

Inwood Elementary School—Polk County

KEY THEMES:

- The discipline and subsequent conduct built into the 75 year old walls of the school. On-site research indicates that student conduct had a negative effect on programs and instruction and had become a contributing factor to failure in the years prior to the arrival of the current principal.
- The intuitiveness, experience, and steadfast approach of the principal who corralled the discipline concerns, then delegate them to a background position that no longer interferes with the educational process. Student and staff awareness has followed suit and now an air of what is deemed acceptable behavior has become the rule instead of the exception.
- The ability grouping that is ongoing.
- The employ of the Accelerated Reading Program at the kindergarten level.
- The alignment of curriculum. Relative to this last point, it is an important side bar that the curriculum alignment that initially took place came about in a forced team approach. That is, within the grade level, as well as both one level above and below, teachers were casually forced to sit with one another and hammer out the details of who will teach what, and how and where it will be taught. This mandated communication and accountability and now those highly sought after attributes continue to contribute to success.
- The remaining key element to Inwood's successful programming is a comparatively simple one that is easily stated, more difficult to document, but recognizable in the fruit it bares. It is the consistent belief that all children can learn. This doctrine is embraced by everyone at Inwood Elementary.
- It is understood that many students may and will require a varying approach to education and the degree of that variance is dictated by the needs of the student. This is documented with Inwood's approach to ability grouping referenced many times in this report.

BEST PRACTICES:

When pressed to explain the formal program that promotes success at Inwood, those inquiring will be advised by administration and staff that there is none. Instead, Inwood Elementary takes many ingredients and configures a highly flexible set of expectations then places the resources necessary for success beneath them. As an example, Inwood expressed the desire to have all kindergarten students be able to write their first name (the standard) AND their last name (the increased expectation) prior to reaching 1st grade. Initial skepticism was swept aside with the implementation of time and resources to reach the goal. Now, Inwood 1st graders write their complete name on the first day of class. Goal set—Goal achieved—Next goal.

While everything at Inwood is geared to the success of students, there is an emphasis on what can be done for the lowest 25%. It is through successes in this least achieving percentile that provides the impetus for expectations to rise, almost systemically, through the remaining 75%.

Whether targeting the lower performers, the median, or the gifted, several practices stand out at Inwood Elementary:

- High Expectations—High Standards
- Paraprofessionals
- Powerful dedicated leadership
- Aligned curriculum
- Vertical teaming
- School newsletter
- Low turnover—consistency of staff
- District foresight—anticipation of State mandates
- Embracing social culture
- Uniform Dress Code

LEADING CHANGE: CREATING SCHOOL CULTURE

Leadership

The principal maintains 11 years of experience as principal of Inwood Elementary School with 31 years of experience in education. The principal has a Master's degree and displays a positive and decisive demeanor. Leadership is without equal

and is accomplished largely by example. There are few, if any, tasks within the confines of Inwood that have not been done personally. Staff reported that the principal has mopped the floors of the school's kitchen when maintenance workers were ill and on the day of the Best Practices visit and was seen stooping to quickly pull weeds while on the way to monitor a classroom. A hands-on approach is encapsulated by personal administration of speed multiplication tables testing to 4th & 5th grade students.

The principal is thoroughly and clearly at the helm of Inwood Elementary School. Several years ago the principal brought conduct into alignment and aligned the curriculum. As principal, it is documented through local editorials and experienced staff that the principal recognized the need for proper behavior first, established it within the school, then rapidly moved on to the tasks for which the school, teachers, and students have been repeatedly recognized. During this principal's tenure, Inwood Elementary became the first, and at the time, *only* Title I (high poverty) school in the State with an "A" grade.

"The most important thing a teacher does is manage the classroom." This quote from Inwood's principal clearly demonstrates the value Inwood places on teachers as managers and role models. Through the staff's daily interaction with students and each other, the leadership qualities necessary for success at Inwood—extreme dedication, single mindedness geared to the benefit of students, teamwork, time management, adaptability and flexibility—are fostered, encouraged and nurtured.

Reciting specifics—all teachers find themselves in the capacity of leader as the grade chairperson is rotated within the grade level. Each teacher will also mentor another, generally several, in the course of his or her tenure at Inwood Elementary. This process insures that the values that have made the school a success are literally passed along to the benefit of upcoming students. New teachers learning from experienced ones.

