

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 201 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 54 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 54 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

309 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	26	29	55
1	52	57	109
2	38	44	82
3	49	57	106
4	34	49	83
5	54	59	113
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	253	295	548

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 32 % Black or African American
 - 60 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 3 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 4%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	26
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	604
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21 %
116 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 73 %
Total number students who qualify: 401

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %
29 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Somerset Miramar sets high academic and social expectations that lead to the successful development of the whole child and create lifelong learners.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Somerset Academy Miramar Elementary is a public charter school, open to all eligible students who reside in Broward County, and subject to the preferences provided for in F.S. 1002.33(10)(d) and described therein. Following the close of an enrollment period, the parent/guardian will be notified of their student’s eligibility status. All student enrollments shall be subject to a random lottery and to the racial/ethnic balance provisions described in F.S. 1002.33 (7)(a)(8).

PART III – SUMMARY

Somerset Academy Miramar- “Home of the Sharks” opened its doors in August 2007 in the City of Miramar, Florida. Miramar is centrally located between the Miami and Ft. Lauderdale metro areas. Our school is located in a suburban residential community named, Vizcaya. During the 2008/2009 school year, our school became eligible for Title I funding. Through Title I funding, our school has benefited from supplementary staff, instructional resources, and support services for our students. Our school is a place where children enjoy learning, teachers enjoy teaching and families are a fundamental part of the educational process. It is our school’s vision to provide equitable high quality education. It is our mission to set high academic and social expectations that together lead to the successful development of the whole child.

Our student body is diverse with a population that is 60% Hispanic, 32% African American, 4% Asian, 3% White, and 1% Multiethnic. We have 29 students that receive ESE services and 116 students that are English language learners. As a Title I school, we have 73% of students that receive free or reduced lunch.

Somerset Academy Miramar has achieved A+ school status every school year since its opening. In the 2013/2014 school year, our school was awarded the ECTAC Exceeding Expectations in Student Achievement Award. We earned this award for increasing reading and math proficiency from one school year to the next, maintaining our school grade, and scoring above the state median in total reading and math learning gains. Another area where we have shown achievement from year to year is writing. Our writing scores fluctuate slightly but always maintain at least 90% proficiency. The Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools has recognized us as a Florida Gold Seal of Excellence school. In 2016, our principal won the Florida TaxWatch Principal Leadership Award. This award identifies Florida’s most effective principals, recognizes their work, and promotes their transformational practices throughout the state. These great accomplishments demonstrate how Somerset Miramar sets high academic standards that ultimately lead to student success.

Together with our families, every year, we host a Reading Night, Math and Science Night, Multicultural Day, Black History Showcase, Hispanic Heritage Showcase, and Carnival. These events have turned into a Somerset Miramar tradition. Somerset Miramar prioritizes the physical well being of the child as well. Our students participate in recess, daily. We participate in Jump Rope for Heart and field day. We have a successful after school judo program free for all of our students. We also participate in the Somerset Academy districtwide Spelling Bee, Battle of the Books, and Math Bowl. We support our community by participating in Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Dan Marino Walkabout Autism, March of Dimes March for Babies and Leukemia/Lymphoma Society Pennies for Patients. We also work with Nicklaus Children’s Hospital to give our students a free EKG and The Oral Health Institute to provide a free dental cleaning and checkup, annually. In addition to supporting our community, this year, we donated funds to both Texas and Puerto Rico following this destructive hurricane season.

At Somerset Academy Miramar Elementary, we never stop growing, learning, and changing to meet the needs of our students. This is the only way to ensure that, year after year, families will continue to choose us. This makes it necessary for us to work harder in providing the highest quality education for our students. This requires classroom teaching to be a blend of whole-class, small group, and differentiated instruction. Our teachers are flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Data drives our instruction. We rely on data to understand trends, weaknesses and strengths not only in our students but in our teachers as well. Our curriculum includes a proactive approach to teaching that meets children’s needs and maximizes their growth as learners. We also strongly believe that students need to be proficient in the use of technology. Our curriculum is heavily infused with technology. We also have many software programs that support our reading, math and science curriculums.

