

## Charles Hadley Elementary School—Miami-Dade County

### KEY THEMES:

- Parental Involvement
- Climate of caring
- School as Extension of Family
- Recognition of middle feeder school requirements
- Student 1<sup>st</sup> approach to decision making
- Participatory leadership
- Data Targets Specific Weaknesses/Strengths
- Dedicated Leadership
- Low Turnover
- School Development Program
- Community Involvement (Sam's Club, Home Depot, Wal Mart, Target, McDonalds)

### BEST PRACTICES:

- Corner School Development Program
  - School Planning & Management Team
  - Student & Staff Support Team
  - Parent Team
- Family Enrichment Center
- Parental Workshop Training
- Data Interpretive Administration
- FCAT Explorer
- AM, PM, Saturday Tutorials
- Spot Lighting Success

### THE PRINCIPAL

The current principal has been at Hadley Elementary for 7 years. She maintains 25+ years of experience in the field of education - 15 of which have been at the principal level. She is outgoing, friendly, and passionate in her approach to grade school learning. Additionally, the Principal is both innovative and grounded as an administrator. Her staff finds her approachable and resourceful while maintaining a firm commitment to the Comer School Development Program.

It is abundantly clear that a large degree of the success enjoyed by Hadley Elementary stems from the Principal's office. Perhaps her most influential directive is a personal mandate to involve faculty and parents in all facets of the school. This overriding theme results in shared leadership, ownership, accountability, and commitment.

### PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Principal Leadership will be described as it relates to the following standards, which are aligned with the National Standards of the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

#### Standard 1: Facilitating a Vision of Learning

The Vision and Mission Statements of Hadley Elementary, *"To guarantee all students a solid foundation of knowledge"* and *"To insure student achievement by providing a quality education in a safe, nurturing environment"* are disseminated in a broad range of fashions, including faculty, parent and student handbooks. Members of the community can access Hadley's Mission Statement through their award winning website. The school sponsors a 1<sup>st</sup> Day Celebration, Get Acquainted Day and numerous open houses, which along with the more traditional PTA and parent conferences, serve as forums for dialogue and discussion.

The School's Mission Statement was refined three years ago with input from all school stakeholder groups. Utilizing methodology from the Comer program, Hadley recognizes deficiencies in programs and students, but does not lower the bar to adjust. Rather, they raise the bar or hold fast to it, with the firm belief that all children can achieve high levels.

Contributions to reaching the goals set forth in both the School Mission and School Development Program are recognized publicly at a wide range of functions, including meetings of the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council and the PTA.

Community partners and other volunteer committees are honored in the school's bilingual newsletter, marquee, in-house partners' breakfast, and school website.

Obstacles and successes to the school mission statement are communicated to school stakeholders several times a year. At the minimum, formal quarterly data reports (i.e. FCAT, SSS, NRT), in-house testing and needs assessments are evaluated, prepared and disseminated. When positives are unearthed, they are celebrated. Should a shortcoming present itself, stopgap measures are implemented. These modifications are the result of the school's Performance Excellence Plan.

The majority of financial resources come from the District allocation. Hadley's skill at distribution is without equal. Success and accountability through the years has afforded Hadley a degree of flexibility and discretion all schools may not enjoy. An increasing portion, vital to the school's programs and a marvelous indicator of faculty commitment, are grants. Teacher initiated pursuit of grants have enabled various programs and are becoming regular welcomed additions. Lastly, faculty, staff, and parents donate a tremendous number of volunteer hours in order to maximize Hadley's potential.

All monies are examined and portioned with the student in mind. In helping to meet federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) criteria, identified groups of students, such as those scoring at Level 1 on the FCAT, are given financial priority. Average and advanced students are accounted for as well and resources have been allocated for computer and science labs.

Hadley Elementary utilizes a method of evaluation that is easily recognizable in other successful schools, despite a change in semantics. At Hadley it is, "Plan → Implement → Review → Actualize". Assessment, evaluation, and re-evaluation of the impact of data driven decisions are ongoing as they affect the School's Performance Plan.

