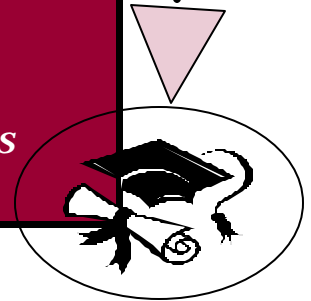




# Terms of Engagement: Student-Centered Exemplars of Secondary School Reform Principles in Miami-Dade County Public Schools



## Featured Secondary Schools

- American Senior High School
- G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School
- G.W. Carver Middle School
- Coral Reef Senior High School
- Design & Architecture Senior High School
- Homestead Middle School
- John F. Kennedy Middle School
- H.D. McMillan Middle School
- Merrick Educational Center
- Miami Beach Senior High School
- Miami Carol City Senior High School
- Miami Douglas MacArthur South
- Miami Norland Senior High School
- Northwestern Senior High School
- Miami Senior High School
- Miami Springs Senior High School
- Robert Morgan Senior High School
- North Miami Beach Senior High School
- Robert Renick Education Center
- South Dade Senior High School
- William H. Turner Technical Arts High School
- Felix Varela Senior High School

## A Call to Action

To herald the call for secondary school reform that is resounding across the country, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) held its own Secondary School Leadership Summit at the downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel on May 23-24, 2005. District teachers and administrators rubbed elbows and heard keynote addresses from an impressive array of nationally-recognized presenters. After an inspiring opening address by Superintendent Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, more than 1,000 participants were led in discussions of the implementation of the M-DCPS reform framework, a three-phase approach begun last school year.

The emerging framework is the product of a group of local school and district educators' work and is based on the model developed by the National High School Alliance, a partnership of leading national organizations. The mission emphasizes the need to shape "...policy, practice, research, and public engagement..." to "...foster high achievement, close the achievement gap, and promote civic and personal growth among all youth..." The primary aim of secondary education is to ensure that all high school-age students are ready for college, careers, and active civic participation. Aligning to the goals of the District Strategic Plan and the Superintendent's reform initiatives,

this substantive framework builds on six reform core principles: personalized learning environments; academic engagement of all students; empowered educators; accountable leaders; engaged community and youth; and integrated system of high standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and supports.

**Six Core Principles:**

- Personalized Learning Environments
- Academic Engagement of All Students
- Empowered Educators
- Accountable Leaders
- Engaged Community and Youth
- Integrated System of High Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Supports

Staff from the Office of Accountability and System wide Performance has compiled this compendium report which captures selected programs that feature the core principles of the framework. The report highlights 22 senior high schools, middle schools, alternative education schools and specialized learning centers located across the school district. The success of these programs is indicative of a promising future for our schools and students once this innovative framework is fully implemented throughout the district.

The school programs and their respective stakeholders featured in this report are exemplars of the rich human resources that are flourishing in our district. Their persistence and foresight are symbolic of what is and what is yet to be for our students. Their pioneer spirits have allowed them not only to think beyond the proverbial box, but also to go well beyond it to establish the groundwork for effective secondary school change.

# American Senior High School

## American Marketing Management and Sports Entertainment-AM<sup>2</sup> ASE

Students in AM<sup>2</sup>ASE (American Marketing Management and Sports Entertainment) are, well, "amase-ing." The mission of AM<sup>2</sup>ASE is to provide students with mastery of the academic and social building blocks needed for a successful future while fostering independence through hands-on experiences such as familiarization trips, job shadowing and internships, curriculum integration, technology-based projects, character education, industry-based speakers, and project-based learning.

Begun just two years ago, AM<sup>2</sup>ASE is an academy which features teams of teachers who work with a group of 60 students in two cohort groups. With the collaboration of Ms. Pat Vegnani from



One Community One Goal® and under the guidance of a University of West Florida consultant, the school spent one year putting the program together before recruiting students. Students, recruited from the feeder middle schools, wrote essays and completed an application to become part of the Academy. Selection criteria included report card grades, FCAT scores, effort ratings, and teacher recommendations. If needed, students were provided with remedial assistance in reading and mathematics.

This sports management academy exposes students to the atmosphere in which they will operate. Through partnerships with the Miami Dolphins, the Heat, American Airlines Arena, and Dol-

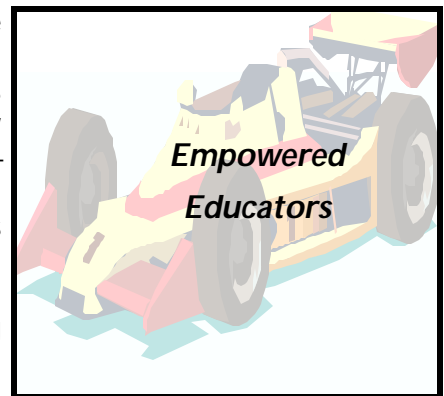
phin Stadium, students hear from professionals in the field about just what it takes to "Show me the money!"

Additionally, they visit entertainment locales such as E P C O T

and NASCAR events. They then complete quarterly cooperative learning projects that allow them to practice the skills they will need in the profession. Projects have included producing a Super Bowl commercial and developing a marketing plan to bring professional sports to a community that has none. The Miami Dolphins recognized one group of students for its project which required students to set up an imaginary tag football league with a five-thousand dollar budget.

Students have developed a sense of camaraderie and teachers have flourished in the teaming opportunities provided. Students take classes together and the teacher teams often move with the students from one year to the next, promoting a sense of community - a school within a school. Parents have become involved and take advantage of the increased access offered by the liaison activities provided by the Lead Teacher. Community is further promoted by the Academy t-shirts, logo, and banner. An advisory board, consisting of representatives of St. Thomas University, the University of Miami, Barry University, Johnson and Wales, Dolphin Stadium, and the business community, helps the school by evaluating student projects, providing slots for internships, and conducting fund raising activities.

*"...[the Academy is] a wonderful opportunity for students to be engaged, to have a focus - a direction for where they are going."*



# G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School

## Drama Program

Rolling up one's sleeves to get the job done is unlikely to be reserved as a metaphor for Thespian pursuits unless it's applied to Jack Mezzano, a blue-collar worker sewing the fabric of young people's lives. With every screen play he writes, every stage set he constructs, every scene he



choreographs, every stitch of the needle that goes into sewing a costume, and every piano key he strikes to provide the accompaniment, it is clear that this teacher talks the talk and walks the walk. Even more obvious is the unstaged sparkle evident on the faces of his students, an eclectic group of performers whose on-stage exploits help them set the stage and tone for the real world experience.

Fun usually isn't the choice synonym of students when they describe the learning experience, but fun is precisely what they have on a daily basis in Jack Mezzano's drama classes. A case in point is the improvisation game, *Reason Justified*. Here, two people are given a scenario to act out. The game proceeds until the person who presented the scenario says, "Stop!" At this point, the two actors freeze in whatever position they occupied, and another person gets up to take the place of one of the actors, with the un-

derstanding that he or she is to act out an entirely different scenario from that starting point. Everyone in the class gets the opportunity to jump in at some juncture, demonstrating his/her respective creativity.

"Theater not only helps us in plays and scenes, but it also helps us prepare for a bigger stage. After all, life is a stage," said returning junior Maria Suarez. Mezzano's students consistently have earned superior ratings in competitions at Florida International University, but the skills acquired along the way are those that they will take with them later on in life. The sentiments repeatedly echoed among these students provide eloquent testimony. They talk of developing openness and improving their ability to interact with others. They talk about the importance of acquiring listening skills and the courage to engage in public speaking, but, perhaps most importantly, they talk of belonging and having a sense of self worth and purpose.

