

Broward County Public Schools

District Profile

Rank among U.S. School Districts (by size):	6
Number of Schools:	286
Number of Students:	258,904
Number of Teachers:	21,486

Superintendent: James F. Notter was appointed superintendent of Broward County Public Schools in 2007 after serving as interim superintendent for nine months. During his 20 years with Broward, Notter has served as area superintendent, deputy superintendent and chief of staff. His 33-year career in public education includes 23 years in administrative roles and 10 years as a classroom teacher.

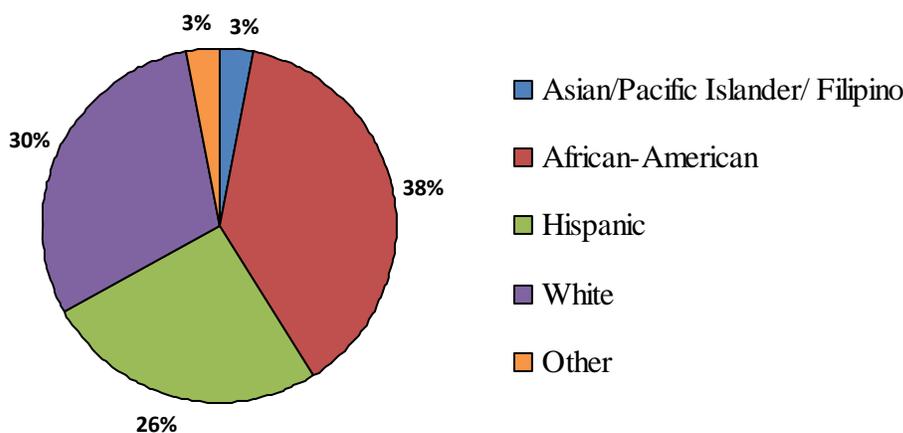
Governance: Nine-member board of education; two members elected at large and seven members elected by the district to serve four-year, non-concurrent terms.

Teachers Unions: Broward Teachers Union

Student Characteristics

Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch:	44 percent
Percent of Students Designated as English Language Learners:	9 percent

Student Demographics



(2007-08 data)

Student Achievement

Broward County Public Schools' (BCPS) student achievement gains are evidenced by publicly available data collected and analyzed by MPR Associates, Inc., a leading education research consulting firm. Among the reasons that BCPS stood out among large urban school districts:

Greater overall performance

- In 2007, Broward outperformed other Florida districts serving students with similar income levels in math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.

Greater subgroup performance

- Broward's African-American and Hispanic students outperformed their peers in similar districts in reading and math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- Broward's low-income students outperformed their peers in similar districts in math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- In 2007, Broward's African-American and Hispanic students achieved higher average proficiency rates than the state average for those students in reading and math at all grade levels.
- In addition, the district's low-income students achieved higher average proficiency rates in 2007 than the state average for low-income students in math at all grade levels and in middle and high school reading.

Greater overall improvement

- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward showed greater improvement than other Florida districts serving similar income levels in math at all grade levels and in middle and high school reading, according to The Broad Prize methodology.

Greater subgroup improvement

- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward's African-American students showed greater improvement than their peers in similar districts in reading and math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- The district's Hispanic students also showed greater improvement than their peers in similar districts in reading at all grade levels and in middle and high school math, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- Similarly, the district's low-income students showed greater improvement than their peers in similar districts in math at all grade levels and in elementary and middle school reading, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward was more successful than the state in increasing the percentage of African-American students who achieved proficiency in elementary and high school reading and math.

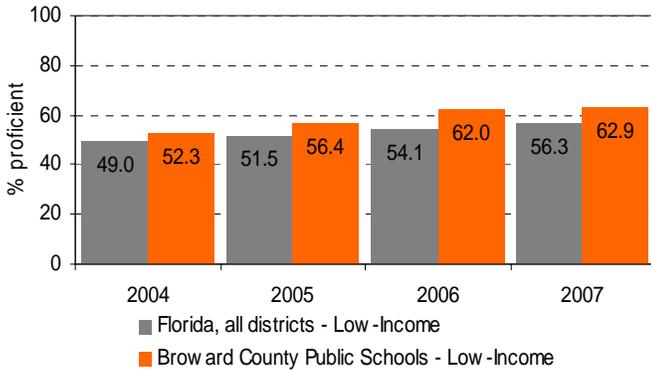
- In addition, Broward was more successful than the state at increasing the percentage of low-income students who achieved proficiency in math at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading.
- Between 2004 and 2007, participation rates for African-American and Hispanic students taking the SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement exams increased in Broward. During this same period, average scores for African-American and Hispanic students taking the SAT exam also rose in Broward.

