

Pompano Beach High School

KEY THEMES:

- Facilitative, consensus-building style of principal that includes a hands-on, accessible approach
- Extensive staff development
- All-magnet school focusing on International Affairs with Informational Technology and International Business
- Four-day week with 110-minute instructional blocks
- Methods for instruction that include hands-on learning, questioning based on Bloom's taxonomy, and technology usage
- "Instructional Focus" of ten-minutes daily in each instructional block on effective strategies in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics
- "Classroom Broward", a Friday school that provides both remedial and elective courses
- Collegiality as evidenced by successful working together and sharing of best practices by staff members
- School technology support that includes four computer labs, thirty computers in media center, eighteen computers in language lab, two to four computers in every classroom plus school-provided laptop computers and Palm handhelds for teachers
- Only school in Broward County that offers Cisco, Microsoft and Oracle certification
- High school-wide expectations of excellence and student achievement

BEST PRACTICES:

- Eight Step Process
 - Focusing instruction on student data and benchmark assessment to increase academic achievement and to have students master Sunshine State Standards
- Magnet Requirements for Diploma
 - 4 English, 4 Math, 4 Science, 4 Social Studies, 3 Computer, 3 Foreign Languages
- Daily Instructional Focus Strategies
 - Bimonthly assessment of benchmarks
 - FCAT Explorer
- Tornado Time Out
 - Sustained Silent Reading Program
 - 20 minutes per day
 - Writing component ensures comprehension
- Multiple Intelligences Theory Training
 - Yearly professional development for teachers
 - Strategies to recognize student strengths and needs
- Vertical Teaming
 - Planning across grade level
 - Seamless programs and curriculum
- Global Studies
 - Required ninth grade unit
 - Goal setting, career exploration and other life skills incorporated
- Senior Project
 - twelfth grade requirement
 - Demonstration of mastery
- Tutoring for Remediation
 - Peer tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Teacher tutoring on Fridays
 - SAT preparation for eleventh and twelfth graders
- PSAT preparation for ninth and tenth graders

LEADING CHANGE: CREATING SCHOOL CULTURE

Leadership

The current principal has been at the school for 4.5 years with 23 years experience as a principal at all three levels: elementary, middle and high school—with 32 years of experience in the field of education.

The principal is a very visible and accessible leader on this campus. One of the teachers interviewed indicated that she could go to the principal with any problem no matter how small and there was always time to meet with her. The consensus is that the principal operates with an open door policy and is a good listener. A parent described the principal as one who is continually seeking what is best for kids; and advocates that “failure is not an option” and, therefore, no child should be left behind.

Delegation of authority is evident as department heads and assistant principals are not only involved in curriculum offerings and selection of materials but also in the hiring practices of the school.

The principal is an advocate of professional development and sees this as a means of improving teaching and learning on the campus. As an example, the entire staff is provided with Palm Pilots and laptop computers and professional development activities necessary to make the faculty comfortable using this technology.

The principal strongly emphasized that their style is to rely on the entire staff as leaders. Communicating what is expected of them in regards to student learning and student safety but then back off and let them do their job. The principal believes their role is to be a leader of leaders; but, if problems arise in the areas of student learning and safety, respond personally.

Personnel

Astute and knowledgeable about budgeting and with input from staff members, the principal has been able to hire needed personnel to work with the students and staff at the school. The high morale and low absentee rate for both teachers and administrators indicate the school is a desirable place to work. Staff development is a priority and money is available to hire temporary duty personnel. According to teachers, professional development trainings that have made the most difference are diversity training, technology training of all types, and workshops that have developed the “instructional focus” component of the curriculum.

Due to the highly specialized focus of this school the principal is constantly alert to hiring qualified personnel to serve the students. The magnet coordinator and guidance department are critical to recruitment and to working with students in the curriculum that focuses on college preparatory courses.

All groups interviewed agreed that the single most critical element needed to be successful at Pompano Beach is to “love kids”. To accept diversity, to be a risk taker, and to be flexible and a team player are other characteristics of the successful educator at this school.

