

Preliminary Report, Highlights: Seminole Middle School, Broward County

DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING: Department heads and administrators at Seminole Middle analyze student data and brainstorm strategies over the summer and at the beginning of the school year, to help ensure that all student needs are considered. It is also a time to plan programs based on those needs, focusing on the skills students need to be academically successful. Individual student data is analyzed to make sure students are placed correctly and to determine if they need tutoring or other supplemental services. Scores from the Tower Test (a test based on fluency and decoding skills) are also utilized to place students appropriately for reading. Teachers in other content areas – such as science or social studies, are then notified so curriculum adjustments can be made to help improve the potential for success in those subjects. Benchmark Testing is used along with monthly informal assessments of student progress. This frequent monitoring of goals and objectives for student achievement allows staff at Seminole Middle to make necessary adjustments throughout the year as opposed to waiting for FCAT results at the end of the year. Department heads monitor and provide support for this process that is documented through a school wide database.

Results: School Grade: 2002 A; 2003 A.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Careful attention to student placement based on previous performance and test scores to give students the best opportunity for success
- Continuous monitoring of student progress towards goals and objectives, with adjustments made as needed
- Use of a school wide data base to help monitor progress of all students

FOCUS ON CURRICULUM: At Seminole Middle the curriculum extends beyond FCAT academic goals and objectives and provides an experiential integration of life skills and current events into classrooms. New programs such as advanced literature and pre-law are offered to students, reflecting an extension of the curriculum at a time when many resources go to remediation efforts. Academic grouping is flexible and instruction is adjusted at all levels to meet students' needs. Seminole Middle utilizes a reading for all approach using three different reading series. Monthly prompts are incorporated for extra writing practice. The curriculum is connected to a sequenced learning plan that is part of their vertical teaming approach.

Results: FCAT Writing Assessment 2002: School average 3.9, compared to district 3.9, and state 3.8; Ninety-three percent of students scored 3.0 or higher.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Experiential integration of life skills and current events into classroom curriculum
- Monthly writing prompts
- Flexible grouping and adjusted instruction reflecting student need
- A sequenced learning plan and vertical teaming

MENTORING: Mentoring is done at all levels at Seminole Middle School. The principal and assistant principals are assigned and involved as mentors. New teachers are part of the NESS program - New Educator School Support. This program is designed for teachers who are new to the system and includes an on-site mentoring component. There is a New Teacher Academy for those who are also new to the district. Mentoring also takes place at the student level. In addition to instruction and remediation provided by staff, students serve as mentors, tutoring peers preparing for the FCAT. The principal refers to the school community as the Seminole Middle School Family – a feeling that is achieved through connecting human resources.

Results: : Over a three year period school grade improved from a C to an A and has been able to sustain the A grade.

Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Mentoring programs connecting human resources at all levels
- On site new teacher programs
- Student mentoring/tutoring as additional support for FCAT preparation