Closing achievement gaps

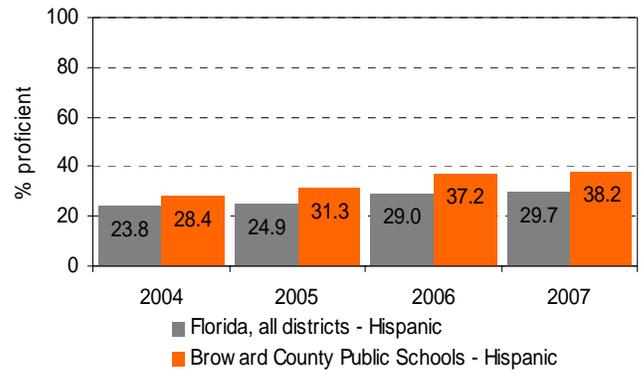
- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward narrowed achievement gaps between its Hispanic and white students in reading and math at all grade levels.
- Broward is also closing achievement gaps between its African-American and white students and between low-income and non-low-income students in math at all levels and in elementary and middle school reading.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward narrowed achievement gaps between Hispanic students and the state average for white students in reading and math at all grade levels.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Broward also narrowed achievement gaps between its low-income students and the state average for non-low-income students in math at all levels and in elementary and middle school reading.

Student Achievement Highlights

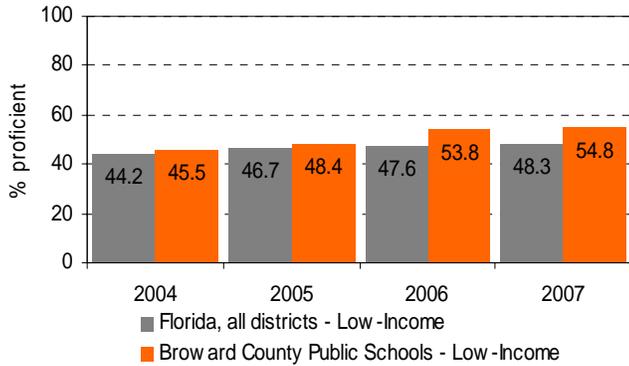
Elementary School Mathematics Proficiency Rates for Low-Income Students in the District vs. Low-Income Students Statewide



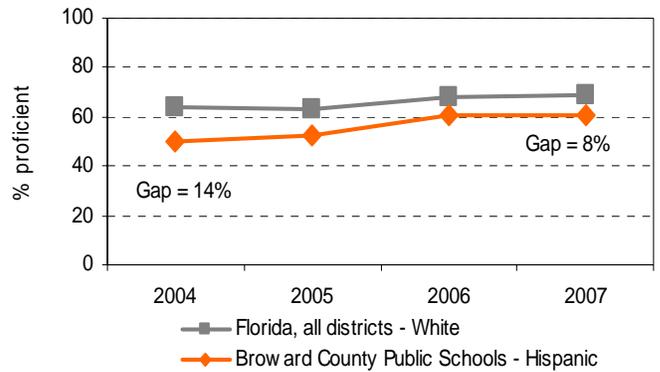
High School Reading Proficiency Rates for Hispanic Students in the District vs. Hispanic Students Statewide



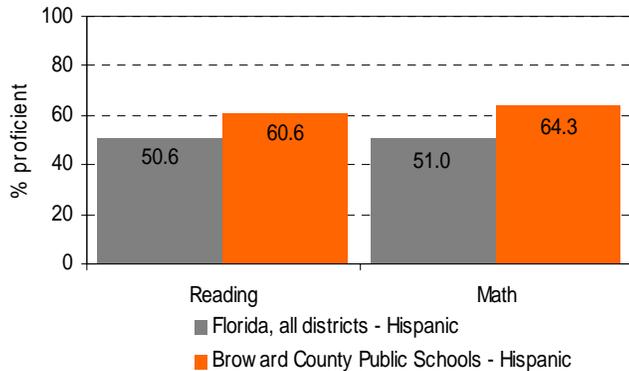
High School Mathematics Proficiency Rates for Low-Income Students in the District vs. Low-Income Students Statewide



