

BVS FEBRUARY / MARCH 2010

DIGITAL DIGEST

FCAT IS HERE!

February marks the beginning of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) administration around Florida. The FCAT is the state's annual summative measurement of student progress. The FCAT is designed to provide an indication of the level in which students are mastering the Sunshine State Standards as they relate to each grade level. With the incorporation of our elementary school program, this is the first year that BVS will administer the FCAT to students in grades 3-11. Our fourth, eighth, and tenth graders kicked things off with the FCAT writing test on February 9. I'm proud to state that our students were well prepared for the assessment thanks to the efforts of our teachers. BVS offered a series of writing workshops facilitated by Mrs. Cardenas and Mrs. Nurnberg. The workshops were designed to bring out the best in our students' writing abilities. As a result of attending the workshops, our students were ready and confident to do their best.

I'd like to thank the parents who made the time to bring their children to BECON from all parts of Broward County for the writing workshops as well as the reading, mathematics, and science preparation activities. Parents, your effort demonstrates your commitment to ensuring your children have every opportunity to be successful in school. I am grateful for this effort. As I always say at our student / parent orientation sessions, parents and school staff must be in sync in order for students to achieve at their highest level. Research shows that a student's chances for academic success diminish without the parent or guardian playing an active role in the educational process. I pledge to all parents

that the BVS team will do its part.

During a recent FCAT reading activity for tenth graders, I asked students if they realized the significance of the tenth grade FCAT tests. I was surprised to learn that many students did not realize that their performance on the reading and math tests determines whether or not they graduate from high school with a standard diploma. Shockingly, less 37 percent of tenth graders around the state scored at grade level proficiency on the FCAT reading assessment in 2009. Compare this with 47 percent of ninth graders and 54 percent of eighth graders scoring at grade level proficiency. This data only begs the question, "what happens to students when they reach high school?" The answer is simple, the level of difficulty changes at the high school level.

For example, students must be prepared to tackle up to seven reading passages of up to 900 words each of informational text on the tenth grade reading test. This is in addition to analyzing a poem. Combine this with questions that require open-ended responses and the result is a test with a significant level of difficulty. My best advice to students is to build their comprehension, vocabulary and endurance by reading at least 45 to 60 minutes a day. Since most of the reading test is informational text rather than literary text, students should regularly read newspapers, news magazines, science journals, or various types of procedural text such as "how-to" articles. Of course, all of these sources of informational text can be found online!



Mr. Christopher McGuire
Principal, BVS

The good news is that BVS students traditionally perform above state and district averages across grade levels. I expect this trend to continue. I believe our students' performance exceeds their peers in brick and mortar schools as a result of the large amount of reading they must do daily in their online courses. I call it "built in endurance training." I'm looking forward to seeing all of our students in March. Parents, please be sure students are on time each day and have photo identification. Testing begins at 8:30 AM at the Boys and Girls Club on March 9-11. Students, be prepared to do your best!

Christopher McGuire

Principal, BVS

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754-321-1005

TIPS FOR GOOD TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Strong oral and written communication skills are essential in today's technological world. Often these strengths can open the door to a successful career and the opportunity to work with outstanding people. At Broward Virtual School, we pride ourselves on providing not just outstanding academics, but also the chance for students and parents to enhance their written and verbal communication skills. In virtual school, the phone is your lifeline, so it is more important than ever to be aware of phone etiquette and manners. Here are some tips to ensure success:

Be respectful of the teachers' office

hours. Planning your calls ahead of time will increase your efficiency in organizing your time.

- All teachers have their office hours posted on the announcement page in your course. Always refer to this before calling a teacher. Although you have 24 hours, 7 days-a-week access to your courses, you do not have 24/7 access to your instructors.

- Decide if you'd like to leave a voice message or send an e-mail message, there's no need to do both. If you do not reach your teacher on the phone, please be sure to leave just one message. You can feel confident that your teacher will receive your message and get back with you as soon as possible. There's no need to call multiple times or leave multiple messages. Multiple calls will likely disrupt a conversation that your teacher is having with one of your classmates.

Be specific.