Somerset Miramar offers students free tutoring services for additional assistance in academic subject areas. Additionally, we also offer have an enrichment program on weekends for students that need the extra challenge. During our school day, we offer an academic intervention program. Teachers recommend small

groups of students to this program to receive instruction from a certified teacher in specific areas of need. Our school has a full time guidance counselor that provides guidance services to our students. Through our Student of the Month program, we nurture and celebrate a culture of kindness.

At Somerset Academy Miramar Elementary, we believe that students learn best when they are encouraged to succeed. We believe that students learn best when their families are actively involved in the school community. We believe that together with a strong instructional program, family involvement and communication are the catalyst that makes education effective. We strive to be the best and hope to continue to provide high quality education in the years to come.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Somerset Academy Miramar, the teachers use a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction. Although the core curriculum is Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Journeys in kindergarten through fifth grade, teachers use the Language Arts Florida Standards to deliver reading and writing instruction that is appropriate at each grade level.

Students learn about reading and writing through scaffolded lessons provided by core curriculum and from additional supplemental resources. Primary elementary teachers use Letterland, a phonics program, to incorporate songs, magnetic letters, pictograms, writing and instructional games to teach students grade-level appropriate phonological awareness and phonics skills. They also utilize data from the online reading program Lexia to ensure that students are on track to meet end-of-year grade-level expectations. Lexia is an online program with real-time reports and many resources including a library of lessons and downloadable activities. The program works behind the scenes and makes adjustments based on student performance. In our school, teachers use it as a tool to differentiate instruction, motivate students and celebrate success as students complete each level. Similarly, intermediate students use Reading Plus as an online program to practice their reading comprehension skills by selecting passages of their choice and on their reading level.

During the rotation of literacy centers, students have an opportunity to sharpen their reading skills on Lexia (K-2) or Reading Plus (3-5) and in other literacy centers that focus on foundational skills and writing. During guided reading, students read an instructional level book from the leveled books in the core curriculum, or a book selected by the teacher. The teacher explicitly teaches a strategy and provides support. In conjunction with the Language Arts Florida Standards, our elementary teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum as a guide to identify key behaviors that teachers should teach and look for during interactive read alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. Throughout continuous professional development, teachers discuss how to correlate learning standards to specific reading behaviors found in the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum. This process has improved our teachers’ understanding of the rigor and complexity of each Language Arts Florida Standard. Once teachers select the standard that will be taught, the teachers use the continuum to teach a reading mini-lesson and present it to students in digestible bites with a variety of texts, from different genres and text structures.

Our math curriculum focuses on deepening conceptual understanding and fluency on specific standards in each grade level in order for students to move to the next grade level with a solid foundation. Go Math encourages a hands-on approach to standard-based learning in all domains and subdomains in the Florida Standards. Students build foundational skills through concrete experiences with manipulatives. In addition to base ten blocks, fraction pieces, and 3-dimensional figures, it provides technology enhanced resources, such as iTools, which allows students and teachers to model and solve problems on the Promethean board. The curriculum transitions students to drawing representational pictures and models to deepen their understanding of the concept, to better assist them at the abstract level of understanding. Our curriculum also provides students with remediation and enrichment through paper-based and online resources. Critical thinking opportunities and higher order thinking questions are the common thread the curriculum provides across all grade levels. Our supplemental math programs, such as IXL, provide teachers the ability to assign specific skill practice to our students based on their needs.

Our comprehensive science curriculum offers students print based and digital lessons that address the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The students participate in virtual labs using science journals for recording, predicting, and analyzing their results. Students also use active reading strategies embedded in their consumable textbook. The curriculum also offers extra support for vocabulary concepts. In addition to our science curriculum, students also use the supplemental program Science Speedbag that allows them to illustrate science concepts and reinforces domain-specific vocabulary across all grade levels.

