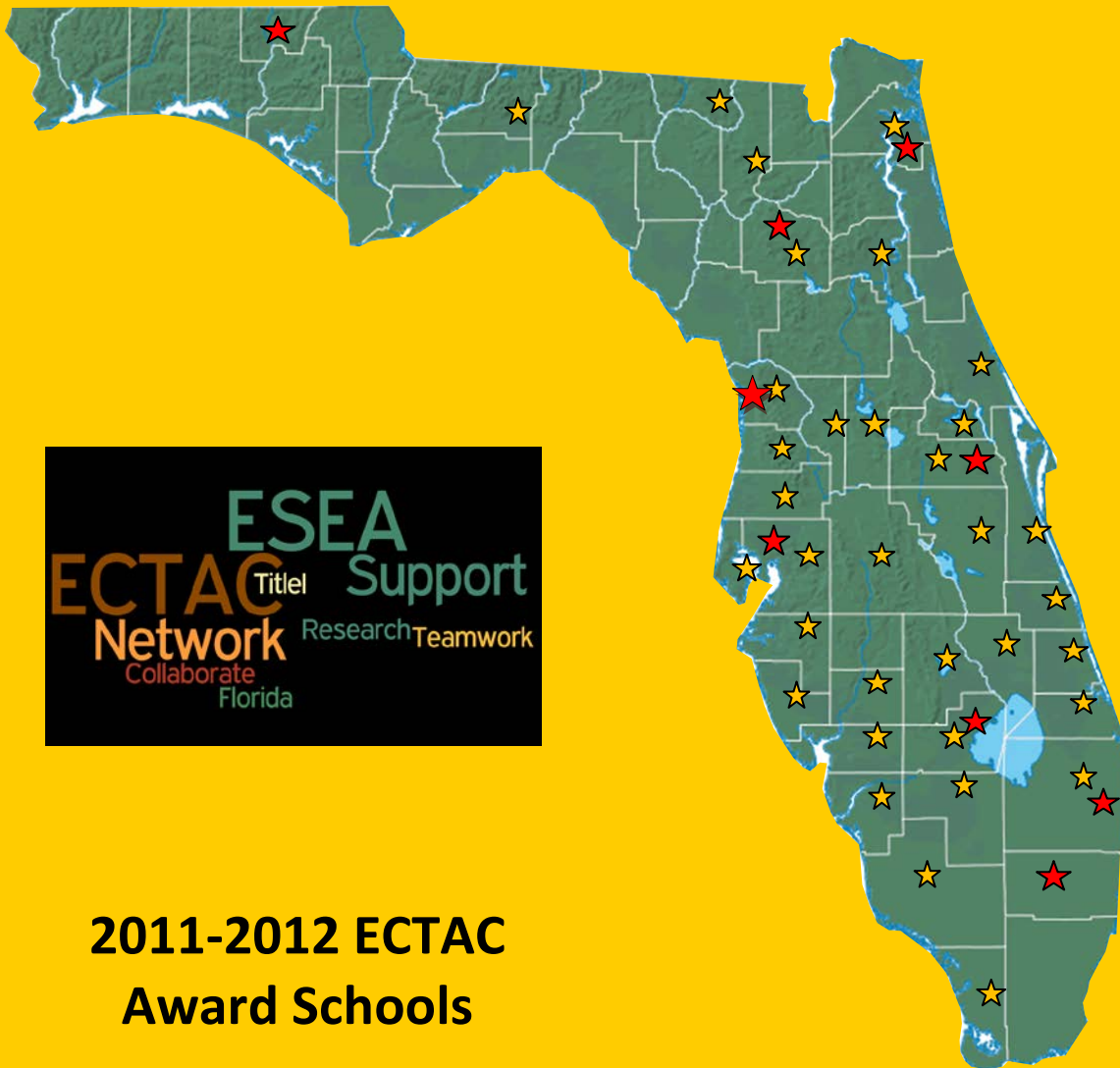


# Exceeding Expectations

Promoting Lasting Student Achievement



**ESEA**  
**ECTAC** Title Support  
**Network** Research Teamwork  
Collaborate  
Florida

**2011-2012 ECTAC  
Award Schools**

☆ ECTAC MEMBER DISTRICTS

★ AWARD SCHOOLS



Exceeding Expectations (E<sup>2</sup>) is a project of the East Coast Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC), a network of 36 school districts in Florida. ECTAC provides technical assistance to school districts regarding ESEA Title I and other selective ESEA programs. The fiscal agent for ECTAC is Seminole County Public Schools.



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**Walt Griffin  
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Congratulations to the ECTAC Exceeding Expectations Award Schools!

The purpose of the Exceeding Expectations (E<sup>2</sup>) project is to identify schools that are showing progress in improving student achievement. Utilizing the 2011 school grading and adequate yearly progress (AYP) databases, a team of statisticians and ECTAC staff spent many days reviewing data from schools with 50% to 100% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

The committee established criteria in reading and math that incorporated longitudinal increases in learning gains, lower quartile results, and overall proficiency. In addition, consideration was given for results that exceeded the state median scores and total School Grade points expected based on the percent of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch. Filters based on the criteria were applied to the data and a group of schools were identified that appeared to exceed expectations as defined by the project.

The next step was to visit the schools to validate what was identified through the data. Representatives from ECTAC member districts and ECTAC staff served on the school visitation teams. Utilizing interview and observation instruments, the teams met with administrators, leadership teams, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and community members.

Based on the data validated by the schools visits, eleven schools were recognized as Exceeding Expectations Award Schools. The schools were invited to share the strategies that lead to their improved student achievement and to receive recognition during the 2012 Exceeding Expectations Conference.

As visitation team members will attest, the schools visited achieved their student performance results not by luck, but rather by focused work; the kind of the work that sustains performance. Although these individual schools are all unique and different, there are common practices in place. These practices include effective leadership (both administrative and shared), utilization of progress monitoring data to drive instruction and interventions, professional development tied to data, and deep systemic family engagement. In addition, these schools make data-based decisions regarding available resources and have successfully developed a collaborative and supportive school culture.

A special thank you is extended to the Exceeding Expectations Award Schools for the warm welcome received by the ECTAC visitation teams. We appreciate your gracious acceptance when invited to be a part of this project and your willingness to share your strategies with your peers! We feel privileged to have the opportunity to recognize you and to celebrate with you all that you are doing in your schools to promote lasting student achievement!

Marjorie Murray, Director  
East Coast Technical Assistance Center

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## Selection Process

The goal of the East Coast Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC) Exceeding Expectations (E<sup>2</sup>) Project is to identify Title I schools that are exceeding expectations and/or showing great progress in improving student achievement.

Schools with 50% to 100% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch (FRL) were selected using five criteria based on School Grade data obtained from the FDOE:

### Reading Criteria:

- **R1** - increased in overall Reading Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).
- **R2** - scored above the state median for Reading Proficiency, overall Reading Learning Gains, and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **R3** - increased in Reading Proficiency and scored above the state median for Reading Learning Gains and the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **R4** - increased by at least 10 percentage points (five percentage points in high school) in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains, overall Reading Learning Gains, and Reading Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **R** - scored more total School Grade points than expected based on their percent of students on FRL.

