



# **Executive Summary**

**Whispering Pines School**

**Broward County School District**

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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?**

Whispering Pines School is a public school located in Miramar, Florida tasked with serving students kindergarten-22 years of age with significant emotional/behavioral disabilities. Whispering Pines serves approximately 140 students at our on campus location in addition to several off campus residential sites serving approximately 75 students. Our students come from a diverse demographic, as we serve the entire south area of the county. Transportation of our students is therefore a unique challenge that our school faces. Many of our students travel an hour or more on the school bus to and from school each day. Additionally, many of our students transition in and out of our school throughout the year. Ongoing communication with other schools is a unique need, and is critical to ensure that all students' needs are met as related to course placement, services needed, etc. Our school is dedicated to helping at-risk students achieve academic and social gains through targeted instruction and therapeutic/behavioral supports. Whispering Pines School's special education teachers, mental health therapists, behavior specialists, nurse, consulting psychiatrist and job coaches tirelessly knock down barriers with assistance of community partners and mentors to show these very special students that their everyday challenges can be overcome so that they may reach their highest potential.

## **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 Whispering Pines School is to ensure an optimum teaching and learning environment, which sets high expectations and enables all students to achieve individual maximum potential through a collaborative effort of pertinent stakeholders. Our commitment is to address the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of students representing a diversity of experience and cultures to promote a positive self-concept, which will allow them to be productive citizens in today's challenging society.

We believe that treating everyone with respect and dignity, being sensitive to our individual differences and working together toward common academic, behavioral and therapeutic goals will provide for a safe emotional setting and meet the individual needs of the staff, students and families. Positive student relationships and individual student potential are cultivated by smaller student and staff ratios. It is essential that the working and learning environment is a place that is healthy, and provides for physical safety. We provide opportunities for continuous learning and personal and professional growth for the staff, students and families.

## **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.**

### Notable Achievements:

- The newly formed Horticulture program at Whispering Pines School provides students with vocational training, therapeutic gardening skills and a hands-on learning lab. The school has applied for, and been awarded over \$10,000.00 to help fund this important program from the following organizations:
- FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Energy
- CA Certified Organic Farmers
- Jamba Juice "It's all about the Fruit and Veggies" Garden Grant
- LEGO Children's Fund
- Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust
- Toshiba Teacher Grants: Gr. 6-12
- Whispering Pines School has been recognized by the district at large for community-based partnerships, mentoring and volunteerism.
- Our Community-Based Instructional and PASS Programs provide students with skills necessary to be career-ready. We provide students with job-related training and supports through the age of 22.

### Areas of Improvement:

- In the next 3 years, we would like to see an increased number of students pass the required standardized assessments through intense remediation and test-taking preparation, leading to higher graduation rates.
- We would like to continue to work on developing ways to increase attendance rates for our at-risk students.
- We would like to continue to work on increasing parent involvement at our school.
- In the next 3 years, we would like to increase the number of seniors who complete the FAFSA application for financial aid at the post-secondary level.

## **Additional Information**

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

- In addition to the monies that were awarded through grant funding for the horticulture program, the school has been awarded an additional \$10,000 in grant funding to support other innovative programs at our school such as the development of a mini-golf course.
- Our school was selected to pilot a program through Promethean for their cutting edge Class Flow technology.