Although learning about current and historical events is embedded in the literacy block, our students also use the social studies magazines from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in the classroom. These magazines

provide an abundance of information on each topic that address specific grade level standards. For example, the fifth grade magazines focus specifically on the history of the United States. The series begins with the explanation of what America was like geographically early on and then transitions through history to cover major historical events, such as the Civil War, Postwar Change and Growth, World War I, The Great Depression, World War II, and then ending with introducing our students to the 21st Century. The digital component of the curriculum provides our teachers with many additional resources for enrichment. Our teachers also address important topics through project based learning throughout the school year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other curriculum areas are an important part in the education of the whole child at Somerset Miramar. Physical Education, Art, Music, Spanish, and Computer courses are taken, providing each student daily opportunities to explore their strengths outside of the traditional textbook based instruction and find hidden talents and/or passions.

Students in kindergarten-5th grade take all of our special area classes weekly, year round. Our physical education coach uses Florida's specials skills standards to plan lessons that teach the importance of fitness and nutrition. Students learn about the importance of healthy habits that lead to healthy lifestyles. The teacher organizes activities for students that include team sports, individual exercise, as well as techniques to improve flexibility and coordination.

Art education at SAM teaches the skills and technical qualities involved in creating, recreating and interpreting artwork that fosters lifelong appreciation. Our art teacher uses the Sunshine State Standards to plan meaningful lessons for our students. She infuses drawing, painting, sculpture, weaving, and work involving fabrics and design. Although the focus is on making art, she teaches our children about the history of these art forms as well. Each year our art teacher hosts an art show and auction on campus. This is an opportunity for our students and families to appreciate culture through art and come together to celebrate student achievement that enhances social and emotional wellbeing.

Our music teacher uses the Sunshine State Standards to plan for lessons that enhance performance skills, teach improvising, reading music, and composing. She dedicates her time to teaching fundamentals of music and communicates through her teaching that persistence and practice every student will reach their potential. Annually, our music teacher produces and directs our school musical. This school musical is successful due to the collaboration of teachers, students, families and our community. Students have the opportunity to showcase their talents and work together to create a spectacular show.

Our Spanish teacher uses La Cartilla de Gretel, Spanish curriculum. Using this resource, she teaches Spanish grammar, pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, composition, and dialogue. She infuses culture and history of countries that speak Spanish. Our Spanish teacher organizes a Hispanic Heritage Showcase each year. This event allows our students and staff to celebrate art and culture through different representations of Hispanic countries.

With the current focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), our computer teacher has one of the most important jobs in our school. She uses the special skills standards to plan lessons that support our students as they learn about careers in a wide range of professions. In addition, she teaches basic computer, keyboard and internet skills and encourages creative thinking with challenging classroom projects.

At Somerset Miramar, we believe building a solid reading foundation is very important. Our students visit with the Media Specialist once a week. She teaches our students how to use multimedia devices, introduces our children to literature, media and other resources to broaden their horizons. She plans and carries out lessons that help our students become effective users of ideas and information, a lifelong skill.

Each special area fosters student creativity. In art class, for example, a student may choose what they will use to fill their blank canvas. In Music class, they may develop their own rhythm. During Computer class,

students may learn about coding their very own app. Each course is an opportunity to develop an interest or existing talent and truly shine among their peers.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Somerset Miramar's data discussions take part continuously throughout the school year. Data from the Florida Standards Assessment is analyzed to identify patterns such as, but not limited to, grade level patterns, proficiency levels, and individual student data. This process allows for goals to be set by subject area and for individual grade levels. At the beginning of the school year, students are given a series of baseline assessments, which are used by teachers to identify individual students, or groups of students, with specific needs for remediation and enrichment purposes. In the primary grades, students take the i-Ready Reading Diagnostic and Lexia Auto Placement while students in intermediate grades take the Insight Assessment from Reading Plus. Fourth and fifth grade students who scored a level 1 or 2 on the FSA ELA take the i-Ready Reading Diagnostic Assessment for progress monitoring purposes. Students in grades 1-5 take the STAR assessment for progress monitoring while kindergarten students take the STAR Early Literacy.