## **Standard 2: School Culture and Instructional Program**

At Hadley, professional development is focused on student learning. Needs assessments determine student performance levels as well as teacher proficiency. Data analysis dictates the requirements of students, which, in turn, mandates the direction of professional development. Test scores are augmented by classroom observation and monitoring. The administration (and faculty) acknowledges that ALL meetings are considered professional development. The group goal is to share knowledge and expertise to the greatest degree possible, which in turn, promotes growth across the range of teachers. Each teacher also presents to administration and maintains an individual Professional Development Plan

Value and self worth among students and staff come on the heels of the Comer School Development Program. The cornerstones of this method are comprised of Collaboration, Consensus and No-Fault. As a result, teachers and students alike are empowered in an environment of trust and partnership. Rewards such as FCAT achievement monies, are shared equally as a form of recognition and partnership in success.

Diversity manifests itself in many ways at Hadley. The multi-ethnic faculty and staff have an intuitive understanding of their students and an ability respond to unique challenges.

Life long learning takes a unique form at Hadley. The Family Enrichment Center provides an average of three parental workshops per week in a well-exercised attempt to facilitate learning in students' parents. Aiding parents affects the children in a highly positive way. Parents seek out and value learning and demonstrate as much to their children. Parents also become better skilled at assisting their children with school homework.

The core value of Hadley Elementary is that, "Everyone can learn". With this attitude, Hadley's administration promotes the school community and encourages lifelong learning in everyone, from first year students to the most senior faculty members. Decision making, founded in the consensus model of the Comer Program, is geared toward high expectation. The expectation is lofty, but the support is always there. On the heels of success comes recognition, which breeds additional success.

Each and every program - be it before, during, or after school, has a purpose - and often, a dual purpose. There are in excess of 20 extra-curricular programs available to Hadley students. A vast number of these occur prior to and/or after school, affording parents built in day care while they work. All, programs are evaluated annually in conjunction with the School Climate Survey.

Assessment results (NRT, FCAT and in-house testing) are utilized in a formal and informal manner to reduce student anxiety toward testing. It is important to understand that Hadley's success comes from the designed stratagem - teach, test, re-teach, and re-test.

An important element to the foundational success of Hadley Elementary is the needs assessments that come from the Family Enrichment Center. Routine surveys are conducted and informal feedback sought out, in an effort to provide the services most required by Hadley's clientele. Each survey is administered with the Comer Method in mind which seeks to develop the student's cognitive, social, psychological, linguistic, physical, and ethical pathways.

### **Standard 3: Management**

Charles Hadley Elementary makes management decisions by analyzing available data and methods of student learning. Administration and faculty are in tune to their students' needs, social development, maturity levels, and responses to multiple learning modes. Administration goes further by matching faculty strengths and personality traits to better serve their students.

Any areas of concern that surface are dealt with in a highly proactive manner. The majority of problems are stalled in advance by careful monitoring and forecasting. Once again, the Comer approach comes into practice. When a problem arises staff meets to identify the best method to deal with it, via consensus and collaboration, prior to implementation.

Hadley maintains an Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee (SAC) that includes representatives from every facet of the school community. The SAC and the PTA meet monthly to review decisions and make recommendations that affect the school's programs, students, and staff. The previously mentioned Family Enrichment Center conducts weekly workshops, which provide invaluable insight from the parents' perspective.

School grounds are well maintained by a support staff that carries the same sense of pride and ownership maintained by the instructional staff. Volunteer efforts abound at Hadley and are responsible for much of the landscaping, painting of murals, decoration and overall pleasant and appealing environment that encompasses the school itself.

Personal records and information is secured and available to employees with proper authorization. The school strictly adheres to both the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments. Employees are trained in each of these requirements.

### **Standard 4: Collaboration with Families and Communities**

Charles Hadley aggressively pursues community interaction by inviting local business and civic leaders to be participants in school teams and committees. This opens the door for networking. Bonds are strengthened and businesses can see and participate in the allocation of their donations. Community businesses are referred to as Dade Partners and are featured on the school's marquee as well as in newsletters. As with their students, Hadley staff openly reward, acknowledge and commend the members of the Dade Partners group.

Hadley's Family Enrichment Center serves as a focal point for the influx of many community services. The program has established strong ties with the Miami Children's Hospital, the Children's Psychiatric Center, and the Miami Behavioral Center for free services. In addition, Hadley has enlisted the aid of a local optometrist who supplies free vision checkups and glasses. Hadley recognizes the needs of the population it serves and responds in overwhelming fashion.

To develop and maintain a positive relationship with the local media, Hadley administration has appointed a staff liaison available for media and communications. Once again, the school reaps the benefit of an established relationship. The school provides the local media with releases and the media are comfortable approaching the school to use it as a backdrop for educational stories.