"I felt important, needed, like I was wanted in that class, and that's what separated it from all my other classes," said Christian Vazquez, a returning senior. In essence, the Braddock drama program has set the stage for pursuits in later life. Not all these students will forge careers from their theatrical experiences, but the exposure they have received has provided them with the additional poise and confidence to approach life's demands. The imprint of Jack Mezzano's influence is likely to remain in their minds forever, and that is a teacher's greatest reward.

*"Theater not only helps us in plays and scenes, but it also helps us prepare for a bigger stage. After all, life is a stage,"*

**Academic  
Engagement  
of  
All  
Students**



# G.W. Carver Middle School

## Center for International Education

George Washington Carver Middle School is the only public middle school recognized by the French, German, and Spanish governments and accredited by France and Spain. The focus at the Center for International Education is to provide educational parity with the European systems and to enable students to compete successfully in the international arena using the best of the U.S. system. The academic program provides a curriculum that emphasizes competency in a foreign language and advanced or honors classes. The school has been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School

*"I make my teachers Superstars, and if you're going to be a Superstar, you had better deliver!"*

of Excellence and as an "A" school by Florida's A+ Plan. Carver students have

earned top FCAT

scores. The Center is comprised of two houses. The International Studies (IS) program is a challenging academic program with an international perspective. Students enter this program speaking, reading, and writing French, German, or Spanish proficiently and study in French, German, or Spanish. The International Education (IE) program is a rigorous academic program that enables high achieving students to study in French, German, or Spanish as they learn the language.

Students wishing to attend must demonstrate average to above average grades in all subject areas as well as in conduct. They must also achieve Level 3 or better scores on FCAT in the fourth grade. IS students must pass a language proficiency exam. If all criteria have been met, the student becomes eligible for the random selection process. Additionally, students from Sunset Elementary that have participated in the foreign language program there are eligible for admission.

That is the school program. The school heart is something else altogether. Program success is attributed to the systematic development of the teaching staff. The principal advises that in order to succeed, one must first envision where he/she



wants to be. Teaching staff at this school are expected to perform not only at their personal best, but at a level that is definitive of "high-quality" teachers.

The leadership strives to develop a professional environment and respect for the *profession* of teaching, underscoring that the most important person in the building is that great teacher in that classroom. Curriculum maps that address the thematic instruction have been developed by the faculty within and across grade levels and disciplines. In keeping with the principal's belief that in education, as in medicine, we can never know enough, the next step is the enhancement of teachers' skills. To accomplish this, a consultant was hired to mentor teachers and work with them to formulate individual professional development plans. As in any family, disagreements may arise, but in this culturally diverse teacher population, the approach to problem solving is characterized by respect, honesty, and fairness.

**Integrated  
System  
of High  
Standards,  
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and Supports**

# Coral Reef Senior High School

## Mega-Magnet Model



Coral Reef Senior High School calls itself a “mega-magnet” school. It is a unique high school composed of six small learning community academies, all of which are bound into a single high school where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Coral Reef students come from eighteen different middle schools. Those applying to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Academy must meet certain academic criteria, and those hoping for acceptance into the Visual and Performing Arts Academy must audition in the discipline they hope to pursue. The students who meet the criteria, like the students applying for each of the remaining four academies, are put into a lottery. The resulting student body is diverse and hard-working, but it is also very representative of the Miami-Dade County community. Students in each academy take magnet classes together, but their core subjects are integrated, providing the opportunity to meet and make friends with students from all of the disciplines. A counselor and lead teacher assigned to each academy monitor and support student progress, while classroom teachers take advantage of a school-wide e-mail system to maintain contact with students and evaluate student work. Building traditions and encouraging school spirit are high priorities, but the bottom line is academics.

Principal Adrienne Leal insists that at Coral Reef there are no rules; rather, there are expectations. With the onus on the students, they rise to the occasion. “In the culture of this school it’s not acceptable or cool to come late, to skip class, or to come unprepared,” she says. Journalism and IB language arts teacher Susan O’Connor agrees, “Because we have high standards, the kids recognize that it’s important to learn. The faculty is committed to the kids. A strong administration supports teachers who love to teach.” The results are well documented. The school has a 99% graduation rate. Recently, *Newsweek* magazine ranked Coral Reef 13<sup>th</sup> out of 27,468 high schools

based on the number of students who take Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes. The emphasis on AP classes, which begins with 9<sup>th</sup> grade AP World History, is one way students from all academies can compete academically with IB students, and it prepares all the graduates to succeed in the global economy.



Principal Leal also credits the high level of parental involvement at Coral Reef for the overall school success. Parents are aware of their big investment in this school. They actively support their students’ academies through booster clubs, and they work through the Parent Teacher Student Association and the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) to serve the entire school and its academic program. Counselor Warren Zucker, who chairs the EESAC, credits the parents for “...coming to the meetings, giving input, and being student-centered. The academies disappear into the overall good of the school.”

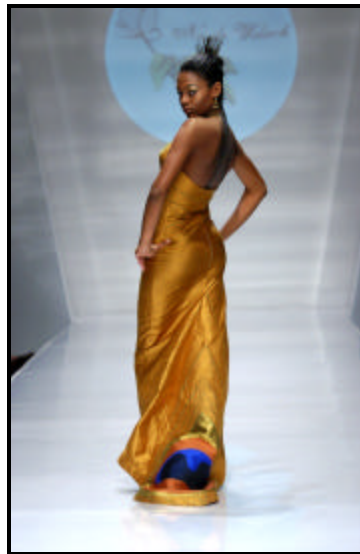
*“Coming here was the best thing my mother ever made me do. The classes are so personal; teachers go out of their way to help. Everyone is here to go to school.”*

The students recognize the home-school connection. Senior IB student Even Garcia loves Coral Reef: “Coming here was the best thing my mother ever made me do. The classes are so personal; teachers go out of their way to help. Everyone is here to go to school.” Shanae Staples, senior class president, agrees: “My mom made me come, but I’m so happy she did. I randomly picked the Business and Finance Academy, and I loved it from day one. Now I plan to major in accounting.” Twelfth grade IB student Kathryn Herrman chose Coral Reef because of its great reputation, and she’s glad she did.

# Design & Architecture Senior High School

## Fashion Design Magnet

Design and Architecture Senior High School, known to one and all as DASH, provides a unique, personalized learning environment in which talented students are prepared for college and a career in the design world. Situated in the heart of the Miami Design District, DASH provides a myriad of professional experiences for its roughly 480 students. Dr. Stacey Mancuso, the school's principal, believes that the smallness is essential for an effective school. It allows the staff to know all of the students and to relate to them as individuals. Students applying to DASH face a rigorous audition. They need to demonstrate individuality and potential. A portfolio is important, but a student who could only provide beautiful drawings on paper napkins from his father's restaurant was admitted based on his obvious talent. Students must also have a history of responsible school behavior, indicating an ability to meet the challenges of a daily commute, completion of 32 credits, including eight advanced placement classes, community service, and a senior internship.



*"Here you're a person. You can keep your individuality, but they won't let you fail."*

side of their world, including marketing and production values. Like most of the teachers at DASH, Ms. Pringle is connected to her industry. These connections allow students to develop real expertise while in high school. In their junior year, all students begin to develop a professional portfolio. For the fashion students, this will include the creations they've designed, constructed, and shown at the annual runway show. The school's professional advisory board has provided the entrée to take this show out of the school cafeteria and into the Fashion Week of the Americas among designers from all over the world. The board is also a prime source for senior internships.

