SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOL SUCCESS!

Sharing Strategies that Work

PROFILES OF 20 HIGH PERFORMING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN FLORIDA
BASED ON THE FLORIDA SCHOOL REPORT'S BEST PRACTICES STUDY
March, 2003

Dear Florida Citizen,

It is a pleasure to introduce you to 20 High Performing Elementary Schools selected in five different categories throughout the state of Florida.

These schools were identified through the Florida School Report, a premiere initiative of The Council for Educational Change. The Report is a statewide online school performance tool www.floridaschoolreport.org. It compares the standardized testing results of schools with similar characteristics. The Best Practices component of the Report identifies schools that have made significant progress when compared with schools of similar demographics. It shares the "why's" and "how's" of their success.

We have included a brief profile of the 20 schools. Additional information is available in the Best Practices section of the Report's web page, www.floridaschoolreport.org. Here you can review preliminary findings from Florida Atlantic University's research project on Best Practices.

We congratulate these High Performing schools. We also congratulate the many other Florida schools that are making progress. The Council for Educational Change believes: "Every Child Can Succeed." Our mission is to help our schools and communities make that happen.

Sincerely,

Elaine Liftin, Ed.D.
Executive Director
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The Florida School Report (FSR) is an online resource for educators, parents, and the general public. It is a powerful tool comprised of three components: Data Analysis, Best Practices, and Training and Tutorials. Each component helps the user to understand, learn, and apply knowledge to assist in helping children and educators learn:

- **Data Analysis** - The Florida School Report looks at a school’s Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) data from a whole new perspective. It allows a school to be compared to other schools throughout the state with similar student and school characteristics. Three different charts are used to highlight and contrast the difference between a school’s performance and those of its own closest-matching, top ten comparable schools.

- **Best Practices** - Discover the possibilities and potential for school improvement by exploring methods and strategies shown to be effective in successful Florida schools! Details from teachers, administrators, and parents are showcased in case studies from high-performing schools, they offer insight and examples into what makes a successful school community. Schools that have surmounted challenges to achieve, above and beyond, are identified and included in this annual study.

- **Training and Tutorials** - Online multimedia tutorials provide a virtual “how-to-guide” for navigating and applying information from the Florida School Report’s School Data and Best Practice components. In-depth template guides provide users with a means to critique their school’s current performance, identify areas of strengths and areas for improvement, and provide for the development of appropriately tailored action plans. Resources and personalized training sessions for sustaining continuous improvement are offered to schools seeking additional support and assistance.

Simply stated, the Florida School Report shows a school where it is, where it could be, and how to get there.

www.floridaschoolreport.org
The research team for the Best Practices Project consisted of a group of professionals who came to the project with distinct backgrounds and responsibilities. Professors from Florida Atlantic University and Barry University were instrumental in the design of the study, the construction of the assessment instrument and the school visitation project. They trained the professionals who visited the schools to conduct interviews and gather supporting evidences of the best practices. They also composed the reports to describe the nature of what drives the best practices in the selected schools.

The selection of the schools followed a multifaceted methodology. In selecting schools, the research team first and foremost considered academic achievement factors and what they characterized as endurance measures - sustained academic performance and representation from students whose native language is not English and those who came from a low socioeconomic status.

High performing elementary schools were selected from five different categories:

1. Schools with both 50 percent or more of their students on the State’s Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL) and 10 percent or more of their students classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
2. Schools with 50 percent or more of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch
3. Schools with between 30-50 percent of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch
4. Schools consistently high in reading performance; and
5. High performing schools regardless of FRL and LEP.