### Math Criteria:

- **M1** - increased in overall Math Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).
- **M2** - scored above the state median for Math Proficiency, overall Math Learning Gains, and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **M3** - increased in Math Proficiency and were above the state median for Math Learning Gains and the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for three years consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **M4** - increased by at least 10 percentage points (five percentage points in high school) in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains, overall Math Learning Gains, and Math Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- **R** - scored more total School Grade points than were expected based on their percent of students on FRL.

Schools meeting two or more of these criteria in Reading and/or Math were identified. The selection team also considered the percent of economically disadvantaged students and performance or growth within subgroups. A subset of schools were also selected based on improved performance and higher than average proficiency for black students and/or students with disabilities. This process resulted in a list of 25 schools from small, medium, and large districts around the state of Florida. Teams then visited these schools and conducted interviews with school staff and classroom observations to determine if the student achievement results were affected by a systemic, schoolwide culture or other factors that may have contributed to the results. From these visits, 11 schools were identified as Exceeding Expectations Award Schools.

**EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS  
AWARD SCHOOLS**





# Micanopy Area Cooperative School

Anne Thomson, Director  
*Alachua County Public Schools*



- **R1 - increased in overall Reading Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).**
- **R4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains, overall Reading Learning Gains, and Reading Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in Total Reading.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	116
<b>White</b>	83.6%
<b>Black</b>	4.3%
<b>Hispanic</b>	6.0%
<b>Asian</b>	-
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.9%
<b>Multiracial</b>	5.2%
<b>Disabled</b>	10.3%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	53.4%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	-
<b>Migrant</b>	-

Micanopy Area Cooperative School (MACS), a charter school located just south of Gainesville in a rural town called Micanopy, was founded in 1997 with a single teacher in one small classroom. From the beginning, the staff of MACS refused to allow limited resources to define the parameters of the school’s success. This is still true today; while not rich with resources, MACS is abundant in high quality teaching and a positive learning environment where children learn and grow.

During the 2010- 2011 school year, the MACS family grew to 134 students in grades VPK- 5. Of the 134 students, 7 (5 %) were Hispanic, 10 (7%) were black, 1 (0.7%) was Native American, and 116 (87%) were white. More than half of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch. MACS currently employs 22 staff and has numerous family and community volunteers.

At MACS, we believe that our success is directly tied to the quality of our employees and our school climate. From the top down, there is an atmosphere of teamwork with an “all hands on deck” approach to student learning. Teachers work together formally and informally to problem solve, collaborating not only on meeting learning challenges in their own classroom, but in the classrooms of their colleagues as well. Formal collaboration occurs in the form of staff meetings, parent conferences, and School Based Leadership Team meetings. A less formal gathering is the tradition of having Friday afternoon “Tea”.

The stability of our staff and administration has been crucial to the success at MACS. The staff have a cohesive working relationship and have developed friendships that go beyond the typical workday. Activities such as the celebration of staff birthdays and rigorous afternoon workout sessions contribute to fostering cohesive relationships, helping to maintain MACS's high employee retention rates. With the teachers returning year after year, strong relationships with families are developed and maintained.

MACS has high expectations for all students. Student progress is monitored every six weeks for reading and math. Results are shared among teachers and administrators. Teachers use the results to guide and differentiate instruction within the classroom. Students scoring well above benchmarks participate in small enrichment groups that focus on deepening curiosity and independent learning. Those students that fall below benchmarks are diagnostically assessed to determine specific skill deficits and are placed in intervention groups based on their remedial needs. The classroom teachers and School Based Leadership Team monitor student progress to determine the appropriateness of instruction. Students requiring additional help are provided after school tutoring by MACS's teachers at no cost to the parent. Students are also provided opportunities to participate in afterschool clubs such as 4-H and Chess Club. In addition to the Smart Boards available in each classroom, we have a mini computer lab with eight Title I computers. Use of this technology allows the teachers to explore concepts to a deeper and grander scale and allows students additional skill practice in a format they usually find desirable.

***“The staff of MACS share a common understanding that the success of the whole is defined by the success of the parts and that no success comes without desire, effort, and vision.”***

MACS not only has high expectations for students but for staff as well. MACS employees utilize the many professional development opportunities provided by the School Board of Alachua County. Opportunities are provided for staff to attend workshops and conferences. Each year our staff participates in a book study, which provides suggestions that can easily be applied to the school as a whole or to individual classroom environments.

MACS involves parents in all aspects of their child's education. A variety of Title I-sponsored workshops are held to provide families with tips, demonstrations, and “hands-on resources” to promote learning at home. Families are encouraged to volunteer in an area of their comfort or choice. With the help of family volunteers, MACS participates in local community events such as the Harvest Festival and Light Up Micanopy. An active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) builds the community's awareness of ongoing projects at our school.

The staff of MACS share a common understanding that the success of the whole is defined by the success of the parts and that no success comes without desire, effort, and vision.

# Driftwood Middle School

Steven Williams, Principal

*Broward County Public Schools*



- Significant gains in Black achievement, Reading (2009-2011).
- Significant gains in Black achievement, Math (2009-2011).
- Significant gains in ELL Math proficiency.

## 2010-11 Demographics

<b>Total Enrollment</b>	1554
<b>White</b>	30.0%
<b>Black</b>	19.8%
<b>Hispanic</b>	43.1%
<b>Asian</b>	4.5%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.1%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.7%
<b>Multiracial</b>	1.9%
<b>Disabled</b>	12.9%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	67.4%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	8.1%
<b>Migrant</b>	-

Driftwood Middle School is a Magnet Academy of Health and Wellness. Our mission is to empower students by integrating problem solving techniques and improving interpersonal skills. The Driftwood School Community is comprised of students, staff, parents, and business partners who work together to promote positive choices and behavior while cultivating life-long learners. The comprehensive magnet curriculum is designed to promote exercise, good nutrition, and healthy lifestyles to ensure student achievement and help students realize their academic potential in a safe environment.

Our Magnet Program engages students in a wellness curriculum. Students participate in high-tech fitness assessments. Healthy lifestyle modules are offered throughout the curriculum. Students prepare for a variety of career opportunities in health related fields. School-wide health and wellness initiatives are designed to ensure students success.

The School Leadership Team is comprised of Administration, Curriculum Coaches, an ESE Specialist, Guidance, a Magnet Coordinator, and a Title I Coordinator. Members of the School Leadership Team are well versed in classroom organization and classroom management strategies. Since the individuals are on-site, they regularly conduct classroom walkthroughs to monitor and support teachers who have identified needs. They assist teachers with organizing learning centers and work with teachers to appropriately organize groups for small group

instruction as necessary to address identified weaknesses. Members of the School Leadership Team assist teachers with identifying and implementing effective reading strategies and tools to use during the facilitation and delivery of daily instruction. These processes ensure that students are appropriately placed and receive targeted instruction that will ensure academic progress.