Despite the hard work, the students rave about the high school experience. Senior Sandra Builes feels that she learned a lot. "The teachers are so motivating. They really push us, and I feel that I came out really well-rounded." Senior

After a freshman foundations year, students select a design program in which to specialize. While each of the other programs (industrial design, entertainment technology, architecture/interior design, web design, and fine arts) is remarkably successful in developing young talent, perhaps the most visible in its achievement is fashion design. Teacher Rosemary Pringle has established a program which is creative but structured.



She encourages students to go beyond the typical, to design clothes that are "edgy," but she also teaches them professionalism. Students learn figure drawing, fashion illustration, pattern making, and apparel construction. They study historical and cultural references, and they learn the business

Lauren Arkin agrees, "Here you're a person. You can keep your individuality, but they won't let you fail." Perhaps the most famous DASH fashion design student is Estaban Cortzar. While still a student, Estaban was the youngest designer ever to show a collection at Fashion Week in New York. After graduating in 2004, he started his own company. Dr. Mancuso believes that most students, however, will need a four-year college degree to get to where they're going. She has developed mandatory AP classes for the junior and senior years with the strong belief that the students are capable of this work. The school also makes available 22 semesters of dual enrollment in FIU design classes. This commitment to high standards has been borne out in high achievement. DASH has received performance grade of "A" for the past five years.



# Homestead Middle School

## Band Program

After speaking with Gene Timmons, Band Director, it's easy to see where the sunshine in K.C. and the Sunshine Band came from. Mr. Timmons, formerly a member of this popular group, is "crazy with desire" to see his kids succeed...and it shows! The band at Homestead Middle School has been honored by being asked to play for the Veterans' Day parade, the rodeo, the Martin Luther King parade, the José Martí parade, the Region VI Retirement Celebration, the opening of the Youth Fair, the Superintendent's Town Hall Meeting at South



Dade Senior High School, and, perhaps most telling of all, at other district schools which have bands of their own.

What sets this band apart from other middle and even senior high school bands? According to the band director, it is simply the fact that the students and he are willing to put in the time it takes to get done what they want to be done. That is, there is a clear vision of what this band program should be. The program goals and activities are planned so that all those participating know what they are looking for. And they go after it, "with tenacity."

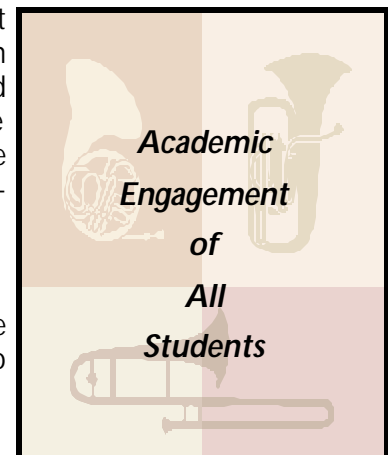
Commitment doesn't stop with the students or director. The program operates under a supportive administration that allows innovation and

room to grow - one that inspires staff and students to be the best that they can be by allowing for risk taking. The failures that are inevitable in taking risks are dealt with through considered re-direction, without the specter of intimidation. The parent community is engaged by access that begins with a band open

*"The practicing is really studying, and these kids study a lot."*

house and is supported by an online handbook. Parents run a music store which supports equipment purchases, and they help to make the program a family affair of the students, the parents, and the director. In fact, one of the leading parent supporters, Doris Crocker, hasn't had a child in the band since 1999. She says she still works with the band on an almost daily basis because she loves the kids and knows that Mr. Timmons accepts only their best and gives only his best. To further underscore the commitment made by the band family, an alumnus recently took it upon himself to refurbish the 11 year old drums the students play.

Mr. Timmons says that the band experience builds life skills: commitment, responsibility, pride, collaboration, and the will to succeed. The band structure also builds leadership with a Captain who is second in command to the director and three Co-Captains who are responsible for Band Spirit, Band History, and the "law" - Rules and Regulations. If you ask the students what makes them play in this band instead of in a band at one of the three nearby band magnets, the response is loud, clear, and unanimous-the teacher and the fun he brings to the program.



# John F. Kennedy Middle School

## Biomedical and Environmental Agriculture Technology Program (B.E.A.T.)

The Biomedical and Environmental Agriculture Technology Program (B. E. A. T) program at John F. Kennedy Middle School is made up of 500 highly motivated students with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, recruited countywide. Instruction in cohort groups in the vigorous academic program is carried out using hands-on activities in integrated thematic units that prepare students for advanced high school programs. Graduating eighth graders have been academically and vocationally challenged and are technically competitive and aware of the delicate balance between living things and their environment.

Students whose academic background is below the threshold for success are provided with tutoring opportunities before school, after school, on Saturdays, during the summer, and on a drop-in basis. Alternative scheduling allows for a three semester algebra class for students who need more exposure to the concepts. Parents sign a compact agreeing to support any academic interventions their child may need.

Teachers in the program are selected based on subject area expertise, theme appreciation, and commitment. They participate in an induction process that begins before the school year and continues until its end. Mentoring relationships are encouraged. These 18 teachers, who teach a reduced size gifted or advanced class, volunteer to start the school year early, working on their themes and classrooms.

Particular attention is paid to the concerns of parents. Staff of the program monitor parental concerns and take action.

The action taken is determined after gathering data regarding the issue and consulting with the principal. Parents are also courted before students are enrolled through recruitment activities that include visits to the 39 feeder schools and through an Internet publication describing all aspects of the program.

*"Tutoring classes have helped us achieve academic success."*



Results on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) indicate that B.E.A.T. students really do *beat* the competition. In reading, the percent of B.E.A.T. students achieving mastery was 88 as compared to 50 for the state and 38 for the district. In mathematics, the percentages were 92, 50, and 43 respectively and in writing, 100, 89, and 87.

The program has been recognized for student-led community service by the Future Farmers of America, as the Outstanding Agriculture Program in the state of Florida.

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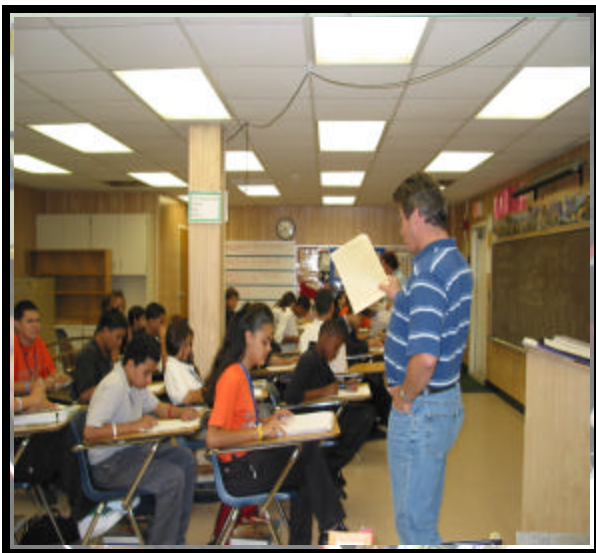
# H.D. McMillan Middle School

## Inclusion Program

H. D. McMillan Middle School offers a full inclusion program for exceptional education students that provides them, as well as their general education classmates, the opportunity for academic success in a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. Dr. Winston A. Whyte, McMillan's principal, first encountered inclusion as a skeptical elementary school principal.; however, when he saw first-hand the academic and social advantages for the students, he became a convert and an advocate. The model which is implemented at McMillan puts 25

general education students and 15 ESE students together in a class with a team of co-teachers. The ESE students include various learning disabilities, ranging from severe to gifted LD, as well as high-functioning autistic individuals. The key to the program's success is the willingness of teachers to participate and the successful pairing of teachers who must share their professional space. Ed Kunkle, who was a Mainstream Teacher of the Year, is an enthusiastic proponent. He sees that all the students benefit. "They are learning in a variety of ways with different strategies. As teachers, we learn from one another, and we collaborate in all areas. Sometimes the ESE kids need something different, and we will discuss ways to meet that need. Frankly, though, I often forget which ones are the ESE students." Hortensia Rodriguez, Kunkle's teaching partner, agrees. "The experience is wonderful, but it is challenging. The teachers must be on the same level and must get along as people. It's like a marriage." The existence of a strong ESE department and teachers who were willing to try boded well for success. The teachers received professional development and support from the Florida Inclusion Network.