All schools have an FCAT reading plus mathematics average greater than 70% Level 3 and above for continuously enrolled students (3 or more years).
2002 High Performing Schools and Their Categories

Schools with both 50 percent or more of their students on the State's Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL) and 10 percent or more of their students classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

- Charles Hadley Elementary
- Coral Park Elementary
- Dante B. Fascell Elementary
- Flamingo Elementary
- Ludiam Elementary
- Village Green Elementary
- Wahneta Elementary
- Wesley Matthews Elementary

Schools with 50 percent or more of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch:

- Inwood Elementary
- Sunrise Elementary
- West Riverside Elementary

Schools with between 30-50 percent of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch:

- Tyndall Elementary
- Valparaiso Elementary

Schools consistently high in reading performance:

- Ashton Elementary
- Bayview Elementary

High performing schools regardless of Free and Reduced Lunch or Limited English Proficiency status:

- Central Park Elementary
- Gilchrist Elementary
- Hawks Rise Elementary
- James E. Plew Elementary
- Lake Mary Elementary
Students at Ashton can “Reach For The Stars” because the staff has firmly rooted their school improvement efforts, including the school’s stellar Best Practices, in effective school research. This research provides the basis for all of their strategies and implemented programs. It is the “heart” of their achievement effort. Ashton has elevated its use of instructional technology to provide the staff with individualized student data - disaggregated - that shapes critical instructional decisions. Coaching and collaboration among teachers and across grade level, along with a detailed three-year professional development plan, are key companions to the data-driven decision-making, and support the goal of each and every child reaching his or her fullest potential.

At Bayview’s campus, 8:15 a.m., kindergarten through 5th grade students scurry to their reading groups. Special focus teachers, staff and volunteers, prepare to assist. Students enter their reading classroom and see projectors illuminating stories, centers with interesting novels, comfortable reading corners, and an area where the teacher directs exciting basal stories. The “literacy block” is about to begin. The school’s faculty has implemented a school-wide uninterrupted reading “literacy block.” Based on test data, teacher input, and reading levels, students are grouped for instruction. Bayview’s instructional focus is aligned to district and state standards. Through the combined efforts of all, Bayview has achieved outstanding success in reading through the “literacy block.”
All stakeholders at Central Park work together to advance student achievement goals. This focused effort, supported by a solid curriculum, has resulted in gains. The school aligns assessment data with resources, practices and training. Teachers on and across grade levels collaborate, learn new techniques and share best practices. Reading resource materials include: basal text, chapter books, content text, research-based remedial program, computer benchmarking, tutoring, after school camps, classroom libraries, and the Accelerated Reader. The K-1 Balanced Literacy program provides the foundation for solid reading skills in grades 2-5. Math competency is promoted through Math Superstars, Calendar Math, and Advanced Math groups. Incentives and rewards from partners, round out the program.

The school's mission is to holistically prepare students to live and succeed in a multicultural and technological society. Trained in the Comer philosophy, the school promotes total communication throughout the school and community. Among the programs are: Extended Foreign Language; an after-school accelerated class teaching students critical thinking skills; Read to Succeed: a reading program developed by administrators and teachers to help promote the love of reading; and a Family Enrichment Center. A combination of resources, a dedicated staff and a well-developed plan of action have led to a steady rise above the norm for Charles Hadley. The spirit of teamwork laid the groundwork for all programs to flourish in their multi-ethnic, multifaceted school. Tracking student performance on an individual basis helps to maximize each student's learning potential.
Improvement at Coral Park is attributed to a total school-wide achievement plan. Elements include the Saturday "Kids Club" (intensive remediation program), Before and After School Tutoring, small group instruction, weekly assessments and monitoring, and the implementation of the highly successful "Parents As Volunteers in Education" program, (P.A.V.E.). Coral Park Elementary believes that all students should be loved, should belong, and should become responsible, confident, and productive citizens. These beliefs are the motivation for the school improvement plan and all actions undertaken to implement that plan. The school's responsibility is to its clients, stakeholders, employees, and community.

