



Palm Beach County
Education Commission, Inc.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

DECEMBER 2009 REVIEW

Goal 1: Child Readiness

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

In our efforts to create a seamless education system, the Palm Beach County Education Commission will promote services for the care, support and education of children from birth and continuing through pre-kindergarten until a child enters the formal K-20 education system.

PDI – Professional Development Initiative

2007

Focus groups and in depth interviews among childcare center directors, practitioners and family home care operators were conducted to gather information regarding perceptions/opinions regarding training, professional development, curriculum and developmental assessments. From this research, implications and recommendations have been formulated to move toward a better educated early childcare workforce and high quality standards in early childhood education

2008

PDI has completed the professional development plan for early care in education (ECE) professionals. The plan links the informal non-credit professional development training programs with the professional degreed programs. The implementation plan will focus on a delivery system that links the instructional components offered by agency and institutional partners. The connectivity plan will provide a system of instruction rather than a series of unrelated or disconnected training modules. Additional work is planned to address changing licensing requirements for childcare workers to include a minimum entry level standard of a high school diploma or GED.

2009

PDI continues to work with connecting stakeholders to the Professional Development Plan. Workgroups were established to complete the tasks and begin to look at implementation for a more coordinated Professional Development System. One of the more exciting accomplishments is the completion of the Career Ladder that will act as the glue for the system. From here we are building the training to align with the career pathways. Another area we are building is Director capacity through leadership and management resources. PD2 is also facilitating the conference planning for an early care and education conference to be held in February.

As an update to our CD2 Initiative, the first graduates of the Early Care in Education program at Florida Atlantic University received their BAECE degree at the December graduation. Everyone is to be congratulated and applauded for such a fantastic collaborative effort. Community leaders, donors, and all the stakeholders and participants have worked together to make this dream a reality.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Broward Co. Community College, Children’s Services Council, Dade Children’s Trust, Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade Co., Early Learning Coalition of Broward Co., Family Central, Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin County, Florida Atlantic University, Fla. International University, Hispanic Human Resources, Indian River Com. College, Lost Tree Foundation, Mailman Foundation Nova Southeastern University, Palm Beach Community College, Palm Beach County Head Start, Palm Beach County Health Dept., Mary & Robert Pew Public Education Fund, Picower Foundation, Prime Time, School District of Palm Beach County, School Readiness Coalition, Toppel Family Foundation, Urban League of Palm Beach County, Workforce Alliance and private providers.

Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement and the Learning Environment

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

The Palm Beach County Education Commission seeks to improve the knowledge and skills of Palm Beach County's residents based on a supportive learning environment.

Caregiving Youth Project

2007

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded the Caregiving Youth Project a four year \$500,000 grant to support the expansion of this program. In addition to Boca Raton Middle School, children at Congress Middle School and Lantana Middle School increasing the number of children served. The project addresses caregiving ramifications including isolation and activity restrictions that could hinder the student's success in school. In addition to directly services these middle school students, CYP will increase awareness of caregiving youth issues throughout the county and identify and prioritize the students in most need of services. They will provide counseling and support services including respite and sponsored activities and build a replicable model. The *Silent Epidemic* reports that among students who drop out of school for personal reasons, 22% do so to care for a family member. The dropout rate of students receiving CYP support will be compared to a control group to determine if the strategy is a valid dropout prevention intervention.

2008

The project has been expanded to Okeechewee Middle School and Palm Springs Middle School. Students participating in the Boca Middle School Program will be featured in a Caregiving Youth Documentary that will be produced locally and aired nationally to raise awareness. T.E.N., the school district's television station has produced a PSA to be broadcast on local affiliate TV. The Education Commission has received a \$100,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation to provide computers, internet connectivity and technical support to Caregiving Youth participants. Our student caregivers not only miss more school but cannot participate in school based or community based supplemental academic programs. Having access to technology will enable the students to keep up with academic work and take advantage of supplemental education opportunities. Family members will also be better able to communicate with teachers and monitor their student's work through *Edline*.

