

Charles R. Hadley Elementary School—Miami-Dade

KEY THEMES:

- Parent involvement and inclusion
- Availability and access to the principal and teachers by parents
- Sense of school as an extension of the family
- School technology support
- Shared leadership and decision making
- Community involvement
- Data driven

BEST PRACTICES:

- Group instruction
- Tutoring (before school, after school and on Saturdays)
- The Family Center
- Spot Lighting Success

LEADING CHANGE: CREATING SCHOOL CULTURE

Leadership

Everybody at Hadley is involved in a leadership role. As a person's strengths are recognized by their peers and the principal, they are assigned to growth opportunities based on those strengths. The principal believes in allowing the talent of staff to emerge. Hadley's teachers feel empowered and very "in" on things. Teacher talent is developed and the administration is flexible and participatory. Teachers believe that they are enabled to achieve academic excellence. Hadley teachers don't see roadblocks or obstacles, they see challenges that they will successfully overcome. Teachers are highly encouraged to participate in training at the district, state and national levels. When the teachers return from training they are required to provide the information to the entire faculty.

The principal also empowers teachers by allowing them to interview applicants for teaching positions at Hadley. The interview team is to give the principal three recommendations and the principal will select one of those names. Teachers felt that by being able to do this they keep Hadley a close family of people who are willing to go the extra mile. The teachers believe the principal supports them and keeps them in on things. Teachers and parents believe they play a role on how the schools financial resources are spent—they do not think that it is one person making all the decisions.

The principal has been at Hadley for six years with a total of 15 years of experience as a principal. She has a doctorate in education and a total of 25 years in education. Before arriving at Hadley, the principal worked in the Professional Standards Department at the District Office. The culture at Hadley is described by the principal as "knowing and understanding that we are all here for the child, whatever it takes to make them successful."

Overriding Key Theme

A key theme at Hadley is honoring and recognizing all students for what they do well. They call this activity "**Spot Lighting Success**." Students are recognized for a variety of achievements where they have experienced success. These activities can include academics, sports, music or community service. The parents, teachers and principal want students recognized by their peers for what is "good and positive." The recognitions include being honored at school assemblies, certificates, plaques, awards and a culminating party at the principal's home.

Personnel

Staff plays an active role in teacher selection. As in all large districts they face the constraints of contract language and district procedures, but continue to pursue the right match for Hadley. Teachers (depending on grade level, etc.) do the initial interviewing of qualified candidates and submit the names of those individuals who they believe would be most successful at Hadley to the principal for final selection. In selecting candidates to refer to the principal, the staff stated they look for candidates with a high energy level and are innovative and committed.

Hadley uses both a formal and unofficial mentoring process for new teachers or teachers new to the school. The formal process is district mandated. The unofficial process is through teammates at grade level who provide newcomers with a built in support system.

There was a general sense that the district needed to do more in the training and retraining of teachers. A teacher shared that "if you are to be on the cutting edge, training should be occurring before a program is adopted, not after."

Setting

Charles R. Hadley School is 16 years old. It has been recently painted. Parent and teacher volunteers do much of the painting and minor maintenance at the school. The teachers and parents have painted most classrooms and offices. Lush tropical landscaping adorns the campus, which includes a student planted butterfly garden.

Everywhere you look at Hadley you will see the school's mission statement and goals. The campus provides a warm and friendly atmosphere with benches and picnic tables throughout the gardens and common areas. The school was very clean and orderly.

Hadley has a Children's Psychiatric Center, Community School and Parent Outreach Center on site. The Center provides various programming for parents. Additionally, parents are provided information on 25 different clubs and special activities designed to get all students involved in the school.

Hadley was graded an "A" by the state in 1998-99 and 2000-01. It is also a "Five Star Award" recipient and a "Little Red Schoolhouse" award winner.

Climate and Culture

The interviews with the parents, teachers and principal provided an overriding sense of family and belonging at Hadley. Parents displayed a genuine sense of pride at being part of the Hadley family. They were highly respectful of the teachers and the job they do for their children at Hadley. The parents truly believed that the Hadley teachers, administration and staff were there for them.

The teachers told us the turnover rate at Hadley is very low because no one wants to leave. One teacher said, "at Hadley all our problems are solved." The closeness of the teachers as friends and colleagues was evident. The teachers shared this same sense of "family" and teamwork that the parents had described to us. The teachers also stated that they have friends in the profession who call them on a regular basis and ask if there are any openings at Hadley, as they would like to work there.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

Resources

Hadley teachers identified themselves as data driven, innovative, committed and willing to go the extra mile to get the job done. They felt like their voices were heard and respected at Hadley.