Professional development at Dante B. Fascell Elementary School contributes to the school's success and uniqueness. Each grade level and special area teacher is given one professional development day per grading period, during which the group discusses the alignment of teaching and learning with Sunshine State Standards. Strategies for students exhibiting learning difficulties are discussed and incorporated into daily lessons. This development breaks down classroom walls and eliminates isolation. It also provides a venue for the presentation of new and innovative ideas and activities undertaken in the classroom and through the many educational, hands-on experiences - including field trips - that the school schedules to fuel young, creative minds.
The use of technology is one of the main ingredients for success at Flamingo Elementary. Computer-assisted teaching and learning have been in practice for the past eight years. A partnership with the University of Miami School of Education is another part of Flamingo's success and has yielded positive student achievement results. The infusion of teaching and learning strategies and professional services are added benefits from this partnership that enrich Flamingo's professional development and relate it to improved student achievement. A strong administrative team and faculty cadre work collaboratively on strategic plans to support student success and professional growth.

Gilchrist believes and operates under the belief that the school is a family where all are lifelong learners working in a collaborative partnership. That includes faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members who work, learn and live in the school community. The school staff and faculty are dedicated to fostering and supporting a systematic process of becoming a focused, positive learning community. This philosophy is played out through their school improvement and strategic planning that calls for high expectations for all students. These expectations also extend to the faculty. High-level professional development, aligned to school and classroom goals is the norm. Gilchrist encourages individuality, creativity and respect. They foster appreciation for diversity in a nurturing academic environment.
Hawks Rise Elementary School

Hawks Rise Elementary works to implement a strong academic program that is supported by a safe and orderly environment. The school has prioritized effective teaching, minimizing distractions and maximizing a nurturing climate that is conducive to school improvement. Teachers are empowered to teach and students are empowered to learn. The school and teachers also set specific individual academic goals that are closely and continuously monitored. This strategy is implemented through precision teaching techniques based on the specific strengths and needs of each child. The individual student and classroom goals mirror school improvement and Sunshine State Standard expectations.

Inwood Elementary School

The faculty at Inwood Elementary has researched what works in the classroom, captured that information, and then incorporated it into school improvement strategies including: strong and visible leadership; high expectations for all students; and a strong and consistent discipline program. The faculty has dedicated and informed teachers, including master teachers who model best practices. Outpacing expectations, Inwood achieved an A school grade for the last four years—the only Title I high poverty school in the State of Florida to earn this distinction and a 2002 Nationally Distinguished Title I School. Inwood students have scored above the average of all Polk County Elementary schools in the grades tested by the district. Inwood’s goal and it is being met every day, is: No Child Left Behind!
Plew Elementary uses the three ‘C’s (the C’s of Plew) to boost student achievement. They are: commitment by parents, students and teachers; communication between the home and school; and control of student’s academic progress to assure that needs are met. Additionally, teachers at Plew devote extensive preparation time developing grade level appropriate instruction tailored to meet the individual student’s needs. It is also designed to meet high expectations and standards. All of the necessary ingredients are blended together in a “can do” classroom environment that elevates performance.

At Lake Mary Elementary School the administration, staff, parents and volunteers work together as a school community for the benefit of all the children. There are high academic expectations and consistent outstanding student achievement is the goal. Student success is monitored on a regular basis by the principal, guidance department, and teachers so that interventions are implemented for each child exhibiting emerging or ongoing academic difficulties. Resources are available for remediation and to provide enhanced academic challenges. The school partners with parents, community and business. Students are rewarded for academic achievement, excellent attendance, and good citizenship, as well as success in a variety of endeavors.
Ludlam Elementary strives to prepare their students to be responsible, productive members of society. The school does that by providing a highly professional atmosphere which empowers students and teachers to fulfill agreed upon expectations. The teachers address the needs of the diverse population through various instructional programs that are geared to meet the needs of a multicultural and individual student population while maintaining the highest standards. The staff seeks out and implements innovative ideas and initiatives that compliment the school's technologically infused curriculum and that build on the strengths of Ludlam's students. The school's mission embodies both diversity and a common goal of shaping the future, summarized by its motto: Many Faces - One Goal.

