



# INFORMATION CAPSULE

## Research Services

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### 2008-09 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 2008-09 school year. M-DCPS earned a performance grade of "B" in 2009 and was only four points short of an "A." Over half of the District's schools (58 percent) earned an "A" and the percent of "C," "D," and "F" schools decreased from 35 percent in 2008 to 27 percent in 2009. Overall, the District's performance on the FCAT improved from 2008 to 2009. In reading and mathematics, the percent of the District's students scoring at the higher achievement levels increased at the majority of grade levels. In Writing and Science, performance improved at the elementary level. Although White students continued to score higher than Black or Hispanic students in all subject areas and grade levels, the District made progress closing the achievement gap. The largest reductions were observed in reading and mathematics, with Black and Hispanic students closing their score gaps with White students in five to seven of the eight grade levels tested.*

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

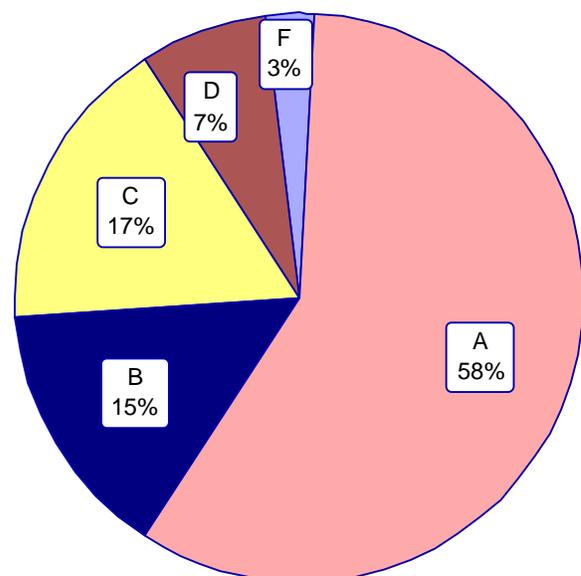
The state's performance grading system for school districts awards points for high scores on the FCAT and for students' annual learning gains. M-DCPS earned 521 points, or a grade of "B."

M-DCPS was only four points short of receiving a grade of "A." The District earned 521 of the necessary 525 points and met the state's other requirements for an "A" (over 95 percent of students were tested and the lowest scoring students made adequate progress in reading and mathematics).

#### What grades did the District's schools receive?

Three hundred sixty-four (364) M-DCPS schools, including charter schools, received a 2009 performance grade. Over half (58 percent) of the District's schools earned an "A" and 3 percent, or 10, schools earned an "F." Figure 1 shows the proportion of grades assigned to M-DCPS schools.

Figure 1  
Proportion of Grades Assigned to M-DCPS in 2009



## How did M-DCPS' performance in 2009 compare to its performance in 2008?

From 2008 to 2009, the percent of schools receiving a grade of "A" increased by nine percent. The percent of schools receiving a grade of "C" decreased by seven percent, while the percent of schools receiving a "B," "D," or "F" each decreased by one percent. Of the 345 schools with performance grades in both 2008 and 2009, 80 schools (23 percent) improved by at least one letter grade.

### How did students perform on the FCAT Writing?

The FCAT Writing is administered at grades 4, 8, and 10. The Florida Department of Education changed the Writing assessment's format in 2009 and returned to an essay-only format after the inclusion of multiple choice items in 2006 through 2008. Essays are scored on a scale of 1 to 6.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the percent of students scoring 3.5 and above on the FCAT Writing increased at grade 4, remained stable at grade 8, and decreased slightly at grade 10. Grades 4 and 8 students statewide posted larger gains in the percent of students scoring 3.5 and above from 2008 to 2009 than the District's students, although M-DCPS trends paralleled those of the state at grade 10.

Figure 2  
M-DCPS FCAT Writing Essay Scores, Percent Scoring 3.5 and Above, 2008 and 2009

