

Martin Luther King Middle School—Santa Rosa County

KEY THEMES:

- Diverse student body
- Parent commitment and involvement
- Strong commitment and caring about students
- Excellent inservice opportunities for staff
- School wide team planning
- Facilitative, proactive, innovative, caring principal
- Emphasis on writing across the curriculum
- Use of data to guide instruction and learning
- Integrated use of technology across the curriculum
- Specialized instruction for lower level students
- Academic intervention Plans
- School wide emphasis on reading, writing, and math
- Positive School Climate
- STAR Math Program
- Inter School Suspensions
- All students can learn
- Turnleaf Achievement Management System
- Outstanding School Achievements:
 - Art students top all middle schools in district Art Fair Competition
 - Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching Economics
 - Winner of Juvenile Justice Team-Up Grant
 - Middle School Principal of Year/Santa Rosa County
 - Region I Middle School Principal of Year
 - Commissioner's Principal Achievement Award for Outstanding Leadership.
 - Florida School Report Award as top scoring school of 37 in the state with the similar demographics

BEST PRACTICES:

- Student/Parent/Community Involvement
- Involvement of Business and Community Partners
- Planning Folder carried by all students
- Professional Development
- Common Planning Time
- Outstanding Art Education Program
- School/Home Communication
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Planning Folder carried by all students
- Professional Development
- Common Planning Time
- Outstanding Art Education Program
- Afternoon Tutorial Program in Math and Reading
- Accelerated or Remedial Reading and Math Classes
- Analysis of assessment results in planning of curriculum
- Team-Up Grant
- Read 180 Program
- Saturday School
- Firm Discipline Plan focused on student responsibility
- Shared Decision-Making

THE PRINCIPAL

The current Principal has been serving in her current capacity at King Middle for seven years. She has 32 years of experience at this school and 36 years overall in education. Her years of experience in the “trenches” have earned her the respect and trust of her entire staff. The Principal believes in leading by example and is a positive role model for her staff, parents and students. She sees as her challenge as charting an ever changing map to progress for her school. She is an outstanding leader who will not hesitate to roll up her sleeves and participate in the work to be done. She believes that setting high but

reasonable expectations will lead to continued success of the students at MLK. The Principal is a high energy, hardworking lady and does not require anything of her staff that she does not require of herself.

She was recently recognized for her leadership in the use of technology and also was awarded the Commissioner's Principal Achievement Award for Outstanding Leadership. Those who work with her are never surprised by the success of the school and its students because the love, dedication, and professionalism she demonstrates daily. Her motto is that "children don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Increases in student achievement at King Middle are perceived as the continuing result of her leadership.

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 mission of Martin Luther King (MLK) Middle School focuses on making the Cougars "*King of the Hill*" in reading, writing, math, and positive attitudes. This is accomplished by providing a caring, concerned atmosphere while encouraging intrinsic learning.

Teachers provide quality, individualized instruction to challenge students and remediate them when needed. An after-school tutorial program is provided two days per week, offering snacks and transportation home. King Middle believes in firm discipline and strives to make all students accept responsibility for their behavior. A Saturday School reinforcing the academic areas is part of the disciplinary program.

The school administration, faculty, parents, and students review and update the vision and mission of the school annually. The vision is communicated to all stakeholders of the school through newsletters, website, open houses, e-mail, orientation programs, student planners, and word of mouth. A strong foundation between students, staff, parents and the community completes the circle and contributes to the success of the school.

Standard 2: School Culture and Instructional Program

MLK Middle is a Title I School due to a large percentage of low socio-economic students. The school also has a student population consisting of many ethnic backgrounds.

The school is data driven. Teachers have student data readily available and use it to identify student needs, clarify and address any existing barriers. The curriculum is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards with both an advanced curriculum for the more advanced students and a remedial curriculum for those students in need of extra help.

Teachers and staff encourage life long learning on a daily basis. Teachers plan for success and provide the programs, curriculum, and individual attention to make it possible for every student to succeed.

Technology use is visible throughout the school. Teachers are encouraged to bring technology into their classrooms. The school is well equipped with hardware and software conducive to support the curriculum.