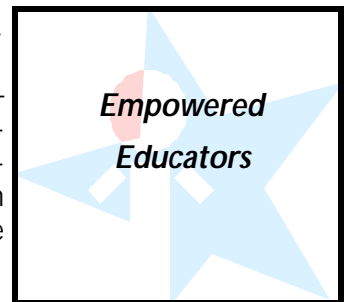
*"The people are nice. Teachers do what's best for students and give them what they need to succeed."*



By the end of that year, the success was measurable. Not only were parents and teachers happy, but also the students made learning strides. Of the ESE students in the inclusion program, 81% increased their Developmental Scale Score, and 95% of these students had significant learning gains. Similarly, 86% of the general education students who were in inclusion classes increased their Developmental Scale Score, and 89% achieved significant learning gains. The program was then expanded to both 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades; today 73% of the ESE students are fully included. The successful learning gains have been repeated each year. The program has been so effective that today none of the staff at McMillan wants to teach in a self-contained classroom. Whyte notes, too, that inclusion has been a benefit for the beginning teacher program. Pairing a new teacher with a veteran in a co-teaching class provides a unique learning and mentoring opportunity.

The obvious advantage for the students is the academic success, but another equally important benefit is the positive social interaction. The ESE students are able to develop normal social relationships without the isolation or stigmatism they might otherwise have experienced.

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# Merrick Educational Center

## Specialized Outreach Center

It's hard to describe the feelings that you get when you visit a school like Merrick Educational Center. The first thoughts that come to mind are that this school exudes an atmosphere of caring and nurturing for students who have a variety of very special needs. Students who are enrolled at Merrick come from across the entire district to receive an education in a setting that exemplifies the principles driving secondary school reform: Personalized Learning Environments, Academic Engagement of All Students, Accountable Education Leadership, and Engaged Community and Youth.

By focusing on the unique needs of each student, the staff of Merrick Educational Center is dedicated to providing an excellent education to this community's pre-kindergarten through 12th grade medically and cognitively challenged students. Merrick also provides specially designed programs that address students' unique challenges at the school site as well as in students' homes or hospital rooms.

### **School-Based Programs for Students with Profound Mental Handicaps**

Merrick's School-Based Program provides the tools students need to reach their potential to participate in family and community life.

### **Community-Based Programs for Students with Profound Mental Handicaps**

The Community-Based Program for the Profoundly Mentally Handicapped provides instruction and related services at homes throughout the district to students who are too medically fragile to participate in classroom instruction.



### **Alternative Telecommunications (ATC)**

Merrick's Alternative Telecommunications (ATC) is a district-wide Alternative Education program for secondary students who have violated the Miami-Dade County Public Schools



*Code of Student Conduct* and have been assigned to ATC by the Division of Alternative Education. Students who are under the supervision of a work-back counselor or a juvenile justice officer receive classes at home by telephone.

***"All of my teachers help me with my school work, and I know they really care about me."***

### **Distance Learning Program**

Merrick's Distance Learning provides students with the opportunity to complete classes using web based instruction. Students who are enrolled in this program log into the "Virtual Classroom" to read the assignments, answer questions related to the curriculum presented, and complete their exams.

### **Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program (HHIP): Itinerant Services and Teleclass**

The Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program (HHIP) has two main components that work together to provide a wide range of curriculum opportunities to students who are unable to attend school for medical reasons. Itinerant teachers provide direct instruction to all eligible students in K-5, as well as eligible ESOL and exceptional students. Middle and senior high school students are served in the teleclass setting, which provides required courses and electives using teleconferencing equipment in studios located at Merrick.

# Miami Beach Senior High School

## Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (AOHT)

Miami Beach Senior High School's Academy of Hospitality and Tourism provides a personalized learning environment, meeting the academic needs of students while developing a well trained workforce for the city's leading employers. The shared commitment of the school's administration, the Academy's teachers, and the business community has created a school experience that is rigorous, relevant, and welcoming.

Students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade apply and are interviewed for acceptance into the Academy. While a GPA of 2.0 is generally required, the most impor-



tant criterion for admission is teacher recommendation. A student with lower grades but with strong recommendations will receive serious consideration. One of the results is that the student membership in the Academy is extremely diverse, representing the whole community served by Miami Beach High, including the range of academic abilities from ESE to gifted. In true academy form, the students are blocked into common language arts, social studies, science, hospitality, and some math classes. They become an actual school-within-a-school. Academy Director, Dr. Lupe Diaz, credits this small school environment with much of the program's success. She says that the teachers have the opportunity to really know the students. They can meet needs, address weaknesses, and celebrate successes.

The success of the program can be measured in the enthusiasm of its students. Senior Alan Alvarez is grateful for the opportunities the Academy has

provided him. "Being in this Academy, particularly the Summer Internship, taught me respect and dedication. It forced me to work hard and to work responsibly." Eleventh grade student Gianina Mora agrees

and adds that she has been able to build good friendships with students who share her commitment. "It

*...nearly all of the AOHT graduates attend college after high school, and nearly 70% have earned a 2- or 4-year degree.*

is lots of work and stressful at times, but it is lots of fun." The effectiveness of the Academy is born out by the accomplishments of its graduates. A 2004 survey conducted by Dr. Marjorie Hanson of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Office of Program Evaluation found that nearly all of the AOHT graduates attend college after high school, and nearly 70% have earned a 2- or 4-year degree. Alumni have gone on to join the hospitality industry in leadership roles, working for hotels and hospitality businesses in Europe, New Zealand, Las Vegas, and New York, to name a few. Many graduates return to Miami Beach, working for the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and local hotels. Fourteen graduates are currently employed in management positions at the Lowes Miami Beach Hotel.

The Academy's students are immersed in a rich curriculum. They learn destination geography, are trained in professional image and customer service, and are certified as Rooms Division Specialists through the Educational Institute of the American Hotel/Motel Association. The business partners support their learning, sharing their expertise as mentors, career shadow volunteers, and guest speakers, and helping to place students in mandatory summer internships.





# Miami Carol City Senior High School

## Law Magnet

**Integrated System of High Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Supports**

Miami Carol City Senior High School is home to a Legal and Public Affairs program which provides young people an opportunity to be excited about learning as they engage with the legal community in significant ways. Tenth grade student Markesha Miller is firmly on her career path. "The program grooms us to be better professionals. We carry ourselves differently, and we look at ourselves as future lawyers." The students are recruited from area middle schools and are selected by lottery. Although there is no academic requirement for application beyond the district-mandated 2.5 GPA, lead teacher Natilee Brown-Van makes sure all applicants are aware of the heavy load they are committing to in joining this program. Incoming 9th graders attend a summer program in computer skills at St. Thomas University; the following summer they return to St. Thomas for a leadership course. Each year's elective law classes are honors level. By their senior year, the students will be in dual-enrollment classes for their core subjects as well as Advanced Placement Government. Joi Renique, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader, is proud to be in this rigorous program. "Our teacher makes us feel that we are the cream of the crop. We feel very fortunate to get everything else in the high school but also to get more." Her classmate Ali Connor agrees. "We're getting a heads-up on the competition. You don't know you can do something until someone tells you you can."

