

Pine View Middle/High School—Sarasota County

KEY THEMES:

- The Florida School, “Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful and healthy lifelong decisions.”
- Grades 2 through 12—Eleven years of consistency of staff, protocol, & priorities
- Quality teachers—Entrusted & empowered by administration
- Staff unity
- Less distance between teachers & students
- 100% Gifted Certified Teachers
- Staff, parent, community partnership
- Active Pine View Association—raising funds to equal \$300,000

BEST PRACTICES:

- Teachers treated as professionals
- Shared, informed decision making
- Powerful dedicated parent & community Association
- Aligned curriculum
- Vertical teaming & horizontal coordination
- School newsletter
- Low turnover—consistency of staff
- Embracing social culture
- Open minded, creative teachers
- Cutting edge Professional Development
- Teaching beyond the textbook
- Students’ needs—1st priority
- Student Agenda Book
- Exemplary fiscal management
- Laboratory Instruction across disciplines
- Focus on academics, no formal athletics

LEADING CHANGE: CREATING SCHOOL CULTURE

Leadership

The acting principal has been the principal of Pine View High for 15 years and has 28+ years of experience in the field of education while possessing a B.A., M.S. and Specialist Degree. The principal is described as outgoing, friendly, exuberant in regards to the standard of education set at Pine View, and masterfully adapt in budgetary matters. The managerial style is one of profound shared decision-making—best demonstrated by the fact that active counsel is sought from 13 distinct groups ranging from the Student Senate to an extremely active parent and community company known as the Pine View Association.

Pine View’s success has multiple facets. A primary element rests with the students themselves. Even at early ages, these gifted children embrace education and academics to such a degree that they become leaders themselves. This process is thoroughly encouraged by teachers who clearly recognize the impact this has on their classroom.

The teachers’ response, as brought out in prior sections, is to actively search for new and innovative additions to the academic program. Each elective chosen for inclusion in the Pine View Course Description Guide brings with it another perspective and opportunity for Pine View students to shine.

Leadership is further documented by the School Improvement Plan, which provides everyone involved with a framework of clear, concise objectives. Needs are recognized and laid out for all to acknowledge and contribute to—in essence, permitting each individual to be a leader in a given area and bringing all of this leadership together toward a common goal.

Beyond the local level however, is the District level of leadership. The District Strategic Plan is what it should be—a building block and guide for the School Improvement Plan, student and classroom management, resources, and professional development.

Personnel

As referenced, the turnover rate for Pine View High teachers is <2% annually. This affords every component that comprises Pine View—District, school, students, and parents, a consistency that is without equal. This consistency becomes an active force behind many other successes that are more readily and completely documented. Indeed, the consistency of staff may be the single most, though misleadingly minimal, statistic inherent behind Pine View's success.

This notion is epitomized by the principal. Having been at the school for 15+ years, this principal is the only principal many of the students and staff have ever known. This is enhanced by the fact that the Pine View School, beyond the scope of this report, is a Grade 2 through Grade 12 school. As such, the administration and staff very literally see little children grow into young adults all in the same nurturing confines of a single program.

An interesting twist is that the principal and assistant principal maintain the lunch and bus duties at Pine View as opposed to teachers. This unorthodox approach provides for several significant considerations. Primarily, it frees teachers up to teach, or at the minimum, prepare to teach. This added responsibility undertaken by the administration also serves to increase their visibility to both staff and students.

Climate & Culture

The ambient climate of Pine View High is one of academic prowess. There are no athletic programs in the sense of what is viewed as such at mainstream public schools. As a result, the focus is academics. That is not to say that extracurricular activities do not occur at Pine View. The contrary is more the case as countless pre, during, and after school programs exist. Intramural sports make up a portion of these activities and the physical education segment is far from neglected, but it is clear that students are enrolled at Pine View for academic reasons.

Climate and culture are both gauged by Student Survey. Much like the application of data to the curriculum, the results of these surveys are tabulated and from them are drawn adjustments and direction.

A review of the School Improvement Plan demonstrates that it provides the structure necessary to meet the unique challenges incumbent on teaching gifted students. These guidelines also reveal several reflections on the culture of Pine View and its importance to the well being of the student body and staff. These are indicated in the existence of the *FORUM Program*, which encapsulates an age-based delivery of lectures and presentations centered on character development. A Diversity Council is also in place at Pine View and provides need assessment and suggested deliveries.