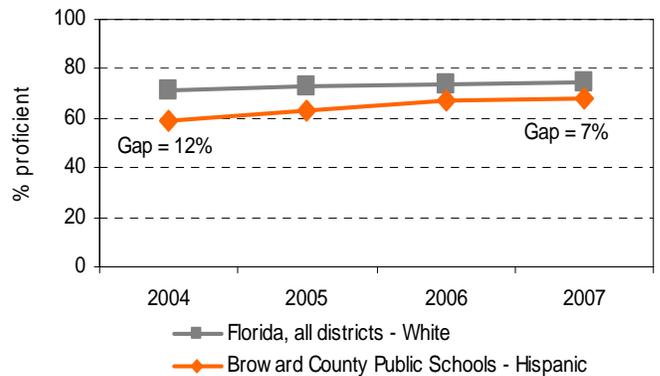
Middle School Reading Proficiency Rates for Hispanic Students in the District vs. White Students Statewide



Middle School Proficiency Rates for Hispanic Students in the District vs. Hispanic Students Statewide



High School Mathematics Proficiency Rates for Hispanic Students in the District vs. White Students Statewide



Key District Policies and Practices

SchoolWorks, an education consulting firm based in Massachusetts, collected and analyzed evidence of BCPS policies and practices affecting teaching and learning. SchoolWorks' qualitative analysis, produced below, is based on a site visit, focus group interviews with district stakeholders and analysis of extensive documentation. The criteria used for evaluation, available at www.broadprize.org, are grounded in research-based school and district practices found to be effective in three key areas: **teaching and learning**, **district leadership**, and **operations and support systems**. BCPS demonstrated the following effective policies and practices.

Teaching and Learning

Research shows that effective teaching is the primary factor contributing to high levels of student achievement. In BCPS, specific district-wide guidelines for classroom practice—grounded in research-based instructional strategies and supported by a district-developed, standards-based assessment system—have been central to Broward's strong academic performance. Instructional leadership in BCPS is described as a team effort. That is, there are a range of individuals at the district and school levels to support the teaching and learning process.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district has established the “Broward Enterprise Education Portal” (BEEP)—a consolidated, web-based portal that provides teachers with curricular and instructional resources. On BEEP, teachers can find standards-based unit and lesson plans across subjects that have been vetted by district curriculum specialists and teachers. When adopting core instructional materials and textbooks across grade levels and subject areas, the district draws on the input from teachers, curriculum specialists and principals. Through the adoption and rollout of the district's core instructional plan—the “Effective Schools 7-8-9 Plan”—in the fall of 2005, the district established a commitment to use of effective, research-based instructional strategies across schools. The 7-8-9 Plan includes:

- The seven correlates of effective schools (safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations, instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, opportunity to learn and student time on task, frequent monitoring of student progress, and home school relations).
- The eight-step instructional process (data disaggregation, timeline development, instructional focus, assessment, tutorials, enrichment, maintenance, monitoring).
- Marzano's nine high-yield strategies (identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note-taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives, generating/testing hypotheses, questions, advanced organizers).

While the 7-8-9 Plan provides school leaders and educators with a structure for school and classroom practices, the district also encourages staff to focus instruction according to individual student learning styles and abilities. Teachers are provided autonomy in planning and delivering instruction, giving them a sense of responsibility for ensuring that all students make learning gains, regardless of performance level. Another key initiative in the district is the establishment of a robust technology plan. Since 2004, when the school board approved an aggressive plan to promote use of digital resources for instruction, the district has implemented numerous initiatives to ensure that the district is technologically advanced. Examples include: a web-based curriculum, the availability of texts online, over 180 web-based courses through the district's virtual university, use of podcasts for training, laptops for teachers, an Internet

connection and at least two computers in every classroom, and many classrooms are wired with speakers, microphones and Promethean boards—digital whiteboards that provide interactive learning opportunities for students.

Assessment

Described as Broward’s “premiere assessment,” the Benchmark Assessment Test (BAT) was developed by district staff to ensure that students would succeed on subsequent state tests. The BAT provides teachers with uniform information about student learning. However, the BAT is used differently from school to school and classroom to classroom. Teachers are given the autonomy to determine how to use assessment information to improve learning opportunities for students.

