

Preliminary Report, Highlights: Coral Park, Miami-Dade County

High Free and Reduced Lunch 55% and High Limited English Proficiency 32%

Student achievement drives the focus, data drives the decisions, and leadership of teachers and principals is the action force powering this high performing school.

MAKE IT HAPPEN: Meeting the needs of Coral Park students (83% free and reduced lunch, 58% limited English, 14% gifted) required extra effort. After marshalling any and all resources, including grant funding, the principal determined more needed to be done to promote the achievement potential of the students. The Principal adopted a "to lead is to serve" strategy and started a Saturday school. Every Saturday she tutors the students herself. Teachers, paraprofessionals and other volunteers join the Principal on Saturdays at this above and beyond effort, without remuneration, but with significant reward in student gains.

Results: Grade 4, 152 student tested in FCAT, Writing: school average 3.7 compared to district average of 3.3 and state of 3.4. FCAT Reading and Math outpacing district and state averages.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Intense tutoring for struggling students; before and after school care with academic focus
- Concentrated reading: while in the hallway, waiting for the school day to begin, every student must read
- Home as a School Zone: homework not completed prompts a Principal meeting and parent contact

EMPOWER TEACHERS: The principal and school team have prioritized small class size and a skilled teaching force. Budget decisions and school improvement plans support these goals. Teachers report that they share in the leadership of and accountability for instructional progress. They also mirror the same goals and values as the principal: student achievement, high-level involvement in the job, caring for students, going the extra mile. All teacher planning is individual and standards-based. There is a collegial atmosphere and open-door policy for staff. There is also considerable emphasis on using every available moment to teach.

Results: 22.4% of staff hold Master's Degrees. Very little teacher turnover. Hiring of as many teachers as possible. Teachers empowered to make decisions regarding classroom instruction and school practices.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Weekly meetings of teaching teams
- Teacher mentoring program including teacher pair up to observe same and different grade levels
- Monthly meeting with Principal focused on support for teachers' direction, rather than principal directives

COLLECT AND APPLY DATA: Data is collected once a week. It is not filed or stored. It is used. On a weekly basis, the teachers regularly monitor their student's progress, including FCAT-like assessments. The principal studies this data as well, and as an ongoing practice, informs parents about their student's progress and meets with students to assist with individual needs. The school also utilizes information from student records and student cumulative files. Administrators and teachers have access to complete information.

Results: 2000 school grade: C. 2001 and 2002 school grades: A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Benchmarking: curriculum and weekly benchmarking of all students
- Seeking and receiving grants for technology that supports data-driven decision-making
- All improvement plans (student, class, school) based on data and responsive to emerging information