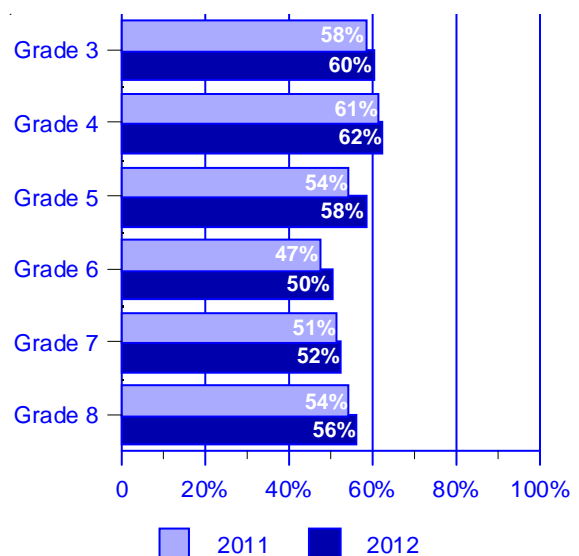
At grades 3-5, higher percentages of M-DCPS students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 than their counterparts across the state. At four of the six grade levels tested (grades 5-8), the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at the higher achievement levels increased by more than those of students statewide from 2011 to 2012.

Figure 3  
M-DCPS FCAT 2.0 Reading: Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2011 and 2012



Note: 2011 scores are reported using the new retrofitted Achievement Levels, based on FCAT 2.0 scale scores.

Figure 4  
M-DCPS FCAT 2.0 Mathematics: Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2011 and 2012



Note: 2011 scores are reported using the new retrofitted Achievement Levels, based on FCAT 2.0 scale scores.

## How did M-DCPS students perform on the FCAT Science?

The FLDOE transitioned from the FCAT to the FCAT 2.0 in science this year. The FCAT 2.0 is aligned with new academic content specified in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Over 52,000 M-DCPS students in grades 5 and 8 took the FCAT 2.0 Science. Grade 11 students no longer participate in the comprehensive FCAT Science testing. Instead, these students take Florida's Biology 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment, which targets specific course content and is administered to all students taking the course, without regard to grade level. (Florida students took a baseline administration of the Biology 1 EOC Assessment in spring 2012; test scores will be included in the calculation of school grades beginning in 2012-2013.)

FCAT 2.0 Science results are reported in terms of Achievement Levels that range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Level 3 indicates satisfactory performance. To facilitate comparisons across time, the FLDOE released 2012 FCAT 2.0 Science results as FCAT equivalent scores, pending the establishment of the new FCAT 2.0 Science scale scores and Achievement Levels, which will be available in spring 2013. As can be seen in Figure 5, the percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 on the FCAT 2.0 Science test decreased slightly at grade 5 and increased at grade 8.

M-DCPS students outperformed students statewide at grade 8: while the percentage of M-DCPS students scoring at Science Achievement Levels 3-5 increased by two percent from 2011 to 2012, the percentage of students scoring at the higher Achievement Levels statewide remained stable.

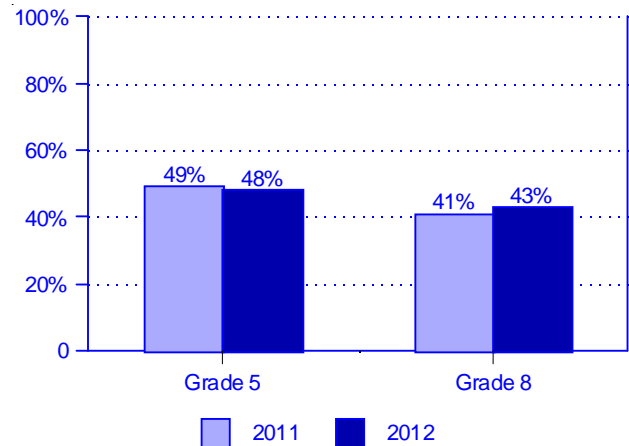
## How did M-DCPS students perform on the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment?