A variety of instructional strategies, practices, and programs have been implemented to provide teachers with the tools to enhance the development of literacy among all students. To enhance student proficiency in writing, a comprehensive writing curriculum has been infused within the Language Arts classrooms. Students also participate in monthly non-fiction writing opportunities across the curriculum. A school-wide reading curriculum has been implemented, and Reading Instruction Focus Calendars are tailored to address each team of students' specific areas of weaknesses. All teachers are Reading teachers, infusing reading skills and strategies within their lesson plans and instructional delivery. On teacher teams, Reading, Social Studies, and Science teachers collaborate to address student needs utilizing common reading strategies during instructional delivery and as students are engaged in cooperative learning environments. Students are exposed to complex text and participate in weekly stamina practice based on both Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Common Core Curriculum Standards. In mathematics, students are provided with differentiated instruction techniques that challenge and provide stimulating, higher-order questioning and problem solving skills. Science classes are structured to provide the opportunity for participation in project- and research-based learning that enhances the understanding of the Scientific Method and science concepts in real world situations. These learning opportunities include labs, activities, and daily mini-lessons to review spiraling concepts. The Magnet curriculum is infused through all disciplines with core content focusing on the total well being of the middle school child. These courses include physical enrichment, healthy living and nutrition, cooperative games and leadership, and environmental wellness. Our unyielding commitment to students and student achievement has resulted in our students showing consistent learning gains across all curriculum subject areas, as well as having earned the highest writing scores of all Broward County traditional middle schools for three consecutive years.

***“On teacher teams, Reading, Social Studies, and Science teachers collaborate to address student needs utilizing common reading strategies during instructional delivery and as students are engaged in cooperative learning environments.”***

Through all disciplines, data is regularly collected and disaggregated to drive, revise, and/or enhance the instructional foci and identify professional development needs. Subgroups and performance on particular benchmarks that are in need of improvement are targeted as well. Student progress is monitored through the use of mini-benchmark assessments, student portfolios, data chats between teacher-student, as well as teacher-administrator and/or teacher-curriculum coach.

School-wide, content specific Lesson Studies take place on a weekly basis. Lesson Study allows collaborative lesson planning and sharing of best practices as it pertains to the development of content area skills. In addition to Lesson Study, professional development takes place on a monthly basis to ensure every teacher has the tools and understanding to effectively differentiate instruction. Some of the professional development opportunities include non-fiction writing

across the curriculum, technology integration, collaborative learning groups, using data to drive instruction, and reading strategies in content.

As part of the instructional delivery component, technology is available through the use of Smart Rooms and Promethean boards. Additionally, each teacher is required to maintain a wikispaces web page that correlates with the daily instructional focus. Students and parents have full access through the Internet. In addition to computer labs, each content area uses laptop carts in the classroom to enhance instruction and provide opportunities for project-based learning.

At Driftwood, a positive climate and culture is maintained, which is conducive to an optimal learning environment. Teachers are supported and encouraged to actively engage in the implementation of school-wide initiatives. It has been established that every student can and will learn, as well as meet high expectations, regardless of any limitations or academic deficiencies. Students are held to the standards in the Code of Conduct in regards to academic and behavioral expectations. All stakeholders, including but not limited to staff, parents, students, and business partners take pride and ownership in contributing to the overall success of Driftwood Middle School.

# Sheridan Hills Elementary School

Donald Fitz, Principal

*Broward County Public Schools*



- Significant gains in Black achievement, Reading (2009-2011).
- Significant gains in Black achievement, Math (2009-2011).
- Significant gains in Lower Quartile Math achievement.

## 2010-11 Demographics

<b>Total Enrollment</b>	586
<b>White</b>	34.0%
<b>Black</b>	15.5%
<b>Hispanic</b>	45.4%
<b>Asian</b>	1.5%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.2%
<b>Multiracial</b>	3.4%
<b>Disabled</b>	21.3%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	67.6%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	26.1%
<b>Migrant</b>	-

Many variables contribute to our success. The first one is our faculty's ability to work together as a team, where shared decision making is valued by administration. As a team, teachers and administration analyze student data, assess school needs, and identify strengths and weaknesses. From these team meetings goals are set, staff development is planned, and curriculum is aligned. Our leaders have an open door policy with faculty and students, creating a welcoming and supportive environment. Throughout the day, children come and go through the offices of our principal and assistant principal. Students may come simply to visit, read, share a piece of writing, or simply for a pat on the back. Our students, parents, and faculty know that administration cares.

The success for our school can also be attributed to the instructional strategies, practices, and programs we have in place. We believe that one thing that sets us apart from other schools is our extended learning day, "Dolphin Training Camp". From October to March, approximately 110 students receive extra instruction twice a week, outside their regular school day. Unlike many tutoring programs, ours is not "Test Prep;" it is an authentic extension of their school day. Students are carefully identified, by analyzing past and present data, as well as social and emotional needs. We assign teachers of that grade level to identify grade level needs, plan instruction aligned to their daily classroom curriculum, and teach small groups after school or in the morning. When camp ended this year, there was an overwhelming consensus among

students that they were sad that it was ending. This was supported by the almost perfect attendance throughout the program.

In addition, Sheridan Hills Elementary is known for its “Tuesday Night Live”. Every Tuesday night, our media center is open to past and present students and family members from 5:00-7:00. On any given Tuesday night, our media center is bustling with children and family members using computers, reading books, conferencing with teachers, or simply socializing with other parents. It is also a place where holidays are celebrated and parent /student trainings are offered. This has allowed for families to build a community within the school and feel as if they are a part of the school culture. These are just two of the many successful programs in place here at Sheridan Hills Elementary (SHE).

Here at Sheridan Hills we continue to have high expectations of students and staff in both academics and citizenship. Students are motivated to learn and succeed through hands-on activities with challenging work that builds confidence and self esteem. Students prepare for a variety of learning challenges, always working toward the goal of “College Bound”. We have a number of motivational programs that help students meet these goals. Accelerated Reader is a program where students read books, take tests, and receive points. Their points are tracked and students earn stars on the hallway boards, shop at the A.R. store, and ultimately earn a medal and their picture on the Hall of Fame. Our “Sunshine State Sleepover” has also been a huge success. If students read all 15 Sunshine State Reader books and pass all the A.R. tests, they are invited to attend a sleepover at school. The enthusiasm that is felt when the children arrive with sleeping bags and pajamas is overwhelming. The media center comes alive at night for book trivia, dance contests, computer games, and time to celebrate with friends.

*“Students are motivated to learn and succeed through hands-on activities with challenging work that builds confidence and self esteem. Students prepare for a variety of learning challenges, always working toward the goal of ‘College Bound’”.*

Being a neighborhood school, family and community engagement are key components to our success. We include local business partners such as: Publix, Sheridan Technical Center, McDonald’s, and numerous others in supporting our initiatives. They help raise funds, provide incentives, and offer authentic learning experiences for our students. From the beginning of the year parents ask, “When is Math Night?” Families of Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students arrive at Publix with pencil in hand ready to solve real world problems. Seeing their teachers, working with friends and family to solve problems, and special treats provided by Publix rewards children.

