

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Victoria Larrauri

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Pinecrest Academy (North Campus)

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 10207 W. Flagler Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Miami FL 33174-1743
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Miami-Dade

Telephone (305) 553-9762

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Judith Marty

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jmarty@materacademy.com

District Name Miami-Dade School District Tel. (305) 995-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Judith Marty

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 252 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 62 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 79 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

393 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
- Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	30	22	52
1	46	52	98
2	34	38	72
3	30	38	68
4	29	37	66
5	22	34	56
6	17	12	29
7	17	11	28
8	4	14	18
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	229	258	487

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 95 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 2 % White
 - 0 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 14%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	52
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	82
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	597
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %
64 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 62 %
Total number students who qualify: 301

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
45 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>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</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: 9
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	96%	98%	95%
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 2018.

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.

The mission of Pinecrest Academy North is to provide an innovative, challenging curriculum in a loving environment that furthers a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, parents, teachers, and staff.

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

STUDENT ENROLLMENT/LOTTERY

Students will be admitted to Pinecrest Academy (North Campus) regardless of race, gender religion or ethnic origin, and our admission and dismissal procedures will be equitable for all students. All "Pinecrest Academy, Inc." schools will implement the following enrollment/lottery policy:

1. Effective immediately, Pinecrest Academy (North Campus) will set and advertise a registration / lottery date.

2. The following groups of students will not have to participate in the lottery and will gain automatic admission/re-admission assuming they complete the "Intent to Return" form prior to the lottery date.

- i. Current students enrolled at Pinecrest Academy (North Campus)
- ii. Siblings of enrolled or accepted students at Pinecrest Academy (North Campus)
- iii. Children of teachers at Pinecrest Academy (North Campus)
- iv. Children of governing board members, however, for Federal Grant Recipient Schools, preference will only be given to children of founding board members of the grant recipient school, Pinecrest Academy (North Campus), while the school is in the grant period. Any governing board members which are nominated and/or elected to the governing board after the founding of the school shall not be eligible for any enrollment preference while the school is in the grant period.
- v. Children of an active duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces.

For Federal Grant Recipient Schools, sibling and children of teacher exemptions only apply to children of the grant recipient school. An exemption cannot be granted if the child does not have a sibling in the Federal Grant Recipient School and/or the teacher is not employed at the Federal Grant Recipient School.

3. If the number of applicants is less than or equal to the number of available slots each qualified applicant will be accepted and enrolled.
4. If the number of applicants meeting the established criteria of the charter exceeds the stated capacity of the school, or individual classroom or program, each child will be placed in a random lottery (the “Lottery”).
5. Each application will be given a number, and all numbers for each classroom/program will be placed in a database. Numbers will be drawn on a random basis and all slots available per grade will be filled based on the rank order of their drawing. The remaining numbers will be used to create the waiting list (the list will be developed based on the rank order in which the remaining assigned lottery numbers are randomly drawn).
6. There will be at least one school administrator plus a member of the board and/or a representative from an independent auditing firm present at the Lottery.
7. After the Lottery is completed, students will be contacted in the rank order in which names were randomly drawn and established on the waiting list.
8. As openings arise throughout the year, the next child on the waiting list for that particular classroom will be offered the “space”. If the school accepts applications during the school year and already has a waiting list from a previous lottery, the school may either re-draw all names to date (less those accepted/withdrawn/removed by request) or conduct periodic subsequent lotteries and add the names in the rank order drawn to the initial list created via a random lottery.
9. The parent has 48 hours to accept/refuse the space and complete all required documentation for admission into program. If the parent is not able to do so, the space will go to the next child on the waiting list. Applicant names for parents who do not respond within 48 hours or who do not accept the available space will be removed from the list and requested to reapply in the future if they would like to be considered at a later date.
10. If there are more spaces than applications, the school may accept all students after the registration period has ended. If the school continues to accept applications after the initial registration period, the school will:
 - A. Conduct subsequent registration periods with advertised due dates and determine whether a lottery is necessary at the end of that period; or,
 - B. Conduct a “rolling” registration weekly. At the end of each week, determine whether or not a lottery is necessary.
 1. If the school receives more applications that week than the available seats, the school will:
 - a. Conduct a lottery;
 - b. Notify families that received available spaces, and
 - c. Put remaining applications on a waiting list in the rank order their numbers are randomly drawn OR let families know they will be included in the next lottery when spaces become available.
 2. If no lottery is necessary at the end of the week because the school has more space than applications received, all applicants may be accepted.
 3. Repeat steps a and b above at the end of each week or as long as the school continues to accept applications for each school year.
11. The school may choose the option of maintaining a waiting list application pool rather than a rank ordered waiting list. When the school chooses this option, it will conduct the lottery from all available applications received to date and stop when all available spaces have been filled. Each time the school has available space, it will conduct a new lottery.

