

Research Procedures and Methodology

The Nature of the Research

The research study can best be characterized as *descriptive*. The intent is to objectively, accurately, and fully describe the characteristics, unique qualities, and practices of the selected schools.

School Selection

Collaboration between the Council for Educational Change (CEC) and the Florida Atlantic University/Barry University Team (FAU/Barry Team) resulted in the selection of participating schools.

Participating Elementary Schools were selected according to the following criteria:

- Schools that enrolled at least 10% of its students classified as being Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and 50% or above on Free and Reduced Lunch
- Schools that enrolled at least 50% of its students on Free and Reduced Lunch
- Schools that enrolled between 30-50% of its students on Free and Reduced Lunch
- Schools with students who obtained at least a FCAT overall score of Level 3 in Reading
- Schools that performed well regardless of its percent of students classified as being Limited English Proficiency or on Free and Reduced Lunch
- All schools had 70% of their continuously enrolled students score at Level 3 and above on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) overall

High performing Middle/High Schools were selected from four different categories:

1. Schools with 40 percent or more of their students on the State's Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL)
2. Schools with between 20-40 percent of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch
3. Schools with 10 percent or more of their students classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
4. High performing schools regardless of FRL and LEP.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Last year, the Florida Atlantic University/Barry University Team visited Texas to investigate the manner in which the Just for the Kids Organization structured and conducted its study of Texas schools. Following the visit, the FAU/Barry Team developed a research methodology and an assessment instrument to address and measure the unique qualities and practices of Florida schools.

The FAU/Barry Team trained a group of researchers, most of them retired school teachers and principals, to collect data from the schools. Particularly significant in the data collection portion of this study is the reliance on evidences and examples collected that revealed the emerging themes driving the best practices.

Currently, the FAU/Barry Team is analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, refining the data collection method and instrument, and presenting the preliminary findings to a national audience of researchers. The FAU/Barry Team is also preparing itself to study some of Florida's middle and high schools.

The elementary school portion of the study has been completed and is now available online. The FAU/Barry Team is currently conducting similar studies of middle and high schools.