



Executive Summary

Collins Elementary School

Broward County Public Schools

Dr. Tracy Jackson, Principal
1050 N.W. 2nd Street
Dania Beach, FL 33004

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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.

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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?

Collins Elementary is located in the city of Dania Beach, Florida. The school and its surrounding community are rich in history. The historic roots begin as the first city in Broward County, dating back to the 1880's. Dania was incorporated in November 1904 and has continued to thrive as a community. Collins Elementary was built in 1959 and named in honor of Ms. Leola C. Collins.

Collins employs a diverse faculty and support staff. The instructional staff includes 54% Black or African American, 31% White, 12% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% other. The teachers have various amounts of experience. 65% of Collins teachers have more than ten years experience, 20% have between three and nine years, and 15% have less than three years experience.

Collins is a Title I school that serves just over 300 students in grades Pre-K thru fifth. Our students represent various racial and ethnic groups including 73% Black or African American, 12% Hispanic/Latino, 14% White, and 1% Multi-racial. 23% of our students are identified and supported through our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program and 6% are English Language Learners (ELL). 95% of our population is economically disadvantaged as identified by student free and reduced lunch status.

The high poverty rate of the population of students served at Collins presents a number of challenges for the school. Our boundaries include two Section 8 housing developments as well as a significant number of duplex and triplex homes. While the Section 8 housing allows for long-term leases, most of the other rentals in the community have six-month terms. Additionally, many of our families share dwellings as a temporary living situation. Many students will enroll for only a few months. Each year, we face the challenge of having 10-20 percent of our K-5 population fail to have a full-year attendance as defined by attendance in both the October and February surveys. A recent survey of our fifth grade population revealed that only 50% of these students attended Collins for third, fourth, and fifth grades and less than 30% attended before third grade.

The high poverty rate at Collins also presents attendance concerns. As families transition from one home to the other, students are often absent for several days while they stay with relatives temporarily. Additionally, our students often lack access to routine health care. Dental issues present a significant source of difficulty as the area lacks viable options for Medicaid families. Students are often absent for several days with a toothache. Due to the cost of over-the-counter medication, common cold symptoms are left untreated and students will often miss days of school while recovering.

Collins recently underwent a change in leadership. After ten years of service to Collins, our principal, Mr. Lincoln Pasteur retired in June 2015. After considering several candidates for his replacement, Dr. Tracy Jackson was selected. Dr. Jackson served as Collins' assistant principal for three years and is familiar with the unique challenges and opportunities within our community. This continuity of leadership has provided the school with the stability required for its continued success.

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.

Collins Elementary School envisions itself as a school of excellence that ensures a nurturing environment to meet the academic and social needs of children. Our mission is to operate with high expectations that are met through rigorous instruction, personal growth, and effective collaboration with all stakeholders.

In order to meet the needs of each student individually, Collins employs a knowledgeable, caring faculty and staff who seek to know each child and his or her family personally. Teachers and support staff take a "whatever it takes" approach to individualizing the curriculum and support for each student. This begins within the classroom, where students receive rigorous instruction with varying support based on individual needs. For those who require additional support to achieve grade level expectations, Collins employs a variety of programs. Additional support staff members pull groups of students throughout the school day to fill the gaps that exist between a student's present level of performance and the grade level expectation. Extended learning opportunities are available after school for our ELL students to help support the academic language acquisition necessary to be successful in school. For students in third through fifth grades, an after school Language Arts and Mathematics tutoring program is available to help prepare students for success on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). Our partnership with the United Way Reading Pals program brings adult volunteers to the school each week to provide a one-on-one reading and mentoring program to many of our struggling first grade students.

Collins implements a Response to Intervention (RTI) process to ensure that the interventions provided to students are both meaningful and effective. Student progress is tracked to ensure he or she receives the interventions necessary for academic success. For those students who fail to make progress even with appropriate interventions and who are identified as needing Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services, Collins has a full-time ESE teacher. This teacher provides services to students needing specialized instruction in reading or math and these students work toward individual goals in these areas. The expectation for every student is that, with the appropriate support, he or she will meet or exceed the expected level of performance for the grade level.

For our gifted and high achieving students, Collins ensures that each student receives instruction that accelerates and enriches the grade level curriculum. Project-based learning and/or an accelerated program of learning is employed by the teachers of this population of students. Throughout the year, the progress of these students is monitored to ensure that they are continuing to achieve at high levels of performance.