When you walk in the doors of Sheridan Hills Elementary you know you are entering a unique, one-of-a-kind school. The school culture and climate provides a safe and welcoming feeling. It is a place where everyone is accepting of diversity and supportive of one another’s needs. Each year, an average of 20 families are identified as having exceptional needs. Our families, staff, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and partners work together to provide Thanksgiving food baskets and holiday gifts. Year after year the office is overflowing with gifts. This year, 70 children received at least four gifts each. The gratefulness expressed by parents was overwhelming. Most recently when we

had a teacher battling brain cancer the SHE family came together. In just two weeks, the school and community put together a family fun night complete with amusement activities, gift raffles, and a live concert. During the concert all faculty and students surprised this teacher with a flash-mob. In that one night we raised \$8,000 for one of our own; we are truly a family here at SHE.



# Floral City Elementary School

Janet Reed, Principal

*Citrus County Public Schools*



- R1 - increased in overall Reading Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).
- R4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains, overall Reading Learning Gains, and Reading Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- M1 - increased in overall Math Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).
- M4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains, overall Math Learning Gains, and Math Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).
- Significant gains in the Lower Quartile.

## 2010-11 Demographics

<b>Total Enrollment</b>	349
<b>White</b>	83.4%
<b>Black</b>	3.7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	9.5%
<b>Asian</b>	-
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	-
<b>Multiracial</b>	3.4%
<b>Disabled</b>	15.5%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	70.2%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	1.4%
<b>Migrant</b>	1.4%

Floral City Elementary school is a small rural school with a student population of 350 PreK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Free and reduced lunch percentages range from 72-76%. Our minority enrollment made up 14% of our student population in the October 2011 count.

A large portion of Floral City Elementary students struggles academically and need extra assistance in order to obtain proficiency with grade level expectations. Over the last 15 years, a number of instructional practices have been established that have increased proficiency levels and student learning gains significantly. Small group instruction in reading and math, a succinct progress monitoring plan, data days, and weekly collaboration sessions have helped move our students to higher proficiency levels with outstanding learning gains.

Small group instruction in reading has been implemented for the longest time period. Small group instruction in math has been consistently implemented for the past three years. Whole group instruction takes on a mini-lesson format, with the teacher moving into small group instruction for the majority of the 90-minute reading or 60-minute math block. Teachers use data from ongoing assessments to pull flexible groups for instruction. In addition, aides assigned to classrooms during the reading and math blocks are instrumental in providing strategic instructional support to individuals or small groups.

Our school-wide progress monitoring plan was in place long before Response to Intervention (RtI) was established. Over the last ten years, our extra assistance plan has evolved from every student receiving instruction in the five components of reading to very explicit and strategic instruction given to students on a progress monitoring plan. Teachers meet with the administrative team during data days to look at individual student data and determine what students in each class need additional support and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Progress monitoring is based on the area of deficiency and is monitored on a weekly basis to determine if the intervention is correcting the determined deficiency. If the gap analysis indicates that student progress is not sufficient to close the gap, a problem solving team convenes to determine next steps. Once the student reaches the problem solving team, meetings are held every four weeks to review progress.

Data days involve classroom teachers, ESE teachers, reading resource teachers, and administrators meeting to review individual student data four times a year. Data spreadsheets are created and maintained on every class. Those sheets have established data points that each teacher collects during a nine-week period. At the end of the year, accumulated student data is shared with the new teacher in order to assist in determining individual student needs early in the school year.

Teachers have weekly collaboration sessions with grade-level colleagues to focus their work on selected topics that are linked to our school improvement plan. The administrators and literacy coach are always part of those sessions to dialogue with grade-level teams as they plan for instruction.

The culture and climate of Floral City Elementary is another component that plays an important role in our success.

Expectations are set and teachers are supported in various ways to ensure instructional expectations are consistently implemented throughout the entire school. Administrators and teachers learn together and are in constant dialogue about how to improve student achievement at Floral City Elementary. When new ideas are brought on board, time is given to collaboratively work through processes and refine them.

Accountability is maintained through daily classroom visits, faculty learning, and collaboration sessions. During classroom visits, administrators observe students actively learning in all group settings. Administrators are part of the faculty learning sessions, learning with and leading teachers in new learning. Administrators also facilitate follow-up collaboration sessions. Teachers are expected to share artifacts of lessons at faculty learning sessions on a regular basis.

Overall, the culture of Floral City is one that values the collaboration process to ensure student success. Teachers share best practices with colleagues and reach out to each other when ideas are needed to improve instruction. Administrators use every possible resource to support teachers in their efforts of moving students to proficiency and higher.

The processes and common goals established at Floral City Elementary have been instrumental in reaching such high levels of proficiency and making significant learning gains, especially with students in the lower quartile.

***“Small group instruction in reading and math, a succinct progress monitoring plan, data days, and weekly collaboration sessions have helped move our students to higher proficiency levels with outstanding learning gains.”***

# Long Branch Elementary School

Marva McKinney, Principal

Duval County Public Schools



- **R4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains, overall Reading Learning Gains, and Reading Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **M1 - increased in overall Math Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).**
- **M4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains, overall Math Learning Gains, and Math Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in the Lower Quartile.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	171
<b>White</b>	2.3%
<b>Black</b>	97.1%
<b>Hispanic</b>	-
<b>Asian</b>	-
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	-
<b>Multiracial</b>	0.6%
<b>Disabled</b>	16.4%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	97.7%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	-
<b>Migrant</b>	-

Long Branch Elementary is located on the lower East side of Jacksonville, Florida. It is a magnificent school overflowing with purposeful learning! Our students are motivated, energized and learn something new every day! Year after year the students of Long Branch continue to gain knowledge and reach higher levels of achievement. As the Principal, it is a pleasure to lead and collaborate with individuals who share the same vision. Throughout my six-year tenure, I continue to lead with an instructional and strategic focus, which has shown results of remarkable student growth and performance. Some of the best practices that are consistently utilized include: the use of data, common planning, effective communication and ongoing professional development.

Using data to drive instruction is evaluated from the perspective of both the teacher and student. Teacher centered data chats involve collaboration and goal setting. During this time teachers review their current data with an Instructional Coach and their discipline to plan effective lessons and to differentiate instruction. Another method that is used when reviewing data is to allow students to take ownership of their growth and performance. This student-centered data chat is conducted once over a two-week period and includes the classroom teacher and student. Students set personal and academic goals when they conference with their teacher. These data chats have proven to be an essential element to student performance and also contributes to building healthy relationships.

Another valuable component is the use of common planning. Teachers utilize this time to plan lessons and share ideas for engaging lessons, as well as integrating learning strategies across the curriculum.

Communication is a very important aspect of any educational venue. Some of the ways we communicate consistently is during my Design Team Meeting, which is conducted twice monthly. A representative per grade level and the members of the leadership team attend the meeting to voice and address any concerns that may be prevalent in relation to their productivity. An additional support for communication is through the use of Blackboard. Blackboard is a source where teachers may access any artifacts in relation to professional development, updates, reference material, and many other components as they relate to the school. The major advantage of using Blackboard is the convenience of accessibility anywhere, anytime.

