



# **Executive Summary**

**Atlantic West Elementary School**

**Broward County Public Schools**

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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?**

Atlantic West Elementary (AWE) is a Pre-K to 5 public school located in Margate, Florida. Margate is a suburban community located in Broward County and lies about 12 miles northwest of Fort Lauderdale and 40 miles north of Miami. The City of Margate was established in 1961 and is bordered by the cities of Coral Springs, Coconut Creek, and North Lauderdale. Margate's percentage of residents living in poverty is higher than Coral Springs and Coconut Creek but greatly less than that of North Lauderdale. Since its establishment Margate's population has steadily increased and currently has over fifty thousand residents. Over the years the area has seen a steady change in demographics as a rising number of minority families continue to move to the area. As the City of Margate continues its beautification efforts, the city has become more desirable to live in. Families of all backgrounds tend to gravitate to maintained cities as these cities often have lower crime rates and better schools causing it to become more appealing. In an effort to keep their families safe and ensure an excellent education, minority and economically disadvantaged families look for communities within cities much like Margate. An increase of these subgroups within the community is reflected in the demographic data of the school.

As of the October, 2017 there are 695 students currently enrolled. AWE has a diverse student population of which 53% are Black/African American, 26% are Hispanic, 2% are Multi-Racial, and 4% are Asian. Of those 695 students, approximately 86% qualify and receive assistance through the Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. Because of the high percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch participants, Atlantic West Elementary School receives federal funding through the Title I program. AWE's high poverty rate presents several challenges for students and staff. Attendance, tardiness, and limited parental involvement continue to be issues the school faces daily. Many families consist of a single head-of-household that is typically employed at more than one full time job. Parent work schedules are often hectic creating a high need for before and after school programs. Many students are often dropped off early and attend after school programs both on and off campus. This often contributes to the challenges AWE faces with parental involvement at school functions. Furthermore, several families in our surrounding community lack resources at home such as computers and reading materials. The programs at AWE provide access to technological resources such as computers and software along with reading resources for student who may otherwise not be exposed. Students are provided opportunities they may never have experienced through the school's enrichment clubs and in-house learning expeditions, and guest speakers.

In addition to our diverse population, AWE has a high Exceptional Student Education (ESE) population, 27%, and a high English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) population, 28%. At AWE, we strive to provide a variety of programs designed to meet our students' various, and often unique, needs.

AWE employs several bilingual teachers, paraprofessionals, and clerical staff members who provide translation and support to both parents and students for our Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian-Creole speaking families. Translating services are provided during school and during after school events such as our Parent Curriculum Academies and STEAM Museum Magnet Showcase events. Our ESE staff includes an Autism Coach, ESE Specialist, 2.5 Speech Language Pathologists, 11 ESE teachers, 1 Occupational Therapist, 1 Physical Therapist, and 24 paraprofessionals. These staff members work together in order to provide numerous instructional models, which provide the opportunities and support, each child needs in order to participate and learn to his or her fullest potential. AWE houses one Specialized and two Intensive Pre-Kindergarten classes as well as five Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Special Program classes. In addition to our self-contained Special Program classrooms, AWE also provides specialized instruction support through a push-in or pull-out model for our students with varying exceptionalities as well as speech/language therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy services for students in preschool through 5th grade. AWE follows an inclusive model that allows all students, K-5, the opportunity to participate in all school functions and programs regardless of ability level.

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Atlantic West Elementary employs approximately 57 instructional staff members, 19 paraprofessionals, 5 custodians, and 4 clerical staff members. Approximately 20% of our instructional staff members are National Board Certified Teachers. Our instructional staff members consist of a highly qualified teaching staff with nearly every teacher holding a dual certification or endorsement in areas such as Exceptional Student Education, Talented and Gifted, and ESOL. AWE has a small but very active Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA does its very best to raise the funds necessary to provide our students with extra resources and enriching activities. Our School Advisory Council consists of 15 members that reflect the demographics of our diverse school.