PART III – SUMMARY

Pinecrest Academy (North Campus) (hereinafter Pinecrest Academy North) was established as a public elementary charter school in Miami, FL in 2010, serving students from kindergarten through 5th grade. In 2015, Pinecrest Academy North merged with Pinecrest Academy North Middle becoming a K-8 Center. Pinecrest Academy North's vision is to inspire core values, which creates a culture of academic excellence, developing lifelong learners who demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values to become tomorrow's leaders. We believe all students can learn if they are challenged, despite their socioeconomic background. The school is dedicated to helping parents and guardians educate their children by creating a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment, which encourages participation, creativity, and enthusiasm for learning. Pinecrest Academy North focuses on providing high quality education, maximizing student achievement, and building future leaders.

The mission of Pinecrest Academy North is to provide an innovative, challenging curriculum in a loving environment that fosters a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, parents, teachers, and staff. The school's population has expanded over the last nine years, and we now serve 487 students. The student population demographic breakdown is as follows: 95% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Black, and 2% Asian. Approximately 13% of these students are English Language Learners, and 9% of the population is part of the Exceptional Student Education Program. In addition, 62% of students receive a free and reduced lunch. The local community of Pinecrest Academy North predominantly consists of Hispanic families, representing various countries of Central and South America. The majority of families at our school are non-English speakers or speak English as a second language. This challenge often affects parents' involvement with their children's homework and review of their studies. In addition, students often have limited technological resources at home, and many families lack a depth of knowledge about the U.S. education system. Therefore, many families rely heavily on the school for educational assistance and resources, including after-care services and tutoring. Despite these challenges, the diversity of our school helps foster an inclusive and multicultural learning environment for students.

For the 2017-2018 school year, Pinecrest Academy North earned a letter grade of "A" for the eighth consecutive year. Based on the points received under the State of Florida Accountability Program, Pinecrest Academy North ranked #1 out of 74 kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) schools in Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS). Our school was also ranked #2 among K-8 schools in the state of Florida, with the highest eighth grade Statewide Science Assessment (SSA) score in the state, scoring 100% proficiency.

In recent years, the school has received the following distinctions and accolades for its performance: the highest ranked elementary school in MDCPS in 2013, awarded High Performing Charter School status in 2014, rated among the most equitable in the nation for low-income students according to the Inaugural Education Equality Index in 2016, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2016, received Bronze STEM Designation award for the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 school year, and also received the Silver STEM Designation award for the 2017-2018 school year.

Pinecrest Academy North focuses on developing well-rounded students. This entails supporting students academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and culturally. The rigorous curriculum at Pinecrest Academy North provides students with opportunities to challenge themselves while instilling a love for education. This is accomplished through a variety of activities that take place within the classroom and during after-school activities. For instance, the students participate in school-wide learning events. These include the Math Solve-a-Thon, our school Spelling Bee, and the Egg-Drop challenge. Through our character development program, "Pumas of the Month," students are rewarded for respect, kindness, gratitude, cooperation, responsibility, fairness, and honesty. Puma Tickets are also given as positive reinforcement to the students who are following the school's rules, being respectful, and serving as overall role models to others.

