

March 24, 2008

Dr. Dr. Blokker:

I just wanted to update you on the progress we continue to make at Sebring Middle School. Although our three years with Literacy First concluded a few years ago, we continue to implement all the strategies introduced through the program and we are pleased with the results. Word walls, walls that teach, anatomy of a lesson, and QAR are commonplace at our school, and now seem effortless. As you recall, our school is one whose demographics are less than ideal. With a high minority population and 60% of our students on free lunch, it seems unlikely that our school would be successful. We have proven that economic status doesn't necessarily mean that students will be academically challenged. I am proud to let you know that despite the fact that Florida raised the standards on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), we remained a force to be reckoned with. Our school continued to be an "A" school when unfortunately 75% of the secondary schools in our district declined by at least one letter grade. (this was a trend statewide) I attribute our success, in part, to our continued work with the Literacy First strategies.

If any school or district has a question about the effect Literacy First will have on student achievement, I can give testament to its success. We have consistently remained an "A" school, and we continue to have success with our lowest performers. Despite the fact that Florida continues to raise the bar for proficiency, Sebring Middle School continues to meet and even exceed the challenge.

We will soon be on spring break, and we are all looking forward to a much needed vacation. I hope this letter finds everyone in your organization well, and I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Yours in education.

Sandi Whidden
Principal
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