High levels of active engagement are an important part of the success at Long Branch. This is attributed to the many ways I encourage my faculty and staff to engage, activate, and motivate students everyday to ensure everyone is always excited about learning. The school is infused with many talents; everyone utilizes their creativity and love for teaching to ensure that students reach their full potential. Some of the strategies that have been implemented include: collaborative structures, small group and differentiated instruction, developing individual intelligences, student development of character traits, and systems to recognize the successes of students and teachers. These talents are magnified through music, songs, movement, and visual representation. Although students experience daily challenges, they continue to be resilient and make academic improvements each day.

The foundation of effectively using best practices is ongoing and purposeful professional development. Teachers are encouraged to act as educational leaders; throughout the monitoring process I recognize teachers for their hard work and perseverance by inviting them to share their ideas during our professional development training. Our school-wide professional development training is derived from the evidence recorded from a teacher self-evaluative tool. This information ensures that all professional development is intentional and meaningful. As the school leader, it is important to me to empower others. I encourage my teachers to continue their professional growth and development; many of them have completed advanced degree programs and participate in inquiry based research projects. My goal is to develop learning leaders and thus build capacity within the school. The *Steps to Achievement* includes many of the methods that most educators presently use. Setting high expectations for students and teachers, using data and monitoring student progress, effective communication, high levels of engagement, relevant professional development, and creating a powerful school culture are some of the methodologies that I have used on the road to a successful school.

Although many educators are familiar with these methods, the key to success is HOW to strategically use the *Steps to Achievement* to gain overall success. These strategic approaches have been uniquely designed to meet the needs of all students.

***“Setting high expectations for students and teachers, using data and monitoring student progress, effective communication, high levels of engagement, relevant professional development, and creating a powerful school culture are some of the methodologies that I have used on the road to a successful school.”***

It is my belief that student progress continues to blossom due to consistent monitoring and the dedication to student achievement that the faculty and staff exhibit each day. All children and schools have varying challenges; the methods I have used can be differentiated to meet and increase student achievement within your classroom or school. I am confident that you will be able to adopt many of the strategies that will serve as an enhancement to your present practices. I am looking forward to sharing my road map to success within this educational forum and to share the *Steps to Achievement* that have proven to be beneficial to my staff and other educators.

# Stewart Street Elementary School

Lisa Robinson, Principal

Gadsden County Public Schools



- **R1 - increased in overall Reading Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).**
- **M4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains, overall Math Learning Gains, and Math Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in SWD Reading proficiency.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	599
<b>White</b>	1.8%
<b>Black</b>	93.7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	3.7%
<b>Asian</b>	-
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	-
<b>Multiracial</b>	0.8%
<b>Disabled</b>	19.9%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	91.5%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	1.7%
<b>Migrant</b>	0.2%

Stewart Street Elementary School (SSES) is a school whose culture is focused on student learning. The school serves over six hundred students grades Pre-K through Grade 5. It also houses the elementary Emotionally Handicapped population for the district.

SSES has a commitment to high expectations, innovation, and collaboration. Teachers and administrators are an active part of each child's educational process. The school's primary goal is to help every child realize his/her full academic potential. The school and staff are committed to helping children develop social responsibility. They encourage and support each child to develop his/her unique talents so that he/she may become responsible citizens of the community.

Parents are very important to the school. SSES believes that a successful educational experience is a partnership between the home and the school. Educators and parents alike contribute to the growth and development of students' lives. The best possible educational experience is provided by the collaboration of all education and community stakeholders, especially parents. The school looks forward to meeting every child's needs together with parents and the community. Faculty and staff at SSES work cooperatively and collaboratively with students, parents, and the community. Teachers make home visits and parents are invited to visit their child's classroom to stay abreast of student progress.

The staff at SSES set high expectations and create a positive learning environment for students, faculty, and staff in order to enhance performance and promote development of critical skills. Students are provided a challenging curriculum in a clean, safe, non-threatening, and drug-free environment. Teachers develop and ask higher-order questions when examining students and probing for answers to questions. Students are challenged with next grade level work and provided enrichment to help them maintain and/or increase their level of proficiency. High-quality staff, innovative and research-based strategies, as well as the use of modern technology, are key pieces in the delivery of instruction. The school provides all students with opportunities for quality learning and the necessary support to ensure academic acceleration, consistent demonstration of appropriate social behavior, and continuous personal improvement. Excellence and a desire to learn are a way of life.

The school also offers an early childhood program geared toward assisting young children in making successful transitions from home or other child care programs, as well as from one grade level to the next. Children are provided age-appropriate activities and experiences to promote social and academic growth. Prekindergarten coordinators, school administrators, and parents meet regularly to discuss provisions for activities and services to address the needs of children and to facilitate learning.

Professional development at SSES focuses on intensive training and support in order to develop skills for career teachers. The professional development provided to staff identifies and field tests effective teaching strategies and creates strong learning communities at the school. A key aspect of the training involves more than just learning about best practices; teachers must learn how to implement those strategies in the classroom. The school continues to implement strong professional development programs to help new teachers become good and veteran teachers to become better.

***“The school provides all students with opportunities for quality learning and the necessary support to ensure academic acceleration, consistent demonstration of appropriate social behavior, and continuous personal improvement. Excellence and a desire to learn are a way of life.”***

The comprehensive approach to education reform galvanizes all teachers toward the most important goal of teacher learning. Educating children is as exciting as it is challenging. Each week at Stewart Street, core-subject teachers and specialists alike collaborate in "cluster group" meetings targeting individual student needs with cross-curricular instructional strategies. Teachers share effective best practices with each other, and master teachers model exemplary teaching behaviors. As a result, students benefit from the connectivity of these strategies across the content areas. School teams devote lesson study sessions to developing rigorous lesson plans. Teachers tailor the strategies to help students identify what each problem asks them to do and how they can apply critical-thinking skills to solve problems. This is facilitated by an RtI leadership team that meets once a month to review grade-level and classroom-level progress monitoring data to identify students who are at the moderate and at-risk levels. Based on this information, the team identifies resources and professional development to provide effective practices, problem solving, and new processes and skills for teachers.

Some of the special features that are offered at SSES include:

- After school tutorial programs with high attendance rates;
- Vista Volunteers to assist as parent liaisons;
- Americorp Volunteers that provide one-on-one reading assistance to struggling students;
- Several computer labs with reading and math intervention software;
- SRA Imagine It! Core Reading Program;
- SRA Imagine It! K-2 Reading Program;
- Acaletics Mathematics;
- Accelerated Reader Program;
- School uniforms;
- School Nurse on site;
- Continuous Improvement Model;
- Volunteer/Mentoring Program;
- Faith-based community involvement; and
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/School Advisory Council (SAC) committees.

"It doesn't matter where our kids come from, it's our job to nurture them and instill in them the belief that they can succeed."



