

AdvancED School Executive Summary

Country Hills Elementary School

I. 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?

Country Hills Elementary School is located in Coral Springs, Florida. Country Hills Elementary School is part of the Broward County Public School System in Broward County Florida. Coral Springs is located north-west of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Country Hills Elementary School services a middle-class community with a majority of working parents.

Coral springs, Florida is a diverse community serving families of many ethnicities. Country Hills Elementary School is a reflection of the diversity in our local community.

Current enrollment is 857 students serving grades kindergarten to fifth grade. The demographic breakdown of our students is: 579 white, 149 black, 7 Pacific-Islanders, 9 Indian, 64 Asian, and 49 Multi-Racial. 230 of the 857 students are identified as Hispanic.

The student demographics of Country Hills have remained relatively stable the last three years.

343 of the 857 students are receiving Free/Reduced Meal Assistance.

137 of our students are identified as English as a Second Language speakers.

152 of our students receive Exceptional Student Education Services. We are the home of an Intellectually Disabled Special Program at Country Hills Elementary School. We pride ourselves in including all of our special needs students in all school activities. Our students participate in Peer Pals Program to pair special needs students with general education students and practice skills in preparation for the Special Olympics.

The staff of Country Hills Elementary School is very committed to our school with a low staff turn-over rate. Multiple staff members have been at the school since it's inception in 1989. Most staff remain at Country Hills Elementary School until retirement or re-location out of the area.

The demographic breakdown of the instructional staff is 48 white, 5 black, 4 hispanic, 1 multi-racial and 2 asian.

The school celebrated it's 25th Anniversary in 2014 honoring 10 staff members who remained at the school since it's opening.

This staff consistency is a key factor in our successful reputation in our community. Over 50% of our staff members hold Master's Degrees. This is higher than the district and state averages for staff members with Master's Degrees. Country Hills Elementary is known in the district for our strong sense of continuous professional development. Our staff is involved in district inservice offerings, national academic conferences and on campus professional learning communities that meet bi-monthly. Our desire for continuous adult learning carries over to our classrooms as we foster a love of learning with our students.

Our community faces the challenge of economic changes. Over the past few years many of our families have faced economic challenges. There has been a tremendous change in the family dynamics as many families are now required to be 2-income families. This change has been seen in the amount of families who no longer attend night events at the school.

Economic hardships have also created a challenge for many of our families to afford housing in our local area. Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in our area is typically \$1800.00 per month. Single-family homes have become unobtainable by many families. Young families are finding it challenging to find affordable housing near our school. We have seen a downturn in our incoming kindergarten enrollment in the past 2 years.

II. 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.

Our mission at Country Hills Elementary School is to provide a nurturing environment that encourages all students to reach their maximum potential through active participation in a developmentally appropriate and engaging learning process. In partnership with home and community, Country Hills will strive for

excellence in education, while meeting the diverse needs of our students and fostering a lifelong love of learning.

At Country Hills Elementary we foster a sense of community throughout our school. We believe the community (“entire village”) has a role in the educational success of every child. We begin every school year by building a sense of community in every classroom. We strongly believe that when children feel they “belong” they can be successful in the school environment. Every staff member takes interest in the well-being of every child in the school. Every classroom is paired with another classroom of a different grade level as book buddies. This sense of friendship is seen when the children look forward to their weekly meeting to share their reading.

At Country Hills Elementary we welcome and encourage parent participation. Most teachers publish a weekly class newsletter to reinforce the home to school connection. We have a vast number of volunteers who serve our school on a regular basis. We teach the importance of citizenship at our school. We feel all citizens have national and global responsibilities. We encourage recycling and environmental responsibility on a daily basis. We are proud of our student Recycling Team, our nature habitats and saving power habits. We have been rewarded for multiple years for a reduction in electrical usage.

We also involve our students in philanthropic events to raise awareness and funds for those in need. We actively participate in the annual Harvest Food Drive to supply food for our needy neighbors. We send cards to our countries Veterans. We raise funds for Pennies for Patients Association and Muscular Dystrophy patients. Our students visit nursing homes to provide entertainment, cards and teddy bears to the senior citizens. We have done the Walk for Love the past two years to support the homeless in Broward County and Tomorrow’s Rainbow for grieving children.

Internally, we honor our students in our DROPS Program. Students are selected by their peers for showing good citizenship in the classrooms. Students are then rewarded with a lunch with administration, guidance and the school resource officer.

