

SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM
Evaluation Plan
Office of Program Evaluation

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Secondary School Reform (SSR) plan represents a substantial effort on the part of the District to create a more relevant, meaningful and effective educational experience for middle and senior high school students. The SSR plan is a multi-phase and multi-year program designed to implement six core principles, that foster high academic achievement, into secondary schools, such as: 1) personalized learning environments, 2) academic engagement of all students, 3) empowered educators, 4) accountable leaders, 5) engaged community and youth and 6) an integrated system of standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments and support.

Through 2011, M-DCPS high schools will be restructured into small learning communities to be known as Career Academies. These personalized learning environments will provide high school students with academic opportunities that will prepare them for college and for the working world. In the 2006-07 school year, 11 high schools elected to implement an eight period schedule. This schedule provides students with opportunities to take additional academy classes, as well as dual enrollment and course recovery classes. During the 2007-08 school year an additional 19 high schools elected to implement this schedule, thereby bringing the total number of comprehensive and alternative high schools implementing an eight period schedule to 30.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the SSR Plan over a four year period, from 2006-07 to 2010-11, student performance in the following areas will be assessed at the end of that period: (1) attendance, (2) drop-out rates, (3) FCAT performance, (4) honors and AP course enrollment, (5) ACT and SAT participation and (6) graduation rates. It is also expected that a high number of students in the SSR schools will have participated in an internship, dual enrollment or apprenticeship experience, and that parents of SSR school students will have participated extensively in the students' education.

A request was made by the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Improvement to evaluate the effect of the implementation of the SSR plan. A joint decision by representatives of that office and the Office of Program Evaluation was made to focus on 9th grade students attending the 10 comprehensive high schools in year one (Cohort 1) and 9th grade students attending the eight comprehensive high schools that began in year two (Cohort 2). The progress of these students will be assessed at the end of 2007-2008, the second year for Cohort 1, and the first year for Cohort 2. Follow-up evaluations will be conducted, as requested, to track students through graduation (2010-11).

In the present evaluation the specific questions to be examined are as follow:

1. *Was the SSR program fully implemented at the schools?*
2. *What is the academic performance of students in the SSR schools?*
3. *What is the opinion of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and businesses cooperating with schools, concerning the effectiveness SSR program?*

Method of Evaluation

Evaluation Question #1. Information about the extent of the implementation of the program's major components at the 18 schools will be obtained via student, teacher, school administrator, and business partners surveys, as well as school site visits.

Analyses: Survey and observational data will be tabulated and reported.

Evaluation Question #2. The indices of student academic progress that will be examined are as follow: attendance, enrollment in advanced course work (honors, AP), drop-out rate, promotion rate, and FCAT-SSS performance (8th through 10th grade).

Student selection. All 9th grade students enrolled in the ten Cohort 1 schools at the beginning of the 2006-07 school year as well as all 9th grade students enrolled in the eight Cohort 2 schools at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year will be tracked. From among these students, those who remain at the same school through the end of the 2007-08 school year will be selected for analyses.

Comparison groups/standards. The students' baseline performance level will be their academic indices in 2005-06 (Cohort 1) and 2006-07 (Cohort 2) school years while they were in 8th grade. The students performance will be compared to the baseline data and to a comparison group.

Analyses: First, the students' performance gains across the two year period (one year for Cohort 2) will constitute the initial basis for comparison. Second, the students' FCAT-SSS academic gains (through 9th or 10th grade) will be compared to the performance gains of 9th grade students attending 10 (Cohort 1) and eight (Cohort 2) non-SSR comparison schools. Comparison students will not have participated in eight period schedules. Only students continuously enrolled in the comparison high schools through 2007-08 will be selected for analyses.

Evaluation Question #3. Approximately 10 percent of the sample students (11th graders in 2008-09) from each of the Cohort 1 schools will be randomly selected to receive the SSR Student Questionnaires. Additionally, ten percent of 10th grade students (10th graders in 2008-09) from the eight Cohort 2 schools will randomly selected to be surveyed.

Approximately 25 percent of the sample classroom teachers at the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools will receive the SSR Teacher Questionnaires.

All Cohort 1 and 2 school principals will be asked to complete the SSR Administrator Questionnaire.

All businesses associated with the SSR Plan will be surveyed.

All surveys will be conducted in the fall of 2008.

Analyses: Survey data will be tabulated and reported.

TIMELINE

Develop evaluation plan	June. 2008
Create questionnaires	Aug. 2008
Collect questionnaire data.....	Nov. 2008
Analyze data.....	Jan.. 2009
Write, disseminate report	Mar. 2009