# Clewiston High School

Janice Lee, Principal  
Hendry County Schools



- **M1 - increased in overall Math Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).**
- **M3 - increased in Math Proficiency and were above the state median for Math Learning Gains and the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for three years consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant increase in Black achievement, Math (2009-2011).**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	853
<b>White</b>	26.6%
<b>Black</b>	24.9%
<b>Hispanic</b>	46.5%
<b>Asian</b>	0.7%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.5%
<b>Multiracial</b>	0.8%
<b>Disabled</b>	13.5%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	66.4%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	4.2%
<b>Migrant</b>	6.4%

Clewiston High School is situated in the rural agricultural heartland of Florida in a county that consistently ranked in the top three counties in the state with the highest unemployment rate. With a high minority rate and high rate of students that come from low socioeconomic means, our school was nonetheless able to persevere and achieve some measure of success, particularly in math. When the 2010-2011 FCAT scores came out, as a school we were proud to see that much of the hard work we had put in as a team into raising the academic achievement of our students was paying off. In math, 76% of our students were proficient on the FCAT Math, while 83% of all students who took the FCAT Math had made at least a year's learning gain or its equivalent, and 80% of the students in the lowest quartile had made a year's worth of learning gains or its equivalent. We knew that what had started in 2009-2010, was coming to fruition. In that year, Clewiston High moved from an "F" school to a "D" school (we had earned an "F" in 2008-2009).

Much of the original progress was in large to changing the culture and the climate of school. With a new principal, a new administrative team, and a new vision for the school that was at the centerpiece of change, teachers and school leaders intensely focused on engaging, inspiring, and challenging students every day. An atmosphere of top-down leadership was replaced with a bottom up leadership style focused on the instructional empowerment of teachers. In the midst of this change, the state's Differentiated Accountability (DA) Region 4 team provided school-wide professional development on topics from the gradual release model of instruction to

implementing lesson study and FCIM mini lessons. Not only did the DA team provide the professional development, they monitored our progress through various instructional reviews throughout the year.

Beginning in 2009-2010, and from that point since, our five main academic content areas (reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies) have had common planning time, which has allowed the implementation of at least four lesson study cycles per year and a critical focus on instruction, data, and sharing of best practices.

In 2010-2011, our school received a school improvement grant (SIG) that allowed three major things to occur. First, it allowed us to extend the school day by two hours, four days per week. This gave way for many of our students to seek additional help in their core content classes, in addition to also having the opportunity to recover credits in math and physical education. Second, it allowed us to increase the amount of technology our teachers had available to them in order to deliver instruction. We were able to provide document cameras, student-clicker response systems, interactive whiteboards, and additional projectors in many of our classrooms. This increase in technology with the accompanying professional development to train teachers on how to maximize the use of this new technology created in many of our classrooms, more dynamic and engaging learning environments. Third, it allowed for our faculty to engage in more professional development, where teachers were able to attend math and reading conferences to increase their pedagogical skills.

***“An atmosphere of top-down leadership was replaced with a bottom up leadership style focused on the instructional empowerment of teachers.”***

In closing, we maintain that by creating a more positive family-oriented atmosphere for both teachers and students, focusing relentlessly on the quality of instruction that took place in the classroom, and monitoring the progress of students in addition to resourcefully using SIG funds, we were able to increase the academic achievement of our students.

# Reddick Elementary School

J. Thomas Roth, Principal

Hillsborough County Public Schools



- **R1 - increased in overall Reading Learning Gains and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for two consecutive years (from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011).**
- **M4 - increased by at least 10 percentage points in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains, overall Math Learning Gains, and Math Proficiency for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in ELL proficiency.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	648
<b>White</b>	9.4%
<b>Black</b>	3.5%
<b>Hispanic</b>	84.1%
<b>Asian</b>	0.9%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.8%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	-
<b>Multiracial</b>	1.2%
<b>Disabled</b>	15.3%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	94.3%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	67.6%
<b>Migrant</b>	13.0%

Reddick Elementary School is located in Wimauma, Florida, in southern Hillsborough County. The determining factors that lead to the success of any school are never easily defined. For a school to be successful, it takes the chemistry of blending multiple facets of an organization together to achieve the desired outcomes. With this said, there are two specific areas that we have identified as leading factors that have contributed to our success at Reddick Elementary.

The first area that we concentrated on was leadership. A great deal of emphasis was placed on developing leaders throughout the school. Specifically, we concentrated on developing teacher-leaders. First, teachers with academic knowledge and leadership skills were identified. The majority of these teachers were already serving in roles as subject-area resource teachers or team leaders. Next, these leaders returned to school a week early to analyze data and work together with administration as a leadership team to develop goals and plans to increase academic achievement. A presentation was delivered to introduce the faculty to the roles of these teacher-leaders and to share the plan for implementation. Throughout the school year, the leadership team met to review new data and to adjust teaching and learning as needed. To limit the challenges or barriers, administration clearly outlined the roles, purpose, and desired outcomes of having the teacher-leaders. By having teacher-leaders throughout the school, teacher and student needs were quickly identified and addressed so that academic success was probable.

The second area that was identified as having a direct contribution on our success was that of the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). By combining these systematic approaches we were able to focus directly on data (RTI) while simultaneously working together with teachers and teacher-leaders (PLCs) to develop plans to meet the learning needs of all students on a weekly basis. This also allowed administration, subject-area leaders, and student-services personnel to maintain continuous dialogue with the classroom teachers to ensure that we were all moving in the same direction to meet the academic needs of all of our students.

Although it takes many areas of focus to improve student achievement, the two areas discussed above were undoubtedly major factors that led to the success of Reddick Elementary. By working as one team, with one goal (student achievement) we have successfully created a learning environment that promotes and celebrates the successes of all stakeholders at Reddick Elementary.

***“A great deal of emphasis was placed on developing leaders throughout the school. Specifically, we concentrated on developing teacher-leaders... By having teacher-leaders throughout the school, teacher and student needs were quickly identified and addressed so that academic success was probable”***

# Maxey Elementary School

Martha Garcia, Principal

Orange County Public Schools



- Significant gains in Black achievement, Math (2009-2011).
- Significant gains in Economically Disadvantaged proficiency.

2010-11 Demographics	
Total Enrollment	270
White	12.2%
Black	51.1%
Hispanic	28.9%
Asian	3.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.5%
Multiracial	1.5%
Disabled	12.6%
Economically Disadvantaged	81.1%
English Language Learners	24.1%
Migrant	1.9%

Maxey Elementary is a Title I school located in Winter Garden, Florida. Students wear school uniforms and teachers set high expectations for their students to follow school-wide expectations and rules. Over 80% of teachers have taught at Maxey for at least six years and there is a strong sense of family among the staff. The theme, *“Teamwork Makes the Dream Work,”* set by the former principal, was fully woven into the culture of the school when Martha Garcia was appointed principal in 2010. There are also strong partnerships from the community that support Maxey by serving on the School Advisory Committee, implementing a student service club, mentoring students, and providing student incentives for increasing achievement.

Beginning in 2009, Maxey’s student achievement climbed from a “C” to an “A” and high levels of achievement were maintained through 2011. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all students also increased, from 85% in 2010, to 100% in 2011. There are numerous factors that have contributed to Maxey’s student achievement success; however they are all founded and grounded in the high achievement expectations that are communicated and permeate throughout the campus.

