



## Silver Palms Elementary

April 29, 2019

### Executive Summary

The Executive Summary (ES) provides the school an opportunity to describe in narrative form its vision as well as strengths and challenges within the context of continuous improvement. Use this template to complete the responses to the various questions below. The responses should be brief, descriptive, and appropriate for the specific section. Transfer completed narratives into the corresponding sections of the Executive Summary found online in ASSIST.

### 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?

Silver Palms Elementary is a mid-sized school with 639 students attending academic programs from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. It is located in the suburban neighborhood of TownGate in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Being located inside of a residential area, it seems to be "tucked away" and avoids a heavy flow of nearby traffic. The school originally opened during the 1995/1996 school year at a portable site, then relocated to its present facility in the fall of 1996.

The structure was built as a secondary hurricane shelter and all exterior windows have shutters. The school must now open as a shelter during a category 4 hurricane or otherwise directed by the district. Silver Palms being built as a shelter allows for improved school safety and security. The teachers, staff, parents and community members are like a big family that work together for a common goal: Educating today's students to succeed in tomorrow's world. The school staff is often complimented for providing a warm and welcoming student-friendly atmosphere, and the student body is respectful and well behaved. Students come ready to learn. The demographic representation of the students and staff, according to race, is not indicative of the school's rich diversity. The student body is 56% Hispanic, 12% Black, and 21% White. Furthermore, the school has children from over 25 different countries.

The staff is 45% White, 54% Hispanic, 11% Black, 0% Asian, 0% Multi-Racial, 0.01% American Indian, and 0% Pacific Islander but, similar to the students, is also multicultural. Presently, the school has 19% of its students enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages program. Of these (19%) 2% are considered non-English speaking. Amazingly, most children develop conversational English language skills rather quickly. The challenge occurs in having them learn academic language.

This can take five to seven years with children of average aptitude. Another challenge occurs when students from South America attend the school only temporarily while their parents visit or vacation in the country. Concurrently, parents are requesting that their children become or remain bilingual. For this reason, as of five years ago, Silver Palms offers a dual-language (English/Spanish) program in which students are immersed in learning both languages. In August 2015, the school was awarded \$206,000 from a General Obligation Bond referendum (referred to as SMART for Safety, Music, Art/Athletics, Renovations, and Technology) that provided critically needed funding for the Broward County Public Schools. These funds helped to increase the availability of technology in the school and along with previously purchased laptops, created a 1.7 to 1 student to laptop ratio, respectively. Using other budget funds, that ratio has recently been decreased to 1.5 to 1. As of the 2018/2019 school year a science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, class is in each third, fourth, and fifth grade classes. The teachers who teach these classes are interested in providing much of the instruction through science, having students apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems, and learning computer programming/coding. Furthermore, during the 2018/2019 school year stakeholders voted to utilize \$100,000 in Smart Bond funds to purchase another laptop cart, make improvements to the playground, replace the marquee with an electronic marquee, and make some needed school improvements.

### **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.

The purpose of Silver Palms Elementary is to provide each student with a unique and individualized learning experience in order to demonstrate academic proficiency on grade level and beyond. This is accomplished by remaining focused on the mission, vision, and values set in place by all stakeholders. The mission is to involve and inspire the entire school community to:

- Provide a safe, secure and high quality educational experience through a variety of engaging, student-centered opportunities.
- Cultivate students' abilities to develop a competitive, collaborative, and communicative nature needed in the global 21st century's world of work.
- Develop citizens able to be responsible in an ever-changing technological, demanding, diverse, and global society.

The vision is as follows: Preparing for tomorrow through excellence today.

The values are reflected as follows:

- Collaboration
- Share best practices
- Accountability
- Passion
- Dedication and commitment to the mission of the school
- Diversity
- Be inclusive, never exclusive
- Quality
- Professional appearance, demeanor, and excellent work ethic

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 shared mission, vision, and values guide the focus of Silver Palms where students attend from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The prekindergarten program provides services for developmentally-delayed children in the area of communication and students with varying exceptionalities. During the 2018-2019 school year a VPK class was added. The kindergarten through fifth grade students study reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students (kindergarten - fifth) also participate in special 30-minute classes daily. These include art, music, and physical education, and these rotate once every three days. Technology is incorporated into lessons in order to provide a "blended learning" experience.