- When leaving a message, include the following information: **first and last name**, specific class you are calling about, a brief reason why you are calling and, most importantly, your **phone number**.
- When you have your teacher on the phone, introduce yourself and briefly describe your needs. For example, say, "Hi Miss Smith, this is Jane Doe, I'm calling to complete my discussion based assessment for Math 2. My number is 954.555.4567."



- State your phone number s-l-o-w-l-y, as if you are calling someone who is writing it down with a broken finger and failing pen. Maybe imagine they are hard of hearing and say it really loud and extra slow. Even repeat it for good measure. 😊

Be polite.

- As previously mentioned, call your teachers during posted office hours only. Most teachers have limited office hours on Saturdays and Sundays. Remember, your teachers work from home, so calling outside of office hours is not considerate of your

teachers' privacy and time with their families (even just to leave a message).

- Your approach to reaching an instructor matters. Be sure to keep your tone of voice (and tone in emails) polite and respectful. Your teacher will surely replicate your courteous manner.

Be patient.

- Teachers are frequently on the phone with students, so your call may not be answered immediately if your teacher is on the phone with one of your classmates. It's helpful to wait patiently for your teacher to return your call. We pledge that you won't wait too long! If you leave a message properly, your call will likely be returned within 24 hours.

If you follow our school's telephone etiquette policies, you will become a great communicator. Great communication skills will serve you well throughout your life!

Submitted by Dawn Cardenas, BVS Language Arts & Reading

GUIDANCE CORNER

FCAT Explorer

There's good news for all students taking the FCAT this year: you can get free reading and math practice on the FCAT Explorer. That's right: free practice for the FCAT at www.fcatexplorer.com.

The FCAT Explorer is an online practice program made for Florida's public school students by the Florida Department of Education.

Both the reading and the math programs offer practice for the skills tested on the FCAT and feature many things to help you get the most out of your study time. You'll receive helpful feedback to the answers you choose and a second chance to answer questions to apply what you've learned. The FCAT Explorer also features helpful online tools like a calculator, a formula reference sheet, and a glossary that defines and pronounces the glossary words.

Best of all, the FCAT Explorer is online, which means you can use the FCAT Explorer on any computer connected to the Internet.

To get your free FCAT Explorer sign-in name and password, contact your guidance counselor using the information below:

High School students email
ruth.eloi@browardschools.com

Middle School students email
tanya.mistretta@browardschools.com

**Please be sure to include your name and grade in the email.



School Days

Please join us for "School Days!"

"School Days" is open to all Broward Virtual full-time students and takes place on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 9:00 am – 12:00 PM.

There will be no "School Days" on March 10th due to FCAT testing.

Wednesday, March 24th

9:00 am - 11:30 AM
Teacher: Mr. Desmidt
11:30 am - 12:00 PM
Lunch: PIZZA! *

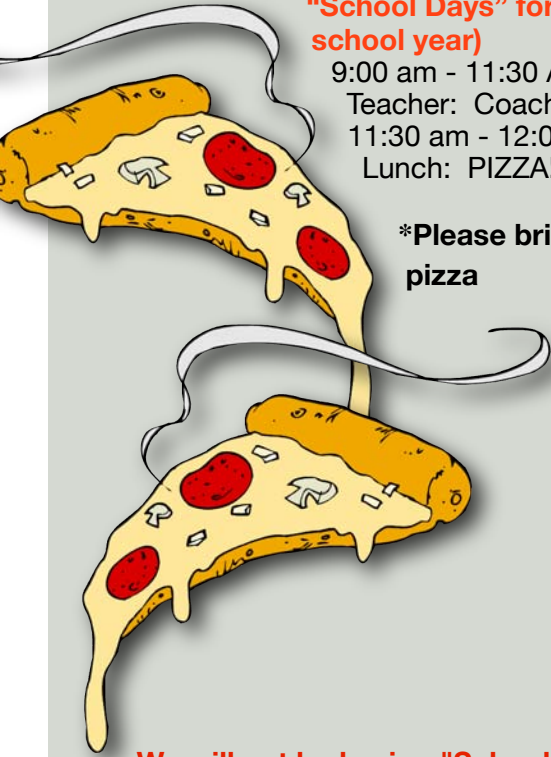
Wednesday, April 14th

9:00 am - 11:30 AM
Teacher: Mrs. Aldarondo-Diaz
11:30 am - 12:00 PM
Lunch: PIZZA! *

Wednesday, April 28th (The last "School Days" for the 2009 - 2010 school year)

9:00 am - 11:30 AM
Teacher: Coach Maxwell
11:30 am - 12:00 PM
Lunch: PIZZA! *

*Please bring \$4.00 for pizza



We will not be having "School Days" on May 12th due to AP Testing.