Teachers and staff at Maxey set high expectations for ALL students, *not just their own*, and there is a strong belief that ALL students can learn. This underlying belief has led to a highly committed and hard-working team. They truly reflect Maxey’s theme: *Teamwork makes the Dream Work!*

Having such a dedicated and collaborative team has contributed to high performing Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). PLC data meetings are conducted weekly, with discussions focused on student progress and instructional strategies to increase student learning. A PLC data meeting form is utilized to guide conversations and to document instructional decisions. Teachers maintain a student data binder and bring them to PLC data meetings as well as data forms to document student achievement. Grade level teams also meet weekly for PLC planning to develop lesson plans, utilizing instructional strategies identified in PLC data meetings. In addition, team leaders complete and submit weekly PLC planning forms to administration.

Grade level interventions in both reading and math have also contributed to Maxey's success. In reading, a common intervention/enrichment time for each grade level is scheduled so that additional staff may be utilized to support each grade level intervention block. This allows for small group reading instruction for all below level students. Students are homogeneously grouped for interventions based on formative and prior year summative assessment data. Classroom teachers, a part-time tutor, ESE/ESOL paraprofessionals, a Media Clerk, and Special Area teachers are utilized, along with classroom teachers to provide below, on, and above grade level reading instruction. During PLC meetings, student progress is monitored and intervention groups are reorganized, as needed. In both reading and math, the lowest 30%, as well as **all** students that are predicted to go down (Bubble Down) based on Edusoft Benchmark data (fall to winter) are identified and Tier III interventions are provided during Special Area time. P.E. waivers are received from parents for students to enroll in small group intervention two days per week. This small group instruction has been and will continue to be provided by the administrative team and part-time tutor. Below level students are provided with instruction to re-teach skills previously covered in the classroom and on and above Bubble Down students are provided instruction to reinforce and/or enrich skills being taught in the classroom. This serves not only to increase student performance, but also serves to further strengthen our collaborative culture by reflecting that *everyone* is responsible for student learning at Maxey, not just the assigned classroom teacher.

***“There is one underlying element that has been expected, promoted, and cultivated throughout the history of Maxey Elementary, and that is ‘Teamwork Makes the Dream Work’. This theme is foundational for successful student achievement.”***

Professional development PLC's have also contributed to the success of our students. As teachers learn and implement high-yield instructional strategies, student achievement increases. A PLC Book Study is conducted yearly and a rubric is utilized to outline expectations and determine professional development points. Monthly chapter presentations are presented by grade level teams that include examples of effective instructional strategies implemented in the classroom. This lends itself to further collaboration, a common language, and tools that all teachers incorporate into their classrooms. To receive maximum points, teachers must complete a portfolio that reflects classroom implementation of strategies utilized, which are showcased at the end of the year. Presently, Robert Marzano and John T. Brown's book entitled *The Handbook for the Art and Science of Teaching* is being studied. Additionally, Vertical PLC's for Reading, Writing, and Math began in 2011. Grade level representatives meet monthly to identify instructional gaps between grade levels and develop strategies and tools for seamless vertical alignment.

Lesson Study has also been implemented at Maxey in grades two and three. This year, kindergarten and first grade teams will be added. In addition, two PLC planning days are provided to teachers in January to review Edusoft benchmark data and prioritize areas in need of improvement in both reading and math. Focus Calendars are developed to ensure targeted instruction in identified weak areas is provided prior to FCAT. Edusoft mini-assessments are administered weekly to track progress and small group instruction is provided, as needed. In July 2011, an increase in the number of discipline referrals, out-of-school suspensions, and teacher concerns necessitated a Positive Behavior Support team to be established. A review of existing rules and procedures was conducted and a handbook for consistency in positive classroom management, rules, and procedures throughout the school was developed. The handbook was distributed to each staff member during pre-planning, along with lesson plans to teach school wide rules and procedures, focusing on positive behavior. As the year progressed, the Guidance Counselor conducted two group meetings to communicate expectations with new teachers as well as for teachers that needed additional assistance with classroom management. This Positive Behavior Support handbook is updated yearly and provided to staff, along with training and support.

ST Math was also first implemented during the 2010-2011 school year. This instructional software program was first grant-funded for grades three and four and provides computer activities that utilize a non-linguistic, spatial-temporal, problem-solving approach to math concepts. Computer lab time is scheduled for 30 minutes per day, four days per week. Presently, all grade levels have been added and are utilizing ST Math during scheduled lab time. Finally, regularly scheduled monthly Parent Nights that focus on subject area content, as well as engaging, hands-on student activities in reading, math, science, and writing has been a contributing factor to our students' success. These Family Nights provide students with additional practice and parents with information and activities to support education at home. To increase parent participation, a parent of the month is identified by each teacher and invited to be honored at each Parent Night. Prizes, as well as certificates are also awarded.

It is evident that there is not just one strategy, practice or program that has contributed to the gains achieved at Maxey in 2009-2011. There is no magic pill that we can replicate for all students to achieve high levels of success. There are a wide variety of strategies and programs that, when used effectively, promote student achievement. However, there is one underlying element that has been expected, promoted, and cultivated throughout the history of Maxey Elementary, and that is ***Teamwork Makes the Dream Work***. This theme is foundational for successful student achievement. Parents, community members, teachers, and staff reflect this in their support of Maxey. Teachers share their student success stories as well as failures and listen to and adopt effective instructional strategies and practices provided by other teachers. They do this because there is an understanding and a belief that the children of Maxey belong to everyone and everyone must work together to ensure that all students learn and make gains.

# Palm Springs Community Middle School

Sandra Jinks, Principal  
*Palm Beach County Public Schools*



- **R3 - increased in Reading Proficiency and scored above the state median for Reading Learning Gains and the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **M2 - scored above the state median for Math Proficiency, overall Math Learning Gains, and in the Lowest 25% Math Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in ELL proficiency.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	1531
<b>White</b>	20.3%
<b>Black</b>	15.2%
<b>Hispanic</b>	61.4%
<b>Asian</b>	0.6%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.2%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.5%
<b>Multiracial</b>	1.8%
<b>Disabled</b>	15.9%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	72.8%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	20.3%
<b>Migrant</b>	0.3%

Palm Springs Community Middle School is located in the heart of one of the most beautiful metropolitan areas in Palm Beach County. Our school’s enrollment consists of a diverse population of 1,535 students with the demographics of 18 % Black, 63% Hispanic, 16% White, and 3% other. We currently have 82% of our students on free and reduced lunch. Exceptional Student Education (ESE) makes up 15% of our population and English Language Learners (ELL) make up 27%.

Leadership definitely plays a significant role in our school’s overall success. Administration is actively involved in all aspects of the daily functioning of the school, ranging from being a part of the professional learning community meetings, decision-making, and addressing individual needs of all stakeholders. Prior to the school year and continuing thereafter, a great deal of planning goes into the Master Board Schedule to ensure common planning for the core subjects. This is done so that time is provided for our teachers to collectively meet and communicate the most up to date information.

