

Cohort Five Quarterly

Cohort 5 Quarterly
Vol. 2, Issue No. 1
November 1, 2007

High Schools in SLC Cohort 5:

- *Coconut Creek
- *Deerfield Beach
- *Dillard
- *Fort Lauderdale
- *Hollywood Hills
- *Northeast
- *Piper
- *Stranahan

Next SLC Meetings
Nov. 8-Piper H.S.
Dec. 6-Hollywood
Hills H.S.
3:30 -4:30 PM

Relevancy & Internships: Focus of Stranahan's Health Pavilion

The 2006-07 school year was a dynamic time for the Health Pavilion small learning community (SLC) at Stranahan High School. Their students and families, the faculty, and supportive professionals from healthcare and business venues collaborated to fulfill their vision of challenging students academically while providing rich hands-on experiences in the medical arena.

Students had the opportunity to enjoy internships at Broward General Medical Center and the Seventh Avenue Clinic, where they realized the practical applications of the curriculum they were learning in their classes. Remembering their special obligations to fellow human beings, the essence of the healing tradition, Stranahan's students raised money for Diabetes, Breast Cancer, and Multiple Sclerosis, as well as various child-related illnesses through the March of Dimes.

A highlight of the 2006-2007 school year was the Health Fair, held in April, when different

organizations from the community came together in the spirit of educating people about the significant role wellness plays in all of our lives. Medical professionals--a chiropractor, a dietician, and a pharmacist, for example--enlightened students about resources and support systems for healthy, hopeful living.

This school year, the Health Pavilion continues to educate students about health-related careers. The Health Pavilion will sponsor Family Night at the end of October, where students will showcase their own expertise through PowerPoint presentations on the impact of blood pressure on overall health. There will also be guest speakers lecturing on alternative ways to maintain wellness, such as through Thai Chi, Yoga, and Massage. At the end of the quarter, students will receive accolades for their academic achievements, exceptional volunteerism, and outstanding dedication

By James Mulhern

Project-Based Learning at Deerfield Beach High



*Bringing
Geometry to
life!*

Project-based learning is infused into Deerfield Beach High School's learning communities, and is evident in the way teachers find innovative ways to bring the Sunshine State Standards to life through personalization and authentic instruction. Teachers are finding that this approach naturally ties content areas together and helps students understand that there is a practical purpose for what they are learning.

In a recent geometry class, students completed making quilts by first creating three-dimensional shapes. Students then had to work with a 12" x 12" square, created by joining two 6" rectangles of different fabric together. They had to create

rectangular solids, cubes, cones, pyramids and cylinders on paper to make their pattern. While doing so, students had to determine the area and volume of the figure. Students worked in small groups to solve their problems. The teacher became a coach and facilitator, helping students implement the project so that it met content standards and allowed for a variety of assessments. The project culminated with students donating the quilts to people in need in the community.

See more projects in science, reading, language arts, Japanese, math and art ONLINE at: <http://blogs.browardschools.com/weblog/deerfieldbeachhigh>.

By Diana Benitez

Piper Concentrates on Making it Personal!

*"I tell parents
they are my
power. I can't
do it without
them."
Ms. Enid
Valdez
Principal, Piper
High School*

Since taking the reins at Piper High School last year, new principal Enid Valdez has worked diligently to change the climate and improve communication among students, teachers, school leadership and parents.

Piper took a personalized approach to scheduling and used SLC dollars over the summer to make it happen. Administrators spent the summer placing incoming ninth-graders in teams based on student choice.

The teams are headed by a group of teachers who monitor everything from the students' grade point averages and attendance to changes in behavior.

"Sometimes our kids come in with outside things they are carrying and teachers may not know that, administrators might now know that,

so I want everyone to be familiar with the kids," Valdez said.

Little things like making the front office more welcoming underscore Ms. Valdez's philosophy to put students first and treat them with respect. She also meets with student representatives monthly and makes a habit of stopping to talk with kids at lunchtime.

She's also rallied parents to become a bigger part of the school community. For the first time in years, Piper now has an active Parent-Teacher Student Association and restructured Student Advisory Council. Throughout the year, she holds "Tea with the Principal" and parent seminars.

(Adapted from the **Miami Herald** article by Julie Levin, Oct. 14, 07.)

Northeast Freshmen Prepare for High School at Hurricane Camp

Northeast Baby Canes got a jump start on high school last summer by attending Northeast's first ever Hurricane Camp. Hurricane Camp was developed and implemented by Northeast's Student Government Association as a result of a concern that too many freshmen were coming to high school unprepared. Two sessions were offered, one in June and one in August.

Incoming freshmen filled their days attending seminars on topics such as time management, graduation requirements, and school activities. They participated in a Scavenger

Hunt all over Northeast's campus and met other freshmen.

After attending Northeast's Hurricane Camp, one student said, "This was a really good experience! I thought that it was going to be boring, but it turned out to be very fun." One student even requested to return for the second session, even though both sessions covered the same material.

Overall, the feedback was very positive, and because of the camp's success, Northeast's freshman class should be more knowledgeable, involved and successful!