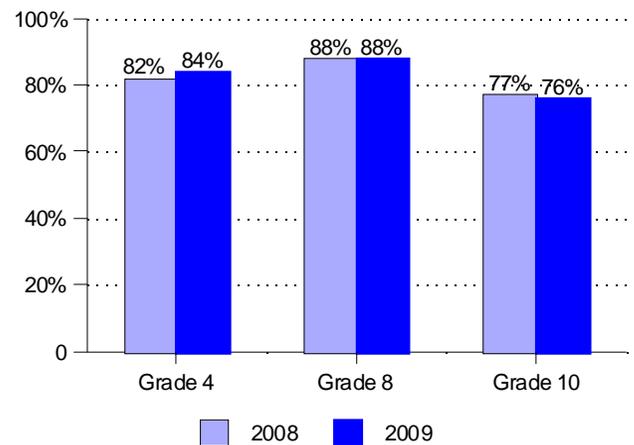
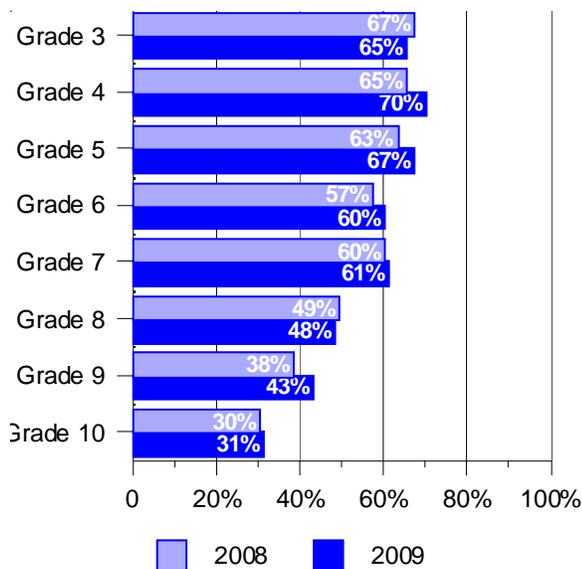


Figure 3  
M-DCPS FCAT SSS Reading: Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2008 and 2009

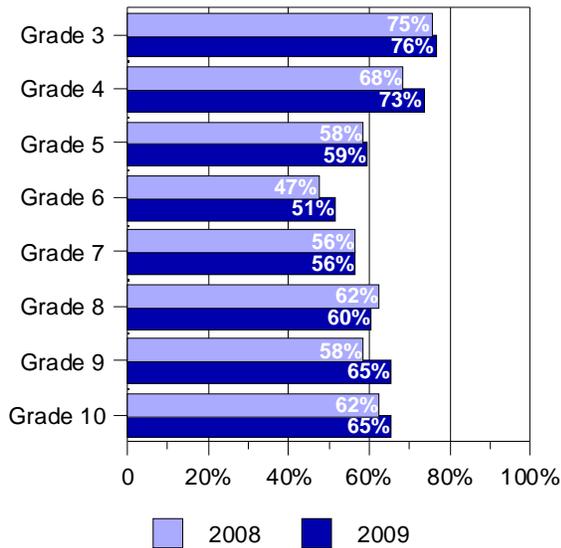


### How did students perform on the FCAT Reading?

The FCAT Reading is administered to all students at grades 3 through 10. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 (the highest levels) increased at all grade levels, except at grades 3 and 8. The majority of the District's students in grades 3 through 7 scored at the higher achievement levels.

The District's scoring patterns were similar to those of students statewide. M-DCPS had a lower percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 than students statewide across all grade levels; however, at grades 4 and 9, the increase in the percent of the District's students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 was higher than that of students statewide.

Figure 4  
M-DCPS FCAT SSS Mathematics: Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2008 and 2009



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

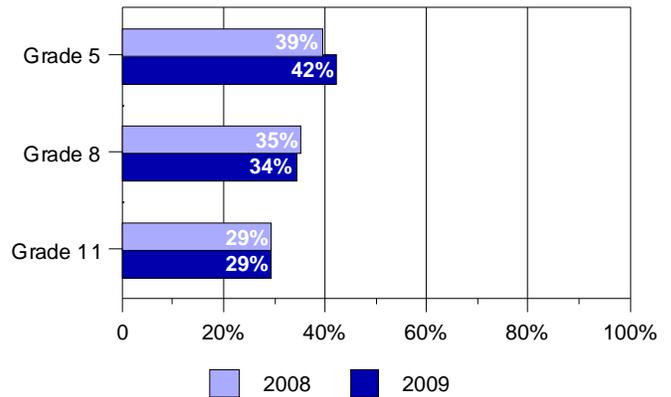
The FCAT Science is administered to all students at grades 5, 8, and 11. The percent of the District’s students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at grade 5, decreased slightly at grade 8, and remained stable at grade 11. At grades 5 and 11, District trends paralleled those of students statewide (Figure 5).

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

The FCAT Mathematics is administered to all students at grades 3 through 10. The percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased at all grade levels, except at grades 7 and 8 (Figure 4). The majority of the District’s students scored at the higher achievement levels across all grade levels.