Last year, the FLDOE began the transition from comprehensive FCAT assessments in mathematics and science to EOC assessments for certain high school courses. The first course with standardized EOC testing in Florida was Algebra 1. Florida's students took a baseline administration of the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment in spring 2011. Results were included in the calculation of school grades for the first time in 2011-2012. Students took baseline administrations of the Biology 1 and Geometry EOC Assessments in spring 2012. Biology and Geometry EOC test scores will be included in the calculation of school grades beginning in 2012-2013.

The Algebra 1 EOC Assessment measures student achievement of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, as outlined in the Algebra 1 course description. All students enrolled in Algebra 1 or an equivalent course must participate in the EOC assessment, regardless of their grade level. As such, students at any grade level who are enrolled in the course, typically grades 7-12, may take the test. Students who entered grade 9 in the 2011-2012 school year and beyond are required to earn a passing score on the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment in order to earn high school credit for the course.

In M-DCPS, over 26,000 first-time testers participated in the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment. The assessment is delivered via a computer-based testing platform. Algebra 1 EOC Assessment results are reported in terms of Achievement Levels that range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Level 3 indicates satisfactory performance and constitutes a passing score.

Figure 5  
M-DCPS FCAT Science: Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2011 and 2012



Note: 2011 scores are from the original FCAT Science test; 2012 scores represent FCAT equivalent scores for the new FCAT 2.0 Science test.

Retrofitted summary scores for the 2011 baseline administration of the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment (originally reported as T-Scores that ranged from 20 to 80) were calculated by District staff to facilitate comparisons between 2011 and 2012 scores. As can be seen in Figure 6, the percentages of first-time test takers scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at grades 7-10, remained stable at grade 11, and decreased at grade 12. Middle grades students performed remarkably well on the assessment, with 89-90% achieving scores required to earn high school credit. (At the middle grades, only high-performing students enrolled in Algebra 1 as an accelerated course and took the corresponding Algebra 1 EOC Assessment.)

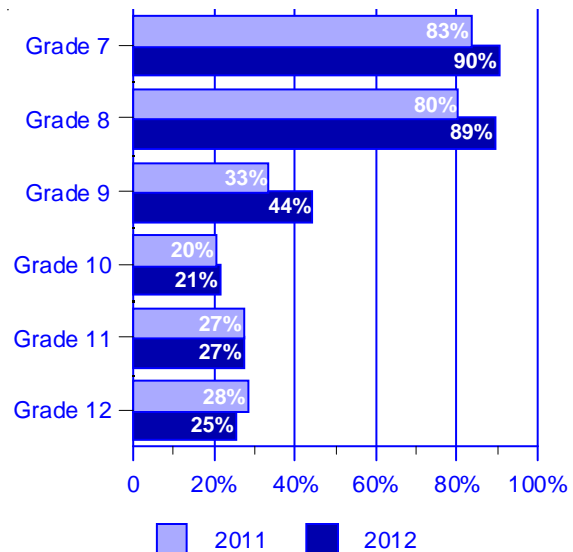
From 2011 to 2012, the percentages of M-DCPS first-time test takers earning passing scores increased more than the percentages of students statewide at grades 7-10. Most notable was the 11% increase in the percentage of M-DCPS grade 9 students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, compared to a 3% increase for grade 9 students statewide.

**How many M-DCPS grade 10 students met the graduation requirement in reading on their first attempt?**

In December 2011, Florida's State Board of Education established a new, more rigorous passing standard for the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading for graduation purposes. Students who entered grade 9 in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter must now score at Achievement Level 3 or above (scale score of 245 or higher) on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading to meet the state's graduation test requirement. Students have multiple opportunities to pass the FCAT 2.0 Reading graduation test prior to graduation, with the first opportunity taking place in the spring of grade 10. Note that the FCAT Mathematics graduation test requirement has been discontinued beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2010-2011 school year, as the FLDOE transitions to end-of-course assessments in Algebra and Geometry.