Dr. Brown-Van is an attorney who practiced in the public defender's office but knew her real calling was in the classroom. Here she exposes her students to the world of opportunities available to them. The students compete successfully in Mock Trial. They were the district champions in the "We the People" constitutional law competition and came in third in the state. They are groomed for leadership in the summer program and special

retreats. Most of these students are active in the Student Government Association, and they work together to develop meaningful service projects. Dr. Brown-Van believes the key to the program's success is the engagement of the legal community in meaningful partnerships. This allows the students to enjoy field trips to the courts and to have outstanding guest speakers such as Senator Bob Graham, who spent a day teaching these students, or the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, who also visited the school.

In addition to the alliance with St. Thomas University, Carol City has a partnership with the University of Miami law school in an ementorship program. The high school students are teamed with a university mentor who agrees to communicate at least once a week by e-mail. Twice a year the students travel to the UM campus for face-to-face meetings as well. College is very much on these students' minds. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade they develop a college portfolio and take a college field trip together. Eleventh grade student Willedra Moseley explains that the goal is to choose options in and out of Florida, because you don't know which school may offer the best scholarships. Principal Kim plans to build on the program's successful partnerships to develop active internships and shadowing experiences for the seniors, providing even more opportunities for success.

*"Our teacher makes us feel that we are the cream of the crop."*



# Miami Douglas Mac Arthur South

## Project ArtSouth

Students at Miami Douglas MacArthur South come to this alternative school with a history of anti-social behavior. Many are involved with the justice system, having extensive arrest records and equally grievous school performance. All need to learn empathy and decision-making skills. Principal Steve Rummel holds out hope: "We can engage these kids with high expectations, small classes, teachers who are coaches, and project-based learning."



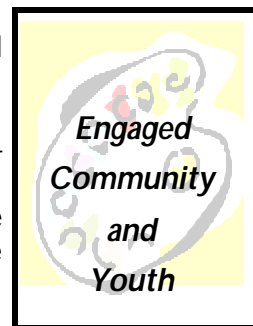
One of the school's outstandingly successful programs is Pupil's Perceptions, a partnership with ArtSouth, Homestead's not-for-profit art facility. Here targeted students have the opportunity to learn various art forms under the guidance of ArtSouth's resident artists. The students come by bus one day each week, although those who live in Homestead are able to use their studio after school or on the weekends. They are selected from regular art classes, must show initiative, commit to improve, and come to school. Their improved attendance will almost automatically increase their grades, but the benefits go far beyond academic improvement. The students come alive as they discover their own talents. They are engaged in creating paintings, ceramics, batiks, and wood carvings, and their focus precludes misbehavior.

Their art work is sold at ArtSouth's gift shop and at art shows throughout the county, providing the students both cash and a positive self-image. The work is also connected to the community as

the students rediscover their cultural traditions which were lost after Hurricane Andrew, then use their newly acquired skills to transform the community with murals and other works of art. They serve as docents for ArtSouth, where they are also building the community's only art library. Finally, they provide weekly workshops for senior citizens at a retirement community and an adult day care center, or they assist the art teacher at a program for disabled children. Art teacher Janis Klein-Young began the program with an end-of-year art show in 2002. ArtSouth's founder, Ellie Schneiderman provided an "incubation" year, but grants, including the most recent \$57,000 Title IV Service Learning grant, have kept the program growing. It is the only local program, perhaps the only one in Florida, that connects the arts to the community and to learning.

*...has improved his grades from an average of 0.9 to a 2.3.*

As Ms. Klein-Young describes it, Pupil's Perceptions "...connects kids and the community to make things better. Through this experience, the students learn that they can be productive." The students agree. Here you don't have 35 people in a class and no one paying attention. If you have a question, the teacher will answer. You can relax and learn something you would never have had the opportunity to learn." Junior Chris Gonzalez has received the Kendall Homeowners Association's Turnaround Award, and has improved his grades from an average of 0.9 to a 2.3. Senior class valedictorian Pierre Remy states, "The teachers are great. They get really involved one on one. I came on a field trip to ArtSouth, loved the art work and found I could do it." With improved grades, healthier decision-making skills, enhanced self-worth, and an appreciation for the value of service, students have an opportunity to succeed.



# Miami Norland Senior High School

## Child Center Program (C.A.R.E.S)

The Child Centered Program, "Children's Advocacy, Research, Education, Services," (C.A.R.E.S) Magnet provides a unique approach for Norland students as they explore a broad area of child centered careers, that include teaching, social work, pediatrics, health care, child psychology and counseling, and child advocacy in all aspects of law and justice. The Council of Great City Schools cited the program as a model for meshing pure education with other fields.

A postsecondary commitment is an expectation for students in this magnet program. As part of a program begun in 1991, in collaboration with Florida International University (F.I.U.), *SummerLink* provides incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders with a taste of the demands of high academic expectations during a four-week college experience on the F.I.U. South Campus. Students take four classes: The Power of Language, Exceptionalities, Minorities, and Cultural Mosaics; these are taught by F.I.U. College of Education students prior to their own internships. Curriculum is supported through trips to the Holocaust Memorial and a Miccosukee Village, along with student skits on ideas and issues generated through their classes. One *SummerLink* instructor noted, "... when they see young teachers right out of college ... and are able to be on the campus, they get a better idea of what an opportunity it is to go to college."

Miami Norland C.A.R.E.S. students have a demanding course load. Honors and Advanced Placement classes are the norm as teachers stress study habits and skills, writing, speaking, and high grade point averages in order to get into the nation's best colleges. Students are able to tour some of Florida's postsecondary choices. Almost yearly, a student receives acceptance to an Ivy League school even though he/she has not been able to visit such schools because of limited resources.

Tenth grade students are eligible for F.I.U. Dual Enrollment credits offered for Emergent Computer Technology and Introduction to Educational Technology during the summer. Eleventh grade stu-

dents participate in an 18-week teaching internship during the second semester with schools from the feeder pattern. Additionally, some eleventh graders also intern with teachers at the school in classes for exceptional students and selected ninth grade classes.



Executive Internships are available in other service areas such as law and medicine. Fifteen students spent their summer on paid internships at a neighboring church tutoring students for the FCAT. Twelfth graders are now able to experience an additional internship with the availability of eight periods at the school. Essays for college applications are closely monitored by caring magnet staff members who were picked for their enthusiasm and spirit.

Miami Norland students have become famous throughout the county as they have placed 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in six of the past eight years in the F.I.U. sponsored "South Florida Model United Nations." Students receive their designated country assignment in October and then take on that country's customs and issues as they prepare to face the mock U.N. General Assembly in the February competition.

Students bring the sense of value from the U.N. competition into their own community and service projects. Oleta River State Park has been the long time recipient of the C.A.R.E.S. students' time and efforts as they have joined with other students from Miami Norland for Saturday morning clean ups every two to three months. Good things and high expectations are contagious.

**Integrated System of High Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Supports**

*"Working with peers is great because we learn and interact at the same time. I have noticed that I want to learn more and it's a lot easier for me to talk in front of people. I've also realized that becoming a teacher is the main goal in my life."*



# Miami Northwestern Senior High School

## PAVAC Magnet Program

For over 30 years, the Performing and Visual Arts Center (PAVAC) magnet program has offered a challenging four-year curriculum in the visual and performing arts for students who are interested in careers in dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Two of the eight school course blocks provide for a concentrated focus on the applied and theoretical aspects of the student's discipline.

