

Preliminary Report, Highlights: Charles R. Hadley, Miami-Dade County

High Free and Reduced Lunch 75% and High Limited English Proficiency 45%

All the Hadley students are considered gifted by the principal and staff. They merit and get gifted teaching from a committed staff.

DIVIDE and CONQUER: The Principal and staff start with the big picture and then painstakingly plot the details that make it an action plan. Hadley has a large Hispanic population (90%) and a large number of students (75%) eligible for free and reduced lunch. Planning for students begins with comprehensive data analysis. Assessment data is used for student plans and to decide what programs stay or go based on effectiveness. The school is divided into six groups, called “websites,” and each is on the Internet. They are set up by grade level from kindergarten to 5th. All “websites” work cooperatively to plan and implement nine-week themes. The comprehensive reading plan is also benchmarked every nine weeks. Teachers analyze the nine-week progress and set midcourse corrections.

Results: Grade 4 FCAT student performance, 209 students: 3.3%, same as district; above state in each grade level in math. Student absences are lower than district average.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Data on comprehension and oral reading is analyzed weekly, biweekly and monthly
- Teachers stopped using commercial materials and developed their own to promote higher order skills, hands-on experimentation and critical thinking
- Teachers decide what professional development activities to pursue, based on applicability

ENLIST ALLIES: Hadley pursues partnerships, parent engagement and grant opportunities to enhance instruction and support student achievement goals. Some of the supporting programs at the school and for the community include: a Family Enrichment Center where students and parents participate in classes and training on education/community/civic issues; a Children’s Psychiatric Center; a Community School; and a Parent Outreach Center. The staff enlists parents as partners in their children’s progress, sharing academic reports, and initiating contact. The faculty and staff aggressively pursue grants for funding special programs, tapping district, state, federal and private sources. They use technology to seek opportunities that are a fit with their strategies.

Results: Five Star School Award; Little Red Schoolhouse Award; 10 separate grants received and active.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Providing a range of services for parents that improve their lives and the education of the students
- Providing parents and partners with fiscal decision-making authority together with school staff
- Pursuing grants—such as technology equipment, infrastructure and training—that support goals

BREAK the MOLD: The staff believes that strategies and practices that work for gifted students work for all students. Hadley is a “Comer” school that practices the philosophy “everything we do is with the child in mind.” When the teachers analyzed the commercially produced materials in use, they were found lacking. They started producing their own materials that reinforced the development of higher order thinking skills. Extending the gifted strategy, the school pairs a gifted and at-risk student for tutoring and mentoring. Professional development is prioritized and directly supports goals. Individual teachers sample training opportunities, report back to the group, and share core ideas. Teachers make decisions concerning the value of the opportunities.

Results: School grade 2000: C; 2001: A; 2002: B.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Gifted teaching strategies and curriculum elements in all instruction
- Recognizing a variety of student achievements by “Spotlighting Success” in formal and informal settings
- Regularly scheduled meeting with the principal: all teachers to demonstrate student progress