AWE was a high performing school that received a school grade of 'A' for 11 consecutive years. However, as of the 2011 school year, the School Grade fell one grade level short each following year. AWE received a letter grade of 'B' in 2012, 'C' in 2013, and 'D' in 2014. However, AWE's School Grade increased to a 'C' as of the 2014-15 school year based on data received from the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). And in an effort to increase student achievement, AWE was awarded a Federal Grant and began its transition into one of six Sprouting STEM Museum Magnet schools in October 2013. As a result of the grant the school receives funds that provide many resources including extra support and instructional staff (STEM Coordinator, Science Coach, and Instructional Facilitators), technology (hardware and software), materials (reading resources, classroom supplies) and field trip funds. These resources provide opportunities to our students and families they may otherwise have not been able to afford. AWE increased and maintained a school grade of 'C' beginning with the 2014-15 school year through the 2016-17 school year based on data received from the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA).

AWE has recently experienced a change in leadership as the former principal retired mid-year. A new principal was appointed on January 21, 2016.

## 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.**

At Atlantic West Elementary we strive for academic excellence. Our unique Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum allows us to integrate reading and writing through all core content areas. Our students are expanding upon crucial reading and writing skills while exploring intricate areas of scientific discovery using a hands-on approach. Students are actively engaged in rigorous lessons in a nurturing and safe environment. Ensuring our students are college and career ready is our top priority. AWE is a whole school magnet serving students in grades Kindergarten through 5. AWE works collaboratively with the Innovative Programs Office (IPO) and other stakeholders including parents, community partners, businesses, post-secondary institutions, and other district departments and schools to create a unique opportunity in support of parental school choice options. The school provides high-quality instruction in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) to nearly 690 students in the cities of Margate, North Lauderdale, Tamarac, and Coral Springs. The mission and vision of AWE is to be a model Sprouting STEAM School that encourages a high level of student interest and achievement in STEAM curriculum. The instructional staff at AWE has developed a unique curriculum that motivates students to be facilitators of their own learning through thoroughly integrated, project-based lessons that promote exploration and collaboration in order to become 21st Century problem solvers. High-expectations and delivery of high quality curriculum ensures that students of low socio-economic are exposed to opportunities that enrich and enhance their learning and motivation to master science, math, technology and engineering skills and content. It is AWE's mission to meet individual student needs in a safe learning environment to maximize student achievement by empowering students to meet today's challenges in order to build a better future. At AWE we will engage students in quality, standards-based instruction to ensure the academic, social, and emotional growth of all 21st century learners. As a Sprouting STEAM Museum Magnet School, Atlantic West Elementary endeavors to ensure that all students are delivered a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for 21st Century challenges and opportunities. We believe barriers can be broken and that students of all abilities and backgrounds can learn and achieve. Cooperative learning groups, evidenced in all classrooms across all grade levels on a daily basis, encourage students to work collaboratively and develop an understanding of varying cultural perspectives. Providing a safe environment for collaboration is key to facilitating differentiated instruction. The Atlantic West Elementary community extends beyond the walls of the school building to encompass parents and partners in education.

The Sprouting STEAM Museum Magnet theme has been integrated throughout the school through the development of detailed and focused standards-based Units of study across all grade levels and special programs. Teacher leaders from all grade levels collaborated to write Units of Study using Understand by Design Process. These Units are complete with inquiry lessons, centers, and instructional resources. Kindergarten, first and second grade classroom schedules dedicate a daily block of time to high quality science content instruction integrated with language arts, social studies and math. Third, Fourth and Fifth grade classroom schedules integrate Science content instruction in a daily two- hour literacy block. Students read informational science text as they master grade level reading and writing skills. All classrooms across all grade levels apply science content learning through non-negotiable weekly hands-on activities and inquiry learning opportunities. In addition, Engineer Design Challenges and the Engineering is Elementary (Boston Museum of Science curriculum) are utilized as culminating learning opportunities that give students the chance to apply content knowledge as 21st century problem solvers. Evidence of quality student learning and content application is also exhibited in Museum Magnet Showcases which will occur this year on a quarterly basis.

All students participate in our STEAM program, including our ESE and English Language Learners (ELL) students. The school's Science Coach and Instructional Facilitators can be seen working daily in classrooms helping to facilitate science inquiry lessons. They are there to not only provide support within the classroom, but also to provide professional development opportunities to all teachers. This support is key to theme integration and sustainability. Computer software programs that support and are focused on Unit goals, benchmarks, and standards

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are also utilized in all classrooms on a daily basis. All grade levels have developed a technology plan included in their quarterly units of instruction. In addition, the Learning Innovation Lab (LIL) is attended weekly by all classes at all grade levels to work on computer programs focused on building integral 21st century computer literacy skills.