"*Mastery Teaching*" is a literal program referenced by staff that assists in teacher development. On a different level is the "*School Improvement Plan Checklist*" that outlines in very specific form the functioning of the classroom through the eyes of the principal. This diminutive form serves as a reflection of the teacher's abilities to utilize resources, provoke learning, and maintain discipline. It is a useful tool in aiding a teacher in the recognition of what he or she is doing within the confines of the class that are in adherence with the overall "*School Improvement Plan*". It is a strong indicator to administration of the heretofore—referenced leadership qualities shown by the teacher being observed.

Personnel

The people that comprise Inwood Elementary are its strength. The process of procuring and retaining these quality individuals begins with the principal, who has 100% autonomy in the hiring process once an applicant has satisfied State and District requirements. Prospective teachers are advised clearly during the course of interviews with both the principal and existing teachers on their grade level what the expectations are at Inwood. They are high and largely self-imposed.

Apart from formal questioning in keeping with the existing probes, teachers remarked that they felt their work was a mission and they saw it as indeed, Missionary Work, in the purest definition of those words. This is a remarkable testament to the staff at all levels and captures in a way few statistics ever could, the reason behind Inwood's many successes.

On a more readily quantified scale, the turnover rate at Inwood Elementary is very low. The last open position saw seven finalists interviewed and there is an active team for the recruitment of minority applicants.

Paraprofessionals, non-certified individuals, who work in the classroom under the supervision of a certified teacher, are widely placed throughout Inwood. They are an invaluable resource to the school and a vital portion of its fabric of success. A common course of development winds its way from parent to volunteer to paraprofessional to teacher thus pronouncing the existing program an unadulterated success. Guidelines, requirements, and mentoring for the paraprofessional are well documented.

Students' needs are the top priority when it comes to staffing Inwood. Teacher hiring focuses on people who are committed team players and are comfortable making home visits. The neighborhood layout of the school promotes frequent home visitation by teachers and administration. This unique aspect of the school allows Inwood to reap the benefits incumbent with home visits, but also brings with it increased demands. Teachers and administration are so closely intertwined with the community that they are often brought into non-school related issues as mediators. It is not uncommon, given the parental and staff interviews, for parents to bring their child before the principal for reckoning relative to a discipline issue that stemmed solely from home. To the staff's credit, they field these concerns in stride and bring the positives into focus as they pertain to academia, but with this as a backdrop, it is vital to Inwood that the correct personnel are on board.

Once within the family of Inwood, there is a mentoring program in place for teachers. They are teamed within their grade level as a primary touchstone resource, but the vertical teaming that occurs exposes the newcomer to staff above and below

grade level and brings them rapidly, by example of many others, into the framework of what is expected from an Inwood teacher. Overseeing this process from behind a continuously open door is the readily accessible principal.

Setting

Inwood Elementary School was built in 1927 and has undergone numerous structural additions throughout its 75 year existence. The original 'one-room schoolhouse' charm and effect has not been lost however. This can be attributed, in part, to the foresight of the school boards, staff, and engineers over the decades. The primary hallway of the school maintains the same hardwood floor from the 1920's. A section of an original black chalkboard, an instructional tool hardly recognizable in today's high-tech classroom, is prominently displayed near the interior entrance to the school's offices. These effects contribute in a large way to the warm, friendly appeal and welcoming attitude of the school.

Hardly secondary to this permeating sentiment is the fact that this is one of only a few remaining true neighborhood schools in the State of Florida. Not a single child is bused to class at Inwood. Every attending child lives within a very tight radius of the building. This unique detail sets the stage for many interesting components that comprise the school and its programs.

The same geographic area that houses the school and its entire student body also produces a very high crime rate. Much, if not all of this, is kept at bay from the school grounds proper, but the heavy propensity for crime in the immediate area is a factor worthy of note.

Also of interest is the intense amount of vehicular traffic that runs adjacent to the school. In excess of 14,000 vehicles per day pass Inwood's primary corridor. When coupled with the previously referenced notation of Inwood being a neighborhood school with no buses, it is easy to see why one priority of the school and its administration concerns the recent purchase of adjacent property—not for construction, but for a road to be built in conjunction with Polk County DOT to modify the existing traffic pattern and reduce the risk of injury to the students.

