

# **Council for Educational Change**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

**Building Leadership Capacity  
to support  
Florida's College and Career Ready  
Sunshine Standards**



**Programs:**

**Commissioner's Leadership Academy**

**APEX Forums: Achievement – Performance – Excellence**

**Community Conversations**





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June 30, 2014

Dr. Elaine Liftin  
President and Executive Officer  
Council for Educational Change  
Meridian Business Campus  
3265 Meridian Parkway, Suite 130  
Weston, Florida 33331

Dear Dr. Liftin:

I am writing to convey my heartfelt thanks for the vision that you brought to life in the Commissioner's Leadership Academy.

Each of the programs was rigorous, thoughtful and timely. The sessions I attended were intellectually invigorating and inspiring. Both the formal and informal settings provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to ask questions, share answers and develop professional friendships that will be sustained for life. You may be proud of the work you accomplished and facilitated through the Academy.

I recognize the enormity of the work required to make the Academy look effortless. Please extend my thanks to the mentors and Council staff, especially Nikki Pierro, for their support in making the Academy work so smoothly.

I deeply appreciate all of your efforts in implementing successful Academy cohorts and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Pam Stewart

PS/tgl



**Commissioner's Leadership Academy**  
A Program Developed, Designed and Delivered by the:  
**Council for Educational Change**  
Established by the Florida Annenberg Challenge

## **Table of Contents**

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### **The Commissioner's Leadership Academy**

Letter from the Commissioner of Education	.....	2
In a Word... "Wordle"	.....	4
Program Summary	.....	5
Program Participants	.....	6
Evaluation Results - Highlights	.....	8
Participant Feedback	.....	9
Recommendations	.....	9

### **APEX (Achievement – Performance – Excellence) Forums**

What is a Forum?	.....	10
Forum Goals	.....	10
Key Content	.....	10
Forum Impact & Feedback	.....	11

### **Community Conversation: Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards Pilot**

Goal	.....	12
Need	.....	12
Design	.....	12
Outcomes	.....	12

*"Principals are first and foremost educators. They are "de facto" presidents of a small college. With concerns about the performance of the faculty and measurable academic achievements of the students."*

Phil Jones, President, Hillsborough Education Foundation

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## **Council for Educational Change**

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## In a Word...

Fellow Principals were asked to describe their Commissioner's Leadership Academy experience in one word. The following "*Wordle*" represents their responses.



## Acknowledgement

Report based on and extracted from the Evaluation Reports prepared by:

University of Miami Evaluation Team

School of Education and Human Development

Ann G. Bessell, Ph.D. – Kahaema Byer, M.S. – Bridget Benavides – Alyse A. Bessell, B.A.



# Program Summary

The Council for Educational Change has extensive experience delivering Academies and Forums that focus on developing and enriching leadership skills for principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders. Over 2,600 educational leaders have participated in sessions from over 750 schools impacting the lives of more than 595,000 students.

In the fall of 2012, the Florida Department of Education awarded a grant to the Council to implement the Commissioner's Leadership Academy (CLA) for a two year period. The program's primary objective is to create cadres of 25 outstanding principals annually that would disseminate best practices and aid with the implementation of the Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards (FCCRSS) among other school administrators throughout the state. The Commissioner's Leadership Academy would also provide opportunities for these selected professionals to expand leadership skills while learning new proven strategies to build upon their strengths and sustain successes. These exceptional principals, would then mentor other principals and be available as a resource to build capacity in districts statewide, assisting other principals and school leaders with the goal of ultimately increasing student academic achievement.



The CLA focuses on three main objectives that these high performing principals would be able to achieve as a result of their year-long training:

1. Prepare their own school leadership team to continue and sustain their successes at their school
2. Mentor a principal selected by the superintendent
3. Put into practice the strategies that they learn by designing and delivering professional development sessions via one day APEX-(Achievement – Performance – Excellence) Forums around the state. (These principals were mentored throughout the year by experienced retired principals who facilitated and guided them with their assignments.

Two separate events with intensive agendas were planned to deliver the components contained in the initiative. In both events, specialized speakers presented subjects to be discussed and critically analyzed with the selected principals. In addition, the mentors met with their cohorts to discuss their particular projects and specific concerns. Culminating sessions were also planned to be held at the end of the yearly programs to collectively reflect on the various components of the year and provide the Fellows with a sense of support as they move forward in their respective professional journeys.





