



Executive Summary for James S. Rickards Middle School

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.

Description

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?

James S. Rickards Middle School is located at 6000 NE 9th Ave, Oakland Park, FL 33334 in the suburban part of the City of Oakland Park. The communities served is primarily Oakland Park with students drawn from nearby central-Broward neighborhoods via standard zoning and magnet choice (ACES). The school serves grades six through eight with 830 students enrolled, 4 administrators, 43 instructional staff and 80 staff members. James S. Rickards Middle has a demographic of 58% Hispanic, 27% Black/African American, 11% of which are white, 2.6% multi-Racial, less than 1% Asian, less than 1% Native American. James S. Rickards is a Title 1 school with 88% minority enrollment (majority Hispanic). For the past five years, more than 80% of the student population is on free and reduced lunch.

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 focus of our vision and mission is to allow our students to take ownership of their learning with high quality educators infusing a rigorous academic program. The mission at James S. Rickards Middle School is to provide a high quality and personalized education in a safe and supportive learning community of students and adults who embrace a growth mindset and achieve success through collaboration, respect, responsibility, and accountability. The vision at Rickards is building a future of life-long learning and innovative thinking for the 21st century global student who is socially and mentally prepared to be college and career ready. Rickards Middle offers students five high school credit courses (Algebra, Geometry, Spanish 1, Biology, and Debate). The students are assigned rigorous courses and given the opportunity to obtain high school credits in these advanced classes. We have also implemented innovative programs to provide our students with a variety of learning experiences. These programs include Coding Fundamentals, Discoveries in Science, Aviation, Intro to Business Management, and Research in Science (GEARS). GEARS is a comprehensive accelerated science program that encompasses 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science classes. It is focused on inquiry-based learning, where the students must produce reports, presentations, models and cite their evidence by investigating real world science. The students continue this path through to 8th grade with Biology. Rickards Middle School's other electives programs include Debate, Band, and Physical Education. Students are also provided with the opportunity to participate in after school clubs and extracurricular sports and activities. These include Mentoring Tomorrow's Leaders (MTL), SWAT (Students working against tobacco), Art Club, Yearbook, Florida Future Educators of America (FFEA), soccer, basketball, volleyball, cross-country, track & field, flag football, and cheerleading. James S. Rickards Middle School exercises proactive leadership in promoting the vision and mission of the District's Strategic Plan. We utilize a collaborative leadership style and implement quality processes to establish and monitor a school mission and goals that are aligned with the district's mission and goals through active participation of stakeholders' involvement in the school improvement process with the School Advisory Council (SAC) and School Advisory Forum (SAF).

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 school earned a B grade by Florida Department of Education. The highest school grade it has received in twelve years. Rickards Middle has established a school-wide positive behavior plan focus on helping students to exhibit positive behavior. RMS is often heard throughout the school. It stands for Respect, Mindfulness, and Safety. The PBIS program has proven to improve attendance, behavior, increase academic engagement and students' participation in class activities. Students are rewarded points for positive behavior through the "PBIS" Reward program application and website. This reward program allows students to earn points for positive behavior, as well as academic engagement and participation. Currently, we are striving to decrease the achievement gap between our highest and lowest achieving students on standardized tests. The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) academic achievement in reading, math, and 8 th Grade Physical Science assessment indicates many students are below grade level and not yet to proficiency in these subjects. The school's Master Schedule has been revamped and strategically pieced together to provide students with opportunity to participate in advance placement classes as well as create homogenous groupings that provide targeted instruction.

Additional Information

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

Our students learn through the learning stations, whole group, and inquiry methods that allows teachers to personalize the learning to meet the students' needs. Each department collaborates to share data and best practices through PLC. ESE and ELL Support Facilitators continue to use push in/pull out strategy with our ESE and ESOL students as additional instructional support. We continue to allow students to be creative and think critically throughout all our courses.