Broward Virtual has started collecting Box Tops!

You can make a difference for Broward Virtual School every time your shop for groceries! Just clip the Box Tops coupons from hundreds of your favorite products and send bring them to Broward Virtual School.



Visit <http://www.boxtops4education.com> for more information!

Character Education

Self-control

According to Character Digest, "Self-control is knowing how to act, wanting very much to act differently, but making ourselves act the right way." Students need to practice self-control, especially when it comes to taking an online class. It easy to be distracted by the television or computer games, but it takes self-control to stay focused and stay on pace.

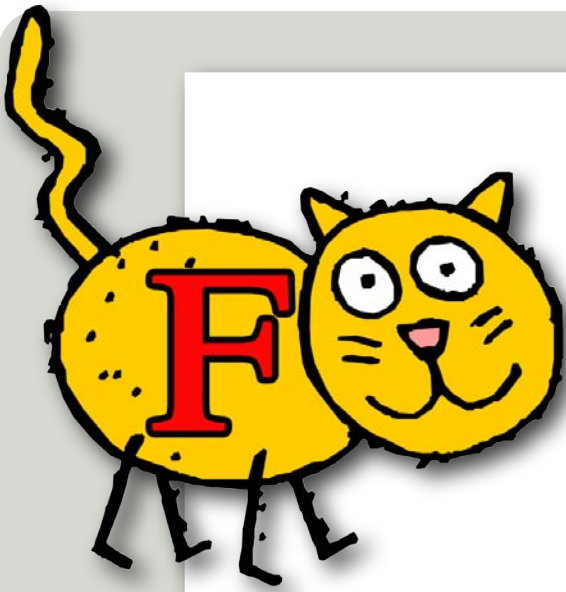
<http://characterdigest.com/character-education-self-control.htm>

To learn more about Character Education go to: <http://www.broward.org/kids/ce.htm>



End of the Year
Field Trip
to Islands of Adventure
Wednesday, May 19, 2010

*The field trip forms will be emailed to students.



2010 FCAT Schedule

Please Note:
Testing is at the Boys and Girls Club

Tuesday, March 9

8:30 am
FCAT Reading
Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & Retakes

Wednesday, March 10

8:30 am
FCAT Math/Science
Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & Retakes

Thursday, March 11

8:30 am
FCAT Science
Grades 3, 4, 5, 8, 11

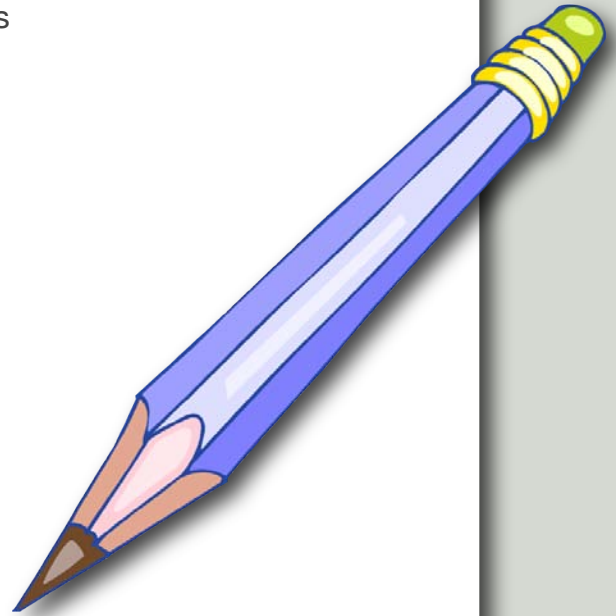
Tuesday, March 16

8:30 am
FCAT Science
Grade 5

Wednesday, March 17

8:30am
FCAT Science
Grade 5

****Home school students must contact the Home School
Department at 754-321-2586 to register for the FCAT.**



BVS Phone Numbers

HS Guidance.....754-321-1105
MS Guidance.....754-214-2888
BVS Information.....754-321-1100