Once the students complete the baseline assessments, the teachers and reading coach meet to discuss the results. Teachers closely analyze i-Ready report to determine which students need additional one-on-one testing in phonological awareness, phonics and fluency. Students performing below level in foundational skills, as determined by i-Ready, are assessed individually with the CORE Phonics and the MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency assessments. Based on the results from these individual assessments, teachers can clearly pinpoint the skill each student needs to learn and can group students accordingly. In small groups, teachers use Letterland phonics materials, word sorts, magnetic letters, songs, and poems to teach students foundational literacy skills. Additionally, students who demonstrate a deficiency in comprehension are also assessed with the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS). Using the results from the BAS, and in conjunction with the baseline reading assessments, teachers and the reading coach decide which students need tier 2 and tier 3 interventions. Students who receive tier 3 interventions work in a small group with the school's reading interventionist using the Leveled Literacy Intervention program. Working at their instructional reading level, these students are closely progress monitored using the assessments embedded in the intervention program and the Benchmark Assessment System three times a year.

Assessments and how teachers use the results directly impact classroom instruction, but teachers' delivery of instruction and expertise to implement certain instructional strategies when needed is crucial. In reading, our teachers teach comprehension strategies throughout the reading block, such as predicting, visualizing, clarifying, summarizing, evaluating, and critiquing the texts. Students have multiple opportunities to practice using their comprehension strategies through book talk, read alouds, reciprocal teaching, shared reading experiences, guided reading and independent reading. When students have various opportunities to read throughout the day and practice using self-correction strategies, such as rereading, making connections, and asking questions, they are willing to read more and share what they have learned. These strategies also boost students' self-esteem and their image as a student.

Our math lessons are introduced in a whole group setting with hands on activities. Students also have the opportunity to practice skill mastery and solve multistep higher order thinking problems and tasks in small groups of peers while using accountable talk strategies to guide them. Tier two students are pulled into small group with their teacher where reteach activities or interventions take place. Independent practice opportunities are also put into place in order for students to practice on digital programs such as IXL. Tier two students who continue to struggle or fail to meet grade level expectations after approximately six to eight weeks, will be referred to the math interventionist for a diagnostic and placement assessment for our tier three-intervention program. If the child study team determines that the student qualifies for tier three interventions, then thirty-minute daily interventions will be implemented by the math interventionist and continued monitoring by the classroom teacher. The math interventionist uses Number Worlds math intervention program to teach students and provide targeted skill practice. Throughout this process, the teacher is in close communication with the parent and the child study team. The goal is to build foundational skills and close the gap for these students.

Our stop, drop and test (SDT) program provides students with biweekly assessments and a mid-year assessment in the areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts. In fifth grade, students also have a science SDT. Our SDT schedule begins with an initial assessment and continues from late September through to state testing. The students build stamina and tackle specific standards. The data collected provides continual “snapshots” of how students are performing on a particular standard and tracked over time to gauge progress. This progress is communicated to students and parents through individual data chats and provides the opportunity for effective communication in relation to addressing areas of concern. Additionally, data is used for modifying instructional focus calendars as needed, instructional differentiation, and small-group instruction. A crucial aspect of SDT is the review of each assessment and modeling of effective testing strategies that makes a difference in the learning process.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Somerset Miramar, we pride ourselves on providing a positive family environment. This environment is so apparent that it has earned us the nickname “SAM Fam”. Our families participate in various extracurricular activities that nurture the ongoing relationship with our school. We can always count on them to help at our annual multicultural festival by not only cooking meals that represent different cultures but also assisting during the event. Our families assist us during literacy night by performing read alouds and help at math and science night by assisting teachers with hands-on experiments. At every school event, our families assist by popping popcorn and making snow cones for our students. At our school, academics are always a priority but so is celebrating our students. We believe that it is important for school to be fun and memorable. Nothing means more to a child than when a teacher goes out of their way to notice and celebrate even the smallest of achievements. Celebrations, verbal praise and heart-felt recognition show our students that their accomplishments can move mountains. We believe that confidence is the key to motivation. When a student feels that they can achieve the goals set for them, they become intrinsically motivated, and become lifelong, enthusiastic learners. Our teachers strongly believe in making real-world connections between the skills taught in the classroom to the challenges the students will face in the real world.

