



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

# INFORMATION CAPSULE

## Research Services

Vol. 0502  
September 2005

Christie Blazer, Sr. Research Analyst  
Dale Romanik, Director

### 2004-05 OVERVIEW OF M-DCPS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

#### AT A GLANCE

*Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) increased its School Performance Grade from a "C" in 2004 to a "B" in 2005. The district represented one of only four districts statewide to increase in the overall grade assigned by the State of Florida. This Information Capsule summarizes several key elements that contributed to this districtwide achievement. Results indicate that students' levels of academic achievement have increased and that, in many cases, 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 increased its performance grade from a "C" in 2004 to a "B" in 2005, one of only four districts statewide to increase its performance grade. M-DCPS also increased the total grade points awarded by 13 points, with only two of Florida's 67 school districts posting larger grade point increases. Although the number of M-DCPS schools graded in 2005 increased by 15, the number of M-DCPS schools receiving a performance grade of "A" increased from 124 in 2004 to 153 in 2005, while the number of schools receiving a "C" or "D" decreased.

#### **FCAT Writing (Grades 4, 8, and 10)**

FCAT Writing scores remained constant from 2004 to 2005 at each of the tested grade levels (Figure 1). Further examination of students' scores showed that a greater percent of students performed at higher levels in 2005, as demonstrated by an increase in the percent of grades 4 and 8 students scoring at "3.5 or above" and "4.0 and above" and an increase in the percent of grade 10 students scoring at "4.0 and above."

At grade 4, the district's students received a higher average Writing score than students statewide; at grade 8, the district's average score was only slightly below the state's average score; and at grade 10, students in M-DCPS and statewide received the same average score. FCAT Writing scores for individual ethnic groups and for Zone and Stellar Schools are not yet available.

Research Services

Office of Accountability and Systemwide Performance  
1500 Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 225, Miami, Florida 33132  
(305) 995-7503 Fax (305) 995-7521

### **FCAT SSS Reading (Grades 3-10)**

From 2004 to 2005, FCAT SSS Reading scale scores increased at grades 3-9, but decreased at grade 10 (Figure 2). The percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 (the highest levels) increased at all grade levels, except at grades 8 and 10. The percent of students scoring at Level 1 (the lowest level) remained constant or decreased at all grade levels, except at grade 10. A lower percent of Black and Hispanic students are still scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 than White students, but minority students continue to close the achievement gap across most grade levels.

Compared to the state, M-DCPS had a lower percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 at all grade levels; however, the percent of students scoring at the higher Achievement Levels increased more for the district's students than for students statewide at grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9.

In 2005, a greater number of Zone and Stellar students performed at higher achievement levels. Fewer Zone and Stellar School students, overall and by ethnic group, scored at Achievement Level 1. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in Zone and Stellar Schools is lower than at the district's schools overall, for all students tested and for each ethnic group. However, minority students made progress toward closing the achievement gap. In both Zone and Stellar Schools, the percent of Black and Hispanic students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased more from 2004 to 2005 than the percent of White students scoring at Levels 3-5.

Additional analyses of gains made in FCAT Reading scores from 2004 to 2005 were conducted by grouping all M-DCPS schools by demographic variables (including ethnicity, free/reduced price lunch status, mobility, and the percent of ESOL students enrolled at the school) and FCAT performance (percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3 and above on the FCAT SSS Reading and Mathematics). This analysis yielded three distinct groups, or clusters, of schools, ranging from highest performing schools to lowest performing schools. Results of this cluster analysis indicated that the percent of students scoring at Reading Achievement Levels

3-5 showed the greatest increase at the lowest performing schools. When results were examined by school level, it was found that most of the increase was due to the higher levels of performance at the lowest performing elementary schools (Figure 4).

### **FCAT SSS Mathematics (Grades 3-10)**

From 2004 to 2005, FCAT SSS Mathematics scale scores increased at grades 3 and 5-9 and remained stable at grades 4 and 10 (Figure 5). The percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 (the highest levels) increased at all grade levels, except at grade 4. The percent of students scoring at Level 1 (the lowest level) decreased or remained constant at all grade levels. A lower percent of Black and Hispanic students are still scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 than White students, but minority students continue to close the achievement gap across most grade levels.