To support the physical development of our students, the school hosts an annual Field Day where students are exposed to a large variety of team and individual sports. After-school sports, such as basketball,

baseball, soccer, and cheerleading provide students with knowledge, skills, values, and enthusiasm to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the social development of students is supported through various events and leadership opportunities. Members of the Student Council and the National Junior Honor Society work together to help coordinate community events such as “Live Like Bella,” “Pennies for Patients,” Veterans’ Week, and canned-food drives. Through local partnerships, Pinecrest Academy North helps support the cultural education and development of students. Parents as Liaison (PALs) and neighboring businesses are invited to partake in our Hispanic Heritage and Multicultural Day, which celebrates the different cultures represented throughout our student body. By collaborating with our local community, our students not only realize the importance of being active community members, but they also develop an understanding and appreciation of the careers and businesses that surround our school. By targeting the holistic development of students, Pinecrest Academy North provides a nurturing environment with a rigorous curriculum that helps build relationships relevant to their academic and social journey.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Pinecrest Academy North utilizes a variety of instructional approaches and techniques in order to address the individual needs of all students. To target the Reading and Language Arts learning standards, the school uses the McGraw-Hill series in elementary school and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections program in middle school. Ready Florida LAFS workbooks and Wordly Wise workbooks are also incorporated as supplemental resources. To ensure all standards are mastered, teachers are encouraged to be creative and explore enrichment activities that target specific reading skills and integrate novel studies to enhance the curriculum and facilitate real-world connections.

Student engagement is paramount at Pinecrest Academy North, and it drives instruction at our school. Teachers guide students through close readings using explicit instruction, and they differentiate instruction based on student performance in specific reading skills. By differentiating through small group instruction, teachers are able to offer students texts and strategies at their instructional level. Technology is utilized as a tool for student engagement; therefore, it is a high priority in our school's instructional approach. By incorporating technology, the teachers provide students with interactive and innovative opportunities to learn through discovery and move up through all the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy in just one activity. Computer-based programs, such as iReady, Edcite, PowerMyLearning, and Quizlet, as well as educational applications on personal technology devices (such as Chatterpix, StopMotion, and Storybook) engage students academically in the area of Reading and Language Arts. In order to increase college and career readiness, Reading and Language Arts are taught in unison to require the students to write analytically when reading multiple texts.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) pacing guides are correlated with the state standards, and the school's curriculum and assessments are aligned with the pacing guides. Following a standards-driven curriculum allows teachers to teach reading skills that are appropriate for students' reading level, while also setting high expectations and individualized goals. Teachers monitor student progress by incorporating benchmark assessments from the Reading Wonders series, iReady diagnostic assessments, and reading skill assessments. Data-driven instruction provides both teachers and students with information that is regularly utilized in data chats. These data chats not only inform students of their own progress, but they also hold students accountable for their personal learning goals throughout the school year.

1b. Mathematics:

To create an effective learning environment at Pinecrest Academy North, an engaging and supportive community has been cultivated for the students. Teachers utilize the Mathematics Florida Standards as a guide when delivering instruction. Elementary students study a variety of math concepts, including basic number operations in base ten format, fractions, measurement, and geometry. Middle school students are also exposed to advanced mathematics courses that will help prepare them for the real world, such as Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1 Honors. The advanced middle school courses expose students to concepts that translate into fields of mathematics, such as economics, finance, and accounting.

The curriculum is also modified based on data gathered from assessments. Informal and formal assessments include topic assessments, chapter tests, mid-chapter quizzes, spiral reviews, midterms, and district-provided assessments. Furthermore, the data is used to guide and differentiate instruction to target the needs of individual students. Intervention groups are formed using the data from these assessments to target the lower performing students, therefore closing the achievement gap.

In order to be as effective as possible in the mathematics classroom, teachers go beyond traditional methods. Through technology and problem-based learning, our students are actively engaged in their education. For example, iReady is a supplemental online program used in kindergarten through eighth grade, which

provides a personalized learning approach for each student. Data from the iReady Diagnostic Assessments are utilized to identify standard-specific areas for growth in mathematics. Teachers challenge students to think about the problems they are solving on a deeper level, pushing beyond solutions and algorithms required to solve the problem. This guarantees that students are analyzing how they found their solution and the process they used to find it. Teachers influence learning by posing challenging questions that not only inspire students' distinctive curiosity, but also inspire them to investigate further, creating life-long mathematicians in a real-world context.