The District’s scoring patterns were similar to those of students statewide. M-DCPS had a lower percent of students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 than students statewide at all grade levels; however, the percent of M-DCPS students scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5 increased more than the percent of students statewide at four of the eight grade levels tested (grades 4, 6, 9, and 10).

Figure 5  
M-DCPS FCAT SSS Science: Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, 2008 and 2009

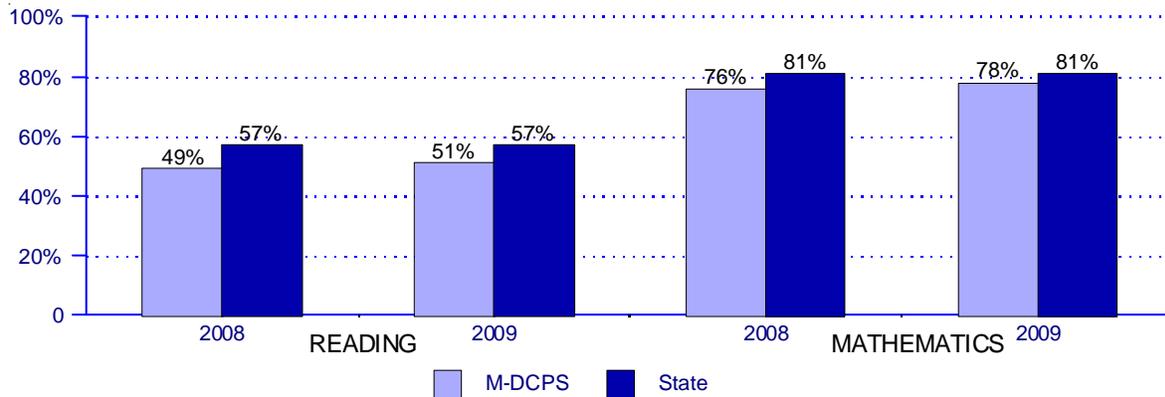


**How many students passed the Grade 10 FCAT Graduation Test on their first attempt?**

High school students must pass the FCAT Reading and Mathematics tests to meet Florida’s testing requirement for a standard diploma. Students have multiple opportunities to pass the FCAT Graduation Test prior to graduation. The first administration that can be used to satisfy the graduation requirement takes place in the spring of tenth grade as part of the standard FCAT testing program. FCAT scale scores range from 100 to 500 and students must attain passing scores of 300 on both the Reading and the Mathematics tests to graduate with a standard diploma.

Over half (51 percent) of the District’s grade 10 students passed the Reading portion of the graduation test on their first attempt in March 2009, exceeding 50 percent for the first time and closing in on the percent of students passing statewide (57 percent). In Mathematics, 78 percent of M-DCPS students passed the graduation test on their first attempt, an increase of two percent from 2008 (Figure 6).

Figure 6  
M-DCPS FCAT Graduation Test: Percent of Students Meeting Graduation Requirements on the First Attempt, 2008 and 2009



**Did the district make progress in closing the achievement gap on the FCAT?**

The performance of the District’s Black, Hispanic, and White students was compared on the FCAT Writing, Reading, Mathematics, and Science.

**FCAT Writing.** Across grades, the percent of Black, Hispanic, and White students scoring 3.5 and above increased from 2008 to 2009. The gap between the percent of Hispanic and White students scoring 3.5 and above decreased by one percent. The gap between Black and White students scoring 3.5 and above, however, remained unchanged (Figure 7).

**FCAT Reading.** A higher percent of White students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 than Black or Hispanic students at all grade levels. As can be seen in Table 1, however, Black students closed the reading gap with White students in five grade levels and Hispanic students closed the reading gap with White students in six grade levels.

Figure 7  
M-DCPS FCAT Writing Essay Scores: Percent Scoring 3.5 and Above, Black-White and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2008 and 2009

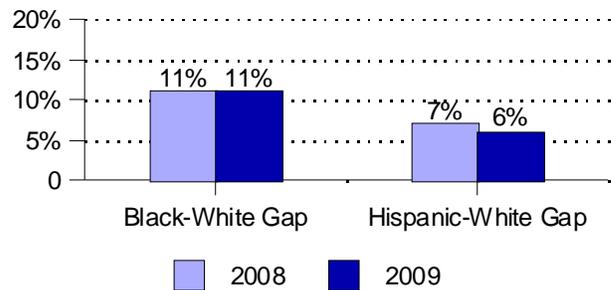


Table 1  
M-DCPS FCAT Reading: Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2008 and 2009