Acceptance into the program is through the M-DCPS School Choice and Parent Option/Magnet office and then by audition and portfolio presentation. While the program draws from the entire county, most placements are through the feeder pattern schools of Miami Norland and Drew Middle Schools, both of which have performing arts magnet programs. Students do not need to have the initial polish in a discipline, but rather a desire and determination to succeed.

Mr. Kevin Rutledge, department chair, hopes to teach students how to develop the art of self discipline as they become the strongest practitioner of their art. The attitude of hard and persistent work in performing arts translates to students' core curriculum work as they become independent learners and collaborators within their disciplines.

Students take Advanced Placement level classes in art and music theory and with scores of 3 or higher on the national exams can earn upward of 12 college credits before they graduate. Many students leave Northwestern's PAVAC program with scholarships to FAMU, Bethune-Cookman, the Florida School of the Arts, or performing arts schools in New York City.

There is strong support by the school's administration, parents, and community businesses. Trips to perform and to research cultural and postsecondary options are funded through donations from the community, staff contributions, and PAVAC fund raisers.

Other school programs benefit from the PAVAC magnet. The "Bulls" marching band includes members of the jazz band. The PAVAC magnet strives to create a feeling of "FAMILISH" while they integrate not only their own disciplines within the program, but also meld with the entire school program. One of the feeder pattern schools has a new music teacher who just happens to be a PAVAC alumnus. There is a hope to reestablish an orchestra throughout the feeder pattern, starting at the elementary school level.

*"The PAVAC program took me where I was and nurtured me and helped me develop my talents. Now I'm in line for a music scholarship at Florida International"*



The PAVAC students perform during the entire year, but one of their favorite times is when they visit middle schools to recruit possible candidates. They would like to bring more students, teachers, and parents to Northwestern in order that they can experience the top-of-the line facilities in each discipline and the nurturing/safe environment that the program offers. Students participate in local and state competitions, and Isaiah Dawson was a finalist in the recent "Miami Idol" contest.

Life time learning and performing by staff members keep them abreast of the changing industry standards which are then passed on to students. That connection is evidenced by graduates that have included Presidential Scholars, Arts Recognition and Talent Search Awardees, Silver Knight winners, MECA scholarship recipients, Ford Salute Education Scholarship recipients, and National Scholastic Art recipients.

**Academic  
Engagement  
Of  
All  
Students**



# Miami Senior High School

## Eight Period Day



Miami Senior High School serves approximately 3,200 students from a largely immigrant community where more than 76% qualify for free or reduced price lunch. In order to meet the academic needs of these students, which include providing significant numbers of remedial or double-dose classes in language arts and mathematics, while at the same time offering a full range of academic and vocational electives, the staff have implemented an eight-period block schedule. This program is a clear example of empowered educators, working in an environment of collaborative leadership, transforming a school to improve student achievement. Principal Victor Lopez saw the need to implement a change that would make the high school schedule more manageable. "Transforming high schools does not need to be drastic. Modest changes that are not imposed on teachers work best. The eight-period block schedule keeps students in school, doesn't kill the electives, and helps teachers to be more

*"Block scheduling periods are too long; traditional class periods are too short; but 4X4 periods are just right."*

focused." The initial impetus for this scheduling model came from the curriculum leadership team which visited a similar program at St. Lucie High School, Florida, then met with faculty members in small groups to answer questions and address concerns. Teachers had to choose whether to return to a traditional 60-minute class without a block, keep the 120-minute six-period schedule, or adopt the proposed 90-minute 8-period plan. They also were being asked to agree to teach an extra period without a supplement, in exchange for which they would have a planning period every day. EESAC Chair and music teacher Dr. Albert Kunze called the decision a bit like *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*. "Block scheduling periods are too long; traditional class periods are too short; but 4X4 periods are just right." He adds that the reduction in contact

hours has motivated teachers to be on task. After an initial three years of implementation, the faculty voted a resounding 88% in favor of continuing the program. The results indicate that, although teachers have more classes, the average class size is down, and the class length allows for any lesson or lab without becoming boring.

Miami High students like the opportunities the 8-period schedule has allowed them. Senior Andrew Hernandez took technology electives every year and became chair of the school's stage crew. "It was a great experience. I'm entering FIU better prepared and better able to prioritize." Senior class officer Yara Simon agrees. She was able to



participate in the Law Magnet, take two electives every year, attend a leadership class, and complete two Advanced Placement courses in her senior year.

Miami High received the 2004 Inspiration Award from the College Board because of the number of minority students who participate in Advanced Placement classes. Activities Director Barbara Quintero points out that this is only one of the many options that would not exist without the flexibility of the 8-period schedule. "We're keeping kids in school. We don't have the high achievers leaving because they want more options, and we don't lose the struggling students who need more support. Next year, Miami High plans to use the 8 period model to implement small learning communities and allow for common planning for teachers.

# Miami Springs Senior High School

## Accountability for All Youth

### Accountable Leaders

Miami Springs Senior High School had limited success in preparing low level readers and mathematics students for standardized tests prior to the 2004-2005 school year. In part, the school's efforts fell short because there were pockets of isolated success and nothing in place that was systemic throughout the school. Philosophically, it was clearly understood by the administrative team and staff that a system would need to be developed in order to capitalize on strategies that could be incorporated into intensive reading and mathematics classes that would increase student achievement.

It was determined that the solution could be found in creating a comprehensive data collection process for students who were at Levels 1 and 2 on the mathematics and reading portion of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). First, the Language Arts and Mathematics departments met to discuss what was to be taught, the methodology that would be used, and how students were to be assessed. Then, all of the information to be taught was placed on instructional calendars and was followed weekly by all teachers teaching Levels 1 and 2 students. Next, all teachers met to create weekly benchmark assessments that would be given to all Levels 1 and 2 students in reading and mathematics.

The benchmarks were to be taught in isolation and tested as such until several weeks prior to the administration of the FCAT. A system for collecting the data was created using the Excel program, and the weekly results were entered into the program. These results placed students in various categories such as those who mastered the benchmark, those who were bubble or borderline, and those who required extensive support in order to master the benchmark. The students and teachers were made aware of their results each week. The administrative team was given the results and reviewed with the teachers the progress of each class and students who were in the lowest 25th percentile in mathematics or reading.

*"Data-driven instruction was our school success"*



The data output was then used to determine what support students and teachers needed. For example, students whose data track made it clear that they were deficient in "author's purpose" or "number sense" would be placed in specific tutoring programs to support those benchmarks. This tutoring took the form of group pull-outs during elective class time and or Saturday tutoring. Teachers who had a significant number of non mastery students in a specific area would work with a fellow instructor who had more success teaching this area in order to share their methodology.

This system provided the opportunity for instructors to share what was working in a collegial and supportive environment and gave administrators the information necessary to make decisions on where to place resources to help teachers and students.

The results for Miami Springs Senior High School were nothing short of phenomenal. The school made significant gains in the area of mathematics and reading over the last two years. The school grade which had been a "D" over the previous five years as rated by the Florida Department of Education, moved to a "C" in the 2003-2004 school year and then a "B" in the 2004-2005 school year. This accomplishment took place while the school was on a double shift because of significant overcrowding. In addition, Miami Springs Senior High School had one of the highest ESOL populations in Miami-Dade County, and the total number of students who were below grade level in reading was nearly 80% in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.