2009

The Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) is the first comprehensive program in the U.S. to address the challenges faced by children who take care of aging, ill or disabled family members. Since its inception in 2006, the CYP extends to seven middle schools and serves more than 260 youth caregivers and their families. CYP services include in school group counseling, classes and Lunch & Learn sessions; in home visits by a social worker to strengthen families with community and medical services assistance; out of school tutoring, camp, wellness, fishing and other fun activities. This year CYP participants have received special support for academic success with its distribution of laptop computers, printers and connectivity through the partnership with the PBC Education Commission and AT&T Foundation. The Project has received national and international acclaim with multi-media exposure in local and national newspapers, magazines, journals as well as television, radio and internet coverage.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the AT&T Foundation, The Schmidt Family Foundation, The Toppel Family Foundation, The Jim Moran Foundation, Palm Healthcare Foundation, Inc., the School District of Palm Beach County, P. L. Dodge Foundation, Gertrude E. Skelly Foundation, BankAtlantic Foundation, Sun-Sentinel News in Education, Boca Raton Community Hospital Foundation, Bethesda Hospital Foundation, Innovation Center at FAU, Stratis Business Systems, Inc

Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement and the Learning Environment *continued*

2008

Palm Beach County fiber-optic network is now connected to the Florida LambdaRail which will improve bandwidth capabilities, enhance network performance and support collaboration and communication among local and regional partners. South Florida Water Management District and the City of Palm Beach Gardens have connected to county fiber and several other cities are in the planning stage. More than a dozen schools have been connected to county fiber and the county and the School District participate in joint long range planning to share connection costs when possible.

Broadband Access

2009

The Palm Beach Broadband (PBB) Initiative will expand broadband Internet access to high poverty underserved communities. PBB will extend the county fiber optic network, build a local fiber loop in the Glades region connecting public community anchor agencies in three cities, and expand the successful Digital Inclusion initiative in qualifying rural and urban neighborhoods.

Palm Beach County is the largest county east of the Mississippi River and covers more than 2200 square miles. The proposed service area covers approximately 54 square miles and includes the geographically isolated western communities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay and targeted economically disadvantaged urban coastal neighborhoods in the cities of Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, Greenacres and Delray Beach. The service area includes a population of 161,102. Our fiber will interconnect critical community anchor institutions in the identified communities, including 46 public PreK-12 schools, Palm Beach Community College, Lakes General Hospital, 48 municipal government buildings, 38 county buildings, 18 public safety buildings, and 5 public libraries. The Digital Divide projects will specifically target the 23,173 students and their families residing in the targeted areas.

A significant benefit of the project is the ability to co-leverage the fiber to support multiple uses including: fire rescue, public safety, law enforcement, transportation, education and digital inclusion to our high poverty communities. Additional connectivity will enhance coordinating governmental services, critical off site data storage, interagency communication, and coordination with public safety agencies particularly for hurricane preparedness and disaster recovery. The Digital Inclusion project will provide the computers and training to enable families to access the rich resources the broadband Internet connections will provide. While heavily focusing on educational opportunities for students, families will be encouraged to utilize this resource to improve their quality of life by obtaining GED and workforce training. Additionally these individuals can apply for jobs, access information and applications for social security, Medicaid, food stamps, emergency assistance and additional local state and government services. Lakes General Hospital will work with families to utilize technology to improve primary healthcare and medical services.

We will address the non-discrimination and interconnection obligations by providing direct, unfiltered Internet access in the same manner that Palm Beach County currently provide no-cost access at the Palm Beach International Airport and other community wireless 'hot-spots'.

Palm Beach County has an existing 600-mile fiber optic based network that will be utilized and expanded with this project. We will include a mix of WiMax and WiFi technologies to deliver residential services in the high poverty communities.

2009 *continued*

PBB is a consortium of six agencies: Palm Beach County government, the School District of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach Community College, Florida Atlantic University, South Florida Water Management District and the Palm Beach County Education Commission. Our Agreement for Interagency Cooperation was executed in 2007. In this agreement, the agencies agree to leverage the infrastructure and talent of the collective group for the benefit of the citizens of Palm Beach County. To guarantee success, the agencies co-fund a project manager to direct and coordinate our work. PBB has a track record of successfully implementing multiple interagency broadband connectivity and digital inclusion related projects. Our success is due to the talent and commitment of the leadership team as well as strategically seeking input from all stakeholders throughout the process. We are especially proud of the Digital Inclusion projects in the Pleasant City CRA neighborhood in West Palm Beach and the Northwest neighborhood of Delray Beach. Similar stakeholder input will be sought as we implement the project in all our partner communities.