Compared to the state, M-DCPS had an equal percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 at grade 5. At all other grade levels, M-DCPS had a lower percent of students scoring at the higher Achievement Levels; however, the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased more for the district's students than for students statewide at grades 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10.

In 2005, a greater number of Zone and Stellar students performed at higher achievement levels. Fewer Zone and Stellar School students, overall and by ethnic group, scored at Achievement Level 1. As can be seen in Figure 6, the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 in Zone and Stellar Schools is lower than at the district's schools overall, for all students tested and for each ethnic group. However, minority students made progress toward closing the achievement gap. In both Zone and Stellar Schools, the percent of Black and Hispanic students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased more from 2004 to 2005 than the percent of White students scoring at Levels 3-5.

As mentioned above, the additional analyses of gains made in FCAT Mathematics scores from 2004 to 2005 were conducted by grouping all M-DCPS schools by demographic variables

(including ethnicity, free/reduced price lunch status, mobility, and the percent of ESOL students enrolled at the school) and FCAT performance (percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3 and above on the FCAT SSS Reading and Mathematics). This analysis yielded three distinct groups, or clusters, of schools, ranging from highest performing schools to lowest performing schools. Results of this cluster analysis indicated that the percent of students scoring at Mathematics Achievement Levels 3-5 showed the greatest increase at the lowest performing schools. Although the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 at the lowest performing schools increased at the elementary, middle, and senior high school levels, the greatest increase was noted at the elementary level (Figure 7).

**Summary**

Several key indicators of academic performance show that M-DCPS students' levels of academic achievement are increasing, but our students still face academic challenges. A greater percent of the district's students performed at higher levels in 2005 on the FCAT Writing, Reading, and Mathematics. Zone and Stellar School students performed at lower levels than the district's students overall, but continued to close the gap. Black and Hispanic students performed at lower levels than White students, but made progress toward narrowing the achievement gap.

Source: Test results presented in this Information Capsule were provided by the Office of Assessment and Data Analysis.