Grade	Size of 2009 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2008 to 2009?	
	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Grade 3	32%	17%	0	-2%
4	29%	16%	-4%	0
5	29%	15%	-3%	-1%
6	35%	18%	-1%	-1%
7	37%	17%	+3%	0
8	37%	20%	+3%	-1%
9	38%	22%	-2%	-1%
10	36%	20%	-3%	-2%

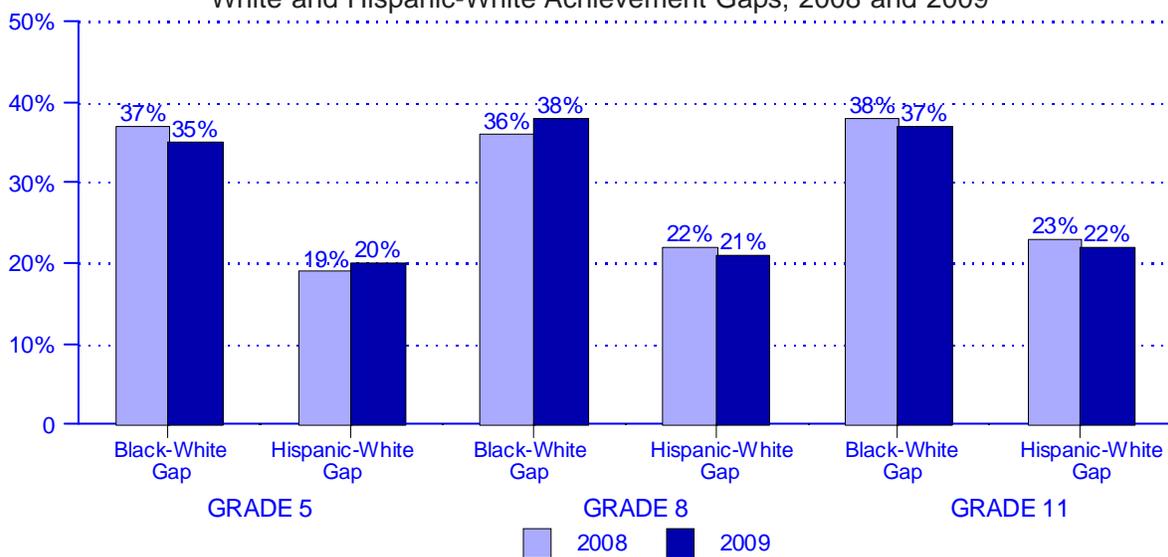
**FCAT Mathematics.** A higher percent of White students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 than Black or Hispanic students at all grade levels. However, Black students closed the mathematics gap with White students in five grade levels and Hispanic students closed the mathematics gap with White students in seven of the eight grade levels tested (Table 2).

Table 2  
M-DCPS FCAT Mathematics:  
Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and  
Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2008 and 2009

Grade	Size of 2009 Gap		Did the Gap Increase or Decrease from 2008 to 2009?	
	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Grade 3	26%	12%	0	-1%
4	24%	12%	-3%	-1%
5	31%	16%	-6%	-1%
6	37%	19%	-1%	-1%
7	36%	16%	+2%	0
8	35%	17%	0	-1%
9	32%	19%	-6%	-4%
10	33%	17%	-7%	-1%

**FCAT Science.** A higher percent of White students scored at Achievement Levels 3-5 than Black or Hispanic students across the three grade levels tested. Black students closed the science gap with White students by two percent at grade 5 and by one percent at grade 11. Hispanic students closed the science gap with White students by one percent at grades 8 and 11 (Figure 8).

Figure 8  
M-DCPS FCAT Science: Percent Scoring at Achievement Levels 3-5, Black-White and Hispanic-White Achievement Gaps, 2008 and 2009



## SUMMARY

From 2008 to 2009, the percent of the District's schools receiving a school performance grade of "A" increased by 9 percent. At the vast majority of grade levels, improvement was seen on the Reading and Mathematics portions of the FCAT from 2008 to 2009. In Writing and Science, FCAT performance was mixed, with elementary students improving in both subjects from one year to the next. Although White students continued to score higher than Black or Hispanic students in all subjects, the District made progress closing the achievement gap. The largest reductions were observed in Reading and Mathematics. Black students closed their score gap with White students in five of the eight grade levels tested in both subjects, while Hispanic students closed the gap with White students in six grade levels in Reading and seven grade levels in Mathematics.

*The reader interested in school-level data and a more extensive discussion of testing results is directed to reports available on Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis' website (<http://oada.dadeschools.net>).*

*All reports distributed by Research Services can be accessed at <http://drs.dadeschools.net> under the "Current Publications" menu.*