Northeast used SLC dollars to provide a 9th grade transition camp.

"I learned a lot about the school," said one freshman, "and I learned what it takes to be successful."

By Amy Varo-Haub

Spotlight on Fort Lauderdale's Ninth Grade Center

Fort Lauderdale High School's Ninth Grade Transition Academy is focused on keeping students and their parents well informed about expectations for students and avenues of communication for parents.

In an effort to educate parents, Dr. Beard, the ninth grade administrator, regularly publishes a newsletter entitled, "Learning to Fly" which is made available on the school's website. This informative brochure outlines the academy's mission and goals and provides tips for parents on understanding testing data,

communicating with school staff, and accessing Pinnacle and Virtual Counselor.

There is also a "Learning to Fly" newsletter for students that is short and simple and addresses common ninth grade questions.

The first issue provides survival tips for 9th graders and outlines the supports systems that are in place for freshmen at the school. It's in a simple question and answer format that is sure to catch their attention. It provides answers to very important questions that ninth grade students may be hesitant to ask. Sample questions are:

- "How can I change my schedule?"
- My teacher talks fast and covers so much information in 90 minutes-how do I keep up?
- Everyone keeps saying to "get involved" at school. Why and where do I start?

Dr. Beard makes herself available in the cafeteria during lunch to gather ideas from students for the upcoming issues.

Mission Statement: All students at Ft. Lauderdale High School will graduate and be prepared for their next challenge.

Hollywood Hills Builds SLC Identity and Community with Increased Rigor!

To assist with the building of community and identity within each SLC and to provide an avenue for developing integrated curricula, each SLC selected a theme. Each SLC theme is related in some way to the overall school theme of "Building Community the Spartan Way."

The SLCs of Hollywood Hills High School are working hard to build community and identity, while increasing rigor, relevance, and personalization in the classroom.

The teachers attended a "Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship and FISH" workshop August 10 at the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Museum. The purpose of this workshop was to provide teachers with information and assistance with the implementation of Bill Daggett's theory of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships, while also introducing the FISH philosophy. Teams of teachers used SLC funds last year to attend both the Model Schools conference and the FISH conference, which made this type of staff development possible.

During the workshop, facilitated by Angie Dickenson, Patricia Bolinger, Paula Kirifides and Iris Payan, participants

developed instructional lessons using higher order thinking skills and the application model. By the close of the training, teachers had a clear understanding of how to provide instruction and develop lessons using the D-Quadrant.

Each SLC not only has a theme, but is also represented by a color. To increase student identity within each SLC, planners were purchased with color-coded covers. The colored student planners were distributed through Advisory. Students are encouraged to use planners to keep track of assignments, club meetings, sporting events, and as passes to leave the classrooms.

Each SLC has a teacher leader who assists the members of their SLC with integrating curriculum. These leaders also play an important role in keeping the SLC initiative alive at Hollywood Hills as they provide the vital communication link that is essential to SLC success.

By Angela Dickenson

Hollywood Hills High School is proud to announce the SLC teacher leaders for 2007-08:

Business & Human Services: Beth Winterholler

Government, Law & Communication: Brian Trimas

Liberal, Creative & Performing Arts: Deborah Clark

Health, Science & Engineering: Iris Payan

Ninth Grade Center: Patricia Bolinger

A Time to Shine at Dillard High School

Department of Curriculum
& Instruction/Student
Support

Dr. Earlean C. Smiley,
Deputy Superintendent
Broward County Public
Schools

Published by
Secondary School
Reform -
Smaller Learning
Communities Grant

For more information
contact:

Daniel Traeger or
Ann Evans

600 SE Third Ave.,
13th Floor
Fort Lauderdale, FL
33301

Phone: 754-321-2087

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.browardschools.com

(Curriculum &
Instruction/Student
Support → High School
Redesign)

Applause and cheers could be heard from the large auditorium as students read their poetry. The Poetry Extravaganza was an event that showcased the students' growth as writers. For some students this was their first time speaking in front of a large audience. As students approached the microphone to speak, nervousness seemed to fade and only confidence remained. The pride of accomplishment was evident on the face of each presenter and was equally apparent on the faces of the teachers. One teacher commented that, "It was like watching my baby take his first steps."

The panel of judges included Dillard High School Administrators, the Principal, Ms. Stanley and Area

Director, Mrs. Pope. Mr. Harrison, one of the judges, commented that, "Giving students the opportunity to express themselves helps them to become more confident and allows others to see their talent as writers and poets." Ms. Stanley was happy to see the enthusiasm of the students and commented that, "It was wonderful to hear the students' express themselves so eloquently." The showcase was a testament to all the hard work that had been done throughout the year.

After scores had been tabulated and the winners selected Ms. Stanley presented them with gift cards and IPODS. The Poetry Extravaganza was a dynamic event enjoyed by everyone and will continue to be a way of showcasing excellence in writing at Dillard High School. **By Vanessa Blackshire**



Back Row from left to right: Vanessa Blackshire, Writing Coach, Ms. Stanley, Principal, Mr. Harrison, Assistant Principal
Front row: Kristopher Scott, Shante Jones, and Shawn Hudson