# Robert Morgan Senior High School

## Comprehensive Academy High School Model of Excellence

Robert Morgan Educational Center, "A College Prep Comprehensive Academy High School," is a model of excellence and operates under the umbrella of seven academies which provide students the experience needed for certification in innovative programs. The seven academies include: Performing Arts; Transportation & Technical Services; Information Technology & Business Services; Engineering; Specialty Services; Design Arts & Entertainment; and Health Science. Each academy provides a variety of strands for students to concentrate in a field of interest. Part of the curriculum ensures students of mentoring and internship placements throughout the business community. With over 50 business partners already on board, this creates a win/win for everyone involved. Principal Greg Zawyer states, "School doors need to be open to the community and business partners." Dental services are available to needy community members; dentists from the community provide the service and high school students are able to assist.

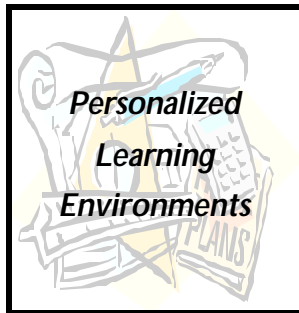
Each academy boasts a unique combination of hands-on experience, skill development, and practical application through a thorough exploration of particular fields. The academy teachers bring a wealth of expertise to each program and student success is evident throughout the academies. Ms.

Zoila Garcia, TV Production, Engineering, and Graphic Arts, worked at Channel 4 and other local sta-

tions. Students in the Engineering Academy are led by Mr. Ron Torres-Gatherer to conduct computer research to learn how to use tools and to produce projects by working in groups. The group's robot placed 5<sup>th</sup> for high schools in the "Battle of the Bots, IQ" national competition. Mr. Timothy Martin oversees the Design Arts and Entertainment Academy. The students must complete 1500 contact hours and a portfolio to receive a certificate of completion within this field. While the classes are recognized nationally for the technical skills taught, Mr. Martin wants to help students sharpen their critical thinking skills and provide them with experiences that will raise their self-confidence.

Students in the Design Arts and Entertainment academy have spent countless hours creating surveys and analyzing data related to student spending and interest trends in order to market ads for the school yearbook and newspaper to local businesses. Steven Munoz, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade business manager of the yearbook says, "Robert Morgan never ceases to amaze me in the things that we can accomplish." Steven, along with fellow students Kevin Mintz and Tarhaun Perez, wrote and produced an infomercial on student eating disorders that M-DCPS chose to show to all senior high schools. Kevin, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader and the entertainment editor of the school newspaper, *The Pirate's Scroll*, was an honorable mention award recipient of the "Teen Speaks Contest for Aspiring Journalists," sponsored by *The Miami Herald* last year. Kevin, a student with special needs, participates in all school activities and said, "I don't think there is another place that I could be so encouraged to participate."

*"Robert Morgan never ceases to amaze me in the things that we can accomplish."*



# North Miami Beach Senior High School

## Biomedical and Environmental Advancement Magnet

When a student perceives a book as no more meaningful than a blank wall, another way must be found to engage that child in learning. When a student is excluded from participation in an activity because of low test scores, another standard must be applied. When a school support employee reaches out to touch the hearts and jolt the minds of students with disabilities, another path is forged. When bright, gifted students and practicing engineers join in the project, Robotics is born.

In its ninth year at North Miami Beach Senior High School, the Robotics Club has enjoyed wins at local and regional contests. It operates under the auspices of *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). The *FIRST* Robotics Competition is a multinational competition that teams professionals and young people to solve an engineering design problem in an intense and competitive way. The program is a life-changing, career-molding experience—and a lot of fun. In



*"It's not about building robots; it's about connecting with kids."*

2005, the competition will reach close to 25,000 high-school-aged young people on close to 1,000 teams in 30 competitions. The competitions are high-tech spectator sporting events, the result of lots of focused brainstorming, real-world teamwork, dedicated mentoring, project timelines, and deadlines. All of these skills being essential elements in the world of work.

The Robotics program boasts of bridging the gap separating school work and life work. In this program, students are selected because they have an interest, even a passion, for the project. Grades are not a factor, but willingness to work hard and exhibit exemplary behavior are. Engineers for the Cordis

Corporation offer expert advice as, under the direction of the club sponsor, about 25 students each year are taught real-life skills such as tangible welding, electrical circuitry, and shop tools' operation. But even more importantly, students are taught intangible skills such as personal integrity, team work, problem solving, creative thinking, innovation, and responsibility.

The school is investigating ways to expand the program by converting it from a club to an academic program which would become the engineering/robotics strand of B.E.A.M., a state of the art, academic, **B**iomedical and **E**nvironmental **A**dvancement **M**agnet. As such, the Robotics program will offer students the opportunity to, "test themselves and go farther."

**Academic  
Engagement  
of  
All  
Students**

# Robert Renick Education Center

## Specialized Learning Center

Robert Renick Education Center (RREC) was named after the late Mr. Robert Renick, a renowned School Board Member for 25 years. Mr. Renick proposed the idea of a specialized center for exceptional students that would provide more services and structure for them. Mr. Renick was the first sitting School Board member to have a school named in his honor. Mr. Renick's own daughter was a student with special needs.

The Center is a specialized middle school program designed to provide a structured, therapeutic educational setting for students in grades six through eight who have been classified as Emotionally Handicapped (EH) and Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED). The goal of this program is to enable each student to gain greater self-control, develop more appropriate social skills, and succeed in a less restrictive learning environment.



A positive school culture has been identified as critical to bringing about positive student outcomes. So, how exactly do you create such a culture when you serve students with some of the most challenging behaviors in the district? The staff, faculty, and leadership at RREC face this situation everyday. Re-building a sense of trust among students that have lost their trust in many of their most personal relationships is central to the philosophy of the folks at Renick. They've realized that punitive approaches to student discipline have limited and short lived results. Instead, they build their program and connections with their students, one relationship at a time. Utilizing a system of Positive Behavioral Support (PBS), the professionals at RREC help students reflect on the consequences of their behaviors and help them find ways to get

their needs met in a more positive manner.

The clinical program is designed to provide individual, group, and crisis counseling to students and their families. These services are provided by certified school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and an art therapist. In addition, a cooperative agreement with the Bertha Abess

*"Our school has allowed to succeed in a less restrictive environment."*

Children's Center provides additional therapeutic and psychiatric services to students.

In addressing the district's Secondary School Reform Initiative of an *Integrated System of High Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Supports*, all students at RREC participate in a block schedule, three periods a day, including required and elective courses. Each student works on goals and objectives identified in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with the aim of having each student realize his/her maximum learning potential. Structured, stimulating learning experiences are provided to encourage active student participation in the instructional environment. This year's curriculum efforts were culminated in an end-of-the year project whose theme was focused on "Foods from Around the World," modeled after the idea of a mini "World's Fair." The project included student art work and foods prepared with fruits and vegetables grown by students in their horticulture class.

The school engages with the community through its Dade Partners. This year, the students performed community service by packing candy for the community's Easter and Halloween celebrations held jointly with Calder Race Course and Dolphin Stadium. The staff, with its stakeholders at the Center, finds successes in each day, small as they may be at times, by continuing to become empowered educators and by providing accountable leadership.





# South Dade Senior High School

## Biomedical Academy

South Dade Senior High School and the Homestead business and civic community have a shared vision which supports the success of the school's Biomedical Academy nursing program. Principal Thomas Halfaker recognized the rapid residential growth in Homestead and the plan to expand Homestead Hospital as opportunities for many of his students to be trained as nursing professionals. He identified a community need that matched student desire. The nursing students represent a



cross-section of South Dade High School, including all ethnic and socio-economic groups as well as a significant proportion of young men.