“A sense of community” describes Sunrise Elementary School. The Sunrise vision and beliefs provide the framework. Thoughtful reflection and cohesion is provided through the use of cognitive coaching, a peer coaching model. Members of the Sunrise community have a significant voice in decision-making and problem-solving. Data-driven decision-making strategies, based on research and continuous monitoring and assessment, are infused into the curriculum. Caring, competent and collegial staff work to create and refine programs to meet student needs. Time is built into the daily, weekly and monthly schedule for teacher collaboration on curriculum, instruction and student progress. Tutoring is provided before and after school.
Tyndall Elementary School prides itself on a tradition of excellence that is rooted in standards, responsive to emerging needs and flexible enough to encourage innovation. School improvement and teacher planning aim to achieve and surpass the Sunshine State Standards, employing individualized instruction - using many methods sensitive to each and every student's learning modalities. The staff believes every student can learn, assuming responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment where that belief is the top priority. Located on Tyndall Air Force Base, the elementary school has a strong foundation of patriotism and a wide base of parental support.

Valparaiso imagined a community within a school operated by students, as a vehicle for school improvement. Then they designed and implemented it - Mustang Metropolis. Teachers use the city to provide an extra learning impetus for students. The concepts, skills and information taught throughout the curriculum are compared and related to activities they encounter while performing civic duties. Students are empowered to utilize problem-solving, decision-making and leadership skills in a risk-free environment. Mustang Metropolis is composed of City Hall, Mustang Mutual Bank, Chat and Chew Restaurant, Wee deliver Post Office, Pony Express Newspaper and five shops. The school's student Mayor and City Council members, pictured above, represent Valparaiso at the City's Commissioners meetings.
This is the second year of the school's initiative in support of Character Education. Project Wisdom, a collection of thought provoking messages are broadcast over the announcements twice a week. The messages are designed to help build "character muscles," encouraging students to make wise, healthy choices. Students actively participate and deliver messages titled "Words of Wisdom," representing the thoughts of great individuals throughout world history. The Character Education project is just one example of the school's total commitment to school improvement strategies that bring the entire school together to focus on academic achievement, as well as community responsibility and the civic development of students.

Wahneta Elementary has a diverse student body of 520 children, with 221 English as a Second Language (ESOL) students. Reading and literacy is a priority at Wahneta. They have a strong school-wide reading program, now in its fifth year, that is directly aligned to the strategic improvement plan. The program is built on the concept of mastery teaching/learning. The six step program was designed to be infused throughout all curriculum areas. It was also designed to be applied in a continuum—beginning in kindergarten and continuing through high school. The consistent and pervasive focus on reading through this program, has supported the school's progress in reading and math. These gains are backed by data analysis, which is another strategy the school uses to chart improvement. Additionally, a dedicated teaching staff—very low turnover—is credited with implementing the program and motivating the students.
Wesley Matthews has a range of established and enhancement programs including Extended Foreign Language; ESE inclusion; family literacy; and technology initiatives. Perhaps the most important strategy is the comprehensive tutoring program that helped narrow the gap in reading and mathematics in grades 2 through 5. Student test scores, grades, diagnostic tests/surveys, and teacher recommendations identify students for before and after school tutoring, daily tutoring, and the school’s Saturday Academy. Strategies including guided reading, effective writing, basic mathematics instruction, test-taking, phonics instruction, and specific programs such as Soar to Success are utilized to meet individual needs of the students participating in the program.

West Riverside credits sound professional development, district support and a strong partnership with The St. Joe Company as the major contributors to their success. Through the Partnership to Advance School Success (PASS) program, West Riverside has been able to successfully merge business savvy, know-how and strategies into school operations. The PASS model, which focuses student achievement strategies, has helped the school deal more efficiently with the multitude of elementary school issues and concern. West Riverside also refined their approach to school improvement, prioritizing accountability and data-driven decision making from the classroom to the Principal’s office. Taking a lesson from their business partner and the corporate culture, the school also uses incentives and rewards to recognize outstanding instruction and teaching.
ASHTON ELEMENTARY
5110 Ashton Road • Sarasota, FL 34233
(941) 361-6440
www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/ashton/