1c. Science:

The science curriculum at Pinecrest Academy North in the elementary grades encompasses the four main branches: Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and the Nature of Science. The middle school students are enrolled in Comprehensive Science 1 in 6th grade, Physical Science Honors in 7th grade, and Comprehensive Science 3 in 8th grade. Through real-world connections, hands-on activities, and the use of technology, the science content is delivered to the students to meet their various learning levels.

To target the needs of all students, mixed ability grouping is incorporated into the blueprint of the classrooms. Students work collaboratively when completing inquiry-based lessons, as well as problem-based projects. Through teamwork and a student-led curriculum, students are able to monitor their own learning progress and assist each other when needed.

A feature that is unique to our science curriculum is Project Lead the Way (PLTW), a supplemental engineering program that is incorporated from kindergarten through 8th grade. This program is based on interdisciplinary lessons with a focus on real-world problems, and soft skills that promote college and career readiness. Coding and Robotics are two of the courses offered to the students through PLTW that prepare them for future global careers in a technology driven world.

Hands-on activities as well as inquiry-based learning are integrated through the use of technology. ExploreLearning Gizmos and various applications such as Science360, Brainpop, and Lensoo Create are a few of the vital features in the curriculum, utilized to enrich the content and stimulate the interest of the students.

At Pinecrest Academy North, student learning is assessed through formative, summative, and performance-based assessments throughout the school year. In addition, benchmark assessments are used at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to track progress. Teachers and administrators are able to analyze the data derived from the assessments in order to improve student performance. Adjustment to the instruction is made for the specific needs of our students. By providing students with the necessary tools, Pinecrest Academy North prepares students for the 21st century.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

The social sciences curriculum at Pinecrest Academy North places a strong focus on students developing real world skills. For instance, students learn about currency in kindergarten, but more complex discussions about financial responsibility, such as paying taxes, take place in the upper elementary classrooms. These discussions are guided by essential questions such as "How does conflict develop?" The ultimate goal is for students to develop a strong sense of civic duty. All students consistently work collaboratively and are given opportunities to lead discussions. In the middle school grades, there is a focus on rule of law. This concept teaches students that no one is above the law, and to be mindful of the country's leaders, in order to ensure a democracy.

Authentic assessments are used periodically. For instance, middle school students often work collaboratively to write songs in the form of a rap battle. Students in 7th grade are exposed to a much more explicit instruction on terminology, and participate in political debates on current issues. To master the content, students are constantly engaged in technology-assisted learning, whether by creating summative PowerPoints on a topic or creating practice End of Course (EOC) assessment questions and answer keys.

Performance-based assessments such as the ones mentioned above, allow for instruction to be differentiated in order to address the students' self-to-self and self-to-world connections. Instruction is delivered through a combination of traditional textbook instruction, informal discussions, and Document-Based Questions (DBQs). As students progress to the next grade level, the method of instruction shifts to teach them at the Zone of Proximal Development. Regardless of their grade level, all students at Pinecrest Academy North consistently discuss the four pillars of civilization, which are: political, social, financial, and historical pillars. Students' understanding of these aspects at their grade level is crucial to their success in high school and post-secondary education, but even more so to their involvement as citizens of the United States.

1e. For secondary schools:

All secondary courses at Pinecrest Academy North have incorporated STEM components. These include lessons and assessments on coding and robotics where students collaborate as a team and communicate to solve problems. Speech & debate, social sciences, and English Language Arts (ELA) all provide students with opportunities to engage in activities that further develop their soft skills. A chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) was opened at Pinecrest Academy North for those students interested in learning about business and leadership. Pinecrest Academy North also offers secondary courses on computer applications which provide students the opportunity to become certified in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Pinecrest Academy North aims to instill workforce readiness in our middle school students.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Visual arts lessons are given to elementary students for one hour each week in addition to a daily studio art elective to all 6th and 7th grade students. Through our art program, students explore a variety of media and techniques in the art-making processes of two and three-dimensional works, including drawing, painting, pastel, mixed-media collage, and sculpture. The Sunshine State-based art lessons provide students with opportunities for creative decision-making using the elements of art and principles of design. Students are able to participate in social and community events by creating cultural artworks for our yearly Hispanic Heritage event, as well as competing in several local art contests, such as the Impressions in Watercolor Exhibit, Every Drop Counts conservation poster contest, Art in the Capitol contest, and STEAM Program Cover contest.