Somerset Academy Miramar faculty and staff has committed to the total educational process. We support all of our students’ academic, social and emotional needs. Our staff serve as advocates for students, so that they may manage the social and emotional demands of their lives. We create positive mindsets and behaviors using social and emotional classroom curriculum and the school counseling program. The school counseling program delivers data driven classroom guidance lessons, individual brief counseling, group counseling, college/career planning and continual collaboration with stakeholders.

Somerset Academy Miramar makes sure that teachers feel valued and supported. The teachers and administrators at our school understand the power of teamwork and empowering each other every day. This support begins with our administration’s open door policy. Teachers are not only welcomed but also encouraged to maintain an open line of communication with our administrators. Teachers are recognized monthly for their achievements and given the “SAM Superhero Award”. During our faculty meeting, teachers are recognized for their students’ outstanding achievements using the school’s educational technology programs. Our school provides opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through different committees. In addition, teachers are encouraged to develop not only strong bonds within their departments, but also with other teachers from different grade levels, as this builds camaraderie. Teachers rely on each other for advice, guidance, and support. Teachers at our school have a daily support system through our wonderful curriculum coaches. Our coaches provide us with resources, weekly professional developments, and feedback to help us provide our students with a rich learning environment. At Somerset Academy Miramar, everyone truly works together to ensure that teamwork really does make the dream work.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Somerset Academy Miramar is dedicated to supporting the development of the whole child. We take pride in our willingness and ability to provide services such as social workers, EKG screenings, oral health, vision and hearing screenings and professional counseling. We believe these efforts, provide our low-income families some financial relief and in turn, student achievement increases, attendance rates go up, and suspensions drop. We firmly believe that strengthening each family's ability to support their children's academic achievement is a priority. We offer daily opportunities for parents to spend time in the classroom, join us for Saturday enrichment or attend one of our family nights such as Family Literacy Night and Math and Science Night. Families, students, teachers, administrators and community members eagerly participate in our School Advisory Council. This council meets, at least quarterly, to collaborate and monitor the effectiveness of the practices implemented in our school.

Our students and staff work closely to support our community. We have many clubs such as The Community Club and the National Honor Society who raise money for families in need, locally and internationally. Some examples of student-led contributions to our community are Susan G. Komen Race For the Cure, Dan Marino Walkabout Autism, American Cancer Society, March of Dimes and Red Cross. Our students clean up beaches, donate supplies to local pet shelters, participate in a holiday food drive that not only feeds neighboring communities but also our own Somerset families' in need and donate clothing to local teens. Our students feel proud of their efforts and our community is grateful for their contributions.

Increasing communication between school and home via phone call, email, electronic grade book viewer, school website and our customizable mass messaging system Parent Link have proven to be the most effective ways of keeping parents and the community informed of our success and school improvement needs. Each of our teacher's has a personalized website that provides specific information for students and their families. Additionally, social media like Facebook and Instagram has served as an effective platform to interact with our community.

