

## Pompano Beach High School—Broward County

### KEY THEMES:

- Business Approach to Education
- Early Recognition of Graduation Requirements
- Hire great people then, “Get out of the way!”
- Student 1<sup>st</sup> Approach to Decision Making
- Participatory Leadership
- Data Targets Specific Weaknesses/Strengths
- Powerful Dedicated Leadership
- Aligned Curriculum & Vertical Teaming
- Celebrate Successes
- Customer/Student Focus
- Wireless Campus

### BEST PRACTICES:

- 4 day School Week
- 110 min Teaching Blocks
- Data Interpretive Administration
- Virtual Counselor
- Innovative Curriculum
- Client Service
- 5 Year Client Plan
- FCAT Explorer
- Unifying Summer Reading Program
- Palm Pilot - Grade Pro
- Friday School
- SAT Prep
- Community Partners (Microsoft, Oracle, Cisco Corp, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, City of Pompano Beach)

### THE PRINCIPAL

The principal of Pompano Beach High School has been there for five (5) years. He maintains 30+ years of experience in the field of education and possesses a B.A. and M.S. By his own admission, he concentrates on his personal strengths as an administrator and hires others to fill gaps. His description is logical - “I recruit staff like a football team drafts players: to strengthen weak spots.” He is extremely personable, approachable, and strongly advocates delegation of authority to his staff and faculty members. In this respect, he views himself as a leader of leaders. He has an over riding passion for academic excellence and is extremely cognizant of the stance Pompano Beach High School must take in order to compete and be successful.

### 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 Statement and Beliefs of Pompano Beach High School is a lengthy document when compared to other similar documents. It bears documenting here however, as it clearly sets the stage for what transpires within the newly rising walls of Pompano High:

- Pompano Beach High School provides a nurturing environment where a diverse group of students build a sound foundation for academic excellence and moral character.
- As lifelong learners and leaders, students use their knowledge, problem solving skills and positive relationships to create a personal vision of themselves in a global community.
- Student learning is a chief priority for the school.

- Students demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills and are actively involved in solving problems and producing quality work.
- Students learn best when actively engaged in the learning process.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
- Cultural diversity can increase students' understanding of different peoples and cultures.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

This document was in and of itself generated by all the major stakeholders in the school. An active SAC provides direction and definition as well as having input on budgetary matters. The school's Administrative Leadership Team, comprised of administrators, faculty, guidance, etc., works directly with SAC and the Faculty Council prior to the implementation of change. A fourth committee, the Student Leadership Group, meets monthly with the Administrative Team in order to stay abreast of direction and to provide their own unique perspective.

Progress toward the Mission and Goals are communicated via the school's outstanding website as well as hard copies included in quarterly and weekly newsletters and bulletins. Further communication of progress toward the school's Mission Statement utilizes the existing conduit of SAC and PTO.

Few barriers exist at Pompano High. Their students are a minimum of Level 3 FCAT performers. Discipline issues are virtually non-existent as students and families are well aware of the consequence. Academically, however, the school reacts very proactively when a student demonstrates that he or she is struggling. When interpretive data suggests this is the case, the student's week is extended to "Friday School" for remediation.

All resources are examined and portioned with one eye firmly resting on the needs of Pompano Beach's clients, the students. The criteria is rather basic and seen at varying levels in many successful programs - "How does this (project, book, resource etc.) affect student achievement?" If the answer is clear, the monies are allocated. In this way, the goals of Mission Statement's are clearly in sight.

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

At Pompano Beach, professional development is one of the highest priorities. Data analysis dictates the requirements of students, which, in turn, mandates the direction of professional development, but it cannot be overlooked that Pompano High, as a magnet school, operates in a competitive arena. The recognizable thread that runs throughout successful schools - Student Assessment → Student Needs → Professional Development → Student Assessment, is present, but professional development also forms a selling point, if you will, for clients - parents and students. Far from having a negative connotation, this emphasis on staff development can only benefit the students.

The Faculty Council referenced earlier provides direct feedback to administration and is clearly held in high regard. This contact reinforces a teacher's sense of worth within the school as his or her voice is continually heard. Moreover, the principal's door is always open to faculty comments or criticism - each taken in with equal regard.

Diversity is a staple at Pompano Beach High School. By its very nature, the school draws many of the finest students from Broward County. With this degree of excellence comes a cultural diversity that rivals the technological presentations of the school. No less than twelve languages are spoken on campus and over fifteen different countries are represented within the student body. Recalling that the school is comprised of less than 700 students makes these figures even more profound.

