



Parent News

An up close look at your Broward County Public Schools

Volume 1, August 2006

Cover Story

“A” RECORD - SETTING YEAR

Broward County's students and teachers produced record-setting results during the 2005/06 year, as the Florida Department of Education released its annual school and district grades in June.

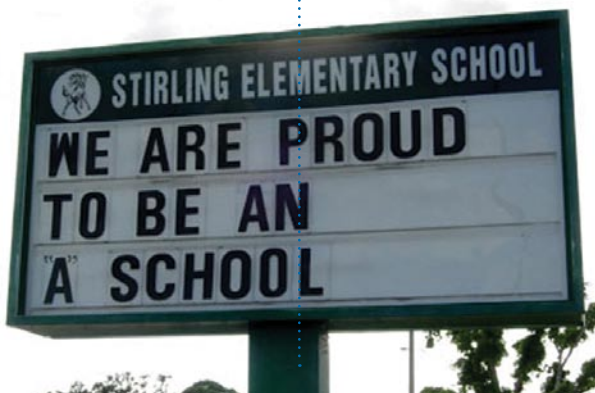
Eighty-four percent of Broward County Public Schools earned grades of “B” or better. Eighty-nine District schools posted improved grades, including 56 to “A’s.”

Hollywood's Stirling Elementary was one of 157 District schools to receive an “A” grade in 2005/06.

Broward's public schools earned a record number of “A’s” in 2005/06. The District's regular elementary, middle and high schools recorded 144 top marks, an increase of 50 “A’s” from just one year ago. The number of “A’s” jumped to a remarkable 157 when you include the results of the District's charter schools.

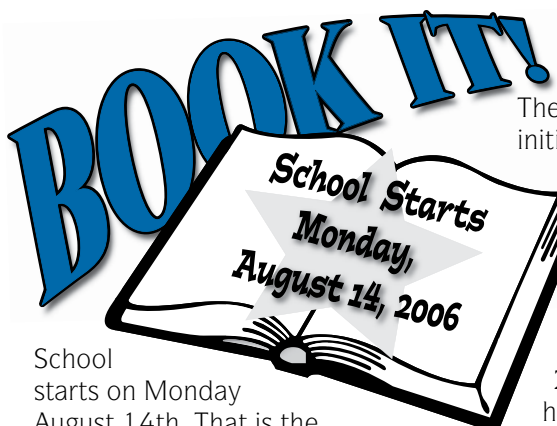
District schools also reduced the number of “C” grades or lower by 50 percent. Only 38 schools scored a “C” mark or below in 2005/06, compared to the 2004/05 total of 76. There were no District schools that received an “F” grade last year.

The District's run of good news continued one week later, as Broward County Public Schools received a District-wide “A” grade for the first time. Last year, the District earned a “B.”



Over 75 percent of the District's elementary schools earned “A” grades. Thirty-six middle schools also recorded “A’s,” while nine high schools collected the highest grades.

Broward was one of 23 districts in the state to improve its overall grade and one of 24 districts to receive an “A.” Broward was one of ten districts to improve to an “A” in 2005/06 and finished as the 12th-highest performing school district (out of 67 total) in Florida. Broward also ranked as the eighth most improved district in the state.



School starts on Monday August 14th. That is the day that doors open and learning commences for the 2006/07 school year.

Back to School posters and calendars are displayed throughout the county, including in local grocery stores, banks, parks and libraries.

The “Book It” Back to School initiative officially began during the final week of the 2005/06 school year when the posters were available to all students at each District school.

The calendars will again be offered at the start of the 2006/07 school year, along with a handy new pocket calendar, small enough to fit in a purse or wallet. This year, the District calendars include an additional feature, important phone numbers with all of the main contact information parents need to stay informed about their child's education.

The school calendars are also available on the District's Web site

(browardschools.com), in both black and white and color formats.

The year-round calendar operates on a separate calendar.

ABOUT PARENT NEWS

Parent News is a bi-monthly publication produced by the District's Communications & Media Relations Department to keep parents informed about the news and events happening in their school system. *Parent News* comes at no cost to local taxpayers. It contains advertisements that offset the cost of production. We look forward to receiving your input about *Parent News*. Phone: 754-321-2300.



Dear Parents/Guardians of BCPS Students,

Welcome back to a brand new school year. I hope you and your children enjoyed a relaxing and safe summer. We look forward to welcoming both you and your children back to school for the start of classes for the 2006/07 school year.

As you probably remember, we had an excellent year last term with our student performance reaching record levels. We currently have more "A" schools than ever before, with 157 schools (65 percent) rated in the "A" category. More than 84 percent of our schools earned either "A" or "B" grades from the Florida Department of Education. And we have no schools in the "F" category.

