

Executive Summary

Grant Program	Community Foundation of Broward – School is Cool: Reimagining Middle Grades
Status	New – Competitive
Funds Requested	\$1,000,000 (per year over three years)
Financial Impact Statement	The potential positive financial impact is \$1,000,000 per year over three years. The source of funds is the Community Foundation of Broward. The School Board of Broward County, Florida, will provide community liaisons and Exceptional Student Education support facilitators at the middle schools as a 1:1 match for this grant.
Schools Included	The first cohort will be ten middle schools throughout the District.
Managing Department/School	Office of Academics
Source of Additional Information	1. Daniel Gohl, Chief Academic Officer – Office of Academics 754-321-2618 2. Stephanie R. Williams, Director, Grants Administration & Government Programs (GAGP) 754-321-2260
Project Description	<p>The School is Cool - Reimagining Middle Grades initiative is intended to change the way curriculum is delivered in the middle grades environment. The transition to project-based learning will engage every student and give them a deeper understanding of career pathways, issues the community confronts, and exposure to electives, while simultaneously providing wrap-around services and social-emotional learning. The overall goals of the initiative are: 1) improved positive student engagement as evidenced by increased attendance and reduced risk-taking behaviors, and 2) increased middle grades students’ academic achievement. The District will focus on the low-performing students at each school based on: 1) High absenteeism, 2) Poor academic data (grades of D/Fs in core courses), 3) Poor performance data (1/2s proficiency on FSAs), and 4) Behavioral Data (MtSS, RtI, Early Warning System, etc.).</p> <p>The Community Foundation of Broward’s (CFB) \$1 million investment per year over three years will be utilized to extend the academic year at each school, cover the salary of a Project Coordinator, provide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum and Training, offer Project-Based Learning (PBL) Curriculum and Training, host ALIgn Summer Camps for student exposure to the arts and science, extend Experiential Learning (field trips, guest speakers, and labs), and ensure the successful transition of Personalization for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (PASL) to middle school (currently offered to high school students).</p>
Evaluation Plan	<p>Over the course of three years, the measurable outcomes BCPS will aim to achieve with low-performing students are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 percent of students’ attendance will have fewer unexcused absences (tiered approach based on school’s rate of unexcused absences), • The percentage of students in the low-performing students involved in behavioral incidents will decrease, • 80 percent of students will improve academic gains in core curriculum (ELA, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies) as measured by improved grade point average, and • 100 percent of students will be engaged in project-based learning, social-emotional learning, an extracurricular activity, or an elective.
Research Methodology	Students and teachers report not being motivated or that their school experience is not connected with their daily lives. In a survey of 12,000 middle school students and 1,300 middle school teachers conducted in December 2017, a school climate survey conducted in May 2017, and the Advanced Ed accreditation process, students told the District that their experience at school is one of loneliness, disconnected tasks, and lacking their involvement other than to be compliant. The students that are speaking most loudly – through their surveys, their behavior, and their lack of effort in the education system – are the students that have the lowest achievement.

Alignment with Strategic Plan	This grant aligns with the District’s prioritized Strategic Plan focus on reimagining the middle grades experience. The grant is aligned with Strategic Goal 1 – High Quality Instruction by ensuring that middle grades students are engaged and by closing the academic gap of low-performing students, and Strategic Goal 2 – Continuous improvement by improving the management, organization, and alignment of resources including staff and facilities.
Level of Support provided by GAGP	GAGP staff worked in collaboration with the Office of Academics, the Office of School Performance and Accountability, and Student Assessment and Research to develop the grant application and the executive summary for board approval. GAGP routed the agreement through the Legal Department and will track the grant in the system.