Teachers and staff receive professional development throughout the year. This professional development is presented on-site, off-campus, and online using *TrainU*, the online professional development system that provides training and courses to all registered School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) employees. In an effort to remain on the cutting edge of education, the



SDPBC has set aside a number of days for students and staff to receive district-approved training. These days include five full-day in-service days and five half-day in-service days. The trainings offered on these days are mostly conducted on-site and are overseen by our school's own professional development team. Palm Springs Community Middle School has a four-person Professional Development Team that has been trained by the school district. The information presented is district-approved and often involves best practices shared among our own teachers and staff. Trainings are presented numerous times throughout the school year; before, during, and after school. It is our goal that our professional development team provides high quality professional development that supports increased achievement for all students.

Teachers meet weekly in Learning Team Meetings (LTM) to analyze data, identify strengths/weaknesses, and brainstorm instructional strategies to address areas of need. In LTM, teachers also take a deeper look at the benchmarks that they are teaching to assist them in creating their learning goals and scales. Teachers give weekly FCAT-style common assessments keeping track of their data, and then a school-wide monitoring of the assessments is calculated. In addition to the above-mentioned assessments, the School District of Palm Beach County provides Fall and Winter Diagnostic Assessments in Reading, Math, and Science. They also provide several writing prompts throughout the school year to help students prepare for the Florida Writes. The Fall and Winter Diagnostic results give us data to assist in monitoring the subgroups.

The Educational Data Warehouse (EDW) team develops data reports for the School District of Palm Beach County's school and district personnel. Our school uses these reports help measure the progress of each student and school against various federal, state, district, and school criteria. Using EDW's reports, administrators can assess school performance trends over time, compare schools to each other, and analyze the total school's performance relative to the district as a whole. Teachers are able to access student performances on state and district-mandated assessments. By monitoring school trends and student achievement, opportunities for improvement can be identified and timely changes can be implemented to ensure our students receive the best possible education.

***“The on-going professional development, coupled with an environment of collaborative learning, helps bring the theory of data analysis to the practical application of renewed and relevant instruction in our educational settings.”***

The RAY WAY and STING are single-school culture programs that are in place at our school to emphasize campus-wide positive behavior. The faculty and staff exhibit complete “buy-in” to productive learning and the philosophy of efficacy in which everyone has high expectations to succeed.

The on-going professional development, coupled with an environment of collaborative learning, helps bring the theory of data analysis to the practical application of renewed and relevant instruction in our educational settings. Technology plays a pivotal role in our school's success; teachers incorporate instruction and learning with technology on a daily basis, preparing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners. Classrooms are equipped with teacher and student computers, LCD projectors,

screens, white-boards, document cameras, VCR/DVD units, Interwrite Pads, and specialized Audio Enhancement Systems. In addition, many of the teachers have course-specific equipment and technology that is used on a daily-basis or shared within their teams and/or grade levels. Currently, we have several teachers using iPods and iPads. Several computer labs are located throughout the school and are scheduled and used for purposes ranging from teacher/class research to computer-based testing.

Palm Springs Community Middle School is a School of Choice specializing in the Arts, Dual Language, and the soon to be Academy of Pre-Finance. While we are proud of our rigorous academics, it is often the many unique opportunities offered by our Choice Programs that set us apart. Some of the programs that we offer through our Choice Program for the Arts include band (beginning, intermediate, concert, symphonic, and jazz), orchestra (beginning and advanced strings), steel drums, chorus (beginning and advanced), dance (modern ballet, jazz, and dance history), communication arts (speech and debate, theatre I, II, and II, and advanced theatre), and visual arts (two-dimensional, three-dimensional, ceramics, and digital arts. Our Dual Language Program offers courses to students who speak both English and Spanish. With the goal of retaining their native Spanish language while at the same time remaining literate in both languages, students enrolled in these courses receive academic instruction in Math and Social Studies in both English and Spanish. This school year, Palm Springs Community Middle School applied for, and received approval, to begin an in-house Academy of Pre-Finance. An introductory course emphasizing finance and economics will be offered. Our goal is to grow this program while at the same time, increasing our students' readiness to become financially responsible, educated, and independent citizens. Approximately one third of our school's population is enrolled in one or more of our school's choice courses.

As a school, we are proud of our students, teachers, staff, parents, business partners, and community members. Our designation as a Community Night School only helps to strengthen our bond with our community. Many of the parents of our students become students themselves in the evening. Our school is truly part of the community; a place to learn, a place to feel safe, and a school of which we are truly proud!

# Wynnebrook Elementary School

Jeffrey Pegg, Principal

*Palm Beach County Public Schools*



- **R2 - scored above the state median for Reading Proficiency, overall Reading Learning Gains, and in the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **R3 - increased in Reading Proficiency and scored above the state median for Reading Learning Gains and the Lowest 25% Reading Learning Gains for three consecutive years (2009, 2010, and 2011).**
- **Significant gains in Hispanic Reading proficiency.**

2010-11 Demographics	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	840
<b>White</b>	12.7%
<b>Black</b>	38.0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	44.8%
<b>Asian</b>	1.1%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.4%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.2%
<b>Multiracial</b>	2.9%
<b>Disabled</b>	12.9%
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	86.4%
<b>English Language Learners</b>	38.1%
<b>Migrant</b>	1.0%

Wynnebrook Elementary School is located in suburban West Palm Beach, Florida. It is a neighborhood school with a variety of ethnicities and cultures. It has a poverty rate of 89% and a minority rate of 86%. The school's population averages between 800-820 students annually.

Wynnebrook's success in continually achieving gains in student achievement is a direct result of having a primary focus on a single school culture, professional development, and literacy. The Code of Conduct was also implemented in 2001. The teachers begin on the first day of school building a community based on the Code of Conduct of being respectful, responsible, a peacemaker, and prepared. Having a sense of community allows for the teachers to focus on instructing the students, rather than constantly redirecting student behavior.

Having a single school culture where all staff members share the same vision, commitment, and common goals is another attribute to Wynnebrook's success. Teachers meet in collaborative teams based on grade levels on a five-day rotational basis. Teachers meet to discuss lesson planning based on curriculum and student data. Best teaching practices are shared among the group. Teachers map out the curriculum and create common assessments based on the standards.

Wynnebrook Elementary firmly believes in creating lifelong learners. Professional development is an integral piece in maintaining student achievement. Staff members discuss which areas, based on data, are foreseen as needing improvement. The professional development team presents trainings based on these needs. This is an ongoing process that involves follow-up with the professional development team and administration working hand- in-hand with the teachers.

Wynnebrook Elementary School began differentiated instruction in the area of reading in 2001. Guided Reading was implemented to meet the academic needs of all students. Students are given direct instruction to meet specific reading needs and to help deepen their understanding and processing of a wide variety of texts. The goal is to create a lifelong learner to ensure meaning is gained and maintained during reading. To achieve this goal, students meet with teachers daily in flexible small groups. Title I funds are used to provide two literacy teachers in the classroom during the literacy block.

***“The teachers begin on the first day of school building a community based on the Code of Conduct of being respectful, responsible, a peacemaker, and prepared. Having a sense of community allows for the teachers to focus on instructing the students, rather than constantly redirecting student behavior.”***

# Thank You!

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## School Site Visits

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