It is abundantly clear based documentation and on the pervasive attitude of the staff, that the goal of Pine View High School is to move young men and women from being outstanding academics to being outstanding citizens.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

Resources

At all levels there was an apparent sense that the staff had whatever resources they believed necessary to complete the task of educating their students. Apart from the District's budget, the school directly benefits from the resources generated by the Pine View Association, which contributed \$300,000 in the form of local grants and expenditures, including the purchasing of the Student Agenda Books.

Additional grant money is petitioned for by individual teachers or departments and accounts for an increasingly significant amount of specifically earmarked funding.

An extensive portion of the local budget is allocated for the Professional Development Plan. The specific tendency of the District, as well as Pine View's administration, is that empowerment of staff through professional enhancement is paramount to individual student success.

A final source of funding, and a testament in and of itself, is the fact that in the history of being awarded A+ money on the heels of FCAT testing, each dollar is and has been summarily given over to the school by the entire operating staff.

Information Management

This heading encompasses a number of powerful elements and mediums. There is the somewhat standardized Individual Education Plan in place for students, but this provides merely a framework. On a grander scale is EQUIP—Sarasota’s Research, Assessment & Evaluation Program. Within the program is the Educational Quality Improvement Profile of the District. EQUIP clearly documents benchmarks as it breaks down a wide variety of demographics and their academic quotient improvements or declines. The District and Pine View utilize the program to assess needs and make the appropriate adjustments.

At the high school level, there also exists extensive Advance Placement (AP) Testing and the associated management thereof. Working with this is Abacus—a tracking system that demonstrates student mastery of specific skills.

COMMUNICATING CHANGE: PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK

Professional Development

Professional development, incorporated by the District, is extensive and provides for a myriad of summer workshops as well as providing financial backing for members of staff seeking initial or higher level certification. These workshops and certifications of staff allow for multiple interpretations on any given subject area channeled within various departments. In addition, a complete Faculty Handbook provides instant guidelines, which are further supported by a solid mentoring program within grade levels and/or departments.

Instruction

Teachers recognize the unique challenges inherent in instructing gifted students and respond by proactively seeking out cutting edge approaches to professional development and training. This is supported and encouraged at every level of the organization. The staff reports that their gifted charges “learn the first time”. As a result, it is incumbent on each and every member of the staff to be so well versed in their given discipline that they are equipped to provide challenge after challenge in order to maintain and foster educational growth.

One example of this approach manifests itself in the increased emphasis on laboratory instruction across disciplines. This articulation promotes an increase in critical thinking and the extrapolation of information to a much wider scope—that is, a higher level application and hence, higher-order thinking.

Classroom curriculum is aligned across the board to insure continuity for administration, staff, and students alike, but as is the custom at Pine View, what would be viewed as outstanding alignment at another school is here the standard, and articulation across grades and departments has become the order.

There is also an increased emphasis on organizational skill development—as much as 5% of the course grade. This encourages and fosters practical notions such as preparation and timeliness—two vital elements a student must be able to demonstrate in the workplace.

It was further noted that re-teaching is employed with some regularity at Pine View High School. That is, a senior student, once exposed to a procedure, process etc., will be instructed to re-teach what they have learned to students in lower grade levels.

Working alongside this process is the Advance Placement programs, which stress thinking, problem solving, and concepts. The bulk of testing at this level is essay and results in cross-disciplinary studies.—ie: an essay test in an AP Science will, by necessity, incorporate English, grammar, writing skills, and organizational thought.

Communication

Pine View, in conjunction with the Pine View Association (PVA), publishes a newsletter, “*Pine Views*”, which outlines upcoming events at the school, messages from the principal and the PVA, Guidance Department news, student information, and specifically references those students and staff deserving of recognition for outstanding achievement.

Moving more toward paperless communication, Pine View High School has an extensive network in place for electronic communication including their school/district television system, email, and website. Each fills a different niche and presents a very complete information package to all concerned.

It is of paramount importance that the communication between staff and administration be recognized herein, although it encompasses elements of other sections of this report. Relative to the teachers and administration there is a very active communication regimen in place. Department chairs and teams have ready access to administration concerning a very broad gamut of issues and concerns. The staff has long recognized that proactive communication via open verbal channels is vital in a program as acute as Pine View. This is especially true of teacher-to-teacher contact. Strong, vibrant, vertical and horizontal teaming exists between and among all grade levels and departments. This helps insure consistency of curriculum and heightens awareness as to what does and does not work for Pine View students.

