



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL**

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MEMORANDUM

September 30, 2015

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Dr. David Christiansen, Deputy Superintendent/Chief of Schools 

THROUGH: Dr. Robert Avossa, Superintendent

SUBJECT: SPRING FY2015 FLORIDA STANDARD ASSESSMENTS (FSA) RESULTS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) AND MATHEMATICS

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has released the FY2015 Spring Assessment preliminary results for the Florida Standard Assessments (FSA) English Language Arts (ELA) for Grades 3-10 and Mathematics for grades 3-8. In 2015, approximately 107,800 School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) students took the FSA¹ test in ELA and approximately 75,400 in Mathematics. The Writing component in Grades 4-10 is also included in ELA scores.

This is the baseline year for these tests. HB 7069 was passed by the Legislature and called for an independent third-party review of the 2014-2015 FSA prior to results being used for educator evaluations or school grades. The FDOE has confirmed that the FSA is valid². However, SDPBC officials have raised several concerns about the validity of FSA in terms of administration of the tests, particularly the computer-based portion of the assessment, the alignment of Florida's standards with the test items, and the use of FSA scores to evaluate the performance of students, teachers and schools.³

Results of the FY2015 FSA test administration are reported as T-scores⁴ for State, District and School comparisons. Preliminary individual student scores will be reported as State Percentile Ranks.⁵ The FDOE will provide students and parents with individual student score reports. Achievement levels (1-5) have not yet been determined and will be reported at a later date.

¹ FY2015 is the first time the FSA test was given and T-scores are reported for ELA and Mathematics; therefore, no annual comparisons are available.

² Wiley, A., Hembry, T. R., Buckendahl, C. W., Forte, E., Towles, E., & Nebelsick-Gullett, L. (2015). *Independent verification of the psychometric validity for the Florida Standards Assessment*. Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida.

Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/departement-of-education-independent-review-confirms-florida-standards-assessment-is-valid.stml>.

³ For details, please see the following link: <http://news.palmbeachschools.org/districtnews/2015/09/02/school-district-officials-concerned-with-fsa-despite-validity-study/>

⁴ The T-score is a standardized score that provides each student with a scale score (ranging from 20-80) which can be compared to the State average of 50. Please see Addendum for details on T-scores.

⁵ Please see Addendum for details on percentile ranks.

Overall, SDPBC had a comparable mean T-scores to Florida and the seven largest Florida school districts at most grades in ELA and Mathematics.

A preliminary analysis of the FY2015 FSA revealed the following based on ELA and Mathematics results:

- The SDPBC had higher mean T-scores than Florida in a majority of grades in Mathematics
 - At grades 4, 5, 6 and 8 (Table 1),
- The SDPBC had similar mean T-scores to Florida in a majority of grades in ELA
 - At grades 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (Table 1).
- The SDPBC had equivalent mean T-scores to most of the seven largest Florida districts in a majority of grades (Table 2)
 - At grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 in ELA,
 - At grades 4, 5, 6 and 8 in Mathematics.

Results for individual schools are available on the Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment website at: <http://www.palmbeachschools.org/dre/NRE/Results.asp>.

Schools will receive their results and use this information to meet individual student needs and for school improvement. District and area staff will use the results to provide direction for improvement in curriculum and instruction.

If you have questions about individual school results, please contact the appropriate area superintendent or the school principal. If you have questions about instruction, please contact Karen Whetsell, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Teaching and Learning, at 357-1113. If you have questions about the results, please contact Mark Howard, Chief, Division of Performance Accountability at 434-8851.

RMA/DWC/KO/MH/SRR /RP/BS:wI

c: Academic and Operating Chiefs
Area/Assistant Superintendents
Academic Directors
Principals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SPRING FY2015 FLORIDA STANDARD ASSESSMENTS (FSA) RESULTS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) AND MATHEMATICS

Table 1. FY2015 FSA Results in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics by Grade Level: Mean T-Scores

| Subject | Grade 3 | | Grade 4 | | Grade 5 | | Grade 6 | | Grade 7 | | Grade 8 | | Grade 9 | | Grade 10 | |
|-------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|----------|----|
| | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL | SDPBC | FL |
| ELA | 49 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Mathematics | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | - | - | - | - |

Note: The FDOE does not administer an FSA Mathematics test at grades 9 and 10. FL = Florida.

Table 2. FY2015 FSA Results in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics by Grade Level for the Seven Largest Florida Districts: Mean T-Scores

| | Grade 3 | | Grade 4 | | Grade 5 | | Grade 6 | | Grade 7 | | Grade 8 | | Grade 9 | Grade 10 |
|--------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----------|
| | ELA | MA | ELA | MA | ELA | MA | ELA | MA | ELA | MA | ELA | MA | ELA | ELA |
| Palm Beach | 49 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 50 |
| Broward | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 51 | 50 |
| Duval | 49 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 49 | 48 | 49 | 47 | 49 | 49 |
| Hillsborough | 50 | 49 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 50 | 52 | 49 | 46 | 50 | 50 |
| Miami-Dade | 50 | 51 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 48 | 50 | 48 | 50 | 49 |
| Orange | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 50 |
| Pinellas | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 49 | 48 | 50 | 50 | 47 | 46 | 52 | 50 |
| Florida | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |

ELA = English Language Arts; MA = Mathematics

Addendum

Florida Standards Assessments (FSA)

This school year, students have taken the FY2015 Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) tests on the new Florida Standards. These tests were administered for the first time in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry.

Since these tests are based on the new Florida Standards, achievement levels (1-5) like those reported previously for FCAT have not yet been established by the State. To report on the performance of students on the first year of a Florida Standards Assessment or end-of-course assessment, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) reports student scores: T-scores, State Percentile Ranks and Percentage Passing (only for ELA Grade 10 and Algebra 1). Each of these scores compares an individual’s performance to the performance of all students who took the end of course assessment or Florida Standards Assessment in Florida.

T-Scores

The T-score is a standardized score that provides each student with a scale score (ranging from 20-80), which can be compared to the State average of 50.

Percentile Rank

The percentile rank relates a student's test score to those of all of the students that took the same test. For example, a test score that is greater than or equal to 80% of the test scores of students taking the test is said to be at the 80th percentile rank. (See Table 1.)

The relationship of T-scores to percentile ranks is given in the diagram below. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