All the curricular programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated through the department heads, administration, and parents who serve on the School Advisory Council. There is a continuous assessment of all programs and improvements are implemented as necessary.

The school culture and climate are also continually assessed. Surveys for parents, students, and faculty are used and the results discussed at faculty meetings, School Advisory meetings, and P.T.A. functions.

Student learning is assessed in various ways such as progress reports, report cards, teacher tests, standardized tests, student planners as well as assessments through the Star Math and Reading Programs.

The integrated service team constantly seeks to help meet the needs of the students such as providing clothing items such as shoes and jackets. Food supplies are often distributed to needy families, especially during the holiday seasons.

Standard 3: Management

Knowledge of teaching and learning theory and student development is used to guide management decisions. The administration embraces the philosophy "We inservice, we evaluate, we determine what is or isn't working and then we change!" This philosophy leads to continuous improvement.

The School Advisory Council is a vibrant group of parents, teachers, students, administrators, and community members who meet once per month to discuss the continual improvement of the school. This group reaches out to the community and is influential in the development of the School Improvement Plan, budget, and other decisions that affect the school.

The staff develops collaborative skills within the school through teaming, grade level, departmental and faculty meetings. Department heads (representing the teachers within their department) meet weekly to discuss academic ideas, review test results and identify trends or patterns in assessment data, sharing in decisions that affect the school. Faculty meetings are held as needed to present and receive input on decisions that affect the school, getting support and buy-in from all stakeholders.

School records are confidentially and privately maintained according to School Board policy and the privacy rights of all are respected.

A safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is evident. The janitorial services along with the students and staff, keep the aging facility clean and inviting.

Standard 4: Collaboration with Families and Communities

MLK is always reaching out to parents, families and community members. The School Advisory welcomes members from the community as well as the school family. Parents are also active as volunteers, chaperones, and as fundraisers thus expanding the student support from the community. The doors are always open for anyone with interest in the school to attend recognition ceremonies or student activities. The facilities of the school are available to support community functions.

The school uses local businesses when purchasing materials or food items. The Team Up Activity is a way the community gives support to the school. There are also many partners in education that have become resources to the school, such as Wendi's Florist, West Florida Trophies, Winn Dixie, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Domino's Pizza, Muskogee Nation of Florida and Food World.

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

All the stakeholders in the school continually evaluate the Principal. She is constantly seen about the campus, in classrooms, morning arrival, afternoon dismissal, lunchroom duty, hallway supervision, and school activities. She has molded King into a school of professional staff that is committed to motivating their students to perform to the best of their ability. The unifying factor of the school is the caring attitude prevalent on the campus. The school is self described as a family and everyone is held to high standards of responsibility and behavior.

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

All-day faculty meetings are held regularly. This is accomplished by holding these meetings during teacher planning periods. By meeting in these smaller groups, people feel more comfortable and tend to share more and ask more questions. Concerns, changes, requirements, and future events are discussed. This procedure has provided a more open exchange and empowering environment.

Staff is aware of the diversity of the student and community population and has an open ear to concerns of all stakeholders, trying to treat everyone equally and fairly. Decisions made outside the school community generally come from the district, state, or federal offices. The school prides itself as a team player and strives to reach high goals set by State and Federal policies.

DATA, DECISION MAKING & DESIGN

Student progress is assessed in many ways throughout the year including: classroom grades; homework grades; unit pre and post tests; software tests; standardized tests; and FCAT. In addition, each student carries a planning folder. Teachers communicate with parents through this folder on a daily basis. Student graded work, assignments and teacher comments are included in the planner.

The teachers, departments, counselors, and the administration review student performance data on an ongoing basis. This data serves as a way to monitor a student's proficiency as it compares to school benchmarks and standards. Students are also compared to district, state, and national norms thus giving insight as to what adjustments may be made in the curriculum or

teaching methods to better serve the students. Teachers receive inservice training through the school district or by their peers to enhance their knowledge in using this data. Inservice has also been provided on the Turnleaf Achievement Management System.