Climate and Culture

Pompano Beach High School has its own different and unique personality. Being a magnet school predetermines the ample diversity in the student body due to its vast geographical boundaries. The International Affairs magnet promotes appreciation for the multicultural composition of the student body. Recognizing the many cultural differences of the student body, the principal has initiated diversity training for the faculty on a regular basis and holds an International Fair each spring to celebrate their make-up. The entire student body is bused to the Broward Center for Performing Arts for student demonstrations of their accomplishments in drama, art, music, and crafts.

Although not a neighborhood school, efforts to have students relate to each other include open communication among the many cultures. Students are encouraged to join a very active Human Relations Club on the campus as well as a vast number of other clubs and organizations. Parents of different cultures are recruited as members of the School Advisory Council, PTSA and booster clubs.

In addition to being a diverse environment, rigorous academic entrance requirements ensure a focus on high expectations and achievement for the students. A 2.0 GPA is required to enroll and a 2.5 GPA is necessary to remain at the school. Students who are having difficulty meeting these standards are provided additional support by the faculty. The small size of the student body and four-day schedule allow faculty and staff to personalize education to meet their students’ needs. A relaxed and collegial atmosphere exists where each student is known and recognized as an individual. Teachers report it is a joy to teach at a school where teachers have the time to gather and share effective instructional strategies. With the four-day week they are able to spend additional time with students who need tutoring. This combination of high standards and continuous support results in high student achievement and success.

Setting

Pompano Beach High School, the second oldest high school in Broward County, is situated on an original campus that dates back to 1959. In 1985 the school was closed as the population of Broward County expanded rapidly to the west and

the school enrollment declined. For twelve years the facility was used for city functions as well as a location for district school administrative offices.

In 1997, as the City of Pompano's population rose, a board decision was made to reopen the school as a satellite campus of Ely High School with the Institute of International Affairs. In 1998 the school became a separate entity with a magnet of International Affairs and in 1999 Informational Technology was added as a component to the curriculum. In June 2001 Pompano Beach graduated its first class in over sixteen years.

As an all magnet high school, the students come from wealthy suburban neighborhoods, middle class neighborhoods, and low-income governmental housing. The students have many different cultural and community experiences and are highly diverse. The school draws from the northern half of Broward County.

The current capacity of the school is 700 with a brand new state-of-the-art facility scheduled for opening in October 2003. The school will then have a capacity of 1446 students. Since Pompano Beach is a magnet school, all students are required to apply for admission and must meet eligibility criteria of 50% or higher in both reading and math on a standardized test. All incoming ninth graders must have a 2.0 GPA from their middle school years. Once enrolled, students must maintain a 2.5 GPA in order to continue attending the school.

Although the students, staff and the school are in the midst of a building program, it is evident that school personnel recognize that students learn best in a safe and friendly environment that provides opportunities for success. Pompano Beach High School provides an excellent educational program, numerous extra-curricular activities and services designed to meet the needs and interests of a growing student body.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Resources

Linking the budget to academic goals and student achievement is the underlying goal of all resources received by the school. The leadership team, which includes the department chairs, meets periodically with the administration. Needs are presented and resources required to meet those needs are discussed. The SAC (School Advisory Council) and faculty council are then involved and decisions are made as to how the budget will be allocated. When requisitions are presented they must list how student achievement will be affected. Each department must include the use of technology in their instruction to address the magnet strand of Informational Technology.

The principal ensures that money received for special programs supports the students for whom it is intended, such as ESE, ESOL and Title I. The district's magnet office subsidizes offerings at the school. The principal indicated the need to pursue grants and business partnerships to gain additional resources.

Professional development, linked to academic goals, is a major priority. In addition to using school funds, the principal is always looking for district support to supply consultants and substitutes for needed workshops. Teachers are encouraged to attend conferences, to belong to professional organizations and to work on advanced degrees.