Based on the state standards and administered twice per year in reading, language arts and mathematics in third through 10th grade, the BAT provides Broward teachers with information on how individual students and groups are performing.

BAT results are both predictive and diagnostic. The BAT is an indicator of how students are likely to perform when they take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) later in the year. It also gives students experience in a testing environment in order to prepare them for the FCAT.

At the district level, BAT data is disaggregated and housed in a data warehouse and on the BPCS website. Individuals at all levels of the district have access to the data. Reports are static, but anyone in the district, including teachers, may request a specific report from the district’s research office. Teachers can access student results that drill down to specific standards and skills. Based on these results, teachers can adjust instruction to better meet the learning needs of students.

In addition, the district has developed mini-BATs to provide teachers with additional interim assessment data. Teachers are provided the option to administer the mini-BATs in most schools, except in struggling schools where administration of the mini-BATs is required. The mini-BATs provide district staff, school leaders and teachers with similar predictive (i.e., an indicator of how well students will do on the FCAT) and diagnostic (i.e., to identify content and skills areas in which students are strong and / or struggling) information at more frequent intervals. Through BEEP, teachers can access specific test questions to measure student learning gains on an incremental basis. That is, to assess student mastery of taught skills before moving on to the next lesson.

Teachers use both the BAT and the mini-BATs to strengthen the teaching and learning process. For example, based on test results, teachers are able to identify at-risk students and place them in tutorials or intervention programs, group and re-group students to provide targeted and differentiated instruction and re-teach concepts.

Instructional Leadership

A range of individuals and structures—referred to affectionately in the district as “Team Broward”—provide instructional leadership and a keen focus on learning across BCPS.

At the district level, four area superintendents provide top-level leadership and support to schools according to geographic location. Under each area superintendent, area directors for school improvement work directly with principals, providing support to improve school performance, and to Exceptional Student Education (ESE) coordinators, who manage student services, funding and compliance for gifted and special education students. The human resources (HR) department also deploys core curriculum specialists and coaches in specific subject areas like math and science to the schools that require specific content-area support.

A district-level instructional council comprised of a range of district and school-based administrators meets every two weeks before board meetings. The instructional council updates the superintendent on school academic progress, specifically on challenged schools, and gives administrators a forum to discuss instructional issues and/or new initiatives across schools.

The role of a principal in Broward has evolved from management and oversight to instructional leadership. In recent years, principals have been encouraged to extend instructional leadership responsibilities and decision-making authority to leadership teams of staff and stakeholders (e.g., community members and parents) demonstrating the district belief that student success is best promoted through a team effort.

Teachers also bring leadership to BCPS. In 2007, Broward County employed more National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) than any other school district in America—approximately 1,300 of the 17,000 teachers in the district held the certification. The district also sponsors the Broward County Recognized Teacher Program (BCRP), a local recognition program for teachers who are qualified for National Board certification but ineligible because their content areas are not sponsored through the national program. Another 106 teachers are a part of the BCRP.

In addition to the roles that district and school staff play to support instruction in Broward schools, the district also involves its larger community, relying on all stakeholders (including parents and community members) to support teaching and learning and, ultimately, student achievement. For example, schools, geographic zones and even the entire district hold regular meetings that include parents and community members. Representation from K-12 also ensures that information flows smoothly up and down the district. The resulting communication network allows parents and community partners, as well as school and district staff, the opportunity to share resources and best practices.

District Leadership

The fundamental functions of district governance and leadership, from goal-setting to implementation to evaluation, must support the essential work of teaching and learning in schools. To keep all components of a district focused on student learning, research shows that district leadership must set clear strategic goals and hold the organization accountable for implementation. BCPS leaders at both the board and district level are committed to programs and initiatives that are focused on the “whole child”—the academic, social and emotional development of every student. The school board, through a recently revised strategic plan, guides the district to improve schools and educate Broward County students for “tomorrow’s world.”

Mission, Vision and Values

Individuals across the BCPS—starting with the school board and including district staff, school leaders, teachers, parents and community members—have a clear commitment to the district’s mission “to meet the educational needs of all students in a safe learning environment.” In addition, the BCPS vision of “educating today’s students for tomorrow’s world” is well-illustrated through the district’s commitment to technology integration and advancement.

