

Preliminary Report, Highlights: Inwood, Miami-Dade County

High Free and Reduced Lunch, 78%

Inwood retains the history, charm and artifacts from its 1927 beginning as a one-room schoolhouse. But make no mistake, they are in the fast lane when it comes to performance.

SET THE STAGE: Before achievement work could begin, the Principal had to create an atmosphere that fostered instruction. All of the students live within a tight radius of the school. There is a high crime rate in the area and heavy outside traffic. The first priority was to set the standard for behavior and expectations, enlisting parents and community to help. Inwood has a “Good Choice Room”: a time-out place for students to consider behavior choices. A paraprofessional helps the student develop a written plan for making a “good choice” the next time. Plans are backed by “Thinking Maps” outlining appropriate actions and responses. The documents go home and require a parent’s signature. Innovations like these were the springboard to the high performance goals.

Results: Reading and Math scores, grades 3-5, exceeded state scores, except for a nominal dip, Reading Grade 5.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Promoting parental events and workshops with intensive outreach (79% participation)
- Making staff responsible for immediately remediating any infraction of student behavior personally observed
- Assigning roles and responsibilities to parents and community members to support student success

MIX INGREDIENTS: Daily goals are written on the boards in each classroom. Everyone is on the same page. While in their classrooms, teachers are managers, instructional leaders, role models and motivators. The Principal reports that the staff are her strongest ally. They view teaching as a vocation, and school improvement as a mission. The teachers draw from many ingredients to configure a highly flexible, yet always high, set of expectations. Constancy comes from mandated data-driven decision-making and a menu of available programs such as Accelerated Reader, After School Tutoring, Compass Computer-Assisted Instruction, and the Macmillan Reading Program. Professional development undergirds the instruction and goals.

Results: School Grades: 2000: A; 2001: A; 2002: A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Teaching what is tested and testing what is taught
- Tasking teachers with setting student and teacher expectations that are high and self-imposed
- Creating a core knowledge environment, utilizing Bloom’s Taxonomy

INSPIRE EXCELLENCE: Inwood’s Principal clearly demonstrates the value she places on her staff and their abilities. She encourages their leadership potential, bolsters it with quality professional development, and gives them opportunities to shine. All teachers will lead in the capacity of grade chairperson, which is rotated within the grade level. Each teacher will also mentor another teacher in the course of their tenure at Inwood, insuring that important values and skills are passed on. The Principal has been very successful in inspiring parents and partners to be active. She capitalizes on the neighborhood school culture and many former volunteers are now dedicated paraprofessionals. The Principal and the staff are highly respected in the community and called upon to input into community issues.

Results: First Title I school in the state. Accountability Report: 446 points on FCAT Reading, Math and Writing, exceeding state requirement of 410 for an A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Using vertical teaming to improve FCAT performance
- Teaming across grade levels and within to reach consensus on who teaches what, how and where
- Learning and teaching on multiple levels in every classroom using curriculum aligned to needs and goals