Climate & Culture

Inwood Elementary is a clean, quiet, comfortable, safe haven for its students. Surrounded by this security, they are free to learn. The staff and management have recognized and instituted the safe haven first, and in the next breath provided the tools for each child to meet or exceed the academic standards in place. Outside of this comparatively easily documented objective, is the attitude of staff to assist the students in reaching beyond themselves to increased potential and loftier goals.

This installation of vision in the children's learning takes shape in many forms yet an extension is in place which consists of defined "*Strategies to Extend Student Thinking*". These are specific practices for teachers to employ that promote learning at a level beyond the readily replicated 'A + B = C' formulas for the Sciences and English, not just the obvious Mathematics comparison. It is this encouraging of higher order thinking that raises the bar of expectations at Inwood and in doing so, raises the standard by which manageable data such as the Sunshine State Standards and FCAT are applied.

Another element of Inwood's successful program is the implementation (District wide) of a firmly enforced dress code. The code mandates, among other criteria, that all shirts are tucked in and a belt is worn as required. On the grander scale, the dress code alleviates the concerns many students have regarding their dress—inappropriate or extravagant, poorly fashioned or indicative of a low-income household, removing an onus, self-perceived or otherwise, from their shoulders. If a child's family is unable to meet the clothing standard, the local Lutheran Brotherhood steps in and obtains the necessary garments—another example of community involvement.

Of all the fine practices in place at Inwood Elementary there remains a strong singular candidate for the foundation of success. It is discipline. Though the antithesis of corporal, it remains extremely strong, unwaveringly consistent, and procedurally strict. It is encapsulated by "*The Good Choice Room Program*".

The Good Choice Room is essentially a time-out room. It is manned by a paraprofessional who assists the child with developing an actual written plan for making a "Good Choice" when next confronted with the same circumstance that landed him or her in the program in the first instance. These plans are comprised of hard copy "*Thinking Maps*", which provide a flow chart for social skills, good and bad choices, and plans for future action. In addition, a letter is sent home with the student, along with his or her plan for making Good Choices. The letter clearly outlines what event(s) led to the placing of the child in the Good Choice Program and encourages the parent to discuss the student's plan of action/reaction in the future. A parental signature is required on all the hard copy documentation along with signatures of the student and teacher.

Teachers and administration acknowledge that minus the ability to control behavior, classroom management, already identified as paramount to success, becomes an issue. At Inwood, discipline is a focal point though intentionally low keyed and relegated to a plateau all its own.

Another very specific ingredient of this program is the “*Discipline Referral Form*” utilized by teachers. A full one-half of the form is devoted to a section titled, “What was happening 10-15 minutes prior to the incident?”. With this information forming a database of sorts, administration, teachers, and Good Choice Room personnel are able to track and indeed predict when an action will escalate into unacceptable behavior. Thus armed, teachers are able to recognize and diffuse most situations BEFORE they become a distraction to learning.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Resources

There are several small elements to the resources component that impact Inwood in addition to the far larger and encompassing District allocation. The principal, staff, and even parents have a hand in certain aspects of the budgetary process in the form of the “*School Advisory Council*” (SAC) and additional resources gleaned from business partners within the community. The school also allocates the financial reward received as a result of being classified as an “A” school (FCAT monies).

Professional Development & Improvement are needs addressed within a conduit of teacher to principal to District. Though based on needs and requests, they are supported by relevant, documented scoring. As an example, when a need was recognized given a limitation or area of improvement concerning a mathematics section of learning, the staff acknowledged the opportunity gap and followed through by addressing the issue with a well-researched budgetary item. The “*Teacher Surveys*” couple with student assessment data to contribute greatly to this effort.

Resources within the existing framework are also utilized for “*Student Incentive Programs*” that encourage and acknowledge accomplishments. These can take the form of simple stickers or books to an orchestrated Breakfast for Recognition Program.

Technology needs are established and documented in reference to the budgetary process. A “*Five Year Technology Plan*” exists—updated yearly, commensurate with rapid advances in the field. The stratagem affords direction and stability in addition to outlining specific goals for the District and its schools. Inwood, as an example, currently has at its disposal a bank of over 30 computers and also maintains a complete television production studio (staffed completely by elementary age students) that airs programs each morning.

Perhaps most apparent in the Polk County District is its extremely active “*Grants Procurement Program*”. This small contingency of operatives pursues grant money from a variety of sources and has many documented successes since its inception under the superintendent’s watch. The monies obtained are scattered across far-flung programs within the District and relieve the financial burden on taxpayers while providing additional resources unattainable in the past. It is a credit to the Superintendent’s office and the Board of Education that they developed and maintain this program.