Throughout the school year, students may experience difficulties with various social aspects of their education. Collins employs a full-time guidance counselor to help find appropriate services for these students. We work very closely with Memorial Health Care Systems and several other social services agencies to provide students and families with access to medical and mental health care support. Counseling Mediation Education & Treatment (CMET) has a counselor working full-time within our school to provide counseling services on campus to students in need. Henderson Clinic, Chrysalis Health, and Smith Mental Health are also available to students and families through referrals from Collins.

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.

Collins Elementary has always defined itself through the academic success of our students. After all, that there is no function of education more important than student achievement. Student achievement is most significantly measured by the assessments provided through state testing. In the five years leading up to the 2015 baseline year for the new Florida Standards Assessment, Collins earned an "A" or "B" rating in the Florida's accountability system. Although the last three years have brought significant changes in education within the state of Florida, Collins' students continue to rise to the challenge and thrive academically. In keeping with our celebration of academic achievement, Collins has an annual academic banquet. The highest achieving students from each class as well as the most improved students are honored for their achievements. These students and their families are treated to a semi-formal dinner and awards ceremony at a local center. In 2014, Superintendent Runcie was a guest speaker and in 2015, school board member Ann Murray was our honored guest.

The 2013-2014 school year brought with it the final year of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and Collins Elementary School's most successful year ever. Collins was thirty-first in the state for reading achievement, fifth in the state for mathematics achievement, and first in the state for overall points toward the school grade within our Socio Economic Status (SES) band of schools. To earn a grade of an "A", schools needed 525 points. Collins earned 599 points, a significant increase from the prior year.

Our success within our socioeconomic band brought significant attention from the district. Our school was asked to host tours of our campus and classrooms by other area schools to present our best practices. Throughout the 2014-2015 school year, dozens of school visited Collins and were provided with information on our curriculum, instructional practices, extended learning opportunities, and response to intervention strategies. Of particular interest to many schools is our approach to our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program students. Like all students, ESE students at Collins are expected to reach grade level expectations. With the appropriate instructional support and accommodations, Collins' ESE students have demonstrated proficiency equal to that of our general education population with regard to results on state assessments.

In the first year of the new Florida Standards Assessment (FSA), our 2014-2015 school year grade was based solely on proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science. The writing component of the school grade has now been integrated into a single calculation of ELA proficiency. As this was the first year for the new assessment, the state was also unable to calculate and include learning gains for students, which requires two years of data on the same assessment. This resulted in a school grade of a "C" for Collins. While we are still first in our SES band for the district, we are actively working to ensure higher proficiency rates for these three subject areas as well as looking forward to learning gains being included in the 2016 school grade.

In our current School Improvement Plan (SIP), we have targeted early childhood literacy within the school. For a student to be successful in our intermediate grades, they must have strong foundational literacy skills. Too often, our school's most significant financial resources have been reserved for providing additional support in third through fifth grades. With this approach, we have many students entering third grade with decoding and fluency deficiencies. By providing early childhood literacy interventions through Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and extended after school learning opportunities to our Kindergarten and first grade students, we hope to close achievement gaps at a younger age so that students can demonstrate grade level proficiency by the end of second grade, thus preparing them for a successful future in reading.

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Throughout the past several school years, Collins has actively worked to increase parent engagement at the school. We have added a family event for every month of the school year. Each month, we bring parents, teachers, students, and community partners together with academically focused activities. The attendance at our events has increased by more than 30% in the past two years and, based on the feedback we have received, parents feel more connected to the school as a result of the relationships we are building during these events. Community-based partners are also able to connect with families who require additional supportive services.

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Additional Information

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

The safety of public schools remains on the forefront of educators, parents, and the public. With this in mind, Collins was provided with a significant improvement in our ability to secure our campus. As an older school, we have a campus with exterior hallways that open to our parking lot. This posed a safety challenge for our school, as visitors were able to enter campus without a single point-of-entry. This year, a fence was added around the perimeter of the parking lot, preventing any access to the campus other than through the front office. With this added security measure, Collins is better able to prevent intruders and ensure the safety of its students while on campus.

Construction has begun on a major city center within our school boundaries. This development will include high-end retail establishments, restaurants, hotels, and apartments. Although we do not anticipate a major influx of students coming from this development, we hope to increase our business partnerships by inviting these new entities to join Collins in supporting the initiatives of the school.

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