Figure 7 provides the percentages of grade 10 students who met the graduation requirement in reading on their first attempt. The percentage of grade 10 students passing the FCAT 2.0 Reading on their first attempt in order to meet the high school graduation test requirement decreased across

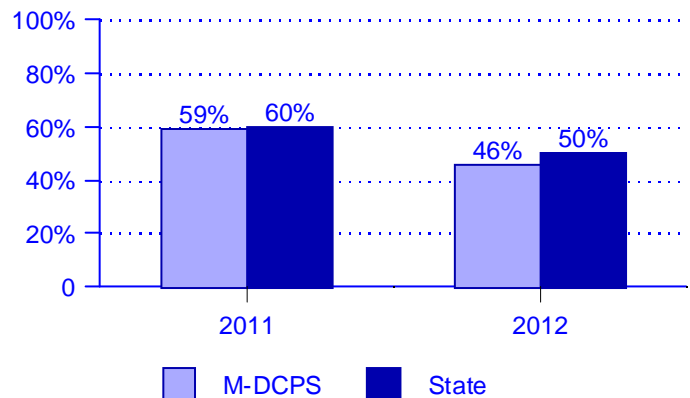
Figure 6  
M-DCPS Algebra 1 EOC Assessment:  
Percentages of First-Time Test Takers Scoring  
at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2011 and 2012



Notes: 2011 results have been converted to the newly established Algebra 1 EOC scale by the District so that Achievement Levels may be compared from 2011 to 2012.

The majority of students taking Algebra 1 are ninth graders. At the middle grades, only high-performing students enrolled in Algebra 1 as an accelerated course. Students who were in grades 10-12 were not required to pass the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment in order to obtain high school credit in the course.

Figure 7  
FCAT 2.0 Grade 10 Reading Graduation Test:  
Percentages of M-DCPS and State Students  
Meeting the Graduation Requirement on the First  
Attempt, 2011 and 2012



both the District (by 13%) and State (by 10%). This systematic decrease in scores is likely the result of the more rigorous passing criteria introduced by the FLDOE this year.

**Did M-DCPS make progress in closing the achievement gap on the FCAT?**

The performance of M-DCPS' Black, Hispanic, and White students was compared on the FCAT Writing; FCAT 2.0 in Reading, Mathematics, and Science; and the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment.

**FCAT Writing.** As can be seen in Table 1, the gap between White students and both Black and Hispanic students increased from 2011 to 2012 at all three grade levels tested. The FLDOE's introduction of more stringent scoring guidelines in 2012 led to decreases in all students' FCAT Writing scores regardless of ethnicity; however, Black and Hispanic students' scores decreased more than White students' scores. Across the three grades tested in 2011 to 2012, the percentage of Black students scoring at 3.0 or above decreased by 22%, the percentage of Hispanic students scoring at 3.0 or above decreased by 14%, and the percentage of White students scoring at 3.0 or above decreased by 9%.

Table 1  
M-DCPS FCAT Writing Essay Scores: Percentages Scoring 3.0 or Above, Black-White and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2011 and 2012

	Size of 2012 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2011 to 2012?	
	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>
Grade 4	14%	7%	+11%	+4%
8	20%	11%	+16%	+7%
10	13%	8%	+9%	+4%

**FCAT 2.0 Reading.** Black students reduced the achievement gap with White students at grades 4, 6, and 8. At the other five grade levels tested, the reading gap between Black and White students remained stable or increased from 2011 to 2012. Hispanic students reduced the reading gap with White students at five of the eight grade levels (grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8). The reading gap between Hispanic and White students increased at grades 7, 9, and 10 (Table 2).

Table 2  
M-DCPS FCAT Reading  
Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2011 and 2012

	Size of 2012 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2011 to 2012?	
	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>
Grade 3	40%	20%	+1%	-1%
4	35%	17%	-3%	-3%
5	37%	17%	+1%	-2%
6	38%	18%	-2%	-1%
7	39%	21%	+1%	+2%
8	36%	18%	-1%	-1%
9	43%	23%	+3%	+1%
10	39%	22%	0	+4%

Note: Data are based on comparisons of 2012 FCAT 2.0 scores and 2011 refitted Achievement Levels, based on FCAT 2.0 scale scores.