There exists a powerful data driven, needs based hierarchy that culminates in dedicated, hard, factual research and ultimately, shared knowledge among staff.

Decision Making

Pine View, not unlike most schools within the State, maintains a School Advisory Committee (SAC), however, the uniqueness of Pine View is clearly demonstrated in the existence of the Pine View Association (PVA). This group of parents, community leaders, and business partners work with staff in the decision making processes at assorted levels in addition to their fund raising and disbursement. As referenced, they are documented within budgetary matters, but the PVA extends itself well into the School Improvement Plan.

Curriculum formation may begin at the District level, but it is abundantly evident that the District allows for site-based management—more so in Pine View's circumstance than others. The gifted nature of the students along with active approach to education by the staff permits, and fairly demands, the use of alternative methodologies.

As has been noted earlier, the principal receives input from a great many sources. This particular element reaches its zenith with the Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT). The SDMT is comprised of administration, students, teachers, staff, and parents. Its varied makeup affords the SDMT the luxury of countless perspectives on issues confronting Pine View. On the heels of these perspectives come viable approaches, which the principal utilizes to the fullest extent.

Parent & Community Involvement

This criterion contains an element that is tremendously developed. The Pine View Association (PVA) is the organizational pinnacle of a PTA. The incorporated group serves as a conduit for both informational and financial resources for Pine View School. The parental and civic involvement is without equal. Apart from their own fund raising efforts (300K in 2002), the PVA was the driving force behind a local tax referendum to maintain the high level of services provided by public education. They have their own website to promote and inform parents, students, and the community at large. One of their many focuses is the annual purchase of the Student Agenda Books for each and every young person enrolled. Beyond and behind this well-oiled machine is a multitude of volunteer hours contributed to the school by parents, concerned citizens, business leaders, etc.

Business partnerships abound at Pine View. Documentation is plentiful as well, as they are recognized in the school's newsletter and through the PVA. These acknowledgments culminate in the patronizing of the businesses, which then develop into a cyclic effect from which both the school and the business partner benefit.

EVALUATING CHANGE: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION

Accountability

The breadth of accountability at Pine View is wide. It is manifested in a student body that is present by choice not mandate. The vast percentage of these students recognize that the capacity to succeed lies within themselves. That is, they are self-motivated and produce performance results based on their own vested interests. It is this internal drive and self-accountability that provides the foundation for Pine View's success. The school's stock material is simply some of the highest caliber young people in the State. A tangible form of this accountability is found in the Student Agenda Book, which serves as a guide to the student's day and promotes time management development.

Students are their own advocates at Pine View High School. They are accountable for their own upcoming semester schedules and spend ample time pouring over the 4 Year Educational Plan & College Admission Profile to insure they have the balance of required courses and electives necessary for graduation in the first instance, but also in preparation for their chosen collegiate field.

It is on this firm foundation that Pine View’s staff finds its own measure of accountability. Due to the unique makeup of the student body, teachers are pressed into a high level of performance. Pine View’s pursuit of excellence begins where many other schools may end. Therefore, the staff is keenly aware, through their daily interchanges with their students and review of data that their delivery form and information must be in keeping with the highest standards. This is made evident in the School Improvement Plan which outlines clearly that the educational requirements of the students are the first priority.

At the County level one need only review the District Strategic Plan, which promotes unequivocally the Standards of Excellence expected from both student and staff alike. It is prefaced by Sarasota’s by-words, *“Every child, every day, whatever it takes.”*

With this simple sentiment as a backdrop, the District’s intention is clearly identified and within the pages of the Strategic Plan is the slogan in concrete form—outlining the partnership stratagem that measure both need and success.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

School Demographics

Pine View High School is located in Sarasota County School District—a county that boasts a population of 339,625 of which 53,725 were enrolled within the county’s public schools for the year 2001-2002. Within the District there are 19 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 K-8, 5 high schools, and 2 schools for the gifted. In addition, there are 12 additional special centers—which are made up, in part, of charter schools, alternative programs, an Adult & Community Education Center and the Sarasota County Technical Institute. Pine View High School’s figures demonstrate a total enrollment for the 2001-2002 of 510, with an October enrollment of 501. Ethnic/racial/gender breakdowns are as follows:

Ethnic/Racial	Female	Male	%
Caucasian	214	239	88.8
African American	2	0	0.4
Hispanic	5	8	2.5
Asian	16	24	7.8
Multi-racial	2	0	0.4
Female	239		46.9
Male		271	53.1

Average class size is 24.3. Students with disabilities and students classified as LEP are both reported at 0%. School suspensions are negligible at 1.2%. Student population stability is high at 98.4%—referencing students enrolled in October remaining enrolled the following February.