This is a remarkable achievement for the sixth largest public school system in the country. We face many of the same challenges to educational excellence as most other large urban school districts in the United States. Yet we have proven our ability to overcome these obstacles and advance student achievement to the highest levels ever.

WELCOME BACK!

Our District has earned a national reputation for excellence, having been singled out every year for the past five years by the Washington, D.C.-based Council of the Great City Schools for consistently advancing student achievement in reading and mathematics beyond state averages.

Despite some formidable challenges – including inadequate state funding for education – we fully expect to continue this record of excellence into the future. As parents and guardians, your involvement and active participation in your child's education is essential to fostering this success. We couldn't have gotten to where we are today without your support for our on-going efforts in the classroom. It is my sincere hope that you will continue to assist our principals and teachers in providing your children with the best education available anywhere.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frank Till
Superintendent
Broward County Public Schools

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is vitally important to your child's academic achievement. For that reason, and to meet the requirement set by the state that school districts establish a definition of a "pattern of non-attendance," the School Board approved a major change to the District's attendance policy.

Effective at the beginning of the 2006/07 school year, both excused and unexcused absences along with tardiness and early sign-outs will be counted when determining a student's pattern of non-attendance. This is a change from previous years when excused absences had no impact on your child's attendance record.

Your child will have a pattern of non-attendance if he or she is absent from school a total of 30 hours (5 days) in any one marking period or 60 hours (10 days) within 90 days. If it is determined by the school that your child has a pattern of non-attendance, sanctions may be imposed.

The School Board has adopted other changes to the attendance policy, so it is important to carefully review and sign your copy of the Code of Student Conduct. If you have questions, call your school or the District's School Social Work and Attendance Department, 754-321-2490, or visit the department's Web site: (www.broward.k12.fl.us/studentsupport/school_social_work_services/contacts.html).

YOUR ONLINE SOURCE

Browardschools.com has a whole new look.

The award winning site is the best source for up-to-date news and information on the nation's sixth-largest school district. The user-friendly site continues to feature facts about the District, school board members, Superintendent Frank Till and links to individual departments and schools.

The site also houses press releases, the school calendar, the Broward Snapshots Photo Gallery, frequently asked questions, information links, media resources, contact information, history, employment opportunities, volunteer information and more.

The design features a color-coded main menu that includes a new parents'

section, with information about school registration, relocation, meals, grades, the parents' guide and more. The site features a variety of multi-media resources, including the new BCPS update, a monthly look at all the newsworthy events and happenings in Broward's public schools. The site will also feature special videos, monthly podcasts, E-News and BCPS Net TV. All BCPS video podcasts are available through the Web site or Apple iTunes.

Portion of browardschools.com are also available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole.





The Kathleen C. Wright Building will have approximately 1,000 windows replaced during the site's Hurricane Wilma-related repair project.

DISTRICT STANDS TALL IN FACE OF WILMA

Hurricane Wilma's October 25th arrival in South Florida caused billions of dollars in damage. It also left the state's second-largest school district to pick up the pieces. More than 240 District sites, including every school, needed repairs, ranging from tree cleanup to window replacement to roof restoration.

The bill: over \$67 million. More than 100 school buildings sustained roof damage; at least 75 sites needed window repairs and over 1,000 portables were affected; some were completely destroyed.

Much of the damage to the District made national news. The most vivid and memorable images were the District's 14-story Downtown Fort Lauderdale headquarters, the Kathleen C. Wright Building. The north and west sides of the building were severely impacted, as one thousand windows were shattered. More than sixty offices were breached.

Over 3,500 workers spent countless hours to get students back in their classrooms within two weeks, as school officially resumed on Monday, November 7th.

Permanent repairs to K.C. Wright began last month, almost eight months after Hurricane Wilma. It took close to \$900,000 in temporary repairs to get the facility up and running and is currently undergoing almost \$10 million in external and internal restoration. The entire project is expected to be complete by the end of 2006.

DISTRICT SAFETY GETS A STAR

Broward County Public Schools is installing a District-wide customized security solution, named STAR (Security Tracking And Response), to protect students on school campuses and comply with the Jessica Lunsford Act. The Act, which took effect in September of 2005, established safeguards to prevent sexual offenders or predators from having access to Florida public school district campuses.

The District will be able to document and track all visitors as they enter and exit school sites, using FAST-PASS technology, created by SISCO and installed by Johnson Controls. The system offers high-speed security checks against local, state and national sex offender databases and against state and local law enforcement files. The system can also be used for authorizing student pick-ups and monitoring daily, weekly and monthly visitor logs.