The school improvement team set aside dollars from the state's school recognition funds to reward students for academic success on the FCAT. Students achieving at least 3.5 in writing for tenth graders and 3.0 or better on reading and math for both ninth and tenth graders earned a twenty-dollar gift certificate to a nearby mall. Money for recognition of students in the form of trophies, certificates and pizza parties comes from the school's budget. The school enjoys a relationship with the local Rotary Club who brings in local professionals to work with the students. Teachers seek local business support for their specialized subject area and projects.

Money received from the state for Pompano Beach's "A" rating was distributed equally to all employees after input from teachers, staff members, parents and the SAC.

Information Management

The school has access to online data in a multitude of areas, including student data (health, report card grades, test scores, psychological testing, attendance), budget, and demographics. Broward County's data warehouse provides student test scores and pinpoints the benchmarks that need instruction. All teachers have school-provided laptop computers and Palm handhelds and use them to access the Internet for instructional purposes. The school also uses an electronic grading program.

In addition, a wealth of information, for both the school and the community, is available through the district's website, www.browardschools.com. Detailed FCAT results and the School Improvement Plan are online. All parents have access to the SIP, either at home or at school. FCAT data allow teachers to focus on the weaknesses of their students as well as on the strengths of the programs and strategies that are being used.

School personnel and a student's parents or guardian have access to student assessment data. Data is used to assist in grouping for instruction and to determine if additional assistance is needed to accomplish grade level and subject area goals. Teachers meet regularly to review progress of students with data that includes benchmark testing, remedial instruction results, and daily work. Parent conferences are held to share information and to discuss continued strategies as needed.

COMMUNICATING CHANGE: PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK

Instruction

The target areas for the SIP are aligned with the state's goal of "student performance" and Broward County's strategic plan goals of "all operations of the school system will align with student achievement needs" and "all students will achieve at their highest potential." The action steps for the school are based on the curriculum areas of reading, writing, math, use of Internet resources, and use of alternative technology to complete at least one class project per subject. Pompano Beach's SIP is aligned to the district's goals with special emphasis on increasing student achievement.

Working with the SAC, the SIP is a culminating effort based on input from teachers, parents, administrators, students and the community. The previous year's testing and the students' current needs determine strategies to be undertaken to improve the instructional program. The Sunshine State Standards are the basis for the curriculum.

Continuous monitoring through the use of benchmark testing, teacher-made tests and remedial instruction assist the staff in assessing progress toward SIP goals. Questioning based on Bloom's taxonomy is employed in all subject areas to expose students to higher-level thinking. An "instructional focus" of a ten-minute daily exposure in each instructional block to effective strategies in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics, based on the Sunshine State Standards, is implemented school-wide; a master calendar of suggested strategies is provided weekly. "Tornado Time Out for Reading" is a twenty-minute period of sustained silent reading, with staff participation, that rotates through the curriculum blocks. With an emphasis on technology school-wide, students are required to complete at least one class project per subject using Internet resources as well as completing one project in each of their classes using alternative technology (such as, PowerPoint, MSWord, MSAccess, MSExcel, and graphing calculators). Instructional materials and methods are based on best practices training.

Since Pompano Beach has the four-day week, a Friday school, titled "Classroom Broward", allows for remediation, as well as the opportunity for students to take additional courses in elective and academic fields. Tutoring schedules are provided in the newsletter that is online. The Friday program also provides the flexibility for students to work, to perform community service and/or to participate in extra curricular activities.

Teachers are encouraged to attend and share information gained from workshops and conferences at department and staff meetings. Continuous training and high expectations of and for all staff members yield good results for Pompano Beach's students.

Communication

Since Pompano Beach High School is a magnet school of International Studies with students coming from the central part to the northern boundaries of the county, the principal realizes effective communication is essential. Not only is the student body bused from miles away from the Pompano community but it is also a multicultural student body. Sensitivity to these cultural differences is recognized and communication needs addressed continually.

Parents are made to feel welcome on the campus. They are encouraged to call the school at any time. The principal publishes quarterly newsletters that can be accessed electronically as well as by hard copy and has established a very informative website as two essential means of communication. Other methods of communication being used are the weekly administrative bulletin, parent orientation, parent conferences, parent shadowing, biweekly assessment reports, interim reports, report cards, portfolio reports, two open houses, daily announcements, and teacher telephone contacts. The school has a policy that all parent calls to teachers will be answered within a twenty-four hour period.