In addition to the programs offered during school, many students participate in after school enrichment clubs such as our Environmental Garden, Musical Theater, Scrapbooking, First Lego League, SECME Engineering, and Mathematics Club. These clubs enrich and enhance our students' understanding of cultural diversity, mathematic applications, environmental concerns; social injustice issues and encompasses them in technology and engineering based problem solving opportunities. Our SECME club participates in science competitions with schools from the district to design, build, test and compete in engineering challenges. Our Lego League Club will participate in a showcase with other Sprouting STEAM Museum Magnet Schools to feature student learning in Lego Robotics programming. Additionally, our second and third grade students are participating in the statewide Chess initiative.

## **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.**

The Sprouting STEAM vision, "Empowering students to meet today's challenges in order to build a better future", was developed and embraced by all stakeholders. In support of this vision, all grade-level teams examined Florida's New Generation Sunshine State Standards in Science (NGSSS) benchmarks and created quarterly curriculum units of instruction. These units were developed using the Understanding by Design framework and incorporate the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) vision. The Engineering is Elementary curriculum units are fully integrated into each quarterly unit in Grades 2 through 5. Our Kindergarten teachers have developed Engineer Design Challenges in the first, second, and third quarters that connect to science concepts and content. In the fourth quarter, Kindergarten students complete one Engineering is Elementary (EIE) Unit. Our First grade students complete an Engineering Design Challenge in the first quarter and then complete three Engineering is Elementary Units for the remainder of the year.

A unique feature of Atlantic West Elementary School's STEAM program is that the Coaches and other Related Arts teachers support staff positions. The focus of the Coaches and related Arts teachers has been to support teacher understanding of our unique STEAM content and curriculum. This is accomplished through participation in team planning, facilitation, and support in the delivery of weekly hands-on/inquiry lessons in the classrooms. Teachers consult with the coaches and Related Arts teachers as needed prior to delivering these lessons as part of on-site professional development sessions. Through this process our teachers build their content knowledge alongside students on a weekly basis. In planning for sustainability, the vision of the Coach and Facilitator position at Atlantic West Elementary has been that of a gradual release model leading to teacher autonomy in their implementation of the program. As of the 2017-2018 school year teachers have full autonomy with regards to this area of curriculum.

The Coaches and Related Arts teachers have designed and built a storage and organizational system, our "lesson bins", for each grade level and quarter that include materials, supplies, and directions/plans for assigned inquiry lessons. Additionally, the Engineering is Elementary Units and Engineering Design Challenges are organized by bins with materials and lesson plans that have been prepared for implementation on a yearly basis. Sustainability of the program is ensured through consistent unit plans, teacher understanding of inquiry lessons, and the development of unit lesson bins. Teachers at each grade level have been trained on the organization plan for materials and resources in order to continue the program beyond the three years of the grant. At the conclusion of each quarter the Coaches work with grade levels to identify needs and establish a replenishment process.

This year Atlantic West Elementary will present four Museum Magnet Student Showcase Exhibits. The theme for each exhibit will be based on quarterly units developed by the teachers and will be inclusive of the Engineering is Elementary curriculum, Engineering Design Challenges, and Project-Based Learning work samples. Students will present final products at an evening showcase event. An important element of the program at Atlantic West Elementary is students as independent collaborative learners. Evidence of this element includes student docents demonstrating and explaining their learning as a result of inquiry, the Engineering Design Process, journaling, and research. The Museum Design Process drives the grade-level exhibits and is supported by our Arts program. Museum nights often have large turnouts of families and community members interested in viewing the quality exhibits presented and produced by our students.

Technology is incorporated into all classrooms daily. Teachers formulated a technology implementation and monitoring plan. As a result of the grant, Atlantic West Elementary now has working computers and iPads at each grade level that have been a great asset for our students who do not have access to computers at home. Our Learning Innovation Labs include a self-contained computer lab with 24 computers used school wide on a scheduled basis. Additionally, our portable Mac Lab is located in the library and is available for teacher checkout. Most popular are the iPads that are available for students to create projects and videos of their work. Atlantic West Elementary used grant funds to purchase iPad stands that are and will be used in the future during parent nights and exhibit events to showcase student learning.