Parents and teachers are involved in the school's budgetary process through the Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee (EESAC). While acknowledging that the district determines the amount of dollars that flow through the school's budget annually, staff and parents felt that the principal provided them with financial decision making authority through EESAC. They advised that the schools PTA and Partners were very generous in providing additional resources including people, time, money and materials. Disbursement of these additional resources was a shared decision with EESAC and staff with input from the principal. Additionally, Hadley aggressively pursued and received a wide range of grants to supplement ongoing activities.

Staff is encouraged by administration to attend as much training as possible. After attending training, teachers are to report back to staff at faculty meetings on the value of the training and its applicability to their ongoing programs. Decisions are then made by the faculty as to its value and applicability for the entire staff. If it is agreed that it would be of value to the entire staff or a segment of the staff, the principal will see to it that the training is provided.

Information Management

The School Improvement Plan is well publicized. It is posted on the school's website, discussed at Open House, PTA meetings and faculty meetings. The Plan is also posted in the school's office and in the hallways. Assessment data is used

by staff to plan and evaluate curriculum. Decisions on what programs to continue, terminate, or modify are based on their analysis of the data. Data is used at every faculty meeting to determine what needs to be changed. The faculty also uses the "School Climate Survey" to determine if they need to make modifications at the school. Hadley's staff consider themselves to be data driven and that all their curricular decisions are based on where they've been and where they want to go. Staff and administration are continually comparing themselves to the district, the State and the nation in realigning their objectives and practices.

COMMUNICATING CHANGE: PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK

Instruction

The district mission and Strategic Plan is everywhere, "it is embedded in our documents and announcements." Hadley aligns their goals to the district, state and nation. Progress toward meeting goals is documented quarterly. Staff tracks everything they do in the classroom to insure progress toward meeting the district's mission and Strategic Plan. All school testing is done using a FCAT type format to heighten comfort level for the annual testing. All before and after school tutoring is in the FCAT format. The school participates in cross grouping with the administration determining initial placement and grade level teams determining movement from that point forward. Every nine weeks each grade level creates a framework, which is linked to the Sunshine State Standards to establish student-learning objectives. Tutoring before, during, after school and on Saturdays is in place to assist the schools lowest 25th percentile.

Communication

Communication with parents is accomplished through traditional means such as PTA meetings, Open House and parent conferences. These forums are used to disseminate information that may be of interest to all parents such as the school mission and school goals. The mission and goals are also described in fliers that are sent home, put on bulletin boards and emphasized in meetings with parents. All school information that is sent home is sent in both English and Spanish. Information regarding student progress is provided through one-on-one conferencing in fact, the principal states, "we have a lot of individual conferences with parents." Communication with faculty and staff is accomplished by hosting regular and consistent faculty meetings and one-on-one meetings with the principal.

Decision Making

Teachers and parents believe they play a role in the decision making at the school and have input into the decisions that are made. They don't believe that only one person makes the decisions, but rather that decisions are made by consensus. The principal describes decision-making at Hadley as a participatory process whenever possible. "We implement the Cromer program, and through the Cromer program, we manage the school around his three guiding principles, collaboration, consensus, and no fault. So, through consensus, everything that we do in the school, the teachers are part of the decision making process and the parents are part of it, and we have different committees to facilitate anything that we do in the school."

Parent and Community Involvement

Parents are a welcome part of the community at Hadley. **"Parents will not be part of the school if you don't open your arms and welcome them and value them, and entice them to come. We have a lot of individual conferences with parents.** Parents are apprised of the level of their children, what we're doing at school, and what we need for them to do at home."

Hadley has a **"Family Enrichment Center"** where students and parents are welcomed everyday and they participate in a variety of classes and training designed to educate parents on school and community issues. **One parent shared that last year the school provided tax preparation assistance for parents on Saturdays before April 15th.** The Center provides parenting classes, assistance with filling out government forms, tutoring skills for parents to assist their children, and assistance with English proficiency. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

"Parents used to come to the school to just watch their children, now, they see that we're tutoring, and they spend the whole day here. Every school should understand how important it is to bring the parents in, and to work with them, and to understand that every parent has something special to give to the school." It was obvious that the parents are made to feel very welcome at Hadley and are strongly encouraged to participate at the school.

There was a genuine sense of affection and pride for the children and the school. Parents and teachers stated that at Hadley their voices are heard by the administration and that they are continuously moving forward.

Hadley has several partnerships with community businesses in the area. Additionally, the principal, teachers and parents aggressively pursue grants for funding special programs at Hadley. The school is currently the recipient of 10 separate grants. A partnership with Citibank has provided computers for students to take home in 10 separate classrooms. The teachers told us that they respond to all offers of assistance and that they actively search for grants from the district, state, federal level and the Internet to fund special projects and activities for Hadley.

EVALUATING CHANGE: CELEBRATION AND REFLECTION

A key theme at Hadley is honoring and recognizing all students for what they do well. They call this activity "Spot Lighting Success." Students are recognized for a variety of achievements where they have experienced success. These activities can include academics, sports, music, or community service. The parents, teachers and principal want students recognized by their peers for what is "good and positive." The recognitions include being honored at school assemblies, certificates, plaques, awards and a culminating party at the principal's home.