Figure 1

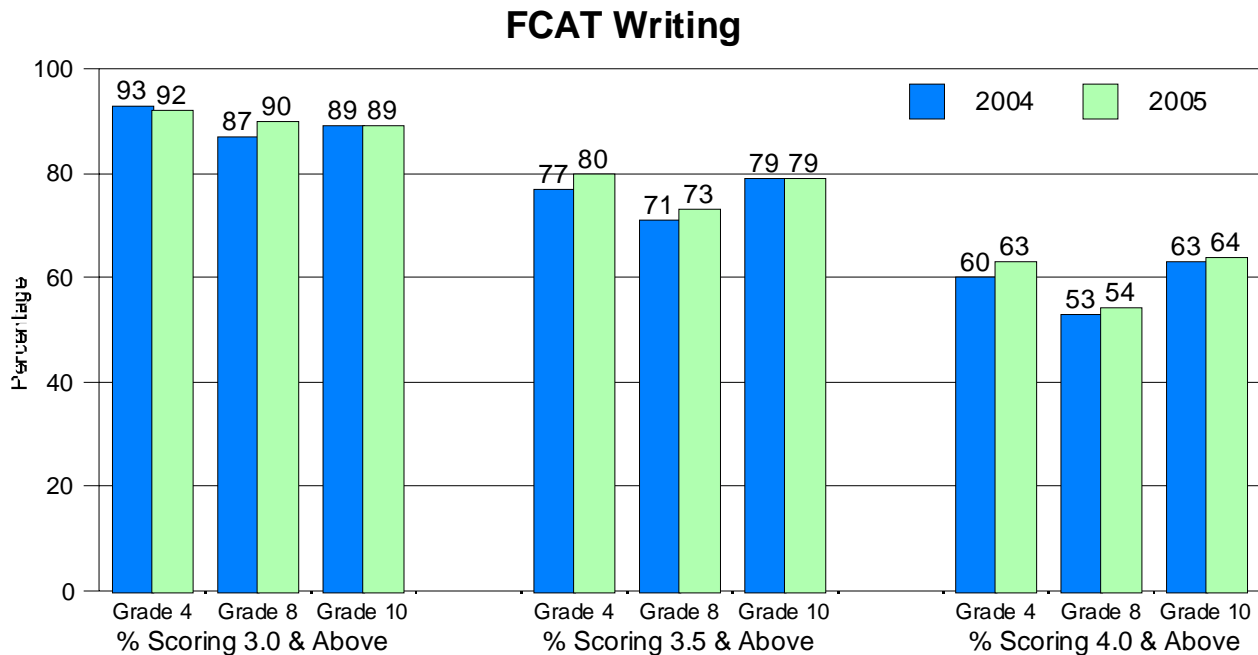


Figure 2

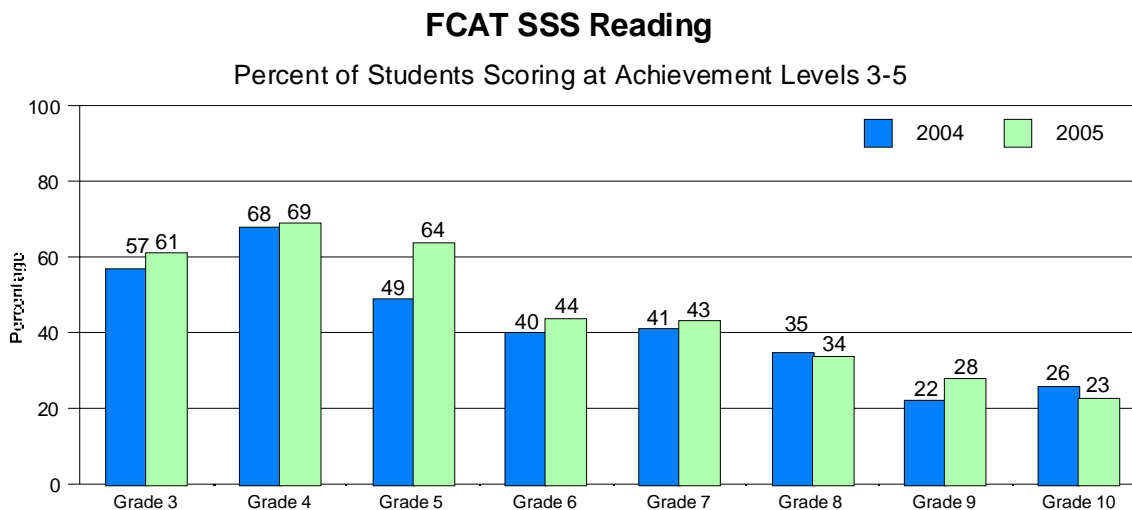


Figure 3

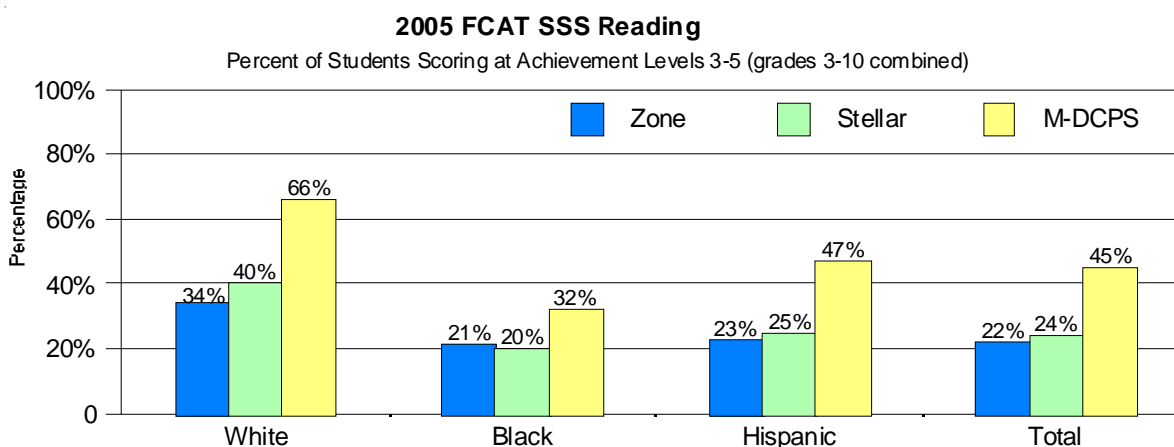