Local businesses such as Vicky Bakery and Freeze Nitro Creamery, among other local businesses have joined forces with us to raise money and provide opportunities for our stakeholders and community members to get together and help make us the strong unit that we are today. Vicky Bakery hosts family nights one to two times a quarter. They open their doors and invite our families to spend time together. Vicky Bakery gives back 10% of their proceeds. Freeze Nitro Creamery donates their time and products for family night events such as Math and Science Night. They set up a station and allow our students to make their own ice cream. They offer our families special discounts as well. These successful partnerships benefit our students, teachers and the entire community.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a continuous practice at Somerset Miramar. Our administration and teachers participate and facilitate many trainings throughout the school year. Each year, our administration participates in the National Title I Conference, National Charter School Conference, Somerset Academy Technology Fair, and Somerset Academy Principal's Chat. Although professional development in academic areas is very important, we also feel that the areas of social emotional, safety and parent communication are crucial for our teachers and staff members as well.

In the beginning of the school year, teachers complete a professional development survey that the instructional coaches use to create a professional development plan. Throughout the school year, the professional development plan is modified based on teacher observations, questions from teachers, and formative and summative data such as FSA assessments. Additionally, teachers can participate in professional development provided by Broward County Public Schools.

Teachers participate in team meetings on a weekly basis. During this time, the curriculum coaches facilitate professional development pertaining to instructional strategies that will benefit students receiving tier 1 instruction, such as differentiated instruction, small group instruction, and guided reading. There is also an emphasis on professional development that supports teachers with the implementation of reading and math interventions for tier 2 and tier 3 students. During these trainings, the curriculum coaches model instructional strategies that benefit students working on different levels. The instructional coaches also model instructional strategies in the classrooms. In addition to weekly trainings, new teachers participate in the New Educator Teacher Academy on a monthly basis. They receive training on topics such as parent communication, using data effectively, teaching students how effective reading and writing strategies, incorporating science, technology, engineering and math in their lessons just to name a few. After trainings, the coaches follow-up with the teachers and analyze data from formative assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and its impact on academic achievement. For example, after modeling reciprocal teaching strategies, analyzing how the strategy addresses the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS), correlating key behaviors found in the Literacy Continuum to the LAFS, the teachers and the reading coach discuss how the students are analyzing and articulating their ideas about text by predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing.

In addition to our weekly team meetings, teachers, coaches, and administration participate in Data Teams PLCs. Each grade level meets to discuss baseline data for the school year, sets goals for the school year, and meets to discuss progress made towards those goals. For instance, the percentage of fourth grade students scoring proficient or higher in ELA will increase from 87% to 90% by the end of May 2018 as measured by the FSA. We believe that weekly meetings among the teachers and coaches promote communication, collaboration, teamwork, and working together towards a common goal.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy and structure at Somerset Academy Miramar begins with the principal. Leading a school of highly qualified teachers by example, the principal holds three degrees in education including an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in Educational Leadership. As a supporter of continued education, she subscribes to educational literature to remain current with the ever-changing educational research and data. She also participates regularly in professional development based on both the needs of the school as well as on the pioneering educational practices that can positively influence the school and its stakeholders. The principal sets the example of passion, dedication, flexibility, and an openness to change that has become the culture of the school.

The principal's core administrative team consists of two assistant principals, each holding a master's degree in educational leadership, and two curriculum specialists, experts in their corresponding curricula areas. This core team, selected and mentored by the principal during her tenure, has established a level of communication that enables them to oversee the daily operation of the school in a personal and hands-on manner. From classroom curricula to classroom management, student assessment to student discipline, school safety to cafeteria and custodial programs, all areas are handled directly and effectively by the members of this team. Daily communication of logistics, issues, concerns, compliments, and accomplishments is the foundation of this core team. This essential component allows for the consistent focus on the school's mission and goals as well as the ultimate success of the school.

The principal is the head of the leadership team, which consists of a group of individuals who share the exemplary qualities that have made them notable leaders in their departments. In addition to their passion and dedication, each brings to the leadership team their expertise and a willingness to embrace the principal's philosophy of change. Through the direction and mentorship of the principal, these innovators do not fear change for they know it is the only way to grow and improve as educators.

