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THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006

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**GOVERNOR BUSH AND COMMISSIONER WINN ANNOUNCE
2006 FCAT WRITING SCORES**

~ Increased number of students scored 3.5 or higher on the test's writing section ~

TALLAHASSEE - Governor Jeb Bush and Education Commissioner John L. Winn today announced the results of the writing portion of the 2006 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for students in grades 4, 8 and 10. These results show an increase in the average score in all grade levels and an increase in the number of students who scored 3.5 or higher on the writing portion of the FCAT. A score of 3.5 is the standard used in the grading of schools.

“These newly released scores from the 2006 FCAT are the latest evidence of Florida’s rising student achievement,” said Governor Jeb Bush. “Our teachers have done a remarkable job helping Florida students improve their writing, a critical skill for future success.”

- 4th Grade – 76 percent of students scored 3.5 and above, an increase from 74 percent last year and up from 34 percent scoring 3.5 or above in 1999. The average essay score increased from 3.7 in 2005 to 3.9.
- 8th Grade – 83 percent of students scored 3.5 and above, an increase from 76 percent last year and up from 51 percent scoring 3.5 or above in 1999. The average essay score increased from 3.8 in 2005 to 4.0.
- 10th Grade – 78 percent of students scored 3.5 and above, a slight decrease from 79 percent last year and still much higher than the 60 percent scoring 3.5 and above in 1999. The average essay score increased from 3.8 in 2005 to 3.9.

“Governor Bush's A+ Plan for Education and its implementation by the State Board of Education have raised standards and expectations for student achievement in our schools,” said Commissioner Winn. “Each year our students continue to make achievements, indicating that these policies are preparing students for future success.”

Printed reports, including individual student reports, school reports, district reports and state reports will be delivered to school districts this week. Districts will also receive an electronic data file of student writing scores.

This year's test introduced Writing+ (Writing Plus), a combination of an essay and multiple choice questions. The essay portion remains the same while the multiple choice section of Writing+ includes questions designed to measure knowledge on four facets of writing skills – focus, organization, support and conventions. This new section will provide a more comprehensive account of a student's writing and language abilities. Parents will receive a scale score on their child's performance on the entire writing test, including both the multiple choice and essay portion. Scores on the multiple choice section will not be included in a school's grade this year. The Department will convene a group of teachers in the fall of 2006 to make

recommendations on achievement level standards for Writing+. Ultimately, the Writing+ performance will be included in the determination of a school's grade.

The State continues to take steps toward increasing the transparency of the FCAT. Hundreds of printed and online resources related to the FCAT have been available for several years, including annual releases of sample questions and a release of “half tests” in 2001. Students and parents are encouraged to use these tests in conjunction with additional FCAT materials provided online to improve performance. Recently, Governor Bush and Commissioner Winn announced the FCAT Parent Network, a secure site that will enable parents to view their child’s FCAT reading and mathematics scores online.

Providing a quality education for each and every student in Florida is Governor Bush’s priority and the state’s most important mission. Florida’s investment in the A+ Plan for Education continues to achieve results. The accountability in Florida’s A+ Plan school grading system ensures the state measures the progress of every student in every school each year. Today, more of Florida’s students than ever are reading on their own, taking college entrance exams, graduating from high school and earning college degrees.

To view school, district and state FCAT reports visit www.fldoe.org.

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