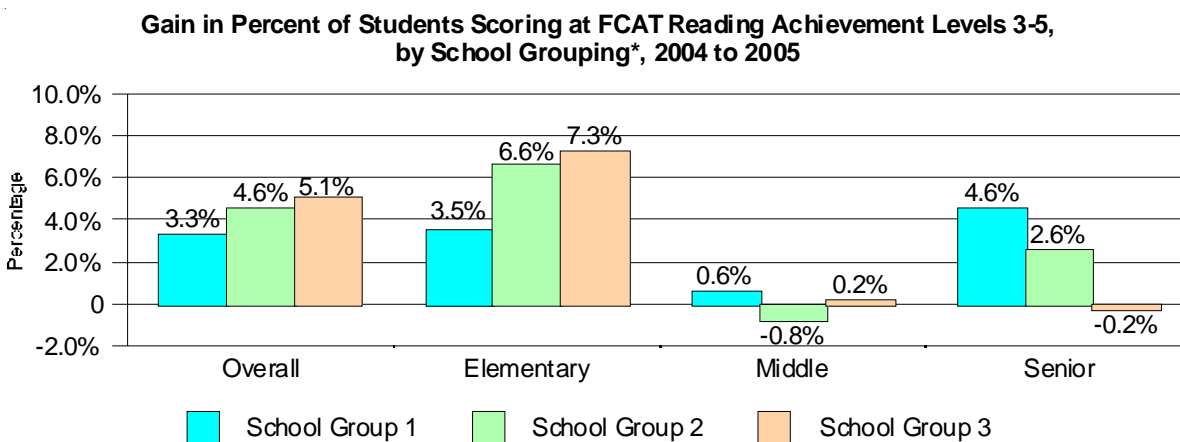


Figure 4



\* School Group 1 represents the highest performing schools and School Group 3 represents the lowest performing schools.

