



# **Executive Summary**

Doral Academy Charter High School

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## Executive Summary Introduction

### Executive Summary

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and student learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way school leadership considers how to organize, maintain order, and stay faithful to the school's vision. A description of the level of stakeholder engagement, trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that the school implements to support student learning also contributes to the overall narrative.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to give schools an opportunity to tell their story, to describe their context both strengths and challenges so that the public and members of the school community have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and what it is deliberating as it engages in the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement.

This report is structured into 4 sections that give context about what the school faces on a day-to-day basis in providing teaching and learning in its community:

#### Section 1: Introduction

- Describes the community in which the school is located. Identifies the unique features and special challenges of this school community. Provides brief demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.

#### Section 2: Student Performance

- Gives a brief description of the school's vision about students and their performance.
- Provides a brief summary of student performance in this school. Identifies the school's goals and how the school will know they have achieved them. Describes the variety of the school's student performance assessments. Identifies how the staff engages in meaningful analysis of student work in order to modify instruction.
- Describes the school's student support programs and services. Identifies the ways in which the school ensures community/parent involvement in the life of the school.

#### Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities

- Identifies the major challenges the school has faced in the last 3 years and how it has addressed those challenges.

#### Section 4: Conclusion

- Identifies what the school is most proud of and why.
- Relates other information the school would like to share with the public and the school community.

## Executive Summary

### Section 1: Introduction

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**Provide the school's mission statement. What process was used to create the mission statement?**

**Describe how the school engaged its stakeholders to parents and community members in the development and fulfillment of the mission statement. Describe the community in which your school is located. What are the unique features and special challenges of your school community?**

**Briefly provide demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.**

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**Narrative:**

Doral Academy Preparatory School is located in the heart of the city of Doral within Miami-Dade County. The city of Doral is considered to be a very young city; it was officially recognized as its own city in 1995. Doral Academy Preparatory was the only high school located within the city when we opened in August of 1999.

Nestled between a middle class residential neighborhood, industrial warehouse businesses, and cow pastures, we have united with our unique local community to develop and cultivate our mission. Doral Academy Preparatory is preparing our students with the academic skills that foster student success in any rigorous educational setting necessary to perform at or above grade level while instilling a belief in their own efficacy.

Doral Academy Preparatory is a comprehensive middle/ high and performing arts school enrolling over 2100 students in grades 6 through 12. The student body is a diverse population composed of 92.8% Hispanic/Latino, 1.2% Black, 4.8% White, and 1.2% other. Our Administration, Faculty, and Staff are as diverse as the students we serve. Currently, we are growing our campus to include a newly constructed three story classroom and gym facility which will expand our enrollment to about 3000.

Doral Academy is unique in that it houses a Performing Arts and Entertainment Academy. In addition to providing our students with a rigorous academic education, the Performing Arts Program allows students wishing to pursue excellence in the areas of Dance, Theatre, Art, Photography, and T.V. Production to receive the hands-on experience to continue their endeavors at the collegiate level.

As we continue to develop successful relationships with our neighboring Colleges and Universities such as Miami Dade College's West Campus and Florida International University, we are looking forward to opening our very own college campus for the next school year. With Doral College scheduled to open in August 2011, we will be unique in being able to offer our students the opportunity to enroll and to participate in college courses embedded within their high school schedule. This will give many of our faculty members the opportunity to become adjunct professors and teach during and/or after our school day, making our school a first class educational program, and also a convenient and accessible campus.

We not only work with our students, but also make sure that all of our parents and community members are informed of and have continuous contributions to the progress of our school Mission and happenings at Doral Academy Preparatory School. This communication is not only continuously being sent out through traditional phone and email notifications, but it is also available on our Website. In addition, all stakeholders are invited to participate at monthly EESAC and PTSI meetings.

Our community has come together with Doral Academy Preparatory through the sponsorship of our various activities and through the volunteer efforts of our students. Our students are actively involved with the Department of Parks and Recreation within the city, logging in many volunteer hours at events such as Hispanic Heritage, Holiday Lights and Ice, Movies at the Park, and Extravaganza.

## Section 2: Student Performance

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**Give a brief description of your school's vision about students and their performance. Provide a brief summary of student performance in your school. What are your goals and how will you know you have achieved them?**

**Describe the variety of your school's student performance assessments. How does your staff engage in meaningful analysis of student work in order to modify instruction?**

**Describe the school's student support programs and services. In what ways does your school ensure community/parent involvement in the life of the school?**

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**Narrative:**

The Vision of Doral Academy Preparatory School is to set the standard for outstanding student achievement while providing a safe and nurturing academic environment.

The Mission of Doral Academy Preparatory School is to prepare students with the academic skills that foster student success in any rigorous educational setting necessary to perform at or above grade level while instilling a belief in their own efficacy.