Pinecrest Academy North offers a music program for all kindergarten through fifth grade students for one hour weekly. The program is comprised of general music where students have the opportunity to learn music history through the baroque, classical, romantic, and contemporary periods together with music theory. Students in kindergarten through third grade learn how to play instruments utilizing the Orff curriculum, which enhances student learning through a combination of music, drama, and movement. The music program in fourth through fifth grades expands to popular music, where the students have the opportunity to learn how to play ukuleles, guitars, and participate in the school ukulele/guitar ensemble. Moreover, as an after school enrichment, the school offers choir, keyboard lab, and modern band.

The physical education curriculum is offered to students in kindergarten through fifth grade for 30 minutes daily, and to the middle school students for an hour each day. The curriculum provides the students with knowledge, skills, values, and the enthusiasm to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The activities in our program promote physical fitness, develop motor skills, and instill knowledge and understanding of rules, concepts, and physical fitness, and wellness strategies. Through the medium of sports and movement, all students participate in a sequential, differentiated program that fosters each student's personal health, fitness, and safety.

As part of the physical education curriculum, students are exposed to a large variety of team and individual sports. These sports assist the development of sportsmanship, character education, teamwork and cooperation, confidence, and an understanding of the importance of physical fitness. Students also receive

wellness and nutrition education to promote lifelong healthy habits.

The Spanish curriculum is offered to all elementary students in kindergarten through fifth grade for two and a half hours weekly. Students are able to access and acquire the skills of reading, writing, and speaking through the use of technology, small group work with hands on activities, as well as teacher-led instruction. Utilizing the Maravillas series, which is correlated to the Reading Wonders program, students can apply the skills learned to communicate effectively in the Spanish language.

In 2017, Pinecrest Academy North launched a Career and Technical Education (CTE) track placing emphasis on Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications. MOS certifications at the core level are available in Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and Access. Each year, Pinecrest Academy North provides middle school students access to Gmetrix for an hour daily during a semester. Effectively implementing Gmetrix as the main curriculum not only prepares, but also enhances the probability of fulfilling requirements for certification.

Obtaining these certifications prepares Pinecrest Academy North's middle school students for College and Career Readiness. The CTE track provides our students with the opportunities to take relevant technical classes and engage in work-based learning to enhance their high school and college careers.

In addition to the MOS certification courses, Pinecrest Academy North strives to develop students into thinkers and problem solvers by infusing the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum in core subject areas. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in PLTW. Project Lead the Way is a pre-engineering program aligned with the Common Core State Standards designed to give students the experience of working with technology, mathematics, and engineering concepts, while working through authentic engineering principles. Students develop critical thinking skills through hands-on project-based learning, preparing them to take on real-world challenges.

The students at Pinecrest Academy North participate in a character education program, which is offered to all students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The purpose of the program is to highlight a certain character trait each month. At the beginning of each month, the school counselor is allocated 30 minutes during social studies instruction in order to present the value of the designated month. The presentation is then followed up with an activity pertaining to the selected value. The counselor has chosen traits that are shared across cultural and socioeconomic lines. Through the practice of respect, honesty, gratitude, cooperation, kindness, courage, perseverance, and responsibility, students build a strong, positive, personal identity.

3. Special Populations:

Pinecrest Academy North focuses on setting high expectations for the staff and students. Instruction that is data-driven and tiered is essential to closing achievement gaps. Pinecrest Academy North focuses on differentiated instructional practices that are data-driven to ensure that each student's needs are met. Teaching practices that are evidence-based such as performance-based learning, whole and small group instruction, inquiry-guided instruction, interdisciplinary lessons, and project-based learning are considered when planning lessons for all of the students.

