

## Preliminary Report, Highlights: Wesley Matthews, Miami-Dade County

High Free and Reduced Lunch, 57%, Limited English Proficiency, 33%

*The school has a young staff (most with under 10 years experience), a young school (7 years old), challenging demographics, and a 19% mobility rate. They are undeterred—no excuses.*

**LINK BUDGET and GOALS:** An acknowledged budget whiz, the principal strategizes funding to support teachers' needs in order to boost achievement. The school has received grants in excess of \$1.37 million dollars over the last three years including: the ACCESS technology project; Adult Literacy Grants, \$250,000; and Reading Enhancement Grants, \$20,000. All grants sought, received and implemented have common goals: the improvement of literacy skills and of student's reading and reading comprehension skills. Staff credits the principal's ability to seek and procure funding from a variety of sources. Moreover, they credit his ability to narrowly focus and funnel it to support agreed-upon priorities. The goal is to build a strong "community of learners."

**Results:** Accountability Report: 72% made learning gains in Reading, and 91% made learning gains in Math. Total of 481, exceeding the requirement of 410 for A.

### Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Developing high level budget/finance skills (principal) to maximize and strategize allocation of resources
- Strategizing a school improvement plan that is farsighted, but sensibly tied to budget and resources
- Funding extra hours of tutoring programs that employ certified teachers and talented paraprofessionals

**COMMIT TO TECHNOLOGY:** The school spent in excess of \$130,000 on technology during the 2001-2002 school year. Every classroom has at least two computers for student use and a 15-station computer lab. Over a five-year period, all students will have access to 165 laptop computers, thanks to a million dollar federal grant, ACCESS, for bilingual education. The goal is to produce students who are bilingual and bi-literate. To ensure that the computers are humming with instructional programs, professional development for teachers focuses on technology use and multimode instruction. Parents are part of the school's mission to motivate learning through technology. They are encouraged to check out laptops and use school computers until 6:00 p.m. daily.

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

### Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Using technology-based programs such as Riverdeep Math and FCAT Explorer (home use also)
- Providing adult computer skills workshops to improve parent and family literacy
- Capturing and using data for assessment, instruction grouping, progress review and to develop curriculum

**LEAD by EXAMPLE:** The Principal never asks anyone to do anything that he would not do. According to staff, he expects the entire school family to evidence the same level of commitment, high standards, and passion for achievement that he holds. In turn, he is their champion. Staff feel supported in reaching their instructional and professional development goals. The principal and his administrative team spend a lot of time in the classroom to take the pulse, offer assistance and intervene as necessary. He also provides teachers with common planning time, highly qualified resource support, and open lines of communication. Staff is given leeway to reach goals, but the bottom line is achievement. Teachers are accountable for demonstrating progress.

**Results:** Accountability Report: 78% met high standards in Reading; 74%, Math; 94%, writing.

### Practices that Promote High Performance:

- Implementing a high level Comprehensive Reading Plan with an emphasis on guided reading
- Designating curriculum leaders with the sole responsibility to oversee programs such as Reading
- Emphasizing the use of effective, research-based instructional strategies in the menu of available programs and professional development