# Program Participants

**Brevard:** Longleaf Elementary □

**Broward:** Broward Virtual School, Coral Springs High, Lyons Creek Middle □

**Calhoun:** The CARE Program (Altha Public) □ **Collier:** Calusa Park Elementary, Oakridge Middle □

**Columbia:** Columbia High □

**Escambia:** Oakcrest Elementary, Ransom Middle □ **Flagler:** Matanzas High □ **Gadsden:** Havana Elementary

□ **Highlands:** Hill-Gustat Middle, Woodlawn Elementary □

**Hillsborough:** Lewis Elementary, Middleton High, Steinbrenner High □

**Indian River:** Treasure Coast Elementary □ **Lake:** Sawgrass Bay Elementary, South Lake High, Tavares High □ **Lee:** Cape Elementary, Cypress Lake Senior High, Dunbar High □

**Leon:** Deerlake Middle □ **Manatee:** W.D. Sugg Middle □ **Marion:** West Port High □

**Miami-Dade:** Dr. Rolando Espinosa K-8 Center, Lamar Louise Curry Middle,



Dr. Elaine Liftin, Council for Educational Change President and Executive Director with Florida's Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart at the inaugural meeting.



Academy participants during training sessions

Morningside Elementary, North County K-8 Center, North Miami Senior High, Royal Palm

Elementary □ **Orange:** Bridgewater Middle □ Chickasaw Elementary, Millennia Elementary, West Orange High □ **Osceola:**

Pleasant Hill Elementary □ **Palm Beach:** Royal Palm Beach High □

**Pinellas:** Campbell Park Elementary □ **Santa Rosa:** Holley Navarre Intermediate, Milton High

□ **Seminole:** Milwee Magnet Middle, Winter Springs Elementary

□ **St. Johns:** Allen B. Nease High **St. Lucie:** Palm Pointe Research School, Parkway Elementary, Southport Middle □ **Volusia:** Friendship Elementary



# Statewide Impact Summary

## Statewide Impact:

	Direct	Indirect*
Participants:	100	50
Schools:	50	50
Districts:	26	30
Educators:	3,364	3,000
School Leaders:	43	70
Students	57,731	55,000

## Total Impact

150 Participants

100 Schools

56 Districts

6,364 Educators

113 School Leaders

112,731 Students

\*Estimated

## Demographics:

The groups of principals, or cohorts, were formed to represent different counties and school levels. The composition of the entire group was created to represent the diversity of the state and school levels of principals. The average experience of the participants was five years.



# Evaluation Results Highlights

**100% of Principals** believed that both they and their school benefitted from their participation in the Academy, noting that they improved as leaders and as administrators

**Question:** How likely is it that you would recommend this program to a colleague as a learning opportunity?”

**Results:** A Net Promoter Index of 100% indicates that all participants fall in the category of “promoters” of the CLA program, and the group is highly likely to recommend the program to their colleagues.



## Culminating Event Three Salient Remarks...

1. **The State Level:** participants remembered the importance of connecting staying up to date on what is happening at the level of state legislation. They were interested in developments related to the Florida’s College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards, and particularly appreciative of the opening and concluding talks by the Commissioner of Education.
2. **Professional Leadership Development:** across cohorts, participants appreciated the resources from various speakers. The concept of “Shifting and Monkey” stood out across participants. Other themes such as “fixed vs. growth mindsets”, the use of Lexiles, and other best practices were also recalled and used.
3. **Networking:** participants appreciated getting to know other fellows, and enjoyed role-alike activities in which they shared experiences with principals at similar level schools. A consistent theme throughout the academy was learning from one another.





# Participant Feedback

- The Academy has allowed me a unique opportunity to share, collaborate, and to learn new and exciting practices and models that are being used to **enrich the lives of educators and to develop our children.**
- It is an honor and privilege to have been selected to participate in the Commissioner's Leadership Academy. This opportunity has allowed me to be **able to network with the best and brightest administrators throughout the State of Florida.** It has opened the door to my colleague's wisdom knowledge, and experience, which will only help me to grow as a person and as an administrator.
- I heard many **excellent "best practices"** that are being used, that I plan to adapt to my school.
- I set a tone this school year on having a **"growth mindset"** with students. It became a common language in the hallway, faculty meetings, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) training sessions.
- It has allowed me to really focus on the **implementation of the continuous improvement model** for school improvement.
- It has given me the **ability to implement transformational change** at my school.
- [It has] **made me a better leader**, overall. [I have] more skills to cope with the ever challenging job requirements.
- I really enjoyed collaborating with all principals in the Academy. Having the opportunity to come together and share best practices is **priceless.**



## Recommendations:

**"I would not change a thing!"**

***"I believe the sessions and the entire mission of the CLA were very effective"***

**"Continue to keep us involved."**



# APEX Forum

As a Commissioner's Leadership Academy (CLA) required activity, the program participants are responsible for designing, planning and implementing a day long APEX (Achievement, Performance, Excellence) Forum. This is a unique opportunity for CLA participants, divided into teams, to demonstrate their leadership. The objective is for the teams to plan, design, and deliver a professional development event which will share information, insight and best practices in the effective implementation of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards with other educators.

