



Executive Summary

Dale Cassens Educational Center

Saint Lucie County School District

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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?

This description is for all alternative education sites in St. Lucie County as we answered all questions from all perspectives represented by alternative education. The sites included the Detention Center, Data House, PACE Center for Girls, Delaware Avenue School, Dale Cassens Education Complex and Performance Based Diploma Programs. These sites range from residential drug treatment center or Detention/Behavioral, dropout recovery, teen parent, academic acceleration, to students placed due to behavioral reasons. These sites are all temporary/transition sites where students stay a minimum of one semester (90 days) to graduation.

The sites are Title I sites with high populations of free/reduced lunch (economically disadvantaged) students. School size is relative to the site with a few as nineteen students in residential to three hundred in dropout retrieval/credit recovery. These sites have community support through Juvenile Justice, Workforce Development, Health Department, Children and Families, Hayslip Drug Treatment, Project Success Drug Counseling, Helping People Succeed Mental Health Counselors.

The unique features about these sites is that the sites are designed to meet the individual needs of students from Autism Spectrum through Gifted. Our sites all have fully certified/highly qualified staff to work with children with multiple needs. Staff are trained in a positive approach through PBS to reward positive behavior while following scripted behavior intervention plans. A multi-tiered system of supports exists within the sites to use data to make scheduling and service related decisions for children.

Our population continues to grow. Over the past three to five years, we have seen an increase in drug/substance abuse increasing our need to provide counseling through residential treatment. Our population is a diverse snapshot of St. Lucie County with both male and female representation. African American is the majority with caucasian a close second, the population growing is hispanic. Our ELL population continues to be less than one percent of total population, however, we see an increase in teen parents within this subgroup from previous years. The Health Department assists our teen parent program with services for all participants.

Challenges continue to be parental support and attendance. These two areas are targets for all sites.

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.

We are a Kids at Hope and a Positive Behavioral Supports sites. This culture and professional development are infused in every part of our programs including staffing.

Our mission is to educate each child to his or her fullest potential while maintaining a safe and nurturing environment.

We have a point and level system to provide students and families with benchmarks of behavior, academic performance and attendance. Our transition model from alternative education is tied to these high expectations. Families all attend an induction at each site to include our culture, expectations, and academic supports.

We are governed by an Alternative Education Task Force since 2000. The team worked to develop a common vision, mission, and beliefs about students, staff, parents that exist today as a model for all programs. This team also meets to monitor program data to determine quality of services.

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.

Our achievement center around student success. We have worked with "at hope" students to graduate and/or catch up to their peer group to graduate on time. Students that have dropped out of school are re-enrolling due to the opening of new programs in the community with hours that work for them.

Over the past three years, over 200 students have transitioned through our middle school accelerated programs to return successfully to zoned schools with their graduating cohort. Since the opening two years ago of community sites for Performance Based Diploma Program, the FTE from these sites went from a total of 40 students to having served over 500 students. Current enrollment is 267. These students are also taking vocational dual enrollment through Indian River State College.

Our teen parents are graduating with applications to post-secondary education and the workforce. This population is decreasing in our district, especially among middle school teens.

We hope to show by academic achievement and behavioral data that we are a model program for the state of Florida. Our MTSS process and data analysis is strong this year.

Additional Information

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

We are always learning and striving to better serve our students. One significant area that we have seen a large increase in population is with students needing mental health and therapeutic services. This population is on the rise and we are researching other sites in Florida with exemplary data on this population.