In preparation for the school year, the department leaders, counselors and administration review student data as they develop the School Improvement Plan and finalize curricular offerings. Since King Middle is constantly striving for improvement, this data is reviewed, updated, and interpreted several times during the school year and changes made as suggested by the analysis of the data. Examples of the use of this data to make necessary changes would be the implementation of the Read 180 program as a result of low reading scores on the FCAT Reading Test. Reading enrichment classes were also offered through the CCC Lab with individual help and support as needed. The Star Reading program has also been utilized to test students at the beginning and middle of the year to monitor their reading progress.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY

The school's vision and mission are regularly presented to the stakeholders of the school through newsletters, orientation meetings, student planners, and open houses as well as posted throughout the school classrooms. Materials describing the school's commitment to providing a successful educational experience are distributed at student performances, School Advisory meetings, open houses, and other school functions. The philosophy of the school is evident on the school's website and is communicated throughout the community by word of mouth and through school celebrations and recognition events such as Spring Fling, Veteran's Day, and the Harvest Festival.

The school has a very active School Advisory Council which meets monthly and shares in decisions that affect the student body. The S.A.C. is kept well informed and involved in every aspect of the school's environment. Department heads, grade level teams, faculty, and administration meetings provide opportunities for all stakeholders to have input and share in the decisions of the school.

The SAC, which is representative of all stakeholder groups, has the responsibility of formulating and processing the Annual School Improvement Plan. They are also involved as the plan is implemented over the school year. The SAC also reviews the school budget as presented by the principal.

Community business partners are kept involved in the school. They are invited to become members of the SAC and are often used in the classrooms as guest speakers in their field of expertise.

New families are welcomed to the school through orientation programs, tours of the school, and the assigning of a peer student as a "buddy" for the new student. The new parents are invited to join the SAC as well as any other functioning school parent group. The Open House at the beginning of school also presents an opportunity for new families to become better acquainted with the faculty and the school facility.

There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer and participate in MLK's activities. No one is treated as a stranger on the campus. The family atmosphere is readily recognized when one enters the building, beginning with the principal who is at the front door greeting students and parents each and every morning.

There is constant communication from the school to its stakeholders. The teachers communicate daily with the home, via the student planner, telephone, e-mail, notes, conferences, marquees, and flyers. Progress reports, interim reports, report cards, and attendance checks, keep the parents informed of their student's progress.

Parents are extremely pleased with the family warmth that permeates the campus. The close relationship of teachers with students and teachers with administrators is conducive to this family atmosphere. The school is truly a friendly and safe campus.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Martin Luther King Middle School is a public school located in Milton, Florida, that is part of the Santa Rosa County School District. The school serves students from both rural and residential areas. Many students are bused and travel thirty minutes or more to and from school.

School Demographics

There are 46 faculty members, 1 assistant principal and a principal who serve the 716 students. The students are classified as 79.32% white, 15.50% African American, 2.79% Hispanic, .83% Asian, .13% Indian, and 1.39% Multiracial. The student population with disabilities is 35% with 4% being gifted and one student classified as a LEP student. The percentage of students on a free/reduced lunch is 62.58%. The stability rate of students is 92%. There were 15 incidents of crime or violence

reported and the rate of suspensions was 18%. The faculty has 42% of its members with advanced degrees. The average years of experience of the professional staff is 15.33 years. MLK Middle received an “A” school grade in 2002, 2003 and a “B” in 2004.

Goals

Goal 3 - Student Performance

At this writing, the composite scores for the FCAT test had not been received from the state. However, the principal indicated the district had informed her that the FCAT norm referenced test results were reported by median national percentile and were again higher than the state in all categories.

Goal 4 - Learning Environment

The school continues to improve on standardized test scores which is documented through the “A” grade status it has earned for 3 years.

Goal 5 - School Safety and Environment

Fifteen incidents of crime or violence were reported this past year. There were 17.6% of the population assigned to in-school suspension and 16.5% suspended out-of-school. The parents and students strongly agree that the school is safe and maintains an environment that is conducive to learning.

Goal 8 – Parental Involvement

Faculty and staff report high parental involvement at Martin Luther King Middle School. It was evident that the door is always open to those who want to be involved in the school. Great pride is shown in the fact that this school demonstrates a family concept with all caring for each other.