Ms. Kyle Smith, who is a health educator and retired nurse, not only shared Mr. Halfaker's vision, but also saw the Academy as a chance to serve nursing. "I want to inspire kids in high school or we will lose them as nurses." Although, initially, the students were able to practice only in area nursing homes, with Ms. Smith's persistence and excellent training, they were soon accepted for internships at Homestead Hospital.

The Chamber of Commerce's One Community One Goal® project has provided equipment and stipends that make the program possible. This summer they funded 18 paid internships. The partnership of the school, the hospital, and civic leaders is building capacity for the community, ensuring that future workers are well trained and that jobs will be available for the graduates who seek them.

Students are recruited in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades to enter the Nursing Assistance training program

as juniors. Ms. Smith looks for desire and compassion above all else in accepting students. For some, becoming an LPN may be their highest career goal. Those students will receive a good grounding and help to begin their careers. Others aspire to be RNs, doctors, or surgeons. These students get a jump start on their career and a way to earn a living while pursuing their higher goals. The classes are double-blocked so that the students spend every other day at Homestead Hospital, where they must complete a total of 40 hours of work per semester. By the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, students take their first licensing exam. If they pass (and South Dade has the highest pass rate in Miami-Dade County), they can be hired as Nursing Assistants at the hospital, earning \$10.00 per hour.

During their senior year, they complete the coursework to become a Home Health Aide, or they can begin the Medical Assistance program, learning EKG and phlebotomy in high school, then completing the X-ray training and testing at Robert Morgan. Along the way, all students must join the Drug Free Youth In Town (DFYIT). Random drug screening is an industry standard that is strictly enforced in this program. Junior Shawn Wilson plans to become an RN, then a paramedic, and, finally, join the Fire Department. He was thrilled by his experiences in the operating room. "It's exciting. Someone's life is in your hands, and I like helping people," he said. Senior Selene Correa has already had the opportunity to do private duty care. "This program has given me a great advantage. I've had experience and been exposed to people. I know that patients need to be taken care of just like family." That's exactly the lesson Ms. Smith hopes her students will learn. "They learn job skills, but they also boost their self-esteem as they learn to be able to help others."

*"I've learned that patients need to be taken care of just like family."*

**Engaged  
Community  
and  
Youth**

# William H. Turner Technical Arts High School

## Technical Arts Program

William H. Turner Technical Arts High School is a model of academic engagement for all students. The school was founded in 1993 to serve the "middle majority" of students who have a strong interest in the technical arts. Of last year's entering students, 67% scored at Levels 1 or 2 on the FCAT. As a result, all students are enrolled in an academically rigorous program in one of seven tech prep academies. This enabled the school to rank 17<sup>th</sup> in the state for its success in moving up the lowest 25%. The attendance and graduation rates exceed the district's performance. Students graduate with a high school diploma and an industry-standard certificate, and 76% of the graduates enroll in post-secondary education. Senior Jane Esther Fleuriner, a student in the Industrial/Entertainment Technology Academy, likens the school to a hospital. "Lots of kids who come here didn't think that we could make it. The teachers know how to heal our wounds and personal hurts and push us to do our best."

Despite the challenges associated with maintaining the academy structure, Principal Valmarie Rhoden believes that the personalized small learning community, in which teachers remain with the students throughout their four years, is critical. Students may go "off-academy" to meet a specific need such as an Advanced Placement course, but the effort is to keep them in their academy groups. The Honors by Exhibition program allows advanced students, working with an advisor, to undertake extra rigorous assignments, the results of which are demonstrated before a panel. All students participate in the Capstone Project which requires them, in the eleventh grade, to identify a challenge in their vocational area, select an adult mentor in that field, and conduct scholarly research. In the senior year, these students must present an exhibition to a panel from that industry that will review the student's entire portfolio and provide an evaluation. Roberto Lopez, a senior in the Finance Academy, picked Turner because of its reputation for better teachers and a better school atmosphere. "The work is harder, but it changed me. I am more mature and more comfortable in

the real world." The adult world immersion, putting students in the presence of adults at conferences, interviews, and other real-world experiences, gives them focus and the opportunity to become confident and articulate.

*"Lots of kids who come here didn't think that we could make it. The teachers know how to heal our wounds and personal hurts and push us to do our best."*



Students are expected to adhere to strict standards in behavior and academic performance, but varieties of safety nets are in place. Principal Rhoden insists that Turner is still a "... Little Red Schoolhouse where students learn that there is hope for them." Struggling students are placed in the V.I.P., or Vocational Instruction Program, through which they receive extra services. An After-school Academy is offered each day from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., providing study assistance and mentoring to any student who is willing to try. "If they will make a commitment, we promise to keep them in the school," says Ms. Rhoden. The supportive and caring environment is appreciated by the students. Shameka Thomas, an eleventh grade Public Service Academy student and poet, loves Turner Tech. "The atmosphere is warm and welcoming. I'm accepted for who I am."



# Felix Varela Senior High School

## Academy Model



Ms. Millie Fornell, principal, reaffirms that everyone "Lives our Vision" at Felix Varela Senior High School. She says "We have been able to instill in every student a love and pride of the building and the school."

Opened in 2000, Varela gives students the unique opportunity to pursue challenging academic coursework as well as to be able to select elective classes from six academies/career pathways that represent the new and emerging professions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The academies include: Aerospace, Engineering, and Naval Science Technology (AENST); Business and Information Technology; Design and Veterinary Technology; Health Science Technology; Visual and Performing Arts; and Liberal Arts. The academies offer students the opportunity to explore careers and develop an expertise in their area of choice before they graduate from high school. Every academy strand offers a specialized curriculum to enhance the students' core curriculum for graduation and provides additional opportunities through field trips, guest speakers, internships, mentoring, shadowing, Gold Seal Scholarships, Dual Enrollment with Miami Dade College (MDC) and Florida International University (FIU), and TECH Prep Articulation Agreements for college credit.

The school received a grant from the League for Innovation in the Community College, *College and Career Transitions Initiative (CCTI)* which supports the three strategies of the school's mission: close the achievement gap; create meaningful educational options that help students with diverse backgrounds and needs reach uniformly high standards; and ensure that students attain these high standards at each level of their educational careers. High standards are documented in the fact that over 200 students are in dual enrollment classes at both MDC and FIU, and over 690 students take Advanced Placement classes.

Ms. Christine Chavers, Academy Leader,

states, "Academies work with academic cores to provide students with an understanding that career choices must be integrated with academics. All students are then connected to the real world." The Nursing Assisting program had 24 program completers in 2004, and 14 students participated in the Nursing Assisting program at Baptist Hospital last year while taking dual enrollment classes at MDC. Twenty-one students took part in a summer internship at Baptist and had the opportunity to see the application of their class work.

Students in the AENST Academy already have "one wing up." Several students have a private pilot's certificate and a long list includes those that are working on their pilot's and glider pilot's licenses and aerobatic programs. Students have found that by working with community businesses like Homestead General Aviation and Miami Gliders, they are able to cash in volunteer time for flight hours.

Students' classroom programs include ground instruction and wind tunnel applications. Several students are looking for careers in aviation through military academies and application to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

All of the students speak highly of their teachers' knowledge, some teachers having come to Varela from other careers; all teachers have high expectations for student achievement.

*"We've gotten ahead through opportunities that we wouldn't get elsewhere."*







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