As a result of this cultural explosion, faculty development includes diversity exposure training. Once again, the ultimate benefactors are the students, while Pompano continues to move toward the forefront competitively.

Volumes could be written on how technology is employed in the learning processes of this school. The premier example is the use of wireless technology. Students maintain their own memory chips, or jump drives, that they can plug into any computer on campus, or home, and open an assignment or project. This state of the art technology places Pompano students on the cutting edge and prepares them for the next generation of technology.

Beyond the measurable programs and wealth of electronic wizardry there is an air of genuine concern that permeates the campus. From the welcoming receptionists to the principal, students, parents, and visitors are made to feel comfortable and respected. It would appear that diversity is so complex and yet so commonplace that it is taken in stride by a well equipped and trained staff.

A portion of this comfort factor stems from the plethora of extra-curricular programming available on campus. More than 20 clubs and organizations exist for students. In addition, a full compliment of sports programs are in place. The range is immense and with purpose. Pompano Beach, as we will explore in more detail, is far from a neighborhood school. It behooves the administration and staff to create a climate and culture of neighborhood on campus that may occur normally elsewhere based simply on geographics. This action provides for the bonding and sense of belonging that might otherwise be lacking in a student body that is less than 40% from the City of Pompano Beach.

### **Standard 3: Management**

All decisions at Pompano are based on student needs, determined by data. Once again, this is a mantle worn by all successful programs. The distinction with a program such as this is the variety of options available coupled with the caliber of raw material - the students selected for attendance. Over the course of a typical four-year program, students have over 20 options for Math coursework; over 20 options for Sciences; and over 25 options for the Arts! This variety is stimulating for students whose abilities demand such a format.

Coupled with this course availability is a wide variety of credit programs such as Early Admissions, Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement and Tech Preparation - all geared in a unique and challenging way to propel students to reach their highest potential.

Each of the previously referenced courses and programs undergoes an annual review to insure it fulfills the immediate requirements of the student and stays in touch with the Mission Statement. Other additions to the curriculum develop based on innovation in the technology field in order for Pompano as a school and its students to remain competitive.

As mentioned at the onset, Pompano Beach High School is nearing the completion of a considerable construction project. New buildings are opening with regularity and architecturally reflect the innovative and technological attitude of the school.

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

This section contains both a highlight and a shortcoming for Pompano High. Thanks in large part to the Principal's concept of community integration, the school enjoys the benefits of many civic and business partners. Unfortunately, the makeup of the school's student body places a restriction on parental involvement.

This latter fact is not total, but demands acknowledgment. The greater percentages of students that comprise Pompano live outside of the City proper - many a considerable distance from the school. While on the one hand this is a compliment to Pompano for maintaining a program unique and demanding enough to warrant transportation challenges, there subsequently exists an incumbent inability for a number of parents to freely interact with the school as much as they might wish. There are offerings, well attended, of orientations, open houses, parent shadowing, and volunteerism, but the geographic size of the northern portion of the county from which Pompano draws the bulk of its students remains daunting.

Returning to the civic involvement however, Pompano, with such an exceptional Principal at the helm, absolutely shines. From his first days as principal, he has made it a priority to involve local agencies with the school and the school with them. The mutual benefits have been extremely rewarding for both parties. At present, a minimum of ten lease agreements exists between Pompano Beach High School and the City of Pompano. These involve such things as the use of the City's golf course for the high school team (at no charge). Other agreements cover school facility use by the City. It is a practical application of one hand washing the other.

The partnership with the City and many other organizations are the result of the principal's efforts to establish ties with people such as the City Manager, the Recreation Director, the City Council, and the Mayor. Simple invitations extended to these community leaders and others, opened the door to meet-and-greets and dialogue. Now, the Principal delegates staff to attend the Chamber of Commerce meetings to see what help the school may offer. Other groups, becoming aware of the new-found direction of the school and the potential for mutual interaction, have come forward. Sports banquets are now routinely sponsored by the local Elks Club who, along with a growing segment of the population, takes great pride in having a school of Pompano's stature represent their community.

The epitome of community/corporate interaction is present even further along this line. The ties that have been developed with major companies such as Microsoft and Cisco Corporation have yielded tremendous benefits to the school's technology programs and as ever, its students. With participatory practices in place for software and training, students can graduate from Pompano with MS, Cisco, and/or Oracle certifications - an outstanding feat for both student and school.

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

As a school, Pompano High begins and ends with fair and ethical treatment across the board. From the onset, entrance criteria are set, adhered to, and unwavering. This lays an even playing field for applicants and their families. Curriculum, program, and graduation requirements are openly addressed with each student and his or her family so expectations are understood and there are no surprises. The young men and women of Pompano High School understand that the bar is set very high and will not come to their level. Rather, they are expected to raise the level of their own game to comply with Pompano's standards of excellence.