Utilizing the MDCPS Pacing Guide as a tool to guide the instruction, teachers create various types of assessments that target multiple intelligences and provide appropriate support for any student that has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). To help bridge the language gap, English Language Learners (ELL) are also provided with strategies by ELL-certified teachers. Additionally, a myriad of technology is used as a component in daily instruction. Technology such as tablets, DocCams, SMART boards, iPads, smartphones, among many others, are used to differentiate learning in whole group instruction, small group instruction, interventions, enrichments, and assessments.

For students performing below grade level and/or not making adequate grade-level progress, teachers must follow the Response to Intervention (RtI) tiered instructional process. These students may include ELL students, students with disabilities, and low-income students. Students are provided with intervention

strategies once the RtI process has begun. Teachers and/or teacher assistants provide this support in a small group setting using supplemental, standard-aligned resources. Students move within the tiers based on their intervention and classroom data. Decisions for said students are made collaboratively during school-based team meetings with both teachers and administrators.

Another instructional approach the school utilizes to meet the individual needs of all students is to provide students with opportunities to participate in academic competitions. Competitions include but are not limited to: STEM Geography Bee, county-wide science fairs, coding events, school-wide showcases, and robotics. These competitions provide every student with opportunities to work as a team, showcase their skills, analyze outcomes, and apply it to their learning.

Pinecrest Academy North uses a plethora of sources when analyzing student data. Data is tracked by the lead teachers as well as by homeroom teachers by content area and grade level. Students are also held accountable for their data, which is recorded in their Data Tracking Binder. Data chats between teachers and students allow for discussion of strengths and weaknesses, and individual goals are set with each student. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in state and/or national testing in reading, math, writing, science, and social sciences. Kindergarten through second grade students are administered the Standards Achievement Test (SAT) in reading and math. Students in grades third through eighth are administered the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) in reading and math. Students in fourth through eighth grade are also administered a writing component of the FSA test. In addition, fifth grade is administered a science component of the FSA assessment. Students in the middle grades are also required to complete the End of Course (EOC) exams. Additionally, students are administered multiple diagnostic assessments three times a year in reading and math. Based on the data acquired from the results of said assessments, instruction for the following school year is tailored to create a more individualized classroom setting. These assessments are meticulously analyzed by teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Pinecrest Academy North, the school's priorities are the academic, social, and emotional growth of the students. Administration, staff, parents, and students work together to foster a supportive and well-rounded learning environment. Students are engaged through a variety of activities that target their social and academic needs. Events are organized to encourage participation throughout all grade levels. Committees comprised of one staff member from each grade level coordinate school-wide events. In addition, the Student Council members assist in the planning process. Literacy Week and STEM Night are two of our school's events that support the academic growth of our students. Throughout Literacy Week, students are introduced to a variety of authors and genres, and participate in poetry writing, character development, and storybook read-aloud. Students are engaged in STEM Night through hands-on activities, robotics demonstrations, and the display of science fair projects. School-sponsored celebrations that engage the students socially and emotionally include a Multicultural Festival, Red Ribbon Week, and Field Day. Through these events, students are exposed to positive life choices, cooperation, and sportsmanship.

Motivating students to reach their full potential is accomplished through a variety of practices and recognitions. The principal recognizes students with high academic achievement at a special breakfast held every quarter. Students are also motivated to reach high expectations through quarterly academic awards. Their academic achievements are celebrated at FSA award assemblies recognizing students' performance, quarterly assemblies, and a year-end event.

A positive environment is cultivated to support the students academically, socially, and emotionally. Sponsored by the school's counselor, "Pumas of the Month" are rewarded for displaying character traits that pertain to a positive classroom community. This includes respect, kindness, gratitude, cooperation, responsibility, fairness, and honesty. Our school counselor also provides student-led conflict resolution and an open-door policy to provide emotional support for all students from kindergarten through eighth grade.