Atlantic West Elementary has been a leader of the six schools in teacher participation in professional development. During the past two



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summers, the majority of our instructional staff has participated in the minimum allowed professional development hours provided by the grant. As a Title One school, additional funding for staff development each quarter through team planning days and summer academy is provided. Professional development sessions have included: Engineering is Elementary Units and Understanding by Design framework, Museum Project-Based Learning, Curriculum Planning (unique to Atlantic West Elementary), STEM to STEAM, and Paideia. Most importantly, AWE offers a summer STEAM Academy, also unique to Atlantic West, for all instructional staff members that includes professional development sessions on new Engineering is Elementary Units, Curriculum Planning in Math, Technology Alignment, Research Question Development, Reflex, Gizmos and Science4Us training, Writing Integration, and Inquiry Lessons for quarterly units. Most significantly, Atlantic West Elementary increased 12 points in Science on the 2015 FCAT Science assessment. Additionally, AWE is poised to increase a letter grade and receive a grade of "C" for the 2014-2015 school year. AWE scores in Science dropped in the 2015-2016 school year. However, the 2017-2017 FCAT results showed an improvement of 17 points rising from a 39% proficient to 53% proficient in Science.

## **Additional Information**

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

Future Plans:

- The future plans at Atlantic West Elementary are to refine quarterly unit plans in order to continue to fully integrate English Language Arts and STEAM curriculum. Quarterly team planning, financed by Title I, will continue to provide teachers time for reflection, revision and learning.

Areas of growth include:

- Professional development to support teachers in planning for more research based projects with students
- Continuation of the gradual release model so that coaches can release to teachers the responsibility of inquiry instruction
- Management of materials and resources associated with inquiry lessons, Engineering is Elementary and Engineering Design

Challenges, and curriculum planning

- Continuing to develop and build on existing partnerships associated with in house learning expeditions and parent events
- Increase opportunities for students to showcase learning at both in house and off campus events
- Develop a plan to train new staff members in implementation of Atlantic West Elementary STEAM curriculum.
- Increase diversity through increased enrollment
- Increase student achievement and become an "A" school

Strategy for Professional Development:

- AWE traditionally does training before pre-planning using Title I funds. Training for implementation of research-based projects can be done in August of 2016.

Strategy for Release of Responsibility to Teachers:

- The Innovative Programs Department is hopeful that year three grant funds will be released this school year. Our plan is to use these funds to keep Coaches and Magnet Coordinator for one more year in order to continue the gradual release model so that coaches can release to teachers the responsibility of inquiry instruction and support management of materials and resources associated with inquiry lessons, Engineering is Elementary and Engineering Design Challenges, and curriculum planning

Strategy for Development of Partnerships:

- Continue to contact existing partnerships associated with in house learning expeditions and parent events and provide them with curriculum in order to tailor expeditions to meet the needs of our students
- Research opportunities to develop new partnerships in the community that may provide more funding and or human capital in support of the programs
- Contact community agencies, city governments, and businesses to provide increased opportunities for students to showcase learning at both in house and off campus events

Strategy for New Staff Member Training:

- Develop mentoring partners within grade levels to support teachers new to AWE in planning and instruction
- Given a Coach position is in place, they will continue the gradual release model in place

AWE continues to use innovative practices such as co-planning with Related Arts teachers and Coaches and Grade levels as Units are continuously reviewed and monitored through a reflective based questioning technique. This is to ensure our current student population is receiving differentiated instruction that meets their needs.

Strategy for Increased Enrollment and Diversity:

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- Continue marketing through brochures, flyers, and presentation to the Coral Springs and Parkland area neighborhoods and pre-schools
- Work with transportation to provide depot stops at area elementary schools to increase access to transportation for interested families
- Continue to work with local news media to showcase events and school information
- Work on and increased use of Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook pages to showcase AWE as a Sprouting STEAM Museum

### Magnet

- Continue to update school Website and calendar to promote programs and activities and parental access to pertinent information
- Continue to increase student achievement and the school grade