On an individual level, Principal Bell radiates integrity. He is an active listener who responds with well thought out stratagems that are beyond personal compromise. His intentions do not waiver from the Mission of the school, nor does he permit his staff to lose sight of their expressed and implied goals.

The diversity of the school has been addressed several times at this point, so it should come as no surprise that variances in culture, background, economic status, and/or ethnicity are embraced as one on the Pompano campus. As simple documentation of this fact, a wide variety of cultures from around the globe have forums from whence to speak as well as individual days of celebration.

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

There exists an open dialogue with the civic and community partners mentioned in preceding sections. This provides the administration with unique business perspectives which are then incorporated into the curriculum (witnessed by the prior section's computer certifications).

Communication within the school itself can take a minimum of two distinct routes. First, there exists a formal chain that leads through the department chair and the Faculty Council, in the case of teachers, or through the student council and Student Leadership Group, in the case of students. Each will eventually lead to the Administrative Leadership Team and possibly SAC. Once the process has cleared and supportive information and data analyzed, a rendering will be enacted.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> possible route is less time consuming, but lacks the buffering or sounding board effect of several minds vs. one concern. The route leads from the source of concern to the principal's door. The Principal and his Assistant Principals take ownership of issues brought to their respective offices. This direct accountability does much to aid in the general day-to-day processes of operating a high school as unique, complex, and diversified as Pompano.

### **DATA, DECISION MAKING & DESIGN**

The academic progression of Pompano's students through its vast curriculum is measured in the identical fashion as a student would be at a school with far less offerings and expectations. The standardized State tests determine original placement and become participating data in graduation. Term grades, entered via *Grade Pro*, demonstrate continued enrollment.

Guidance, faculty, and department chairs review performance data from all avenues. It is here where decisions are made concerning proficiency and placement. As referenced in prior sections, Friday School becomes an option for remedial work, thereby affording the student the wherewithal to progress before his or her GPA places their enrollment status in jeopardy.

Total access to any form of assessment data is at, and literally IN, the hands of teachers. True to the technology form, teachers have school issued Palm Pilots and laptop computers (wireless compatible) that can access test scores that have been entered from local testing and District information. This ease of performance monitoring encourages faculty to do exactly that, which positively impacts the students and programs by the simple fact that staff is up to date and on top of grades. As a result, rapid intervention is possible. It is noteworthy however, that by Pompano's own admission, when it comes to the use of this technology, they are only as good as their least proficient teacher. To that end, in-service training is provided to insure that all faculty are comfortable and confident with their approaches to technology. DETA, Digital Education Technology Academy, a graduate level course in exactly this area is currently underway for staff at Pompano.

For faculty, the instant access to such a myriad of data also affords them, not unlike the students themselves, to see where they, as teachers, have exceeded school and District goals, or perhaps here they have come up short. Again, information is knowledge and affords them the luxury of making adjustment to style, delivery, and content in order to achieve the desired outcome.

For administration, the ease with which performance can be measured and accessed provides them with information in order to select long-range programs to fill gaps made apparent by current testing. In addition to curriculum adjustment, personnel development and its relationship to Pompano Beach's *School Improvement Plan* depend heavily on the information derived from on going assessment.

Vertical and horizontal teaming within the school has generated several novel approaches - most notably to the reading program currently in place. A practical 20 min. Silent Reading Time occurs each day. It is rotated through the curriculum and followed by testing for retention and comprehension. Even more unique is the assignment of a single book (Fahrenheit 451 in 2002, Tuesdays With Morey in 2003) to the entire student body AND the entire school staff. From 9<sup>th</sup> grader to Senior, custodian to principal, everyone associated with the campus reads the same book. When school reconvenes, there is a naturally unifying tie for discussion between every person at the school. This unification is the perfect segue to the following section.

## **FAMILY/COMMUNITY**

As with every successful school, communication is the key to a positive relationship with both parents and community partners. Pompano Beach High School has as the ideal resource in this area, its Principal, and his efforts and strategies have been previously referenced.

Each piece of information, vital in its own way to success, is transmitted to parents and students in hard copy or on-line for easy access. New and returning students' progression toward the expectation is well laid out and documented via orientation, open house, letter, phone calls, and one-on-one parent conferences as required. Parents advise they are acutely aware of the "Friday School" option should it be required. They also indicate that the 4-day school week poses no concerns for them as the fifth day is generally consumed by their students' fulfillment of the community service element of graduation (40 hours for standard and 75 hours for Florida Academic Scholars).