Communication within the school is a priority that is facilitated by its four-week class schedule and additional planning time for teachers daily. Departmental meetings are scheduled monthly and faculty meetings are held twice a month. "Collegial Conversation Mondays" are provided where the faculty has the opportunity to converse with each other on a professional

basis across content areas. Faculty members conduct ten instructional focus workshops after school periodically throughout the school year.

Pompano Beach High belongs to the Ely/Pompano Innovation Zone that consists of elementary, middle and high schools in this feeder pattern. The principals within this zone meet during the school year to articulate information to promote better communication across levels of schooling.

Decision Making

The principal is a strong believer that all stakeholders should be empowered to become involved in the decision-making process of the school. A very active School Advisory Council, consisting of parents, teachers, students, and administrators, meet on a regular basis to discuss school direction and progress as well as budgetary items. Departmental meetings are held regularly where decisions are made regarding instructional materials, curriculum, textbooks, and teaching strategies. The principal stresses the importance of making teachers feel comfortable and involved in virtually all decision-making opportunities.

The school is organized with an administrative team of two assistant principals, a guidance director, a magnet coordinator, and six department heads. The principal constantly involves this leadership team in school-related decisions and is truly an advocate of shared decision-making. As a result of this practice, the faculty values the contributions each individual makes to the school, as evidenced by their decision to share the A+ money equally with all staff members.

Faculty Council meets on a regular monthly basis to identify ways to improve teaching and learning; the members then submit their findings to the administration as formal recommendations. During lunch a student leadership group meets with the administrative team on a monthly basis; they discuss student concerns and solve them collaboratively.

Parent and Community Involvement

Pompano Beach High School is made up of students from many diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Students from wealthy suburban and middle class neighborhoods, as well as those from federal housing projects, attend the school. The student body is geographically representative of central to northern Broward County. Being a magnet school students come from many cities: 37% from Pompano Beach and 44% from the bordering cities of Coconut Creek, Coral Springs, Deerfield Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Lauderhill, and Margate. The remaining students (19%) commute from cities ten to twenty-five miles from the campus. This diversity and geographical distribution requires the school to make every effort possible to involve the parents and community. Parents are welcomed as volunteers on campus to assist with school safety, office work, or in the classroom. A viable School Advisory Council encourages and recruits parents to serve in this important role. A PTSA is active on the campus and makes all parents welcome. Parents can also be involved in many booster groups to promote and enhance school activities, such as band, chorus, and athletics.

Two open houses are scheduled yearly to give parents the opportunity to visit the campus and meet the faculty and staff. A School Improvement Team that includes parents on the School Advisory Council meets monthly. This team is responsible for creating the annual SIP for the school.

Business partners are recruited in the surrounding communities. Some of the most active are The Oracle, City of Pompano Beach, North Broward Hospital District, Microsoft, Papa John's Pizza, Roadhouse Grill, Chamber of Commerce, and the Cisco Corporation. In speaking with parents they indicated that this school depicts a family atmosphere. The school is a source of pride for the community and parents are proud to have their students enrolled in this school. Teachers indicated that parents are very supportive of the faculty and their efforts to provide an excellent educational program for their children.

EVALUATING CHANGE: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION

Accountability

Personnel are held accountable for the achievement of goals and objectives through frequent monitoring of student work. During team and department planning meetings, data on students are discussed; students needing remediation are identified; and professional development opportunities are shared. Using data received from the "virtual counselor" (Broward County's data warehouse), students are assigned to attend "Friday School" for assistance. This school operates on a four-day, eight-hour per day student week; the day is divided into four 110-minute periods. Remediation is done on Fridays and Wednesday afternoons when activity buses are available for the students. Interim reports are sent home every four-and-a-half weeks.