We value our parent participation to keep our school community strong. We have multiple evening events every month to bring families to our school. Our dedicated PTA hosts many of the events and bring family entertainment to our school. The Pro Kids Show and Halloween Bingo are examples of our PTA events. The school staff also organizes family events to foster learning. Recently, we hosted Walmart Math and Family Night to encourage family problem-solving of mathematical and science

questions. We host family reading nights and our annual Academic Fair to highlight the successes of every child at the culmination of the year.

We make all attempts to build a love of learning in every child by using a Balanced Literacy approach to our language arts curriculum. We teach reading through leveled readers that are “Just Right Books” for each child. Books are rotated weekly by our teachers and housed in our ample reading resource room. Teachers conduct individualized student conferences to work on the child’s reading goals. Country Hills Elementary is proud to honor our students every year with awards for their participation in our Stuck on Books and Read Across Broward Programs.

Country Hills Elementary is also known for inviting children’s authors to share the love of writing and reading with our students and staff.

We strive to extend learning beyond the classroom by exposing our students to various field trip opportunities each year. Each field trip has an academic purpose that extends the lessons in the classrooms.

III. 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.

Country Hills Elementary is proud to be an “A” rated school by the state of Florida.

Our school grade for 2014-2015 was calculated per the criteria below:

English Language Art Achievement (70%), Mathematics Achievement (75%), Science Achievement (58%), Total Points Earned (203), Percent of Total Points Possible (68), Percent Tested (99), Minority Rate (53%), Free/Reduced Lunch Rate(36%).

Our student body has been recognized for their achievements in the Broward School Math Competition, various district art contests and the City of Coral Springs Martin Luther King, Jr. contest winners.

Our school has received the Golden School Award to over 20 years for the level of volunteer hours contributed to our school. Our strong sense of community is

obvious by the active PTA that always supports our school. We have a very active membership at our monthly School Advisory Council and School Advisory Forum meetings.

Country Hills Elementary is proud that we have made gains in the amount of available technology in our school for our students and teachers. We recently received \$207,000.00 in technology upgrades from the SMART Bond award.

Our school is known as being a model for Multi-Age classrooms in our district. We are the home of (5) K/1 classes and (5) 2/3 classes. The multi-age philosophy is a desired parent-choice program at Country Hills Elementary where the child stays with the same teacher for 2 years and the learning environment is built around students learning from each other and being good community members. Our multi-age classrooms are visited throughout the year by staff from other schools to replicate the model at their schools. The multi-age program at Country Hills Elementary has been in existence for 24 years.

We have started offering Stay Cool After School Clubs for our students as well. These enrichment clubs offer a service to our students of all ages to explore hobbies of various interests ranging from sports, crafts, chess and engineering as just a few examples.

Our areas that we continue to strive for improvement are the infusion of technology in the learning process. Now that our equipment availability has improved we are looking for enhancements to our digital learning to prepare our students for their future career choices.

We strive to continue our understanding of the State Standards in all content areas. Ensuring that every lesson is driven by the grade level standards will continue to help us reach advanced levels of academic achievement. Also, finding quality assessments to drive instruction is a constant challenge for our classroom teachers. Making sure the assessments match the standards is a focus of our Professional Learning Communities.

Our other main area where we seek improvement is in the chronic absences and tardiness of some students. We know that children cannot reach their optimal achievement levels if they do not attend school on a regular basis. Our support staff is working with families and community resources to improve the attendance rate of some students.

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

At Country Hills Elementary we run our own after care program that services all grade levels. We obtained an “Outstanding” rating during our most recent quality inspection.

Our 5th grade students are given the opportunity to learn to play band instruments and instructed by the Coral Springs Middle School Band Director twice per week. Their talents are showcased at bi-annual concerts in coordination with our Country Hills Chorus students. This opportunity to jump-start their band skills allows the students to be placed into more advanced band sections when they matriculate to middle school the following year.

All of our 4th and 5th grade students have individually assigned laptops to use in the daily classroom lessons. The 5th grade students are permitted to take home the laptops as part of the Digital 5 District Initiative.

Our staff is highly dedicated to making sure every child will learn. Teachers spend extensive time delivering narrative conferences to parents. Time is given to explain in detail each academic area and the child’s levels of achievement. Suggestions are shared with parents to build skills at home. Teachers at Country Hills Elementary go well beyond the expected time of parent conferences to build that home to school connection and give every child the best opportunity for success.