## What is a Forum?

A Forum is a professional development event that is usually one day in duration. Forums offer learning and skills acquisition based on the event's timely educational theme, topic or issue. By design, they are intensive experiences and differ from a conference because of their interactive nature. In the case of the APEX Forums, the attendees, the information, and learning will be delivered by practitioners with a successful track record in implementing Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards. Forums also build bridges—connecting the learning to schools and classrooms, through the implementation of action plans which are developed at the Forum and delivered at the school site.

## Forum Goals:

- **develop and deliver** professional learning that includes an introduction to new material and follow-up activities surrounding the implementation of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards. Information will be based upon the Standards reference materials provided by the Florida Department of Education
- **share, explore, and disseminate** practical and replicable best practices of high performing principals in raising student achievement that parallel and manifest the new Principal Leadership and Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards.
- **guide** participants in the development of action plans which will help them apply the APEX learning back at their school sites

## Key Content:

Includes emphasis on sharing of leadership best practices and effective practices for the implementation of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards which will:

- 1) raise student achievement
- 2) create a collaborative school climate
- 3) directly impact school improvement
- 4) include specific activities for Forum participants on implementation and follow-up
- 5) elevate staff performance
- 6) promote leadership skills
- 7) are practical and replicable



# APEX Forum Impact & Feedback

Representative quotes that reflect how principals benefitted from the program:

- “Preparing for the APEX (Achievement – Performance – Excellence) Forum required me to do research for aspiring principals. This research helped me to reflect on my own practice and ways to improve. Therefore, my school has benefitted from my **personal growth.**”
- “Honestly, this has been one of the **BEST teacher-leader all day sessions.**”
- “It has allowed me to build a much deeper toolkit which has **increased my effectiveness as an instructional leader.**”

Year 1 - Direct Impact			Estimated Indirect Impact First Year	
District	Participants	#	Schools	Students
Broward	Aspiring Principals	32	32	27,200
Escambia	All School Leaders	27	27	22,950
Hillsborough	Principals/School Leaders	27	15	12,750
Miami-Dade	Principals	44	44	37,400
Orange	Assistant Principals	38	30	25,500
<b>Totals Year 1</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>125,800</b>
Year 2 - Direct Impact			Estimated Indirect Impact Second Year	
District	Participants	#	Schools	Students
Broward	Principal/Intern Principals	60	60	51,000
Hillsborough	Principals/District Reps	70	50	42,500
Leon	Lead Teachers	90	45	38,250
Orange	Principals	100	100	85,000
<b>Totals Year 2</b>		<b>320</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>216,750</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>488</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>342,300</b>

- “I have **grown professionally** from each forum experience by learning from the other participants and leaders.”
- “I have taken every part of each session and modeled it for others, reflected on it and been **changed by the information.**”
- “It allowed me to see my profession through a new lens.”
- “I enjoyed the interactions and information provided

at each session. This has made the understanding of **more rigorous standards easier to understand.**”

- “Excellent information which gave confidence in the direction on implementing more rigorous standards.”



# Community Conversations

**GOAL:** Update business partners and parent leaders on Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards and their impact on Florida schools.

**NEED:** The adoption of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards will result in students who graduate from high school being better prepared for college and the world of work. Implementation of these standards have major leadership implications for principals and their school leadership teams. The implementation of this enriched curriculum impacts teachers, students, and especially parents, who help their children, reviewing schoolwork and monitoring homework.

**DESIGN:** This awareness session is designed to brief school business partners and parents, and enable them to experience actual work samples of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards. Participants will have the opportunity to share ideas and develop preliminary plans for assisting their schools during this major transition.

## Outcomes:

The two day APEX Forum was embraced with excitement and enthusiasm by all participants. Overall, parents and business leaders not only found the sessions valuable, but they also expressed a commitment to share their knowledge and understanding of Florida's College and Career Ready Sunshine Standards with others in order to ensure that all students were better prepared through the use of the curriculum.

The capacity building within each triad of a principal, parent, and business leader provided the venue for genuine collaboration that led to creation of solid action plans. Parents felt empowered because they had gained the knowledge to speak with confidence about the standards and business leaders expressed a better understanding of the challenges and possible roles they could play.

***“Excellent facilitators! Engaging activities to really talk about the need for higher standards.”***

***“I loved the real-world connections during the presentations. Those connections made the work ahead appear realistic to do.”***

Participants also benefitted from collaborating with members of other schools. For example, they talked about developing parent workshops for specific subject areas; using a feeder pattern approach for holding meetings; and holding community conversations in community facilities. Participants also suggested more hands-on opportunities and engagement in areas such as building school culture and learning more about college and career readiness for their students. It was clear that the collaborative bonds that were formed would continue in the future.