Information Management

For the benefit of all associated with Inwood Elementary, the school has adopted “*Grade Pro*” and “*SAPP*” as the tools in place to access and control data. Grade Pro seems especially conducive to demonstrating progress of students. All associated school staff has access to the information contained in these in-house systems—this includes the school’s nurse, psychologist, etc. The data contained is used as a measurement tool for students, but beyond that, Inwood demonstrates its full capability by sifting through the data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses within the relative instructional programs and, if warranted, teachers themselves.

Associated with these instruments is the broader “*School Improvement Plan*”. The plan itself is inclusive of Inwood’s “*Mission Statement*”, which outlines that, “the school’s primary purpose is to provide every student with the opportunity to achieve the skills offered at his or her grade level.” Access to the plan is unlimited and copies are available in the school’s office for ready reference, but beyond accessibility is the direct tie back to the information systems in place. From a review of current and past data, strategic criteria for success began to emerge. From this sprang the “*School Improvement Plan*” - bolstered by the powerful singular “*Mission Statement*”.

COMMUNICATING CHANGE: PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK

Instruction

At the heart of Inwood’s many instructional capabilities is an aligned curriculum. The school, and Polk County in general, had provided themselves a substantial head start toward this end by beginning to align curriculum across grade levels prior to the institution of the Sunshine State Standards. When FCAT blanketed the State, Inwood was prepared. Vertical teaming

played a vital role in this early process and continues to do so. Regular meetings, conducted at various school levels, insure compliance and enhance communication as well as present needs and areas of opportunity for growth and modification.

An indicator of progressive interaction and follow up with student learning is the daily “*Math Maintenance*” that tests (informally) students in order to insure past skills are kept fresh and honed over an extended period. Simplistic rewards can follow this testing and countless other interactions in the school. “*Inwood Bucks*” are an in-house play money system that affords children the opportunity to earn ‘money’ to be utilized later as a cohesive class to ‘buy’ pizza parties, etc. from the administration.

Deeply rooted in the instructional practices of Inwood is the implementation and recognition of Bloom's Taxonomy. This classic model provides still another framework on which to flesh out lesson plans and practical instruction. Its employ also insures higher order thinking, an integral part of an Inwood education.

On the County level is the “*District Strategic Plan*”. It very specifically outlines 8 well-developed areas, which support the District's objectives. A full 5 of the main points have as their focus classroom instruction. This dedication and direction on the part of the District is a key element of the success of Inwood's student body. Continued assurance that Inwood is moving toward the District's Plan comes from data collected from such testing as FCAT, but also from sources such as “*Parent and Teacher Surveys*”.

Inwood specifically is not shy about being a recognized core knowledge environment. Though curriculum is well aligned at all levels, as demonstrated within the “*School Improvement Plan*” and individual “*Classroom Management Plans*”, there is a realization concerning the FCAT and Sunshine State Standards. “What we teach is what we test,” is a theme reiterated throughout the school and conversely, “What we test is what we teach.” This notion provides for extreme focus.

Communication

An innocent yet powerful daily reminder of an outcropping of Inwood's instructional practices is the daily goals written on the boards in the front of each classroom, each morning. Simply stated, direct instructional guidance and communication that advises the students, and monitoring administration, exactly what the class will learn that session.

Communication in the broader sense is manifested in the timely meetings and conferences that occur among and between grade level instructors. As noted previously, this active communication insures continuity and provides open doors to minor issues before they can mature into major difficulties. Along this same line, yet broader still, are the visits to Inwood from the middle schools it feeds. Once again, this proactive approach affords the opportunity to both acknowledge and prepare curriculum and students for what is expected at the next level.

“*Parent and Teacher Surveys*” are major factors in the communicative success of Inwood Elementary. These ongoing assessments couple with existing documents such as the “*Parent/Student Handbook*” and “*Elementary Code of Student Conduct*” to inform all concerns as to the expectations associated with attending Inwood. More current reflective information is ushered along in the school's mini-newspaper/flyer, published bi-monthly—“*Smoke Signals*”.