The PBB steering committee is comprised of the chief technology officers from Palm Beach County, Palm Beach Community College, Florida Atlantic University, the School District of Palm Beach County, South Florida Water Management District and the Executive Director Palm Beach County Education Commission. The team, including Mike Butler, Director of Network Operations; Gary Weidenhamer, Director of Education Technology; and Robert Busch, CPA, Fiscal Oversight has substantial technical training and years of experience in managing complex projects. As professionals for large government agencies, these individuals are experienced in managing complex technical projects from conception to implementation and long term support. They also bring to the project the added talent and resources of their organizations. This team is experienced in working together and is poised for immediate deployment. The overall infrastructure cost of broadband system is \$16,217,036.

The expected subscriber projections for the project, out of a population of 161,102, are 64,441 or 40%. We estimate the number of direct jobs estimated to be created by the infrastructure project to be 140. The estimated number of indirect jobs created is anticipated to be in excess of 1,800.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, Florida Atlantic University, Palm Beach Community College, School District of Palm Beach County, and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioner, and the City of West Palm Beach.

Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement and the Learning Environment *continued*

Digital Inclusion

2008

The digital divide describes the fact that the world can be divided into those who do and those who do not have access to and the capability to use modern information technology. Over the past 15 years, citizens have become growingly dependent upon access to technology such as computers and the internet to participate socially and economically. More than 68% of the US population has access to a computer and the internet in their homes and use it regularly. However, for those in the very low and low economic status they have been left behind and have become a part of the digital divide. Their lack of access to technology and the web limits their ability in the workforce, education and ability to grow economically.

To address this growing concern, a small Proof of Concept Project was implemented in a six-block area surrounding Pleasant City Elementary School. The intent was to identify and provide resources needed to provide technology to children and families of students attending school. The necessary components included computers, training, technical support and internet access in the homes of these families. Families meeting specific criteria were given computers that had been excessed from the school district and refurbished by high school students. Training was provided by school district personnel in partnership with a community-based organization. Help desk support was provided by PBCC and the wireless signal was provided by Palm Beach County. The Education Commission and our community partners have been awarded a grant in the amount of \$101,500 by the Quantum Foundation to expand this project to 100 families in the Pleasant City neighborhood. The computers will be refurbished at Roosevelt Middle School and training will be provided to families by the Urban League. Students from the WPB Empowerment Center will be trained in level one support. Families participating in the United Way's Prosperity Campaign will be included in the project.

A second pilot project is underway in Delray Beach. Students attending the Beacon Center program at Village Academy were trained by Park Vista High School students to reimage computers. The same model for connectivity and access is being used in Delray. The initial families were provided training by TED Center and school district staff. The City of Delray Beach and community members from the Ed Board have raised private funds to support the project. Additional planning is underway in several other communities to initiate similar projects.

2009

The infrastructure buildout for the Pleasant City Digital Inclusion project has been completed. 37 antennas have been mounted on FPL poles and the County wireless signal is transmitted from a school district ITV tower. More than 5000 residents can now receive public wireless within the neighborhood with the use of a wireless enabled device. To use wireless indoors requires a booster antenna. A computer refurbishment class was established at Roosevelt Middle School in January. 60 eighth grade students learn real world skills as they refurbish older computers. A standard computer image has been developed for the computers that will include antivirus and site filtering/blocking software. Links to district learning sites appear on the desk top for easy access. By the end of the semester, the students could complete 6 computers each day. As a bonus, the referrals in the cohort dropped from 11/wk to 0. Families were invited to three training sessions and at the completion of the training, the families receive a free refurbished computer and the booster antenna that allows them to receive free internet at home. The project is supported through a generous grant from the Quantum Foundation and has been funded for a second year. The success of the project and the partnerships established served as the model for the \$20M stimulus grant application.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, Florida Atlantic University, Palm Beach Community College, School District of Palm Beach County, and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioner, City of West Palm Beach; Urban League of Palm Beach County, United Way, Toppel Family Foundation, Quantum Foundation, TED Center, City of Delray Beach, the Delray Beach Education Board and private citizens

Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement and the Learning Environment *continued*

Efficacy - Campaign for Proficiency

2007

Efficacy is the belief in ones ability to successfully perform a task or achieve a goal. With our partners, a “Train the Trainer” certification process resulted in 10 community leaders becoming certified to conduct the Campaign for Proficiency presentations in the community. To date, more than 500 parents, community agency staff and other community members have been trained. Adults who participate in the training will reinforce with all our children that they can succeed “by knowing it and showing it” to be ready for graduation, work or college.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Children’s Services Council, the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Faith-based Ministries, Mary & Robert Pew Public Education Fund, Picower Foundation, Prime Time, the School District of Palm Beach County, Toward a More Perfect Union, and the United Way.