The STAR System will also help streamline the District's volunteer program through an online application process and tabulation of volunteer service hours. The volunteer/mentor program application is available online at (getinvolvedineducation.com).

One of the unique features of the STAR System is its network connectivity. The system can serve as a District-wide messaging center, providing schools information such as Amber Alerts, hurricane warnings, lockdowns or other emergency communications in real-time.

The installation of the system is expected to be complete by September of 2006.

A WELL-DESERVED HONOR

The District's Urban Academies Program, developed as a partial solution for the county's teacher shortage and as a method for improving Broward's quality of education, was one of seven programs in the country (out of 1,000 applicants) to receive the prestigious 2006 Innovations in American Government Award. The award is presented annually to programs that are creative, effective, meet a need and can be duplicated by other organizations.

The "Grow Your Own Teachers" program involves a special curriculum, field training and college credits for interested high school students, rigorous course and classroom training for college undergraduates and professional development for practicing teachers.

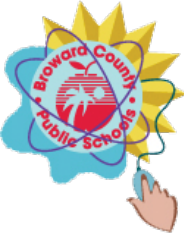
The program is run in partnership with Broward Community College, Florida Atlantic University, Nova Southeastern University and Barry University.

The program has already placed 360 teachers in hard-to-staff schools, and 91% of them have remained there for more than three years.

During the 2005/06 year, 271 students joined the program. All of the students enrolled in the program have gone on to attend college.

The program, recognized by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Council for Excellence in Government, was the only educational program to receive the honor.





WIRED FOR SUCCESS

Broward students are wired for success through the use of technology in their classroom lessons and in their homework studies. The District has started several innovative programs that provide students with experience in using computers in school and at home.

The Digital Learning Environment pilot program provides nearly every student in four Broward County Public Schools with a laptop computer for use in the classroom and at home. The results are encouraging. An elementary school that is part of the program saw its school letter grade go from a "C" to an "A" in the first year of the program.

The District's technology Refresh Program provided 40,000 laptop computers to schools for use in classrooms. The computers are housed in mobile carts so they can be moved from room to room.

During the past school year, the District started the Digital Divide program, which provides families that cannot afford to purchase computers, with refurbished computers no longer needed by the school system. Parents are provided with instruction on how to setup and use the equipment during training sessions on Saturday mornings.

The District has also developed programs that enable students to use technology in special projects that encourage them to use what they have learned in various courses.

The District provides teachers with the training they need to use technology and prepare their students to become full-fledged members of the digital age.



KEY CONTACTS (Area Code 754)

Advanced Academic Programs	321-1830
Athletics & Student Activities	321-2550
Before & After School Child Care	321-3330
Career, Technical & Adult Community Education	321-2620
Communications & Media Relations	321-2300
Community Involvement	321-1970
Core Curriculum/ Educational Programs	321-1850
District Guidance	321-2584
Diversity & Cultural Outreach	321-2090
Dropout Prevention/ Alternative Education	321-2120
Educational Programs	321-2130
Equal Educational Opportunities	321-2150
Food & Nutrition Services	321-0215
Health Education Services	321-2270
Magnet Programs	321-2380
Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education	321-2950
Professional Standards & Special Investigative Unit	321-0735
Psychological Services	321-2460
Pupil Placement/ Reassignments	321-3035
Pupil Transportation	321-4400
Safety	321-4200
Student Support Services/ESE	321-2560
Volunteer Services	321-2040

PROFESSIONAL STUDY DAYS

In a joint effort between the Broward Teachers Union and Broward County Public Schools, the following high schools will have scheduled professional study days for staff, as part of the Superintendent's high school reform initiative. Student dismissal times will follow the individual school's exam schedules.

High School

Coral Glades
Coral Springs
Cypress Bay
Deerfield Beach
Everglades
Flanagan
Fort Lauderdale
Hollywood Hills
McArthur
McFatter
Miramar
Monarch
Northeast
Nova
Piper
Plantation
Pompano Beach
South Broward
Stranahan
Hallandale Adult
Dave Thomas
Whiddon Rogers

Professional Study Days

9/21, 10/26, 11/16, 3/22
9/21, 10/26, 11/16, 12/7, 1/25, 2/15, 3/22, 5/17
9/21, 10/26, 11/16, 12/7, 1/25, 2/15, 3/22, 5/17
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9/21, 10/26, 11/16, 12/7, 1/25, 2/15, 3/22, 5/17

Data clearly shows a direct correlation between the time devoted to professional development of teachers and the academic performance of students.