Standards for relating academic achievement (i.e. the 9 week report cards and 4 week interim reports) are in place as expected, but the high level of parental interaction via PTA, SAC, home visitation, and the pervasive attitude of being a neighborhood school, historically precludes any communication breakdowns regarding student development and advancement.

Decision Making

At the District level there exists a “*Strategic Plan*” which outlines in very specific detail the parameters to and from which decisions are made. The existence of this document serves as the backdrop for all that follows—on down and inclusive of Inwood's own “*School Development Plan*” and further, into existing “*Classroom Management Plans*”. This purposeful one-thought guidance system directs the decision making process from top to bottom and extends its arms in every direction. In providing this framework it insures the cohesiveness and continuity necessary for success.

It is imperative to note that each level of strategic plan referenced above is the result of input from a very wide range of sources. Once again, by utilizing expertise from all levels, all sides and all fronts, Polk and its schools set themselves up for success by maximizing their resources and personnel.

Within Inwood Elementary proper, decision making processes are marked by dual sided dialogue. Administration and staff confer on available programs for instance, reach a democratic consensus, and move on the project before them with the referenced plans as the constant guidelines. The interaction touches many areas including communication and

accountability as all members of the Inwood family have input and thus, a stake in the program's success or failure. This expands to the District level when one references the feeder school visits.

Perhaps one of the more easily and readily recognizable facets of the decision making processes comes in the form of the flexible grouping that is ongoing at Inwood. Students are seamlessly moved from one level of ability to another as the needs and requirements of the child dictate. These moves are based on data and input from many sources and while instructional by nature, the overlapping communication and decisions made are indicative of the processes in place at Inwood.

Parent & Community Involvement

The epitome of resource utilization is the parental involvement displayed at Inwood. To avoid redundancies, the reader is advised to review that section referenced under Resources and Instructional and the employ of paraprofessionals.

In addition to the paraprofessional program, there is an active PTA and SAC (also previously referenced). Inwood's PTA produces their own in house "*PTA Brochure*", which outlines the objectives of the PTA and lists all upcoming events and fundraisers. Both PTA and SAC receive wide support from the community, still another reflection of the advantages of being a true neighborhood school.

Community involvement is clearly demonstrated in the form of donations as the most recognizable contributions, but well beyond the financial aspect is perhaps an even greater a wealth of expertise and commitment. Two independent banking institutions, the Polk County Sheriff's Department, and the State Farm Insurance Group all provide mentors one day a week. Kash-n-Karry (a local grocery store chain) displays pictures of Inwood Student Good Citizens on the walls of their stores. The local Boys and Girls Clubs provide after school tutoring in anticipation of FCAT Testing.

The ongoing "*Parent Survey*" is well received and responded to, once again, consistent with the community interest and involvement in the school, its programs, and its students. There is a "*Parent-Student-Teacher Contract*" (signed by a full 97% of parents) that is dated and signed by each of the listed parties and conveys the involvement necessary and required from each for success of the learner.

EVALUATING CHANGE: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION

Accountability

As with most successful programs of any size, scope, and nature, accountability is painted across Inwood Elementary with a broad brush. There are varying measures of liability from student thru teacher thru principal and on to the District level. Each segment of the instructional machine has its own measure of responsibility to the both the "*Strategic Plan*" of the District, the "*School Improvement Plan*" and the ultimate success of the student. At the District level are the budgetary processes which provide for research based assessment tools to be implemented by operating staff. District, school, and classroom evaluation is an ongoing process and the personnel involved are quick to recognize those tools that work for Inwood and those that do not. It is this follow up, this accountability for success that assures the students of receiving the most current and appropriate programming.

Taking this a step further is Inwood's approach to ability grouping. Beyond the obvious well documented successes inherent with such a tact, is Inwood's dedication to being flexible, and highly so, within the framework of the grouping. This, again, assures each child of being in the most correct posture to gain fully from the educational experience. Coupled with this grouping approach is the staff's preparedness for the incoming student body for any given year. Prior testing eliminates guesswork and affords the current year's instruction staff a 'picture' of the student's strengths and weaknesses and permits a tailored ability program to be in place waiting for the child on the first day of school.

"*Handbooks for Staff*" and both "*Parent & Teacher Surveys*" afford valuable information that precludes second guessing as to accountability and what is or is not expected of the corresponding individual. Parents also sign a "*Code of Conduct*" that outlines an expectant behavior model. Moving hand-in-hand with these hard copies are parental tours, conferences, and workshops, which produce a remarkable 79% parental turnout. The information shared at these meetings support and reiterates the requirements of each segment of the learning community from student and parent, to teacher and principal.