Over the past few years, the district sharply increased its focus on technology—evidence of the district’s commitment to its particular mission and vision. In the spring of 2004, the school board approved an aggressive technology plan designed to “digitalize” the district.

A range of technology-based resources—available to district staff, school leaders, teachers, parents and community members—are used both to educate BCPS staff and to promote the district. They include

more than 180 web-based courses online, many district-adopted textbooks in electronic format; BEEP (accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week); a website in four languages; and district-wide podcasts and other communication devices. District administrators report that BCPS today is leading the way in technology implementation.

Governance

Nearly all district-wide policies and processes reflect extensive input from BCPS stakeholders, including district and school administrators, teachers, parents, community members and business partners. For example, the school board has established “communication looping”—a transparent cycle of vetting issues and policies and ensuring that stakeholders receive information. The communication looping process begins with the school board’s committee structure.

The board’s committee structure is designed to keep the board informed, to provide a check and balance, and to ensure that the community is involved. Eight committees report to the board on a monthly basis. Committees include community members, teachers union representatives and parents who are either appointed by the board or the superintendent. Board members serve on only two of the eight committees: insurance and legal.

Anyone in the district or its surrounding community may bring policy ideas or issues to the board, which often begins through local advisory councils—either school advisory councils (SAC) or area advisory councils—and filter up to the district advisory council (DAC), which includes representatives from school and area advisory councils, such as principal and community representatives. As initiatives gain support from district stakeholders and are deemed worth pursuing, the board typically forms a committee to research the initiative or issue and gather input from stakeholders. Information is brought to the board and to the superintendent’s educational leadership team for discussion, and if they decide to move forward, a policy is drafted. The draft is then sent back out to the community through the DAC to the areas, zones and schools for feedback. Feedback is then filtered back through the DAC to the board, where it is discussed in public board workshops prior to for a board vote.

This board process is described in BCPS as a “grassroots effort” to ensure that everyone in the nation’s sixth largest district has input, that different individual and community perspectives are heard and that information is filtered back up to the school board.

Strategic Planning

At the recommendation of the school board and a new superintendent at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, BCPS established a new, three-year strategic plan to guide the work of the district. The BCPS strategic plan contains seven goals that address student achievement, health and wellness, safety, innovation, employee excellence, parents, business and community partnerships, and environmental stewardship. The district’s strategic planning process included an analysis of a triad of information described below to ensure that student academic achievement was prioritized in the plan and the focus was on the “whole child”—the academic, social and emotional needs of every student.

First, the school board conducted a review of the previous strategic plan to evaluate what goals and objectives were still district priorities. They reviewed emerging national and state priorities, as well as district demographic information, to better understand the needs of the student population, including AP enrollment, graduation rates, mobility and truancy data.

Secondly, the district gathered stakeholder input by holding a number of board workshops, community meetings and focus groups with principals and teachers—many of which were conducted by the

superintendent. The district also collected survey information to understand individual perceptions of district programs, practices and leadership effectiveness.

Finally, the district gathered information from the business community about its priorities for creating a competitive workforce.

Performance and Accountability

The district's strategic plan serves as the foundation for all other plans: area, department and school improvement plans. Plan development at all levels includes key data analysis and input from relevant stakeholders. Student performance data is central to determining which district schools are in need of improvement, and those schools then receive the support of a team of BCPS staff.

Similar to the process used to vet the district's strategic plan, school improvement plans are developed by school leadership in conjunction with the School Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC is comprised of the school community (i.e., school leaders, teachers, staff, parents, community members and business partners) who meet to discuss key issues and events at the school. The district solicits input from stakeholders through various committee meetings and forums. Area superintendents review school improvement plans, which are ultimately approved by the school board.

Based on FCAT scores, AYP determinations (a letter grade of C, D or F), and input from area staff, the instructional council, a group of district leaders who meet two to three times per month prior to board meetings, including the superintendent, area superintendents, the executive directors of curriculum and instruction as well as principal representatives, designates struggling schools as "superintendent schools." Superintendent schools receive differentiated levels of support (targeted, moderate or intensive) based on need. For example, an intensive school receives greater overall support, like resources or personnel, while a targeted school receives specific supports tailored to the needs of its struggling students.

In addition to increased support from the area office and/or the human resources department, superintendent schools also receive an additional layer of support through collaborative network teams (C-NET). C-NET consists of principals on special assignment out of the superintendent's office.