Figure 5

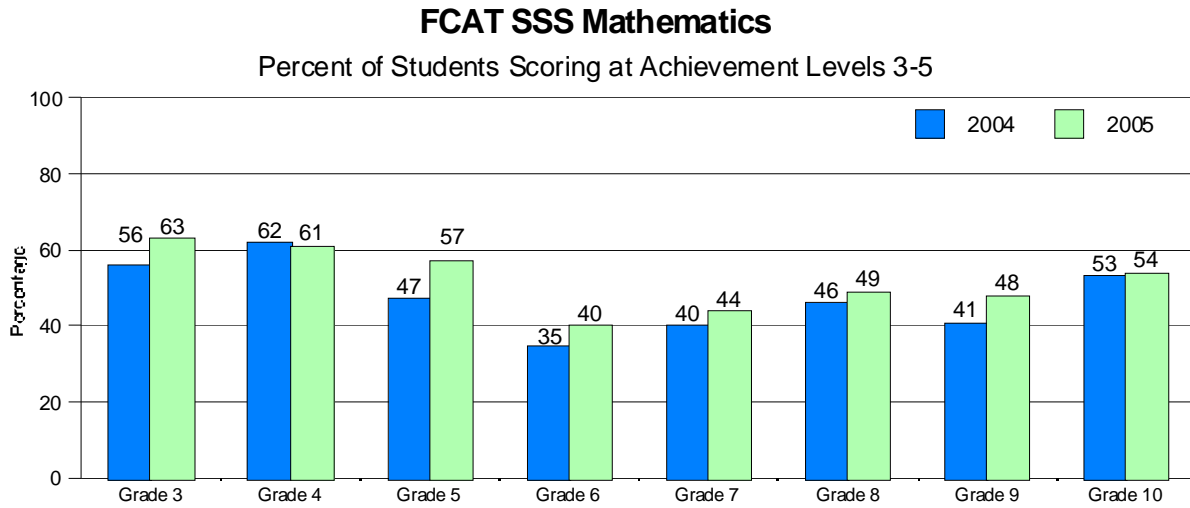


Figure 6

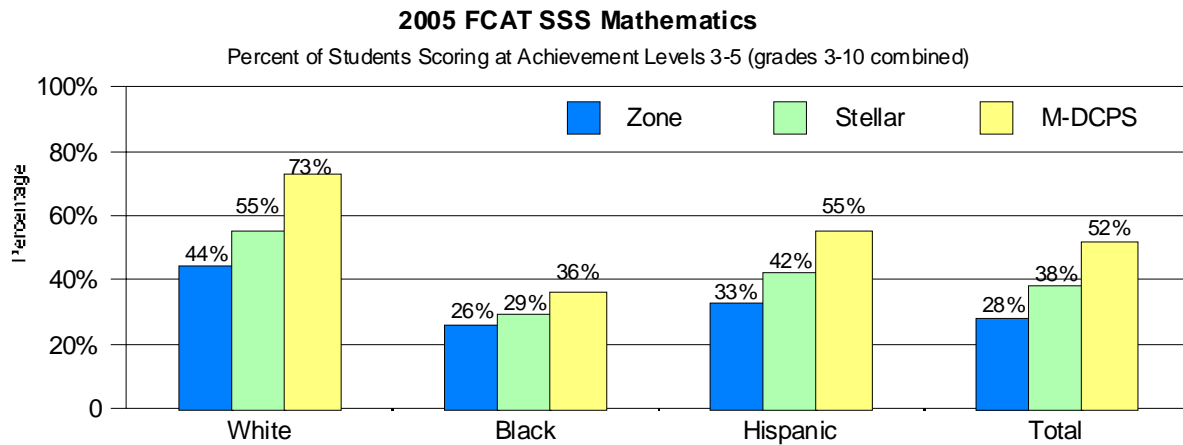
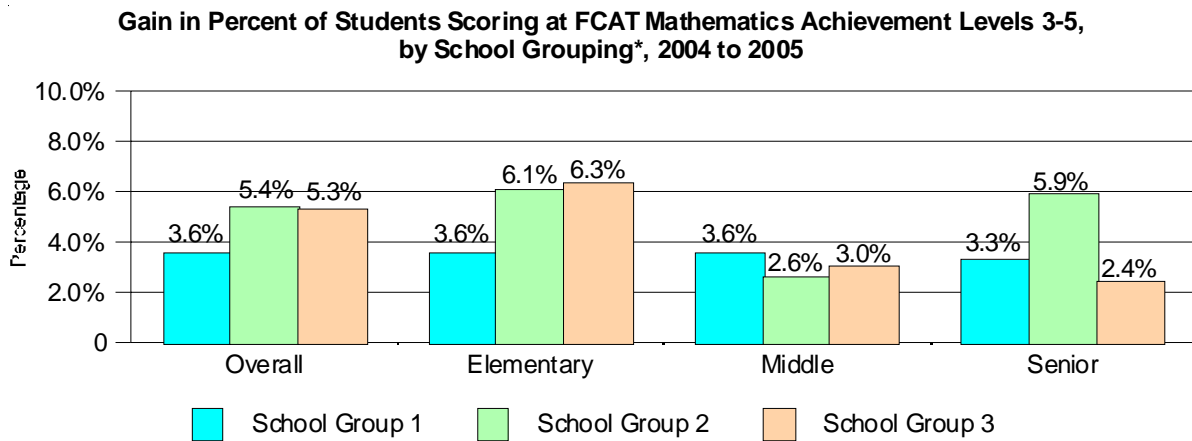


Figure 7



\* School Group 1 represents the highest performing schools and School Group 3 represents the lowest performing schools.