**FCAT 2.0 Mathematics.** Black students reduced the achievement gap with White students at grades 6 and 8. At the other four grade levels tested, the mathematics gap between Black and White students remained stable or increased from 2011 to 2012. Hispanic students reduced the mathematics gap with White students at grades 3, 4, 6, and 8. The mathematics gap between Hispanic and White students remained stable at grade 7 and increased slightly at grade 5 (Table 3).

Table 3  
M-DCPS FCAT Mathematics  
Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and  
Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2011 and 2012

	Size of 2012 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2011 to 2012?	
	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>
Grade 3	34%	16%	0	-1%
4	32%	14%	+1%	-2%
5	36%	18%	+3%	+1%
6	37%	19%	-1%	-1%
7	39%	19%	+1%	0
8	33%	16%	-1%	-1%

Note: Data are based on comparisons of 2012 FCAT 2.0 scores and 2011 refitted Achievement Levels, based on FCAT 2.0 scale scores.

**FCAT 2.0 Science.** Both Black and Hispanic students reduced the achievement gap with White students at grade 8. At grade 5, however, the gap between White students and both Black and Hispanic students increased from 2011 to 2012 (Table 4).

Table 4  
M-DCPS FCAT Science: Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White  
and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2011 and 2012

	Size of 2012 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2011 to 2012?	
	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>
Grade 5	40%	21%	+3%	+2%
8	37%	21%	-3%	-1%



**Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment.** Across all grade levels tested (grades 6-12) in 2011 and 2012, the gap between Black and White students decreased by 1 percentage point and the gap between Hispanic and White students decreased by 3 percentage points. As can be seen in Table 5, analyses conducted by grade level found that the gap between White students and both Black and Hispanic students decreased at grades 7-9, but increased at grade 10. (Note that results are not reported separately for grades 11 and 12 because fewer than 10 White students were tested.)

Table 5  
M-DCPS Algebra 1 EOC Assessment:  
Percentages Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and  
Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2011 and 2012

	Size of 2012 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2011 to 2012?	
	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>	<u>Black-White Gap</u>	<u>Hispanic-White Gap</u>
Grade 7	16%	6%	-12%	-3%
8	12%	2%	-7%	-3%
9	25%	12%	-1%	-1%
10	30%	22%	+22%	+22%

Note: Results are not reported for grades 11 and 12 because fewer than 10 White students were tested.

## Summary

This report provided an overview of M-DCPS' 2011-2012 academic performance. Highlights include:

- M-DCPS earned a District Performance Grade of “B” in 2012.
- Despite extensive changes made to the school grading formula, M-DCPS posted stronger than expected School Performance Grades, with almost half of the District’s schools earning an “A” and only 2% earning an “F.” M-DCPS also fared well in comparison to the state.
- More rigorous scoring criteria used for the 2012 FCAT Writing led to decreases in the percentages of students passing the exam at all three grade levels tested, both in M-DCPS and statewide.
- FCAT 2.0 Reading results were mixed for M-DCPS students, with performance gains at five of the eight grade levels tested.
- The percentages of M-DCPS students scoring at the higher achievement levels on the FCAT 2.0 Mathematics increased at each of the six grade levels tested.
- FCAT 2.0 Science results were mixed for M-DCPS students. The percentages of students scoring at the higher achievement levels increased at grade 8, but decreased slightly at grade 5.
- The percentages of M-DCPS students passing the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment increased at grades 7-10, remained stable at grade 11, and decreased at grade 12. Middle grades students performed especially well, with 89-90% achieving scores required to earn high school credit.
- Likely as a result of more rigorous passing criteria, the percentage of grade 10 students passing the FCAT 2.0 Reading on their first attempt in order to meet the high school graduation requirement decreased, in both M-DCPS and statewide.
- The District made some progress reducing the achievement gap on the FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, and Science, with improvements at some grade levels noted. On the FCAT Writing, however, the more stringent criteria used to score the exam led to a widening of the achievement gap: although all students’ scores decreased regardless of ethnicity, Black and Hispanic students’ scores decreased more than those of White students. On the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment, the gap between White students and both Black and Hispanic students decreased across all grade levels tested. When analyses were conducted by individual grade level, results indicated that the Black-White and Hispanic-White gaps decreased at grades 7-9, but increased at grade 10.