Pine View is unique in that, though it is a public school, it is devoted entirely to gifted students. Entrance requirements are lofty. Pre-requisites include a standardized IQ test score of 130. A battery of additional test results and individualized criteria complete the entrance procedure. Pine View High School comprises the culmination of a gifted program that runs from grades 2 thru 12—all under one figurative and literal roof.

Vital statistics of note drawn from the FDOE School Advisory Council Report—

Goals

Goal 3:

Student Performance: A blanket statement can be pronounced wherein Pine View High routinely and without exception exceeds both its District's and State's averages. An example of such is carried forth within the results of the FCAT Mathematics Scores for Grade 9 wherein Pine View eclipsed the State average by 98 points—scoring 384 and thoroughly entrenching this group in the Level 5 Achievement Score Range. Overall, Reading & Mathematics scores from Grades 9 and 10 exceeded the State average by the mean score of 84.25 points. Relative to NRT, similar results are noted. Mathematics and Reading scores combined for Grades 9 and 10 produced a mean average of 37.75 percentage points above the State average.

Based solely on school accountability grading, Pine View High School scored a combined 537 points on the FCAT Reading, Math, and Writing portions of the test, handily exceeding the State mandate of 410 points required for classification as an 'A' school.

Additional data indicates a mean SAT score of 1321 for 116 students tested (100% of 12th graders tested). This is in comparison to the State average score of 991 (43.2% tested).

Average years of teacher experience runs above the State average at 16.2 with several teachers in excess of 20 years experience. Turnover is extremely low, <2% annually. Teachers with advanced degrees comprise an extremely high 65.7% of the operating staff. Teacher and Administrator leave absences are well below the State average in every reporting category.

Pine View Middle School is located in Sarasota County School District. Pine View's figures demonstrate a total enrollment for the 2001-2002 period of 593, with an October enrollment of 575. Ethnic/racial/gender breakdowns are as follows:

Ethnic/Racial	Female	Male	%
Caucasian	298	213	88.9
African American	6	1	1.2
Hispanic	15	8	4.0
Asian	14	10	4.2
Native American	0	1	0.2
Multi-racial	6	3	1.6
Female	339		59.0
Male		236	41.0

Average class size is 24.3. The student population on free/reduced lunch are reported at a very modest 7%, LEP students are .2%, and students with disabilities 0%. Percentage of out of school suspensions are negligible at 2.1%. Student population stability is high at 98.6%—referencing students enrolled in October remaining enrolled the following February.

Pine View is unique in that, though it is a public school, it is devoted entirely to gifted students. Entrance requirements are lofty. Pre-requisites include a standardized IQ test score of 130. A battery of additional test results and individualized criteria complete the entrance procedure. Pine View Middle School comprises the mid-link in a gifted program that runs from grades 2 thru 12—all under one figurative and literal roof.

Vital statistics of note drawn from the FDOE School Advisory Council Report—

Goals

Goal 3:

Student Performance: A blanket statement can be pronounced wherein Pine View Middle routinely and without exception exceeds both its District's and State's averages. An example of such is carried forth within the results of the FCAT Mathematics Scores for Grade 7 wherein Pine View eclipsed the State average by 94 points—scoring 386 and thoroughly entrenching this group in the Level 5 Achievement Score Range. Overall, Reading & Mathematics scores from Grades 6 thru 8 exceeded the State average by the mean score of 86.5 points. Relative to NRT, similar results are noted. Mathematics and Reading scores combined for Grades 6 thru 8 produced a mean average of 34.5 percentage points above the State average.

Based solely on school accountability grading, Pine View scored a combined 537 points on the FCAT Reading, Math, and Writing portions of the test, handily exceeding the State mandate of 410 points required for classification as an 'A' school.

Average years of teacher experience runs above the State average at 16.2 with several teachers in excess of 20 years experience. Turnover is extremely low, <2% annually. Teachers with advanced degrees comprise an extremely high 65.7% of the operating staff. Teacher and Administrator leave absences are well below the State average in every reporting category.