BAYVIEW ELEMENTARY
1175 Middle River Drive • Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304
(954) 390-0730
www.firm.edu/schools/broward/bayview_el/

CENTRAL PARK ELEMENTARY
777 North Nob Hill Road • Plantation, FL 33324
(954) 474-8220
www.broward.k12.fl.us/centralparkele/

CHARLES HADLEY ELEMENTARY
8400 NW 7th Street • Miami, FL 33126
(305) 261-3453
http://crhadley.dadeschools.net/

CORAL PARK ELEMENTARY
1225 SW 97th Avenue • Miami, FL 33174
(305) 221-5632
www.dade.k12.fl.us/coralparke/

DANTE B. FASCELL ELEMENTARY
15625 SW 80th Street • Miami, FL 33193
(305) 380-1901
http://dbfe.dade.k12.fl.us/

FLAMINGO ELEMENTARY
701 East 33rd Street • Hialeah, FL 33013
(305) 691-5531
www.dade.k12.fl.us/flamingo/

GILCHRIST ELEMENTARY
1301 Timberline Road • Tallahassee, FL 32312
(850) 893-4310
www.gilchrist.leon.k12.fl.us/

HAWKS RISE ELEMENTARY
205 Meadow Ridge Drive • Tallahassee, FL 32312
(850) 487-4733
www.leon.k12.fl.us/Public/HawksRise/HKRISE.html

INWOOD ELEMENTARY
2200 Avenue G NW • Winter Haven, FL 33880
(863) 291-5369
www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/inwood/

JAMES E. PLEW ELEMENTARY
220 Pine Avenue • Niceville, FL 32578
(850) 833-4100
www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/plew/

LAKE MARY ELEMENTARY
132 South Country Club Road • Lake Mary, FL 32746
(407) 320-5650
www.lakemaryelem.scps.k12.fl.us/

LUDLAM ELEMENTARY
6639 SW 74th Street • South Miami, FL 33143
(305) 667-5551
http://ludlam.dadeschools.net/

SUNRISE ELEMENTARY
3155 Phoneita Drive • Deltona, FL 32738
(407) 688-9530
http://schools.volusia.k12.fl.us/sunrise/

TYNDALL ELEMENTARY
7800 Tyndall Parkway • Tyndall Air Force Base FL 32403
(850) 286-6481
www.bay.k12.fl.us/schools/tes/

VALPARAISO ELEMENTARY
379 Edge Avenue • Valparaiso, FL 32580
(850) 833-4120
www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/valp/

VILLAGE GREEN ELEMENTARY
12265 SW 34th Street • Miami, FL 33175
(305) 226-0441
www.dade.k12.fl.us/5641/

WAHNETA ELEMENTARY
205 Fourth Street, East • Winter Haven, FL 33880
(863) 291-5392
www.polk-fl.net/wahnetael/

WESLEY MATTHEWS ELEMENTARY
12345 SW 18 Terrace • Miami, FL 33175
(305) 222-8150
http://wmes.dadeschools.net/

WEST RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY
2801 Herschel Street • Jacksonville, FL 32205
(904) 381-3900
www.educationcentral.org/wre/default.htm
The Florida School Report is a Council for Educational Change initiative. The Council for Educational Change is a statewide, non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of education and strengthen the academic performance for all children.

Our Programs:
- Prepare and Empower School Leaders
- Partner with Business
- Mobilize Parents and the Community
- Engage in Research and Development
- Serve as a Catalyst for Public Policy

Ongoing evaluation is a required element for all Council of Educational Change initiatives.

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOL SUCCESS!
NEW REPORT REVEALS SECRETS OF SUCCESS OF HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Commissioner says report offers “a roadmap to excellence for every school”

Tallahassee – A new analysis of Florida’s high-performing elementary schools – conducted by the Council for Educational Change at Gov. Jeb Bush’s request – reveals common strengths and strategies that help students achieve regardless of other challenges, such as the economic or cultural make-up of the school.