2008

More than 1000 training events have been offered in after school programs, community agencies and local universities. Ten additional community members will complete the training in January 2009 and will be available to expand the outreach to community organizations on the waiting list. Training will also be offered to a cohort of staff from Palm Beach Community College. Delivering a consistent message to young people from the schools, churches and broader community strengthens the message that as adults we are committed to ensuring our children succeed.

Smart is not something you just are, smart is something you can get!” - Dr. Jeff Howard, Efficacy Institute

2009

The Step Up for Proficiency Campaign Project continues to provide a series of efficacy training sessions for schools, parents, community boards and agencies. The project trainings provide concrete strategies for adults to support all children in achieving higher levels of proficiency and character development through community-wide training. More than 1500 training sessions were offered with more than 4000 parents and community partners participating.

Science Education

2007

The Independent Citizen Group on Education is a private citizen’s initiative who actively supports science education in Palm Beach County. A series of school visits to familiarize the membership with the depth and breadth of science education was conducted with the hopes of engaging their 3000 Palm Beach County members as a valuable resource tool.

The Scripps Institute announced its first PhD graduate from Scripps Florida. The establishment of graduate education has been a key goal of Scripps Florida. Scripps continues to provide internships for students and teachers.

FAU, Pine Jog Environmental Center and the School District are partnering to build the first LEED certified elementary school in the state of Florida. This school is uniquely sited on an active environmental education site to provide a living laboratory for the students. A secondary facility is also being constructed to provide science teacher training, staff development and Master Degree programs.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Business Development Board, Children’s Services Council, Max Planck Society, the Oxford University ,Palm Beach Community College, Palm Beach County Commission, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, Department of Education, Pratt & Whitney, The Scripps Institute, Urban League of Palm Beach County, Workforce Alliance, and The Independent Citizen Group on Education .

2008

With the support of Pratt & Whitney, PBCC offered a Math and Science Summer Institute to advance high school and college student. The institute was a blend of rigorous college classes, research projects and career exploration to help prepare students for a future in engineering and science research.

Scripps Florida continues its successful summer research internship program for teachers and students. Scripps also offers “Introduction to Science” lectures for middle school classes and offers “Science Saturdays” for high school sophomores and juniors.

The newest life science business in Palm Beach County, Max Planck Florida Institute, will be providing science programs to Palm Beach County students and educators. In 2009, they will debut their Science Tunnel, a sophisticated, interactive multimedia show that offers visitors a fascinating trip into the realm of scientific discoveries. It has traveled to Tokyo, Singapore, Shanghai, Brussels, Johannesburg, Seoul and Berlin. Palm Beach County will be its first location in the United States. The exhibition features video stations and hands-on exhibits. Visitors can observe dancing atoms and molecules at work, discover the roots of human culture or fight a virus before it infects the body.

2009

Pine Jog Elementary Is The First And Only LEED Gold Certified School In Florida - The School District announced that it is now official; Pine Jog Elementary School is the first and only LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Certified school in the state of Florida. The LEED for Schools Rating System recognizes the unique nature of the design and construction of K-12 schools. Green schools are healthy for students, teachers and the environment. Pine Jog Elementary and Pine Jog Environmental Center were recognized by Southeast Construction Magazine as the best overall construction project and the best green project in their Best 2009 awards program. The annual competition recognizes construction and design excellence in a four-state region that includes Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Park Vista Senior Completes Science Fair Sweep - Melanie Kabinoff, a senior at Park Vista High School, competed in and earned awards at seven consecutive county and state science fairs. Melanie is the first student in Palm Beach County to earn seven awards at the Palm Beach County Science and Engineering Fair, a Palm Beach County record.

Goal 3: Skilled Workforce

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

Nearly everyone in Palm Beach County works and work begins at an early age. To be realistic about the needs of the County's people, the Palm Beach County Education Commission must and will seek to prepare *everyone* to successfully enter the workforce, to integrate workforce preparation with the K-20 system, to identify realistic job opportunities and to constantly and flexibly match lifelong workforce preparation with changing job opportunities.

2007

West Boca High School achieved the National Standards of Practice (NPOS) and achieved a certification of recognition from the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). This brings the total of award winning academies to six. Palm Beach County has the distinction of having the most NCAC certified academies in the nation. Today more than 30,000 students are enrolled in more than 100 CHOICE programs district-wide. Newly released data shows that students who are enrolled in the career academies out perform regular/traditional students and those showing the greatest improvement are the Level 1 and 2 students.