Staying within the confines of the Comer Program, faculty is asked to select and participate in three different teams or committees. This commingling of persons, talents and resources, serves Hadley well and promotes collaborative growth. Teachers feed off one another's successes and learn from one another. A prime example of this interaction surfaces when a faculty member attends an off-site conference and returns to share new approaches or strategies.

### **Standard 5: Acting with Integrity, Fairness, and in an Ethical Manner**

Hadley's Principal takes an active role in insuring that professional values run the gamut of school personnel. The core values listed on Hadley's website, proclaim, *"Everyone can learn. Safe learning environment is paramount. Customers (students) are a priority. Uphold high standards of professionalism."* By serving as an exemplary role model, the Principal sets the standard for fairness and integrity. She mandates that everyone in the school family uphold these values and is held to the same high standard of behavior. This is reinforced with ethics in-service training.

Hadley Elementary recognizes children (and staff) for what they do well. By exhibiting sensitivity to diversity and valuing everyone as an individual, Hadley celebrates differences in background. Special days are set aside to explore and appreciate the uniqueness of the many varied cultures represented by the Hadley family.

The school's diversity is further detailed in the Comprehensive School Plan and its supportive staff development. Few items are left to chance at Charles Hadley where their proclaimed motto is, *"Educating Our Children, Enriching the World"*.

## Standard 6: The Political, Social, Economic, Legal, and Cultural Context

The principal's office is clearly the hub of Hadley's communication wheel, demonstrating that clear and concise communication is vital to success. The Principal and her staff maintain this goal by communicating upcoming changes PRIOR to their implementation. By being pre-emptive and gaining consensus, problems are more easily avoided.

The open-door dialogue with community partners is also prevalent between the administration and the entire school community. A great deal of attention is placed on the preparation of annual, quarterly, monthly, and weekly meetings, but the day-to-day, hour-to-hour exchanges that occur in offices, on the phone, via email, and in the halls of Hadley Elementary are the keys to its communication, vitality and success.

### DATA, DECISION MAKING & DESIGN

Student progress is constantly monitored at Charles Hadley Elementary. Pre-tests are administered at the start of the school year in reading, writing, and math. These early tests serve to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals as well as the class as a whole. Daily and weekly assignments allow teachers to map out skill sets for the duration of the year. Bi-weekly tests are given in both reading and math and students are adjusted within grade to ability. Monthly and quarterly tests are administered in order to ascertain progression and retention of knowledge. ESOL tests are provided to LEP students annually. FCAT and NRT are also annual for students in grades 3 and 5 while students in grade 2 take the Stanford Achievement Test - Edition 9. All students in grades 1 thru 5 are administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory in the spring of each school year.

Teachers compile the collected data in District created charts that show performance of the individual and the class at a glance. Teachers review this information at grade level meetings. Hadley utilizes Quality Improvement and Deployment Teams to digest the reams of information and, with administration, reach a consensus regarding the next logical step in laying out the student's educational placement as well as determining if goals are being achieved. Comparative score analysis demonstrates weaknesses, in individuals or the curriculum as a whole. In either instance, the appropriate stopgap measures can be implemented in short order. An Academic Improvement Plan is developed for students who are below grade level.

Faculty training in the form of how best to interpret the data in hand is accomplished by the principal and/or outside service professionals or District mentors. Software such as SNAPSHOT™, a demographic application, assists in this endeavor. Teachers are also well versed in the use of Student Performance Intranet, which is a District wide web-based program. Faculty has full access to required data for analysis and interpretation.

At the culmination of the school year, the strategic planning process aligns or re-aligns new and old objectives based on the collected data and information obtained via the Family Enrichment Center, Climate, and Staff Surveys. All this falls neatly into the PIRA (Plan → Implement → Review → Actualize) process. This procedure allows for modification at all levels - the curriculum, the classroom and the individual student.

An example of curriculum intervention is the Saturday School program which targets Level 1 and 2 students. Classroom intervention takes the form of one-on-one instruction or small group teaching in order to best suit the needs of the class. At the individual level, specialized tutoring is arranged. For below grade level students, Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) are developed. In the case of an exceptional student, an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is implemented that permits the student to progress at an advance pace.