Our vision is the guiding principle that establishes the goals for the student population. The Mission is the Vision set in motion. Students at Doral receive the necessary skills to foster academic success and a strong belief in their self-efficacy. Our academic program is organized on a rotating block schedule. Students are assigned seven (7) credits per year as the maximum course load; students take four classes on an alternating block schedule. The composition of the school day is comprised of one 60-minute class that meets everyday followed by three 90-minute block scheduled classes that meet every other day. Annual credit classes are year-long and semester courses are half of the year.

Advanced Placement Program courses are offered in Art History, Biology, Calculus AB, English Language, English Literature, European History, Government (United States and Comparative), American History, Psychology and World History. AP Foreign Language courses offered include French and Spanish as well as Spanish Literature. Advanced Placement is an open-enrollment program. In addition, school has instituted a Pre-Advanced Placement program for its Middle Grades students. This program provides students with the opportunity to experience the rigors and expectations of the Advanced Placement curriculum in preparation for High School Advanced Placement courses.

One of our unique programs is our Scholars Program. Our Scholars Program enables sophomores, juniors and/or seniors to enroll in college courses and earn college credits at local institutions of higher education. Higher education institutions that collaborate with us are Miami Dade College, Florida International University and our own Doral College will be in place next school year. The Scholars Program aims for students to earn an Associates of Arts Degree from Miami Dade College. The fact that Doral Academy Preparatory has been an "A" school since the 2006-2007 school year serves as a testament to our student's academic performance, and the realization of our Vision and Mission statements.

Over 2.4 million dollars in Scholarships and Grants were received by the 2010 graduating class. In addition, Doral Academy Preparatory was named one of the Top High Schools in the Nation according to News Week, was named one of the top 500 schools in the Nation for two consecutive years according to US News and World Reports.

Doral Academy Preparatory has a long-standing commitment to the improvement of its student's literacy skills. Simply put, literacy involves every facet of the world which its students face. Since the 2006-2007 school year, our Literacy Team has been establishing literacy goals aimed at improving school-wide literacy on an annual basis. Our literacy goals for the 2010-2011 school year are as follows:

- Promotion of reading for pleasure with incentives to achieve to motivate school-wide student body engagement
- Implementation of research based instructional practices that increase teacher effectiveness
- Creation of a cohesive network of teachers that actively share their expertise
- Increasing the application of internal assessment that individualize instruction to increase student success
- Promotion of writing across the curriculum

At the conclusion of each school year, we re-assess our goals and reflect on how well we were able to meet each in accordance with our Standardized Test scores.

Doral Academy Preparatory we have a system of performance assessments. Beginning in 2009-2010 all core classes (Math, Reading, and Science) have given a Baseline Assessment at the beginning of each year, an Interim Assessment during the middle of the year, and a standardized final exam. Teachers not assigned to one of the aforementioned areas also provided students with similar assessments. The goal has been to measure learning gains resulting from meaningful classroom instruction. Sophomores at Doral also take the PSAT, an indicator of how they will perform on the SAT. Lastly, students at Doral also participate in Advanced Placement testing. During the 2009-2010, 206 students participated in AP examinations and forty-two percent (42%) achieved a three (3) or higher.

Our faculty is actively engaged in the utilization of data from assessments to better address the diverse needs of their students. During the 2009-2010 school year and continuing to the present, numerous Professional Development activities have been dedicated to the interpretation and application of data gathered from assessments. The Baseline and Interim assessments provide our teachers with the strengths and weaknesses of each student. Based on the tendencies within their classrooms our teachers differentiate their lessons in order to meet the needs of each student. This is evident in the lesson plans as they include the differentiation of instruction. This data is required to be kept in the teacher's professional binder as a reflection tool and is submitted annually for review in accordance to our progress monitoring system.

Doral Academy Preparatory strives to provide the students with various student support programs and services. Doral Academy Preparatory has an excellent Athletics Program in which students are encouraged to achieve excellence both on and off the field. Students at Doral can also choose from a variety of Clubs and Honor Societies that are suited to meet their unique interests. Our counselors are always eager to assist students academically and socially, the latter requiring parental consent. Should the student have a situation that cannot be adequately addressed a case referral system to proper community agencies is in place.

We also provide multiple provisions to help support our students' academic needs in both advancement and/or remediation. Students scoring poorly on their FCAT in Reading or Math are assigned to an Intensive Reading or Mathematics course in order to receive the necessary skills to achieve success. The Literacy Coach is also an active participant and students requiring additional help may be pulled out to receive individualized attention, or pushed in to receive whole group instruction. Additionally, our SPED Coordinator works with students with special needs to ensure that their needs are met. To this extent, teachers with special needs students are given the students IEP and any accommodations that may be necessary.

Parental and community involvement at Doral Academy Preparatory is vital. Our parents are encouraged to participate in the enrichment process at Doral through EESAC and PTSI meetings. Here parents are afforded an arena in which communication with Administration, Faculty and Staff is encouraged. Open House and Parent Night also provide the parents an opportunity to meet our Administrative team, Faculty, and Staff and gain a better understanding of the policies and procedures of our school. Our website, [www.doralacademyprep.org](http://www.doralacademyprep.org), is a repository of information about the happenings of the school. Community involvement is important at Doral and many of our student organizations regularly partner-up with City of Doral, Parks and Recreation.

## Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities

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### What are the major challenges your school has faced in the last 3 years and how have you addressed those challenges?

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#### **Narrative:**

One of the major challenges that Doral Academy Preparatory has faced in the past three years was the merger between our Middle School and the High School, beginning the 2009-2010 school year. It is a forgone conclusion that both of these student bodies are unique and each required different needs. In order to make this transition as smooth as possible, our Faculty and Staff were informed of the changes and the necessary preparations that this entailed. Our stakeholders were informed of the changes and challenges that this posed at our EESAC and PTSI meetings and were assured that an incident-free transition occurred. Additional security guards were hired to ensure that students arrived to class safely. Lunch schedules were adjusted to ensure that our Middle School students would all have lunch together. This limited the contact between Middle and High School students. Our merger of both the middle and high grades has proven to be successful in all facets of Doral Academy Preparatory. Including, but not limited to; vertical teaming, common planning, and a more cohesive and seamless transmission to high school for our students.

Doral Academy Preparatory also faced a challenge with the streamlined dissemination of information between the school and its stakeholders. This challenge was remedied during the 2008-2009 school year with the launch of the school website, [www.doralacademyprep.org](http://www.doralacademyprep.org). As a result of our school's website many processes have been streamlined. Our stakeholders are able to gain access to the most current events at the school, students are able to view their assignments on-line, parents are able to review their child's progress, and the community at-large can gain an understanding of our school. The school website has also served as a powerful recruitment tool in that both prospective students and teachers can attain insight on the school, its teachers, and its philosophy on education.

Doral Academy Preparatory also faced and continues to face a challenge in the way of literacy. As mentioned in "Section 2: Student Performance", a Literacy Team was created and School-wide literacy goals were implemented. Teachers were provided with a Literacy Binder with all information pertinent to Literacy and methods of improvement. Since 2007, homeroom has been used as a Silent Reading Period in which students may read any book, periodical, journal, etc. in an effort to improve in skills necessary to succeed in standardized testing. More recently, the teachers in the Language Arts Department have been actively engaged in monitoring students' Response to Intervention.

Beginning in 2009 and continuing into the present, Doral has witnessed and is witnessing its expansion process. In 2009, a larger Cafeteria was added. Construction began in 2009 and the cafeteria was completed for the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year. Our current expansion includes two new buildings that will allow us to better serve our Performing Arts Program and our Science Department, and a state of the art Gymnasium. Our Administrative Team laid out a plan in advance of the ongoing expansion to our students and faculty and has taken the necessary steps to ensure that its stakeholders are safe and free of incidents.

## Section 4: Conclusion

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**What is your school most proud of and why?**

**Is there any other information you would like to share with the public and the school community?**

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**Narrative:**

Over the past five years, Doral Academy has had its share of accolades. One area that deserves special mention is that our school has earned an "A" grade as determined by the FCAT grading scale, since 2006. This is a testament to the dedication that our Administrators, Faculty, and Staff have towards our student population. To this end, our teachers are always looking to push the educational threshold in the classroom by the implementation of current educational strategies. Doral has also been nationally recognized by Newsweek Magazine and U.S. News and World Reports, for two consecutive years, as one of the top 500 schools in the nation.

Another area noteworthy of mention is the establishment of a fully functioning Media Center. Since 2006, our Media Center has undergone a complete reorganization. We now employ a full-time Media Center Specialist who is available to provide assistance to students. The Media Center also has a fully functioning electronic cataloging system, state of the art computers, and is equipped with a SmartBoard allowing our teachers to better communicate educational goals through the use of technology.

The Administration, Faculty, and Staff at Doral Academy also share great pleasure in student success. During the 2009-2010 school year, thirty-seven percent (37%) of our students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses passed their exams with a three (3) or better. In 2010, this number increased to forty-two percent (42%), an increase of five points. Ninety-eight percent (98 %) of the class of 2009 graduated and enrolled in two or four year institutions compared to ninety-nine (99 %) in 2010. Collectively, our students received \$1.3 million dollars in scholarships in 2009 and \$2.4 million dollars in 2010.. Doral Academy also had one of its own represent her native Suriname during the Beijing Summer Olympic Games in 2008. This same student brought Doral its first ever FHSAA State Championship in the fifty-meter (50 m) freestyle in swimming in 2010. Our students are also actively involved in the community serving at many City of Doral functions, the ING Marathon, Relay for Life, Model United Nations (FIU), Ronald McDonald House, and Kids Corner.

Doral Academy Preparatory has experienced many exciting changes over the last five years. As Doral Academy enters its next phase its Administration, Faculty, and Staff will continue providing its student's with the academic skills that foster student success in any rigorous educational setting necessary to perform at or above grade level while instilling a belief in their own efficacy.