Palm Beach Community College and the School District are refining their career cluster pathways to ensure that students can take advantage of all credit opportunities offered to them. Through the inter-institutional articulation agreement, PBCC and the school district course alignment includes more course by course alignment so that students who complete portions of programs at the high school level can receive college credit for their learning. A recent OPPAGA study this agreement was one of only three in the state that met the full criteria as specified in state statute.

Florida Senate Bill 1232, effective July, 2007 requires a percentage of students enrolled in career academies achieve industry certification or college credit in the academy. Many academy programs do not have industry certification or college credit and we are currently working with industry representatives and public and private post secondary institutions to address the problem.

Leadership Palm Beach County established GET REAL to connect industry expertise and resources with career academy coordinators through opportunities to work directly with LPBC alumni leaders.

Through a Workforce Alliance B.E.S.T. grant 11 students at Lake Worth High School received training and certification as medical translators.

Career Academies

2008

The Palm Beach County Film and Television Commission in partnership with Palm Beach County Economic Development Office and the School District produced *Industries of the Mind*, a seven :30-second commercial series to market the career pathway opportunities available for our students. The commercials are based on the 21st Century Palm Beach County Strategic Plan findings that identified seven industry clusters for Palm Beach County's future: Bioscience, Aerospace, Marine and Environmental Science, Information Technology, Tourism, Film Arts & Culture and International Banking and Financial Services. Additional information is available by accessing the following website: <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/careered/industries-of-the-mind/>

Atlantic Community High School's Criminal Justice Academy and Seminole Ridge's Construction Academy were awarded "Model Academy" status by the National Career Academy Coalition. Palm Beach County continues to lead the nation in the number of quality programs available to our students

In a major effort to stimulate student interest in higher level science and math careers, FAU's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, in partnership with the School District has been awarded a five year grant for \$2.6 million from the National Science Foundation. Graduate research students are paired with high school science students to incorporate cutting edge research and implement conceptually based curricular materials into the classroom. Two career academy programs, Spanish River's Biotechnology and Boca High's STEM academy are participating in the program.

The Palm Beach County Career Pathway Consortium, a partnership between PBCC and the school district, has established a Leadership Boot Camp for high school Career Pathway Academy Coordinators, district CTE support staff and school site administrators. Participants share best practices, receive information on career planning and development, articulation agreements, dual enrollment. College outreach services and implementation strategies for career programs.

Monroe County and Palm Beach County School Districts have received a five year \$1.5 million grant to replicate West Boca High's Model Culinary Academy. This unique Inter-district agreement will strengthen the availability, accessibility and equity of educational choice programs at Marathon High School and prepare students for the increasing number of jobs in the food services industry

2009

The National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) reviewers visited some of the schools in our county and conducted a very rigorous review process. As a result, Park Vista Community High School's Information & Technology Academy and the Medical Sciences Academy and the Construction Academy at Seminole Ridge Community High School were designated certified academies and West Boca Raton Community High School's Medical Sciences Academy was named a model academy by NCAC. Career academy coordinators and instructors spent the past year preparing for this site visit by compiling documentation that reflected meeting or exceeding the criteria necessary to earn this national recognition. The Middle School Expansion Project has added Pre-Academy Programs at three middle schools: Lake Shore Middle School, Engineering; Lake Worth Middle School, Medical and Congress Middle School, Medical. The Middle school Pre -Academy Expansion Project will allow middle school students to be encouraged to explore career paths that are needed in the 21st century. Students will have the opportunity to experience the career of their choice and make a smooth transition when they enter their career academy high school. The Career Education Department newsletter, [Career Connections](#), is now available on-line at www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/careered.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the Breakers Hotel, Business Development Board, Embry Riddle University, Commerce Bank, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Florida Atlantic University, Hispanic Human Resources, Historical Society of Palm Beach, Hotel Biba, Hotel and Lodging Association, IBM, Junior Achievement, Leadership Palm Beach County, Lockheed Martin, Loggerhead Museum, Municipalities, Norton Museum, Palm Beach Community College, Palm Beach County Commission, Palm Beach Cultural Council, Palm Beach County Education Foundation, Palm Beach County Film and Television, Commission, Palm Healthcare Foundation, Pratt & Whitney, Quantum Foundation, the School District of Palm Beach County, School House Consulting, State Attorney's Office, Workforce Alliance, 4 year colleges and technical schools and local businesses and chambers of commerce.