High-expectations course from administration, the leadership team, faculty and staff, and through to the students as well as their families. The belief that student achievement is a team effort is an essential component of the school's success. In order to ensure that all stakeholders are effectively working together, the principal maintains an open line of communication both through a standard open-door policy, as well as through scheduled meetings. Meetings are held weekly for the grade level teams, bi-weekly for the leadership team, monthly for the remaining faculty and staff, and a minimum of quarterly for parents and families. Throughout these meetings, it is evident that the principal has created an environment that allows for clear communication through a willingness to share and an openness to new ideas from all stakeholders. Many of the ideas shared are supported and are visible throughout the school's programs. For example, our Black History Month event was re-invented from an idea contributed by our history and drama teachers. Through collaboration with the administrative team and the creation of a committee, their vision of a musical/theatrical tribute to the important contributors of black history was realized. In another instance, the security staff of the school communicated a desire to implement a rewards/initiative program for students during their lunchtime. Again, with the assistance of administration, a well-coordinated program was put into place to encourage appropriate behavior and to reward classes monthly. The intervention program at our school was also developed subsequent to the continual communication between administration and teachers, where the need of additional support for Tier III students was identified. The program has been adapted and improved yearly based on the needs of the students/teachers and through the consistent communication and monitoring that exists between the interventionist and curriculum coaches. This is yet another example of how our staff continually contribute to the enrichment of our school. This open line of communication ensures that policies, programs, and resources are focused on student achievement, and that accountability is a natural course of the process.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Successful schools do employ multiple strategies that work collaboratively to address the various aspects of not only managing an educational facility, but also ultimately meeting the goals of continued academic growth and closing the achievement gap for all students. At Somerset Academy Miramar, we pride ourselves in being unique and innovative in many areas, however the one true foundational practice that reaches out to every aspect of our success is essential and effective communication. Communication is a necessary skill for any relationship, but at Somerset Academy Miramar, there are high expectations for the level of communication that is at the core of our culture. A culture of understanding where all stakeholders are aware that through open, concise, and intentional communication, we are all able to address concerns, offer suggestions, clarify misunderstandings, celebrate successes, and strengthen our relationships.

The expectation of consistent, effective communication begins with the leadership of the school. Administration and the leadership team communicate consistently and openly with the staff and faculty, enabling them to maintain awareness of the progress of the varying aspects of student education and success. Bi-weekly meetings for departments and leadership allow for a broader awareness and discussion of ideas, events, policies, and procedures in a manner that encourages proactivity. A more precise level of awareness begins with weekly communication within grade levels where instructional strategies are developed, data is reviewed and addressed, and specific student progress is analyzed. The frequency of meetings provides the opportunity for communication; however, the effectiveness of the communication is a skill that we continually strengthen. A safe and open environment exists where strategic questions and comments guide the conversations providing an accurate picture that allows us to offer support or address needs quickly and effectively. For example, from these meetings and conversations, professional development for teachers is provided, academic and behavior intervention plans for students are developed and prescribed, continual progress is monitored, and modifications can be made as necessary, ensuring a successful outcome.

This same level of consistent, effective communication carries through to our students and families. Administration, leadership, and teachers are present and involved at every event, conference night, Parent University, Student Advisory Council meeting, etc. That presence is key to developing the culture of open communication with all stakeholders at Somerset Academy Miramar. Parents and families quickly understand our availability as they are received openly and warmly at these opportunities. It is commonplace for parents to engage in effective communication with teachers, leaders, instructional coaches, and administration throughout these occasions. This approachability sets the foundation for families to feel comfortable reaching out not only to their child's teachers when needed, but to our instructional coaches and administration as well. The ability of our families to reach out for different levels of support, without feeling as if they are "going over the teacher's head" is a unique aspect of communication that exists at our school. For example, it is typical that our families know the personal cell phone numbers of our teachers, leaders, instructional coaches, and even administrators; something that is valued by both the parent and faculty as a consistent part of our philosophy that student achievement is a team effort. This unique level of support and accessibility is key to effective communication and has become a trademark of our culture; it is what sets Somerset Academy Miramar apart as a successful school.