Accountability

All school related information is sent home in both English and Spanish. Tutoring is made available to all students Monday through Friday both before and after school. Teachers identify students in need of additional assistance and their parents are contacted and strongly encouraged to have their child participate in the daily tutoring. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's teachers and administrators on a regular basis. Parents told us that the teachers call them at home regularly to advise of their sons or daughters progress both academically and socially.

Parents are informed of the school's mission statement and goals by the principal and the teachers through meetings, fliers, bulletin boards and one-to-one communication. The school also advises each parent of the expectations for their child and what they can do to assist their son or daughter in becoming successful at school. Repeatedly parents told us how welcome they were made to feel at Hadley and how accessible everyone was to them.

Hadley has divided the school into six groups, which are called websites. Each can be found on the Internet. The websites are set up by grade level from kindergarten to 5th grade. The special area teachers and paraprofessionals are also involved by grade level. All websites must work cooperatively to plan and implement the nine weeks themes, including culminating activities for each.

Test scores are posted publicly and teachers are constantly striving for improvement. There is a commitment to "raising the bar" on achievement and eliminating practices and strategies that didn't move them forward in achieving their goals. The school is dedicated to a comprehensive reading plan and every nine weeks every grade has to conduct benchmark analyses. Data on comprehension and oral reading is analyzed weekly, biweekly and monthly.

The teachers advised that they had stopped using commercially produced materials and began using materials that were teacher developed. Teachers said they ensure the development of higher order thinking skills by probing for analytical thinking, inference, hands on activities, acting out and long and short responses. The school also initiated a program, which pairs a gifted child with a challenged student for tutoring and mentoring.

Hadley's teachers plan together as a total school, then by grade level and area of specialty. During this planning they establish benchmarks and objectives as a team. Progress reports are sent home every four weeks and teachers meet with parents every nine weeks to inform them of their child's progress and achievement of objectives. During this time period teachers have to demonstrate to the principal that they are making progress on achieving their goals for their class.

The principal's philosophy is to "teach every child as if they were gifted." Students are taught for mastery and application of information. The school staff firmly believes that good teaching eliminates behavior problems. Sunshine state standards and district standards related to curriculum and testing are shared with staff whenever there is a change so that they know what is going to be used to measure a schools performance.

Hadley has been a Comer school since 1994. The Comer and Hadley philosophy is that "everything we do is with the child in mind."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
School Demographic Information

Charles R. Hadley Elementary School is located in Miami, Florida. Hadley enrolls approximately 1,300 students in Kindergarten through 5th grades. The faculty consists of 81 members listed as instructional staff members, and 3 school-based administrators. The school serves a 75.2% free and reduced lunch population. 90.4 percent of the students are Hispanic, 7% are Caucasian, 0.8% is African American, 1% is Asian, 0.1% is Native American, and 0.8% is Multi-racial. Hadley has a 91.7% stability rate, which means that the majority of students that are enrolled in October are also enrolled in February.

Five new teachers were hired at Hadley for this school year. The average years of teaching experience are 15.2. Student absences are considerably lower than the district averages both in under 20 days and over 20 days absent.

The average class size is 25.9 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. 9.3% of the students have a mild, moderate, or severe disability, 4.7% of the students are gifted, and 44.9% of the students are classified as LEP. The school grade for 2001-2002 was a "B."

Ethnic/Racial %	
Hispanic	90.4
Caucasian	7.0
Asian	1.0
African American	0.8
Native American	0.1
Multi-racial	0.8

Goals
Goal 1:

Readiness to Start School: Evaluated 193 kindergarten students, with 169 meeting the State's expectations for readiness. This translates to 87.6% of Hadley's entering Kindergarteners meeting the state's criteria.

Goal 3:

Student Performance: In grade 4, 209 students were tested in FCAT writing assessment (graded on a 1.0 through 6.0 scale), with a school average of 3.3, the same as the district with the State average at 3.4. FCAT norm referenced test results in Reading and Math were reported by median national percentile ranks (NPR) and were higher than the district in all categories. Hadley was above the state in each grade level in mathematics but lower in reading.

Goal 4:

Learning Environment: Reports that 6.2% new teachers were hired for the 2001-02 school year compared to the district average of 12.9%. Teacher absences were reported at 6.5 days per year compared to the district average of 6.0. Administrator absences were lower than the state and district averages at 8.0 average days.

Goal 5:

School Safety and Environment: Reported 12 total incidences overall, four for breaking and entering, seven for vandalism and one for weapons possession.

Goal 6:

Teachers and Staff: Reported that 35.5 % of the staff held a masters degree or higher during the 2001-02 school year.