Formalized report cards go out at 9-week intervals with interim reports being issued at the halfway point.

Parents report that they feel they have a solid voice through the SAC as far as decision making is concerned and have ready access to faculty and administration should they request it. Additionally, they report that the school's administration mandates a 24-hour or less turn-around when a parent phones the school to speak with a member of the faculty or administration.

Discussions with parents brought to light the emphasis on the Arts at Pompano and how it ideally complements the core coursework. A number felt that this recognized target issue - that students who are actively engaged in the Arts are propelled to greater academic success and well rounded behavior, was a determining factor in electing to apply to Pompano Beach High School.

Though the issue of limited parental involvement is apparent due to the distances students are drawn from (referenced earlier) parents believe that Pompano compensates by providing a nurturing family environment on the campus. The size of the school (<800) contributes to this sense. Additionally, it was important to family that successes, even at a magnet school with a high caliber raw product, be celebrated and appreciated the fact that Pompano was not shy in doing just that.

Diversity has been addressed many times throughout this report, but bears repeating under this heading. To a person, parents of various backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs have an overwhelming sense of security about their children being enrolled at Pompano. They believe all differences are respected and have faith that the school does more than is expected to embrace the nuances of difference.

Information transfer, like much of Pompano High School, relies heavily on technology. The school's website provides a wealth of updated information. More important to parents however, is the existence of *Virtual Counselor* - an on-line program through which parents can access by password their student's academic record and data directly from the classroom. This single piece of technology is perhaps Pompano's greatest achievement as far as parents are concerned. Again, due to several families' inability to come to the campus for conferences etc., the campus comes to them via the internet. The presence of this technological data port by itself conveys to parents that Pompano High School cares about them, their opinions, concerns, and information and reinforces the unwritten philosophy that failure is not an option.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Pompano Beach High School is a full magnet school. Entrance criteria are marked by a number of eligibility requirements. These include FCAT Level 3 for both Math and Reading. Once enrolled, students must maintain strict GPA guidelines - 2.0 for 1<sup>st</sup> term incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and 2.5 for 2<sup>nd</sup> term 9<sup>th</sup> graders thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders. There are information technology stations throughout the individual classrooms culminating in a state of the art media center. This center and associated courtyard, along with the highly modernized off-campus appearing cafeteria, maintain a wireless modem technology 2<sup>nd</sup> to none in the State. This cutting edge technology defines Pompano Beach High School and strongly supports its surname - *International Affairs with Informational Technology*.

Reopened in 1997 as a result of growing need, Pompano Beach graduated its 1<sup>st</sup> class in 2001 -sixteen years since its last graduates walked its stage. A massive building project is nearing completion and will allow for a maximum of 700 students.

Unique among schools is the 4-day week employed by Pompano. Each day is comprised of four 110 min. teaching blocks. These elongated sessions provide ample time for deep seated research and thought provoking dialogue.

### **School Demographics**

Pompano Beach High School is located in Broward County School District - a county that supports in excess of 131,000 students. Within the Broward District there are 144 elementary schools, 38 middle schools, and 25 high schools. In addition, there are 58 additional special centers, including Adult, Vocational, Charter, and Department of Juvenile Justice Schools. Pompano Beach's figures demonstrate a total enrollment for the 2003-2004 period of 697.

Ethnic breakdowns at Pompano are as follows: 49% White; 32% Black; 15% Hispanic; 2% Asian; <1% Am. Indian; 1% Multi-racial.

Average class size is 26.9. The gifted student rate is 2.9% and those with disabilities are reported at 2.6%. Percentage of out of school suspensions is reported as .4%. Student population stability (from FDOE Ed. Info & Accountability Services) is listed at 95%. Percentage of LEP Students stands at 3.4%.

There are 3 administrators and 38 instructors at Pompano Beach High School. Average years of teacher experience runs below the State average at 9.6. Teachers with advanced degrees comprise a high 44.1% of the operating staff. School Grade for 2003-2004 = A

### **Goals**

#### *Goal 3 - Student Performance*

Pompano Beach High School routinely and without exception exceeded both its District and State's averages in every measurable category. An example of such is carried forth within the results of the FCAT Reading Scores for Grade 9. In this category, Pompano Beach eclipsed the District average by 38 points.

#### *Goal 5 - School Safety & Environment*

Of the nearly 44,000 reportable incidents that took place in the State's high schools, a sum total of FOUR (4) took place at Pompano Beach High - establishing it as perhaps the premier high school for safety in the State.