### FAMILY/COMMUNITY

Communication is the key at Hadley when it comes to parental interface. The school's philosophy is provided in a myriad of ways - written in the *Parents Handbook*, covered at orientations and open houses, reiterated at EESAC and PTA meetings, and touched on frequently during parent/teacher conferences. As seems to be the case with much of the work at Hadley Elementary, the Family Enrichment Center's influence can be seen here as well. Parents report that a wealth of information is obtained via the Center as far as how children are assessed, what programs are available, and what the expectations are of their children and themselves. Parents report that Hadley staff actually listens and takes their concerns into account. Their voices are heard and notes left inside simple suggestion boxes are given careful consideration.

Parents also have expressed their satisfaction with the Parental Surveys routinely conducted. They report that they have seen their comments take root and form policy - something that gives them tremendous satisfaction and gives Hadley the true buy-in required of parents in order to be successful.

Transitioning new students and their families into the climate and culture of Hadley is eased by a comprehensive orientation complete with tour, handbooks, and expectations, with the Family Enrichment Center as a focal point of the tour. Newcomers are relieved to find that most teachers are bilingual (90% of the students are Hispanic). As with most programs and procedures

at Hadley Elementary, it is the people that make the real difference. Parents quickly become aware of the contribution the staff makes to insure the success of their children.

While uniform conferences are laid out at predetermined junctures throughout the year, additional conferences, formal and otherwise, are available at a moment's notice. Parents report that irrespective of circumstance, faculty and administration alike are more than willing to meet at the parent's convenience to discuss a student's progress or problem.

Communication continues in the form of notices sent home regarding changes that may be underway at the school. Progress reports and report cards are standard, but it is the ease of access to teachers and administrators that parents welcome most. Phone calls, both ways, are common. Email is common as well for those with access.

Parents report that they are very comfortable having their children at Hadley Elementary, saying that should a health situation or other personal crisis arise, they know that they will be contacted and the appropriate measures taken. Confidence is a word that comes up often when discussing the school with parents. Parents understand the child first attitude of the Comer philosophy and report that they see daily the collaboration, consensus, and no-fault tactics at work.

Parental conferences are held a MINIMUM of three times per year. At the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, a form called a Compact is signed by the student, the parent, and the teacher. The Compact outlines the responsibilities and expectations of all concerned. This alleviates miscommunication during the course of the school year.

Parents feel very much 'in the loop' at Hadley. They respond by volunteering their time as chaperones for trips, to be readers at Reading Nights, participating in landscaping projects, and even become involved in the classroom. Parents acknowledge that they receive much from Charles Hadley Elementary and in turn try to give back as much as they can.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **School Demographics**

Hadley Elementary School opened in 1986. Buildings are in excellent repair as a result of staff and parents oftentimes doing minor painting and landscaping projects. A student maintained butterfly garden with casual benches adds to the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the school.

Hadley received a "Five Star Award" for excellence in education and is a "Little Red School Award" winner. Currently they have a prestigious Governor's Sterling Award under review.

Hadley Elementary School is located in Miami-Dade County School District, a county that supports a student population of 371,691. Within the District there are 210 elementary schools, 47 middle schools and 47 high schools. In addition, there are 138 additional special centers, including Adult, Vocational, Charter, and Juvenile Justice Schools. Hadley's total enrollment is 1,261 for the 2003-2004 school year. The ethnic breakdown of Hadley is 7% White, >1% Black, 91% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% American Indian, and <1% Multi-racial.

Average class size is 25.9. Students on free/reduced lunch are reported at 77.5%. The gifted student rate is 4.9% and those with disabilities are reported at 7.6%. Percentages of in and out of school suspensions are reported as 0%. Student population stability (from FDOE Ed. Info & Accountability Services) contends that 95% of students enrolled in October remained enrolled the following February. Percentage of LEP Students stands at 47%.

There are 3 administrators and 81 instructors at Hadley Elementary School. Average years of teacher experience runs above the State average at 15.2. A number of teachers have been at the school since its doors opened in 1986. Turnover is extremely low, often non-existent year to year and several staff members have spent their entire careers as Hadley. Teachers with advanced degrees comprise 32.4% of the operating staff compared to 31.5% statewide. School Grade for 2003-2004 is an A.

### **Goals**

#### *Goal 1 - Readiness to Start School*

193 kindergarten students were evaluated. 169 met the State's mandate for readiness - 87.6%.

#### *Goal 3 - Student Performance*

Hadley Elementary School was slightly beneath the State average in Writing (3.4) with a 3.3. NRT results were higher than Dade County District in Reading and Math. Hadley exceeded the State's averages at every grade level in Math, but was lower than the State average in Reading.