Expectations are high at Inwood Elementary, and they are not gilded. The requirements for success are set out for all to see and the various individuals within the school's internal and external community are expected to meet them. If they are not, each hand in the process is addressed as to his or her shortcoming. However, on the upside, as is more often the case with Inwood, successes are embraced and rewarded from top to bottom within the educational hierarchy.

The ongoing assessment and evaluation of assorted programs—such as, DART, Fox In the Box, the Accelerated Reading Program, etc., occur beyond the accepted FCAT preparation and testing and accordance with the Sunshine State Standards. As a strong compliment to these and other existing programs, some externally produced and others internally manufactured, is the application of Bloom’s Taxonomy to aid in the measurement of higher order thinking. This historical foundational program is extremely evident in many classrooms visited.

A seemingly lesser note referencing accountability, but vital in its simple nature, is the fact that the staff member who observes an infraction of behavior rules and/or procedure is responsible for its immediate remedy. This definitive approach to behavior management and accountability (*Good Choice Room* and the *Discipline Referral Form*) serves the school and the students well.

Strict accountability reaches its zenith with the inner and intra teaming processes that are in place across grade levels and curriculum. Once again, this insures a curriculum aligned to consistent levels of expectations. No Surprises—High Expectations: By words for students and staff alike at Inwood Elementary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

School Demographics

Inwood Elementary School is located in Polk County School District - a county that boasts a population of 500,000 of which nearly 82,000 were enrolled in the county’s public schools for the year 2001-2002. The Polk County School District is the 8th largest in Florida and the 37th largest nationwide. The District is by far the largest employer in the county with >10,000 employees.

Within the Polk County School District there are 66 elementary schools, 18 middle/junior high schools, and 13 senior high schools. In addition, there are 52 special centers—which are made up of charter schools, vocational/technical centers, adult schools, and alternative services. Inwood Elementary figures demonstrate a total enrollment for the 2001-2002 period of 642, with an October enrollment of 501. Ethnic/racial breakdowns for all students/all year are as follows: Caucasian, 44.2%; African American, 39.7%; Hispanic, 12.3%; Asian, 1.6%; Multi-racial, 2.2%.

Ethnic/Racial %	
Caucasian	44.2
African American	39.7
Hispanic	12.3
Asian	1.6
Multi-racial	2.2

Average class size K-5 is 22.8. Students on free/reduced lunch are reported at 79.2%. The gifted student rate is 4.2% and those with disabilities are reported at 11.8%. Percentages of in and out of school suspensions are 1.4% and 3.2% respectively. Student population stability percentages contend that 92% of students enrolled district-wide in October remained enrolled the following February. For Inwood, this figures runs slightly less at 87.8% over the same period.

Vital statistics drawn from the FDOE School Advisory Council Report include:

Goals

Goal 1:

Readiness to Start School: 95 kindergarten students were evaluated and 86 met the State's expectation for readiness. The percentage translates to 90.5%—6.7 percentage points higher than the District average and 6.5 percentage points higher than the State average.

Goal 3:

Student Performance: Reading & Mathematics scores from Grades 3 thru 5 exceeded both the District and State averages with the lone exception of *Reading Grade 5* which fell short by a nominal 3 and 9 points respectively.

Relative to FCAT NRT, similar results are noted. Mathematics and Reading scores for Grades 3 thru 5 again exceeded both the District and State percentile rankings with the sole exception of *Reading Grade 5*.

Based solely on school accountability grading, Inwood Elementary scored a combined 446 points on the FCAT Reading, Math, and Writing High Standards & Gains portions of the test, exceeding the State mandate of 410 points required for classification as an 'A' school.

There are 2 administrators and 31 instructors along with 26 individuals classified as support staff (the comparatively high number of 'support staff' is inflated by 15 individuals whose proper classification would fall under 'paraprofessionals' and whose job descriptions more closely parallel 'instructors'). The Average years of teacher experience is slated at 10.4. Five new teachers were hired for the 2001-2002 school year, translating to 16.1% new instructional staff. Teachers with advanced degrees comprise 10.3% of the operating staff. Teacher and Administrator sick leave absences are markedly below the State average of 5.3 and 3.8 days respectively.