

Preliminary Report, Highlights: L.A. Ainger Middle School, Charlotte County

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE READING!: Of great importance at Ainger is the incorporation of reading in all disciplines. One strategy supporting this focus is the use of *Read Alouds* backed by research suggesting that oral comprehension precedes written comprehension in many cases. Teachers read to students irrespective of age or ability group. Another strategy working to strengthen reading skills is *Read 180*, an expansive literacy program building on student assessment followed up with software, audio books, and paperbacks. District and school level grant writing for implementation of programs including *Read 180* have allowed resources to extend beyond static allocations.

Results: FCAT scores in reading routinely and without exception exceed both the district and state averages.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Attention to reading in all disciplines
- Specific programs to identify reading skills and materials to support improvement
- District and school level grant writing to provide additional resources supporting reading

“TEAM” WORK: Vertical alignment of school curriculum exists between and among all levels serving to heighten what works for students at L.A. Ainger. *Team Time* is an organized daily ritual consisting of one half hour prior to school wherein staff meets to discuss issues of the upcoming day and the status of both students and programs. An outcropping of the *Team Time* theme is the articulation that exists between L.A. Ainger staff and its feeder high school. Teachers in the two schools communicate to insure that scope and sequence are in order, increasing the success of students as they move through high school.

Results: School Grades: 2002 A; 2003 A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Vertical alignment of school curriculum among and between grade levels
- Time built in each school day for staff to examine what is working at individual and school levels
- Communication with staff at high school to align efforts to produce successful students

DATA-DRIVEN AND RESEARCH-BASED : The instructional staff at L.A. Ainger is a primary focus of the principal and the district with regard to resources that make a difference. Teachers are encouraged to “just teach”. Using existing data as a baseline, they are permitted to instruct in creative, innovative fashions. The focus remains on academic skill development with accountability being paramount. This empowerment creates a climate of respect and trust in what teachers do. Tools such as the use of Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) support teacher efforts. The AIP aligns needs, standards, and interventions to further the focus on academic achievement with staff remaining the key resource for implementation.

Results: Teacher turnover >2% annually; Teachers with advanced degrees tops 45% compared to state average of 31.5%; Teacher leave and absence requests below state levels.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Supporting instructional staff as key resources - given flexibility with accountability
- Maintaining a focus on academic skill building
- The use of Academic Improvement Plans to target need and focus intervention strategies