

School Choice

Understanding the landscape of options in Duval County

Summary of recent key middle school reform efforts in Duval County Public Schools

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP:

- Two middle school district supervisor positions provide strategic support for principals.
- Principal changes in 60% of the middle schools.
- Professional development for leader efficacy with the University of Florida and The New Teacher Project.

PERSONALIZED SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS:

- Every middle school has a thematic program aligned to the feeder patterns of elementary and high schools. These programs include Technology, Coastal Science, and Arts.
- Twenty middle schools offer an accelerated program that provides continuity into a high school acceleration program.
- Two middle school conversions made to dedicated magnet schools: Eugene Butler (two single gender leadership academies), and Joseph Stilwell (military leadership academy).

MARKETING:

- Discover Duval initiative to gain support from businesses and community members through visits to area schools to see firsthand the great things going on.
- The annual School Choice Expo showcases all of our schools' offerings; this Expo is followed by school-based marketing efforts and recruitment tours.
- District marketing efforts (podcasts, social media outlets, community meetings, upcoming door-to-door visits) highlight programs and encourage parents to keep their students in local public schools.

TEACHER SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- In light of the new Florida Standards, the district provides a designated middle school reading and math director, area support specialists, a reading coach in every school, and a math coach in schools with low proficiency.
- In reading and math, new curricula and teaching frameworks are implemented and common planning sessions are facilitated by the coaches weekly.
- In science, math, and reading, blended learning platforms are embedded into the curriculum.

DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS:

- The district platform of progressive discipline plans and positive behavior supports include an ISSP teacher, a Dean of Students, and a School Resource Officer at each school, all of whom focus on positive accountability measures such as Restorative Justice and Peer Mediation. A district Executive Director supports school-based positive behavior intervention plans as well.

DEVELOP THE WHOLE CHILD:

- All middle schools offer an array of elective options including art, music, and foreign language.
- Expanding mentor partnerships districtwide with student advocacy groups include City Year, Junior Achievement, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Achievers for Life.
- Title 1 Schools utilize the SOS Transition course to assist students in navigating the challenges of adolescent life.
- Summer school is offered in select courses for 8th graders to help them promote to high school.
- Expansion of middle school athletics program allows 6th graders to participate on sports teams.

ONE by ONE Convention School Choice Session Leaders

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Additional session materials:

Jacksonville Public Education Fund in BRIEF Vol. 7, School Choice