The administration at Pinecrest North also maintains an open and approachable environment to ensure the teachers feel valued and supported. Formal meetings to discuss academic progress are scheduled twice per quarter, and a variety of data is presented and discussed with the administration. In addition, informal communication occurs daily. Teachers are welcome to discuss issues, whether personal and/or professional. This supportive family environment has been an asset to motivating our staff and keeping morale high. Our school is always pursuing ways to acquire resources that will help our teachers reach struggling students such as books, online programs, and support materials. Praise and recognition for positive attributes and constructive criticism to continually improve make Pinecrest North a wonderful place to learn and grow as an educator.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parental involvement is an integral part of our school culture which empowers our parents and motivates them to be consistently involved in their child's education. Parents are encouraged to partake in a variety of school-wide activities. Through our Parents as Liaisons (PAL) program, family members have the opportunity to participate in the school-wide activities as well as provide their own input and ideas. Having open lines of communication through our school's website and social media accounts has a positive impact on students' development, both academically and emotionally. Events such as Science Night, STEM Night, Career Day, seasonal festivals, and field trips provide opportunities for continuous engagement with families. Parent volunteers are also encouraged to attend quarterly Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee (EESAC) meetings, allowing them to partake in the decision-making process of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). EESAC stakeholders play an active role in planning, implementing, and monitoring the SIP. During the mid-year reflection of the SIP, the EESAC committee re-evaluates the goals of the school and determines if modifications are necessary. Intervention programs, such as after-school tutoring, Saturday tutoring, and small group differentiated instruction, are discussed for continuous improvement.

Community involvement at Pinecrest Academy North is another fundamental component of our school's culture. The school has developed an ongoing partnership with the Miami-Dade County Police Department, which allows us to provide aid to those in need. Families at our school are encouraged to participate in the canned food drive, as well as a toy drive to assist families in our community throughout the holidays. This service provides a learning experience for students and teachers while demonstrating the importance of contributing to members of their community. The Miami-Dade County Police Department also helps implement school-wide programs, such as Red Ribbon Week. Throughout the week, students learn about fire safety through hands-on reenactments and the importance of living a drug-free lifestyle. Community members are also invited as guest speakers to take part in Career Day and are encouraged to further engage with the students by visiting classrooms to showcase their specializations through interactions and hands-on activities.

In order to promote college and career readiness, Pinecrest Academy North has also established a partnership with a local university, Florida International University (FIU). FIU engineering students visit the school and teach science inquiry-based lessons to the kindergarten through eighth grade students. Our students have also attended multiple engineering showcases hosted by FIU. At the Engineering Exposition, students had the opportunity to tour the computer, science, and engineering labs while participating in contests and a multitude of hands-on projects. This experience translated directly into their classrooms, allowing them to apply the content learned into their courses. Overall, community outreach is a priority at our school and is essential for student success.

3. Professional Development:

Pinecrest Academy North's professional development (PD) approach is to provide teachers with new and up to date strategies applicable to their teaching by connecting the PD to curriculum materials. Professional development trainings are decided upon through student assessment data, areas in need of improvement, and staff surveys.

The week prior to the commencement of the school year, teachers participate in research-based professional development. Topics include, but are not limited to, STEM, the reading/writing process, and small group instruction. To ensure the strategies learned are being implemented in the classrooms, the administration conduct formal and informal walk-throughs as a follow up evaluation. Evaluations are an ongoing process that starts in the earliest stages of program planning and continues beyond the end of the program. At the start of the school year, teachers are required to complete a Deliberate Practice Growth Target (DPGT) with a specific, measurable, and attainable goal that is directly aligned to student assessment data. In addition, a peer-to-peer mentoring program for new teachers is implemented. This program pairs veteran teachers with new teachers to help ensure a successful first year experience for our new teachers. As part of the planning process, the PD liaison and the leadership team also conduct a staff survey, allowing each teacher to select areas for growth.

Teachers participated in several Professional Development sessions, such as "Effectively Implementing STEM in the Classroom," "How to Effectively Incorporate Performance-Based Assessments into the Curriculum," and "Working Together, Succeeding Together." Throughout the PDs, participants were engaged in instructional strategies and were provided with tools such as resources, lesson plans, and manipulatives, to transform their classroom into an innovative environment. As part of the follow-up activity, teachers were required to implement quarterly performance-based assessments, as well as STEM inquiry-based activities, aligning to the overall STEM goals of the school.