Operations and Support Systems

Research shows that the design and implementation of district operations and systems directly affects how well the district can effectively support teaching and learning. In BCPS, a rigorous audit function and strategic financial planning ensure that the district has the resources to support programs and initiatives. The district has a customized professional development system designed to ensure training programs are effective and that professional development is having an impact at the classroom level on students.

Allocation of Financial Resources

BCPS has an in-depth audit function designed to ensure that the district maximizes its funds. The strategic plan prioritizes funding at the district level, and these funding priorities filter down to individual schools.

An audit committee consisting of 12 members from the district and the community who are appointed by the school board provides an additional check and balance system for the district. A financial advisory committee that includes board members and community representatives provides additional fiscal oversight for investment policy, cash management and debt issuance. A range of community stakeholders provides input on financial processes.

Area and school budgets are based on well-defined improvement plans that link to the district's strategic plan. Budget priorities are developed in conjunction with a budget forecast group, which includes members of the executive leadership team, principals from each level and representatives from the budget office who answer questions and analyze financial impact. A school-based budgeting process allows school administrators and advisory councils the autonomy to determine how funds are allocated to best meet the needs of their specific student population.

Support for Teaching and Learning

During the 2005-06 school year, the district aligned all of its professional development offerings with state and national standards and centralized professional development offerings into one system. All professional development courses offered through the district's catalogue are developed and/or vetted by trained staff. Individuals who design and produce professional development programs must be certified and qualified through district processes. For example, professional development trainers have been trained on the district, state and national professional development standards—protocols used to implement trainings, which include for example, the theory of change and the logic models.

The theory of change model helps identify the objectives a training program will address, including the target audience, the instructional strategies and the desired outcomes. The logic model provides a flow chart—a visual representation of the theory of change—which allows trainers to develop evaluation questions to measure the impact and effectiveness of professional development courses and activities. This has resulted in a rigorous evaluation system used to assess and monitor BCPS' professional development programs in order to measure impact and to make improvements. Evaluation tools include, for example:

- The district uses satisfaction surveys, course evaluations, assessments of teacher needs and student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programs. This data is used to measure defined outcomes that are identified through the theory of change and logic model for each training program. The criteria by which professional development courses are also evaluated are based on relevant state and national standards.
- The district also evaluates the effectiveness of professional development at the classroom level. District administrators use classroom walkthroughs and protocols to assess the quality of teacher practice in the classroom and in turn, to measure the impact of professional development activities. That is, have teacher practices advanced and / or improved as a result of professional development activities in which staff have participated.

An additional cornerstone of professional development activities in BCPS is the extensive continuum of programs to prepare and to grow aspiring leaders. For example, the Leadership Experience Administrative Development (LEAD) program is the training program for aspiring leaders in the BCPS. Aligned to Florida's 10 Principal Leadership standards, the two-year training program provides aspiring administrators a range of professional development events that align with key district initiatives (e.g., classroom walk-throughs, high yield strategies, correlates of effective schools, diversity and cultural awareness, technology for administrators). Aspiring leaders are assigned to a cohort which is lead by cohort mentors who provide additional training to aspiring leaders through community sessions, an additional set of training programs.

Following completion of the LEAD program, aspiring leaders enter the interim assistant principal track, which continues to provide training in three key areas for aspiring assistant principals. These include: instructional leadership, operational leadership and school leadership—which align with the Florida Principal Leadership standards.

The Intern Principal Program is another step in the leadership development pipeline. Intern principals are assistant principals who are selected because they show potential for becoming a principal. This training consists of professional development meetings, monthly seminars and optional training modules. Training is provided while individuals are in an assistant principal position.

During all phases of leadership development, beginning with the LEAD program and until aspiring leaders are placed in a principal position, aspiring leaders are assigned two mentors: 1) a mentor that is a retired principal who has been trained to serve in this capacity, and 2) a practicing principal (i.e., the school leader where the aspiring leader is placed). District principals who receive an intern are provided training in how to coach and mentor. Mentors are assigned principal trainees based on an analysis of skills to ensure an appropriate match.

For more information about Broward's best practices, please visit www.broadprize.org and/or contact Keith Bromery, director of communications and outreach, at keith.bromery@browardschools.com, or 754-321-2300.