The report was debuted at a Tallahassee news conference today with Education Commissioner Jim Horne, who said, the results underscore that every child can learn and every school can succeed, given the right atmosphere, strategies and resources.

“We have always believed in our hearts that every child could succeed,” Commissioner Horne said. “This is further evidence of what it takes for schools to achieve despite challenges. This analysis can serve as a roadmap to excellence for every school.”

The analysis is an outgrowth of the Florida Schools Report, released for the first time last year by the South Florida Annenberg Challenge at a meeting of the Governor and Cabinet. The FSR compares student and school achievement data for all public schools. The Council for Educational Change (CEC), the statewide successor organization to the Annenberg Challenge, took the data to the next level by analyzing what high-performing schools are doing that makes a difference. Florida Atlantic University conducted the study with Council oversight.

“We found markers of success that showed up in school after school,” said CEC Chairman, Chancellor Edward T. Foote, II. “We found principals who take risks, empower teachers and lead by serving. Reading, not just as a class, but as a culture, infused in everything students do. Where you find these things, you find students achieving.”

The analysis, “Doing It Right: Best Practices of 20 High-performing Schools,” was based on site visits and a comprehensive analysis of 20 of Florida’s highest achieving schools, including a heavy sampling of schools that are economically challenged or have a significant percentage of students for whom English is a second language.

Among the practices and characteristics common to most of the schools were these:
➤ **Principals are the key.** High-achieving schools are all led by principals who take risks, respect the professionalism of their staffs, develop leaders among teachers, and advocate strongly for staff and student needs.

➤ **Reading is a prime focus.** These schools create an entire culture that supports reading. Reading is infused throughout the curriculum and the school day. Students with reading challenges are identified and remediated early.

➤ **Data drives decision-making.** These schools rely heavily on data to benchmark and monitor student performance and to inform decision-making at every level.

➤ **Teachers are valued and trusted to make decisions.** All these schools enjoy low staff turnover because teachers are challenged, respected, and empowered to make decisions. Pertinent, high-quality professional development opportunities are provided and shared with colleagues and parents.

➤ **Budget flexibility.** Schools with flexible budgeting were able to realign funds to meet student needs based on data and address priorities such as reading, professional development and technology.

➤ **Involve parents meaningfully.** All of the schools have programs to encourage and maintain parental involvement. By reinforcing the education process at home, students receive positive affirmation that academic excellence is valued and important.

Schools were selected for the analysis on the basis of their 2002 FCAT scores in five categories:

High poverty and multi-lingual schools. These are schools with 50 percent or more of their students on the State’s Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL) and 10 percent or more of their students classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

- Charles R. Hadley Elementary, Dade County
- Coral Park Elementary, Dade County
- Dante B. Fascell Elementary, Dade County
- Flamingo Elementary, Dade County
- Ludlam Elementary, Dade County
- Village Green Elementary, Dade County
- Wahneta Elementary, Polk County
- Wesley Matthews Elementary, Dade County

High-poverty schools. These are schools with 50 percent or more of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch:

- Inwood Elementary, Polk County
- Sunrise Elementary, Volusia County
- West Riverside Elementary, Duval County

Typical schools. These are schools with 30-50 percent of their students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch (the state average):

- Tyndall Elementary, Bay County
- Valparaiso Elementary, Okaloosa County
High reading schools. These are schools that consistently perform high in reading:

- Ashton Elementary, Sarasota County
- Bayview Elementary, Broward County

Consistently high-performing schools. These schools consistently perform well high-performing schools regardless of Free and Reduced Lunch or Limited English Proficiency status:

- Central Park Elementary, Broward County
- Gilchrist Elementary, Leon County
- Hawks Rise Elementary, Leon County
- James E. Plew Elementary, Okaloosa County
- Lake Mary Elementary, Seminole County

For more information about this study, Best Practices, and the Florida School Report, please contact Dr. Linda Goudy, Florida School Report Research Director and/or Dr. Elaine Liftin, Executive Director, Council for Educational Change at 1.866.268.0250. Visit the website at www.floridaschoolreport.org.

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