In addition, the Miami-Dade County Public School District provides all teachers with access to the Professional Development Portal where district-wide PDs are listed and aligned with academic standards to support student achievement. In addition to District and in-house PDs, all administrators and teachers have unlimited access to non-facilitated modules through Beacon Educator. Beacon Educator is a professional development website, which provides individual, self-paced modules for educators in pursuit of professional learning and/or skill building. Based on our professional development approach, the teachers at Pinecrest Academy North have the option to complete modules to target their individual needs.

4. School Leadership:

Pinecrest Academy North's Principal and administrative team believe in a transformational leadership philosophy, where the focus is on enhancing the motivation, performance, and overall morale of the staff through various means. The leadership team is made up of the Principal, the Lead Teachers, and the Instructional Support Coach. The goal of the leadership team is to transform the teachers and staff into leaders themselves to ultimately create a positive change in the lives of the students. The Principal encourages the teachers to instill the mission and vision of Pinecrest Academy North into their lessons, incorporating higher order skills to promote college and career readiness in all grade levels.

The role of the Principal is to be a role model to the staff and inspire them to be the greatest versions of themselves. At the start of the school year, teams are constructed to accomplish different tasks. Committees are formed to plan STEM activities, community partnerships, career-aligned showcases, and academic field trips. With the Principal as the motivator of the teams, the staff implements a collaborative plan to achieve their tasks, empowering them to take ownership and responsibility of their work. The Lead Teachers at Pinecrest Academy North are also deeply involved in the education process, providing resources as needed to ensure the teachers and staff are successful throughout the school year. Through curriculum development, the Lead Teachers, along with the Instructional Support Coach, provide supplemental resources to enrich the course content.

The focal goal of all stakeholders at Pinecrest Academy North is for students to be successful in and out of the classroom. The administration ensures this occurs through quarterly administrative meetings with the teachers, monthly staff meetings, and open lines of communication. These practices translate into the classroom, where teachers conduct individual conferences with students, resulting in successful practices that help close the achievement gap. Formal and informal observations are also conducted throughout the school year to encourage accountability and growth. Teachers are met with individually to discuss areas of strength, while creating a plan for further development. In addition, a staff handbook, which is given at the commencement of the school year, provides a framework for implementing school policies. School-wide guidelines are detailed regarding dress code, behavior management, procedural safeguards, and academic goals to enhance student achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Pinecrest Academy North has successful practices embedded throughout the campus. Such practices have become an integral part of the school's culture and are evident throughout the curriculum, the stakeholder relationships, the vibrant classrooms, and the overall vigor felt when walking through the hallways. While there are a considerable number of key components that are required to be an effective school, the most instrumental factor to Pinecrest Academy North's success is maintaining high expectations for all stakeholders. Setting a system of high standards for the students, staff, and parents encourages everyone involved to put forth maximum effort, building a community that excels through hard work and determination.

All students at Pinecrest Academy North are equitably held accountable for their success. Data-chats between the students and teachers are conducted to evaluate progress. Through student-directed learning, data is analyzed by the students, allowing them to gain insight into their strengths, and create a measurable plan to reach their targeted goal. Setting forth requirements of high-quality work, creating measurable goals that must be reached, and instilling a system of behavior management strategies are all factors that promote the high achieving culture in the school. As a result, Pinecrest Academy North was the highest performing K-8 charter school in Miami-Dade County and the second highest performing K-8 charter school in the state of Florida during the 2017-2018 school year.

The staff at Pinecrest Academy North has similarly high expectations. Data chats are conducted during pre-planning week between the teachers and administrators to discuss student grouping, statewide assessment results, and instructional strategies. Teaching and learning begins on the first day of school, creating a structured environment for the students and educators. Through informal and formal observations, the administration ensures the staff is incorporating data-driven instruction to monitor student progress and adjust groups as needed.

Parents are also active participants in the education process and are therefore held to a level of high standards by the school. Parents are encouraged to participate in summer testing prior to the start of the school year, to assist in the transition for the upcoming academic year. Pinecrest Academy North has also organized the Parents as Liaisons (PAL) group to assist with the overall culture of the school. They are recommended to volunteer 30 hours per family throughout the school year, as well as participate in workshops conducted by the administration.

Setting high expectations for all stakeholders creates a culture of accountability and fosters a supportive teaching and learning climate.