Goal 3: Skilled Workforce *continued*

2007

Workforce Alliance, Business Development Board, Palm Beach Community College and the School District are working to make sure that the career academy designs are meeting the work force needs of the future. The programs that are obsolete will be eliminated and high demand academies replicated. AWI process for industry certification is focused on nationally recognized certification and portability which will require educators to work very closely with industry.

The interagency team is providing support for the Career And Professional Education Act of 2007 (CAPE ACT) commonly know as SB1232. School Districts and Regional Workforce boards are required to develop joint strategic planning and implementation plans for all career academies.

Power of QE³

2008

The informal partnership of Workforce Alliance, Business Development Board and the Education Commission continue to provide coordination of economic development, education and employment to ensure a quality workforce in Palm Beach County. QE3 worked together on developing curricular pathways for career education that provides for core course crossover credit between academic and career programs and alignment to the 16 national US Department of Labor occupational clusters and streamlining state certification requirements to assure business/industry-based professionals can be employed as career and technical education teachers. Workforce partnered with the educational community to provide training programs and curriculum to match business needs, including partnering with FAU on the Biotech Training Program: and working on the Federal Work Ready Certification Program to prepare job seekers for employers.

2009

Workforce Alliance, the Business Development Board, the Education Commission, Palm Beach Community College and the School District have been reviewing the high school career academy offerings to determine if the current academy courses are continuing to meet the changing workforce needs. This ongoing dialog ensures that the appropriate curriculum pathways are being developed and aligned with postsecondary curriculum.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the Business Development Board, Palm Beach Community College, School District of Palm Beach Count, School house Consulting and Workforce Alliance.

2007

The Florida Initiative for the Advance of Teaching (FIAT) is being expanded to serve all counties served by Florida Atlantic University. The University and regional partners have created a three prong innovated approach that is practical, research based, and scalable. Project Good FIT increases the number of education majors by paying college freshmen, sophomores and others interested in teaching to provide instructional support with model teachers. SMaRT provides classroom experiences to college juniors and seniors to work as substitute teachers with mentors. AIT fills teacher vacancies with selected university seniors who are ready to student teach as the actual classroom teacher with daily support from a mentor. Undergraduate students receive extensive classroom experiences and intensive, multi-year support with retired educator mentors as well as a minimal stipend. The students in the schools classrooms are provided with additional qualified and caring undergraduates to directly support mutual learning in concert with the classroom teacher.

The initial pilot was a joint initiative of PBCC and FAU to bolster and build the teaching profession in the Glades for Glades residents. This same program design is being developed with PBCC and FAU's School of Nursing to recruit and train health care professionals in the Glades region.

Teacher Preparation

2008

Florida Institute for the Advancement of Teaching (FIAT) and GOOD FIT continue to serve as a practical, research-based, and scalable solution for improving Florida's PK-20 educational system by recruiting, preparing, and retaining quality educators in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of Florida schools. Project Good FIT recruits potential education majors by paying college freshmen and sophomores to provide instructional support with model teachers. The SMaRT Program provides college juniors and seniors with classroom experience as substitute teachers with mentors. The AIT Program fills teacher vacancies with select university seniors who are ready to student teach with daily support from a mentor. The FIAT initiative improves the quality of instruction for both school-aged and undergraduate students with retired educator mentors. Currently, Florida Atlantic University is working closely with the three community colleges and seven school districts in its region to implement one or more of these three FIAT pilot programs on a limited scale. In the '07-'08 school year, Palm Beach County 62,672 students received 55,165 hours of quality instruction.

2009

The FIAT undergraduate participants are drawn from Palm Beach Community College, Broward Community College and Indian River State College. The partnership now includes more than 100 urban and rural schools in underserved and underprivileged communities. Because FIAT places undergraduates in the classroom early in their careers, they have time to pursue a different major if they decide teaching isn't for them. Undergraduate majors receive four years of intensive training by current and retired teachers an up to 1300 hours of classroom teaching experience. Those that stay in the program tend to stay in the profession. In the last six years, 206 FIAT graduates have become teachers and 204 (99%) are still teaching in Florida—a significantly higher retention rate than the state and national averages. FIAT's model for developing highly qualified, diverse and committed teachers is a model that should be replicated across the nation. With this success, Florida Atlantic's FIAT program was named a Merit Finalist for the Mutual of America Community Partnership Award.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with, Centro Cultural Latino Americano, Florida Atlantic University, Hispanic Human Resources, Mary & Robert Pew Public Education Fund, Palm Beach Community College, the School District of Palm Beach County, School House Consulting, and Workforce Alliance.