Dania Elementary located in Broward County, Florida, is a Pre-K through fifth grade school with a large special needs population. We currently serve 65 autistic students. Dania Elementary has a diverse student body which consists of 36% Hispanic, 38% Black 21% White and the balance falls between the Multiracial and Asian ethnicity. In the last several years, charter schools have opened in the area taking our bounded students, many of which are our highest achieving students. Students return later lacking the skills that peers have already been taught. We have a gifted/high achieving class at each grade level third through fifth as 3% of our population has been identified as Gifted.

The socioeconomic level of the community is a challenge. We are a Title 1 school with a 77% free/reduced lunch rate. Thirty-four percent of the community has income at or below the poverty level.

Over the last few years, we have seen a huge expansion of students in our special needs programs. As our Hispanic population has increased we have seen more Hispanic families involved in the school. We are making every effort to make sure we have personnel available to translate and we send home notices in multiple languages. We have had an influx of Eastern European families relocate to Dania. This created a language challenge but we hired qualified teacher assistants who speak multiple languages. Our English language learners are another challenge. Twenty percent of our student body is English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL).

One of the biggest challenges we face is the transient nature of the community. Our mobility rate is one of the highest in the District.

**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.

Dania Elementary School’s Mission Statement: Providing the highest quality education to all students.

Our Vision Statement is to provide all students with educational opportunities that will enable them to successfully reach their potential through the cooperative efforts of the home, school and community.

We believe that all students will learn when their individual needs are met;

Learning is a lifelong process;

Every student has a right to a high-quality educational option;

Engaged families combined with highly effective teachers and school leaders are the core components of a successful school;

Positive character education is essential to whole child development

The diversity of our community is valuable and must be embraced and

Students must be prepared as innovative thinkers and responsible citizens to compete in a global economy.

The school embodies its purpose by ensuring differentiated learning for all students. ESOL services within the classrooms by ESOL endorsed teachers, teacher assistants dedicated to service students and to be available to translate for parents, computer-based remedial program and a pull-out program provided by a trilingual teacher assistant. Many of our students with special needs are mainstreamed within the general education classrooms for academics and all our special needs students are mainstreamed for lunch recess and the related arts programs. Parents and guardians of our students with autism are invited to a monthly meeting (Parent Connections), where parents network and learn together.

Stakeholders are invited to our monthly Title 1 family nights. During these family nights students are learning strategies through fun activities to make them more successful learners while parents are learning strategies to help their children at home with core academic subjects.

Our School Accountability Council is expanding, including more active community members with improved attendance reaching a quorum at every meeting.

This year we expanded our PTO. This fledgling organization needs much support to become active and successful. Although our parents want their children to reach their potential and receive a good and meaningful education, their early experiences left an unpleasantness for the educational system. Dania Elementary has made a concentrated effort to be welcoming and open to the community. We have trilingual staff to interpret for better communication; we have had translators at Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings and parent nights. Our ESOL contact has regular communication to update parents on the progress of students. Slowly, parents began to feel accepted and more comfortable at school. Because of these actions and staff friendliness, the community has slowly warmed to the idea of volunteering and becoming more involved.

One area of success is our Title 1 family nights. The attendance for these nights has been increasing as we continue to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

**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.

In the last 3 years, we have seen an increase not only in parent involvement but also in parent and community volunteers. Dania Elementary services many English language learners and we try to make parents comfortable by having activities that they can take part in and translators at meetings but we know we must find alternative ways to bring our stakeholders into school.

Dania Elementary school has also seen improvement in our student achievement levels. We have moved from a B to an A school. We have also seen student improvement with our lowest quartile students. Our student with disabilities have improved from 33% to 46% in ELA and 49% to 56% in Math. Our ELL students have improved from 44% to 56% in Math.

Broward Schools has an annual Impact Expo where teachers share innovative activities and best practices. In the last several years our teacher participation in this event has increased and our teachers have written grant proposals based on innovative activities they believed would positively impact student achievement. The number of grants awarded has increased in direct correlation to the participation of attending teachers. This year one of our teachers will present her idea for other teachers to use. This is a great honor.

The District offers a plethora of professional development which our Principal, leadership team and teachers have had the privilege of attending. Teams share learned information school-wide increasing school capacity.

One of the school’s initiatives has been to steadily move all teachers from a program-based curriculum to standards-based. Through staff development and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers are becoming proficient at unwrapping standards, planning instruction, analyzing assessments and tracking data.

We are improving our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics curriculum (STEM), through regularly scheduled hands on activities and monthly competitions.

Struggling learners were identified and placed in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) in first and second grade. Not only are the students showing progress with reading but also teachers have been exposed to balanced literacy. Balanced Literacy encompasses all five areas of reading with writing.

Areas we must continue to work on are becoming more proficient in delivering standards-based curriculum. Improving technology skills of teachers and students and refining our STEM and writing curriculum. In the years to come we plan to expand the LLI program to other grade levels.

[**Additional**](http://www.advanc-ed.org/assist/s/diagnostic/section/view?surveyId=1147697&sectionId=265) **Information**

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

We received laptops with $135,000 awarded us from bond money. This brought the computer student ratio to three to one. Our infrastructure was updated at the same time. Teachers were trained on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards and all passed the end of course exam.

At Dania Elementary we pride ourselves on teaching the whole child. Our music teacher provides the students with several musical productions throughout the year in which the community enjoys. The art teacher exposes the students to multicultural history, activities and projects. In physical education students are taught the basics of sports, health and nutrition.

Each grade has a case manager who is familiar with the students and loops with that grade level each year to ensure that at least one support staff member knows the students creating a collective memory of the students.

We participate in community events to promote citizenship.

Dania Elementary is a member of the Dania and Hollywood Chamber of Commerce as well as the Education Advisory of each City. A school representative attends a monthly meeting in each city to keep abreast of the events and to share our perspective. We take part in those events that are appropriate for our stakeholders, but share all community information given to us. Some of the events Dania Elementary has been a part of are; Relay for Life, Autism Walks, Pennies for Patients, shoe collections, Towel collection for the Humane Society, student performances at City events and tree plantings for Earth Day. Our students and faculty are very conscious of the Green Initiative. Selected fourth and fifth graders, “Dania’s Global Patrol”, regularly collect materials to recycle from classrooms. Currently, a committee of teachers requested and collected clothing from the staff that is no longer wanted and selected students will be the beneficiaries of these items. Dania Elementary’s goal is to become a source of help and service to our stakeholders. Helping us achieve our belief that students can achieve if their needs are met.