

Preliminary Report, Highlights: James Weldon Johnson Middle School, Duval County

APPROPRIATE STUDENT PLACEMENT: Staff at James Weldon Johnson take extra steps to ensure students are prepared for the challenges that face them in this college preparatory magnet school. Student placement and progress are determined using teacher made tests. Students that need extra assistance for the advanced curriculum are placed in an “Enrichment Camp” that is offered in the summer and runs for three weeks before the start of school. Camp students are provided intensive tutoring and evaluated for placement on a team best meeting their needs, improving the chance they will be successful. Teachers are knowledgeable and eager to challenge their students. Goals are set high with cooperation between all stakeholders contributing to their success. Expressions of cultural diversity are encouraged throughout the year as 47% of students are from minority cultures.

Results: School Grade: 2001 A; 2002 A; 2003 A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- “Enrichment Camp” to provide support for academic success
- High expectations for all students regardless of entry level
- Individualized placement of students on a team best suited for their success

COMMUNICATION AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS: Incoming students and their parents are invited to attend a spring orientation to learn about the policies and expectations of the school, with a second orientation session held in the fall before classes start. Parents are very connected with the school and eager to support the efforts of students and staff. Parents are also actively involved in the decision-making processes throughout the year, embracing and sharing the philosophy of high expectations. Conferences, reports, and phone calls provide significant communication links with parents. The principal has an open door policy and is readily available to students, parents and staff. Each incoming sixth grade class is assigned its own administrator who stays with his or her group of students until they complete eighth grade. There are three teams for each grade level, two being advanced track teams and one being gifted. The emphasis is on making sure each student has the proper placement to will ensure academic success.

Results: FCAT norm referenced tests are higher than district and state across all categories.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Parents and staff that share high expectations for all aspects of the program and student achievement
- Orientations that promote communication and support for high academic standards
- Continuity in progress monitoring by assigning class administrators to monitor student performance from grade 6 to grade 8

STUDENT DIRECTED RESEARCH: The spirit at James Weldon Johnson is to raise the bar and expect more. Reaching for this standard, students participate in a research program that involves setting aside one period each day for students to consult with teachers for extending the instructional process with questions and additional guidance in any particular subject. All students participate in the Science Fair, which includes a heavy emphasis on scientific research methodologies. Instruction is geared for students who are motivated to learn and the principal seeks teachers who will reach out and support the academic needs of these students. Teachers and parents believe that communication and teamwork are key components to academic success for students. Test performance goals are also set high and are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards.

Results: Student Performance: 98% of students scored 3.5 or high on FCAT Writing assessment with an average score of 4.6; 84% (rdg) and 90% (math) of eighth grade students scored 3 or higher on FCAT.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Programs designed to extend learning and answer student questions
- Highest standards set for performance
- Aligning school goals with state and national standards