The ratio of technology to students is 1.7:1, respectively. The instruction is standards-driven, and the Florida Standards are used to guide the curricula. Students receive differentiated instruction in order to meet students' individual needs. The kindergarten through third-grade classes have an 18:1 student-to-teacher ratio, respectively, and in fourth and fifth grade, 22:1. The school also offers three special programs: Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Dual-Language (English/Spanish). All faculty members are highly qualified. They are also certified by the State of Florida with six being National Board Certified teachers. All but one have several years of teaching experience. The faculty and staff have the philosophy of doing what is best for children and working diligently. Furthermore, processes are in place to perpetuate school improvement with an emphasis on student achievement.

Historically, teacher turnover is very low. This has allowed continuous school-reform implementation. The faculty participates in professional learning communities (PLC) in order to collaborate and share best practices. Assessments are periodically and consistently implemented in order to monitor student achievement and adjust the curricula and instruction to meet students' individual needs. Administrators monitor PLC's to ensure their effectiveness.

The entire community, including the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) and the Partners in Education, supports the school through volunteer programs and fund-raising activities. Many evening events are planned, such as the Publix Family Math Night, Integrated Literacy Night, Reading Under the Stars, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), Family Night.

### **Additional Information**

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

Silver Palms has been recognized by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) as an "A" school since the 2003/2004 school year. During the 2016 and 2017 school year, the school grade was a "B"; however, due to an increase in student achievement and learning gains in most categories, Silver Palms is once again an "A" school. Silver Palms' overall score placed it in the top 12% of all (177) Broward County schools, traditional and charter. Silver Palms provides special academic and community programs, clubs, and other incentive/supportive services that add worth to the educational experience of the students.

The academic programs include ESE, ESOL, dual-language (English/Spanish), and Gifted. We also offer "blended learning" opportunities through Accelerated Reader; i-Ready; Career Day; project-based learning; and an International People Fair. Other offerings include Stock Market Game for fourth-graders, Scrabble and math competitions for fourth-graders and fifth-graders, STEM, fluency program (using volunteers), Rise and Shine Readers (a morning reading program), and Junior Achievement BizTown for fifth-graders.

Programs involving the community include Publix Family Math Night, Reading Under the Stars, STEM Family Night, People Fair, Fall and Spring Book Fairs, and PTA events, such as movie nights, fun Fridays, and FunDay. Other programs include the Thanksgiving Harvest Drive and Toys for Tots. The manner in which the school community communicates with the community at large is through the use of a detailed quarterly newsletter that provides a calendar of events and grade-level news. The school also uses ParentLink, a robotic telephone, e-mail, and texting system to relay messages. A school's website and marquee are also available and are updated frequently in order to keep parents and community members informed.

Annually, the school receives the Golden School Award, which is given when the total number of volunteer hours is double the number of students enrolled in the school. The school also received an award for being a 21st Century School where the teachers incorporate technology standards into the curricula and can model the use of technology for the students. Recently, Silver Palms received the Broward Education Foundation Involvement Award since at least seven percent of the staff donated to the organization. Student clubs include the following: Art Club, SECME Club, Robotics Club, Green Team, Math Club, Morning News Club, National Elementary Honor Society, AAA School Safety Patrol, Silver Palms Singers, and Student Council.

A Talent Show also involves fifth-graders who are willing to practice and showcase their talents. This allows students an avenue for showcasing non-academic aptitudes. The school provides quarterly Honor Roll Assemblies; monthly Kid of Character and Cafeteria Incentive assemblies; quarterly and AR awards programs. Supportive programs include the PTA, Urban Teacher Academy Program, Foster Grandparents Program, Listeners Program, i-Ready Camp, Coaching in Academics Camp, and Language Enrichment Camp. During the next three years, the school's challenge will be to maintain its present enrollment level or preferable, grow. The City of Pembroke Pines offers a charter-school system and there are also several other charter schools available in the city, many of them offering a kindergarten through eighth-grade program, in which parents are interested.

Services available to ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) students has improved greatly over the years. They benefit from an increased number of certified classroom assistants for small-group instruction used to intensify fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. On the other hand, their complete immersion into the classroom instruction is beneficial since the students are exposed to an increased use of the English language.