



Executive Summary

Westwood Heights Elementary School

Broward County School District

2861 S.W. 9th Street
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

Westwood Heights Elementary (WHE) is located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and currently serves 605 learners from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to fifth grade. The school community is comprised primarily of African American low to moderate-income families. Approximately 91% of learners are Black/African American, 6% are Hispanic, 1.4% White, 0.6% are Multi-Racial, 0.3% Asian, 0.2% Native American. For the past 3 years Westwood Heights has averaged 96% of learners receiving free or reduced lunch. The minority rate at Westwood Heights has remained at 99% over that same time period. There are four Kindergarten classes, four first grade classes, four second grade classes, five third grade classes, three fourth grade classes, and four fifth grade classes. The ECE program has two Head Start 4-year old classes, one Head Start 3-year old class, two Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) classes, and one Pre-Kindergarten Exceptional Student Education (ESE) class. Additionally, there are four self-contained ESE classrooms serving children with intellectual disabilities and/or medically fragile conditions.

At the end of the 2013/2014 school year Westwood Heights Elementary was redesigned as part of the Student Success Opportunity Schools (SSOS) Initiative to support a Community of Learning Initiative. The redesign included a partnership with Nova Southeastern University who infused research-based practices into professional learning opportunities for teachers. Since the redesign of Westwood Heights Elementary in 2014, the school has turned over more than 90% of the staff and increased the Early Childhood Education program by three classrooms. The current staff demographics are 48% Black/African American, 46% White, and 6% Hispanic, which is designed to create a more diverse staff compared to previous years and more closely represent the world in which our learners will compete as adults.

Some unique features and challenges associated with the community Westwood Heights serves includes, but is not limited to high percentages of student mobility, poverty levels far exceeding those of other communities in our District and poor attendance. The community is predominately a rental community consisting of a high percentage of government subsidized dwellings. Westwood Heights is a walking community, a positive feature, which we strive to use to our learner's advantage. Therefore, our entire general education population either walks to school or is transported by car.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

The mission of Westwood Heights Elementary School is to provide a "Community of Learners" environment where each learner will be encouraged to reach his/her potential academically, socially, and emotionally by reducing distractions and increasing parental engagement. The vision of Westwood Heights Elementary School is to promote a "Community of Learners" with an enriched environment where all learners will be prepared for a college and career ready path that consists of educational opportunities from school readiness to adult education. This environment will encompass technologically enriched tools that are essential for 21st century teaching and learning. At Westwood Heights, we have laptop computers for every fourth and fifth grade learner, class sets of iPads and iPods for every Kindergarten and first grade classroom and class sets of Samsung tablets for every Early Childhood Education classroom. Grades two and three have laptop and iPad carts that provide daily use of technology for learners on a rotating basis. The Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STREAM) Lab also has a class set of iPads. Additionally, an iPad cart is made available to all learners on a rotating basis during lunch.

Our school embodies its purpose through a myriad of program offerings and high expectations. Our learners' academic day is one hour longer than the traditional elementary school day and that additional time focuses on intensive literacy instruction. We have five core courses for every learner, Reading, Mathematics, English-Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. The schedule consists of three hours devoted to literacy (ninety minute literacy block, thirty minute double-dose, sixty minute intensive instruction), ninety-minute mathematics block and the remainder of the academic day devoted to science and social studies instruction. Additionally, learners have three related arts classes - STREAM, Music and Physical Education. We also offer an after school chorus program, periodic extended learning opportunities, extended VPK and on-site after care programing designed to support academic, social and emotional growth. We have high, yet attainable, performance expectations for our learners. Academic performance is continuously monitored through tracking achievement as measured by formative/summative assessments within each three-week instructional cycle, one-to-one conferencing, teacher observation, learner work samples and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Social and emotional progress is also tracked through teacher observation, quarterly progress reports, behavior referrals and MTSS.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Throughout the past two and one half years WHE has much to celebrate. While the victories for learners may seem small by some standards, for our school community they are consistently moving in the right direction. As seen below, there is evidence of improvement in academic achievement for learners, instructional practice ratings for teachers, as well as the addition of programming designed to create a "Community of Learners" at WHE.

- Increased scores in English-Language Arts (ELA) and Math
>15/16(BSA Mid-Year Data): ELA-27, Mathematics-20
>14/15(FSA): ELA-25, Mathematics-25
>13/14(FCAT): ELA-26, Mathematics-16
>12/13(FCAT): ELA-26, Mathematics-22
- Creation of an Art & Soul Program for learners in need of emotional support lead by our school psychologist
- Strengthened partnerships/mentoring for learners
- Implementation of Digital 4 and Digital 5 classrooms
- Innovations for Learning (IFL) Grant
- Teacher Development/Mentoring - I3 Grant, Teacher Improvement Fund (TIF) Grant, Establishing Excellence in Elementary Preparation (EXCEED) Grant
- Staff repurposing resulting in over 90% staff turnover from 2014 to present
- Continuous improvement of teacher instructional practice scores (Domain 1) as measured by Marzano's iObservation tool, which has seen average scores increase from under 3.0 to over 3.2 (Scale 1 to 4.0).
- As of 2015/16 mid-year data, an overall increase in the number of teachers rated "Highly Effective" (3.45 to 4.0) is anticipated by the conclusion of the 2015/16 school year

Striving to Achieve in the next three years: Please make the bullets below into a narrative.

In the next three years, the goal is quite simple, continuous improvement for all learners at Westwood Heights Elementary. This will not only focus on student learning, but adult learning as well. If the desire is to move all children into positive achievement trends, the faculty and staff must grow as well in order to provide that support.

- Provide resources and programming designed to meet the needs of the whole child (Academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional)
- Introduction of Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) to address the literacy needs of our Tier II and Tier III students
- Utilization of Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) Running Records Assessments that is designed to work in conjunction with LLI
- Increase educational opportunities for learners, as well as community members, by expanding into summer, evening and weekend programming to include, but not limited to academic support for learners, adult education opportunities, recreational programs, sports programs, performing/visual arts programs and faith-based support
- Increase technology resources available to all learners and staff through SMART Futures allocations
- Develop a "morning show" to improve school-wide communication, which will be produced/delivered by our learners and funded through SMART Futures bond money
- Increase academic proficiency and learning gains where continuous improvement is the goal and reality for every child through recruitment/retention of the "best and brightest" educators and the steady pursuit of research/results based programs

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- Continue to develop a STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Lab, which allows all learners access through the related arts rotation and partially funded by SMART Futures bond money

Increase parent participation through the introduction of a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and developing ways of encouraging increased volunteerism

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

All teachers are afforded one hour and forty minutes daily to accommodate common planning, MTSS meetings, professional development, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, parent conferences, staff meetings, English Language Learners (ELL) meetings and other activities focused on learner achievement. This has been accomplished through expanding related arts courses from thirty to forty minutes each, as well as the addition of the "extended day" concept, which requires all classroom teachers to be work eight hours and thirty minutes per day as compared to the seven hour and thirty minute day, which was required in previous years.