Parents are made aware of standards their children are expected to meet early in the school year. The guidance counselor goes to all of the middle schools in the identified area to discuss the curriculum of the school. Parent orientation for ninth grade parents and open houses set the stage for awareness and expectations for students. Parent conferences are held as needed but interim reports, telephone calls and subject area newsletters are the major vehicle for parent communication. Additionally, the parents are told how to access the virtual counselor and online grades. Parent involvement is difficult for this school as the students live in a wide area that covers the northern half of Broward County.

Cultural sensitivity is inherent in the makeup of the school. With International Affairs as one of the magnet strands, different cultures and ethnicities are celebrated throughout the year. The student body is diverse and a concentrated effort is made to hire a diverse staff. A human relations club has been formed and enjoys a culturally diverse membership.

Informal assessments, other than those mandated, include questioning utilizing Bloom’s taxonomy and FCAT-type questions integrated across the curriculum. The 110-minute periods encourage the teachers to incorporate hands-on learning and project-based instruction. Critical and creative thinking are the focus of instruction.

The leadership team recognizes stakeholders through weekly bulletins, Teacher Appreciation Week and newsletter articles. Staff recognition includes Secretaries Week activities, luncheons for custodians, breakfast for bus drivers and written notes of appreciation. Students are recognized through Honor Roll assemblies each quarter, Students of the Month announcements, daily announcements, marquee postings, and monthly luncheons with the principal for “Kids of Character” and “Most Improved” students.

Repeat from an earlier section: The school improvement team set aside dollars from the state’s school recognition funds to reward students for academic success on the FCAT. Students achieving at least 3.5 in writing for tenth graders and 3.0 or better on reading and math for both ninth and tenth graders earned a twenty-dollar gift certificate to a nearby mall. Money for recognition of students in the form of trophies, certificates and pizza parties comes from the school’s budget. The school enjoys a relationship with the local Rotary Club who brings in local professionals to work with the students. Teachers seek local business support for their specialized subject area and projects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

School Demographics

Pompano Beach High School is located in the fast-growing County of Broward just west of U.S. #1 in the City of Pompano Beach. Thirty-eight instructional staff is employed with three administrators. Pompano Beach High enrolled 662 students. The school report grade for 2001-2002 was A. 33% of the students were on free and reduced lunch in 2001-2002. The stability rate is 93.8%, with 4.7% of the students classified as LEP and 2% of the students classified with disabilities. Average class size for language arts, math, science, and social studies is 26.4, 26.6, 26.1 and 28.4 respectively.

Ethnic/Racial %	
Caucasian	49.7
African American	33.5
Hispanic	13.7
Asian	2.1
Native American	0.2
Multi-racial	0.8

Goals**Goal 3:**

Student Performance: In grade 10, tested 175 students in FCAT Writing Assessment, with a school average score of 4.2, as compared to the district average of 3.9 and a state average of 3.8. (Scores range from 1.0 (lowest) to 6.0 (highest)). FCAT Reading and Math scores were higher than district and state averages. FCAT norm-referenced test results were reported by median national percentile ranks (NPR) and were higher than district and state percentile ranks for reading and math in grades 9 and 10. FCAT School Accountability Data in grade 9 Reading and Mathematics, with 222 students tested, reported a mean scale score of 327 in Reading and 322 in Mathematics, as compared to the district at 289 and 288 and the state at 287 and 286 respectively. In grade 10, 175 students were tested with scores of 326 in Reading and 340 in Mathematics as compared with district scores of 307 and 323 and state scores of 303 and 319 respectively.

Goal 4:

Learning Environment: Reported new instructional staff hired for the 2001-2002 school year as 26.3% compared to the district average of 16% and the state average of 16.6%. Absentee rates were comparable to both the district and the state for the number of student absences of 11-20 days and considerably lower for students absent 21+ days or more. Leave days for both teachers and administrators were lower than the district and state average with teachers having 5.9 absences as compared to 7.4 and 9.6 for the district and state respectively and administrators with 6.3 as compared to the district average of 9.3 and 8.1 for the state.

Goal 5:

School Safety and Environment: Reported four discipline incidents overall.

Goal 6:

Teachers and Staff: Reported that 44% of the staff had graduate degrees (including: masters, specialist, and doctorate).