

Florida School Report: Preliminary Results, High Performing Schools

High Performing schools increase student achievement. The Best Practices Study makes the connection. It shares results from a comprehensive analysis of 20 high performing schools that share a common approach — a new way of visioning the norm.

“Doing It Right”:

School Principals Who Lead

respected by staff...were risk-takers...uncompromised advocacy on behalf of students and staff

The staff at all schools credited the Principal's leadership as the driving force behind increased achievement. “It couldn't happen without the Principal.”

School Principals Who Serve

respected staff's professionalism...developed leaders... supported staff needs

High performance is linked to the Principal's ability to lead by empowering their staff; providing leadership/development opportunities for staff; and coming through with support for instructional needs.

Reading as the Prime Focus

taught in different ways...supported by development...infused throughout curriculum

First and foremost, all schools focused their time, effort, resources, staff and partnership support to improve the reading and comprehension skills of all students.

Teachers Who Are Leaders

identified and met needs...analyzed/used data...pursued professional development

Teachers who are empowered, challenged, and respected, commit to a school for the long term. Low staff turnover was a consistent element at the high performing schools studied.

Quality Professional Development

aligned to curriculum...made available for parents...shared with colleagues

If students hit an achievement wall, it is the teacher's responsibility to find an alternative way to teach. The positive impact of customized professional development was universally voiced.

Dynamic School Environment

had high expectations and standards...shared vision...collaborated and communicated

The staff, principal, and parents all set high expectations for their students and believed that their school was the best. They were proud of themselves, each other, and of their collaborative contribution to their school's excellence.

Budget Flexibility

supported goals with resources... increased local control...heightened accountability

Schools with more budget control can align funds to needs more easily and fully. Schools with flexible budgeting prioritized Reading, professional development and technology.

Three P's--Parents...Partnership...Purpose

engaged parents...developed strong partnerships...gave parents and partners a higher purpose

High Performing schools appreciated their parents and partners and treated them as equal stakeholders, prized mentors and valued family members with essential roles and responsibilities.

Three D's--Data...Decision-Making...Design

used data-driven decision-making...benchmarking and monitoring...curriculum design

If there was one strategy that was indispensable for building achievement, it was the ability of staff to access, understand, analyze and apply data. It calls for technological expertise and support to ensure that teachers could instruct students based on their individual needs.

Connections

school to community...school to culture...school to big picture

These schools are community hubs. They create after hours learning opportunities for students and families. They make it worthwhile for parents and the community to be involved in comprehensive improvement.