



# Choosing Excellence™ Training Results

## NEAF Grant Objectives

Lee County, FL, was one of seven districts across the nation to receive a Closing the Gaps initiative grant from the National Education Association Foundation. This grant has provided \$250,000 annually for the past five years to provide support to Lee County's project, *Closing the Gaps through Choosing Excellence*. As the grant period comes to an end, participating schools have shown an overall increase in learning and a decrease in achievement gaps as compared to other District schools.

The initiative had five major objectives, which if met, would contribute to increased student achievement across all student subgroups. This article will address the first objective relating to teacher training.

## NEAF Grant Objectives

1. *All teachers in project schools will earn a rating of Effective or Highly Effective on applicable indicators of the Teacher Evaluation tool within the 5-year project period.*

The excerpt below examines the satisfaction with the professional development provided by the grant and the impact on teacher effectiveness.

- a) ***Evidence of Increased Teaching Quality: A core strategy utilized across all sites involves building teachers' capacity to deliver high quality instruction. Related activities involve development of professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring, as well as a wide array of professional development opportunities. Provide, as available, data and narrative regarding the impact of these activities on teachers' professional life (e.g., retention, satisfaction) and/or effectiveness (e.g., as evidenced in improved evaluations, peer observation or self-report data).***

Many of our teachers and administrators have told us about the positive changes brought about by their participation in *Choosing Excellence*™. An excerpt from an email from Jamie Van Cleve, one of our School Contact Teachers at Patriot Elementary, is below.

*Choosing Excellence has played a large part in the success I have encountered over the past three years here at Patriot. To begin with, the best way I can define Choosing Excellence is to say that it is a package of best practices that can close the achievement gap, improve student learning outcomes, and ensure school processes are running efficiently so that teachers and parents are part of a highly functioning school. Personally, I have had excellent success from implementing the different tools within my classroom, grade level, and throughout our school. I truly believe that Choosing Excellence is what played the largest part in making me a high-impact teacher with three years of highly performing students. In addition, our 4<sup>th</sup> grade team began tracking data and following the continuous improvement model in our PLC meetings which led to five awards from the Florida Department of Education in '14-15 for Math, including highest gains and proficiency.*

Lee County uses a State-approved Teacher Evaluation Tool which is based upon the Danielson model. Our goal is to have all teachers performing at an Effective or Highly Effective level, based upon this tool. Evaluations are determined based upon a combination manager ratings and student performance on high-stakes tests. The final rating includes a Value Added Measure (VAM) score. The FY16 VAM scores will not be available until late fall, so the ten schools that were added to the grant this year are not included in the data.

The table below illustrates the percentage of Effective and Highly Effective teachers at the grant schools. Green highlight indicates that the percentage is equal to or higher than the District average. As illustrated in the tables, all of the schools had a higher percentage of Effective and/or Highly Effective ratings than the District. When the Effective and Highly Effective ratings are combined, 65% of the grant schools outperformed the District. Nine of the ten original grant schools (highlighted in yellow) outperformed the District (90%).

School	% Effect.	%HE	% E+HE
Bonita Elem	65.8	31.6	97.4
Caloosa Mid	82.7	17.3	100.0
Cape High	64.0	36.0	100.0
Challenger	71.4	28.6	100.0
Dip. Elem	72.6	24.2	96.8
Dip. Mid	69.8	24.5	94.3
East	90.6	7.7	98.3
FMHS	64.9	34.0	99.0
FMMA	78.9	21.1	100.0
J. Colin	76.5	14.7	91.2
LAMS	85.1	9.5	94.6
Manatee	80.0	10.8	90.8
Mariner	53.0	44.6	97.6
Patriot	77.3	22.7	100.0
Pinewoods	60.3	39.7	100.0
Skyline	52.9	42.6	95.6
South	81.4	17.5	99.0
Tortuga	81.4	14.3	95.7
Tropic	73.9	24.6	98.6
VPAA	60.6	38.5	99.1
District	75.2	22.2	97.3