

Middle schools targets for future success

By Martin Lenkowsky • August 2019

Future Success Depends on Youthful Performance

Middle school should be a natural steppingstone towards a successful high school experience and usually followed by college admission. Unfortunately, that is often not the case. Studies have shown those who fall behind in middle school often do not wind up graduating high school.



Foundation CEO Linda B. Carter and Broward School Superintendent Robert Runcie

That's why the Community Foundation of Broward, a public-private partnership, decided to take action by teaming up with Broward County Public Schools to embark on a project to "reimagine" how middle school education is delivered in Broward.

Kirk Englehardt, the Foundation's vice president of marketing and communications, recognizes the ultimate importance of middle school in a child's academic career. "Our whole focus is to increase the high school graduation rate," he says. "And middle schools are the fork in the road."



The foundation's Kirk Englehardt

He says the foundation's major emphasis deals with attendance, behavior and course performance. The foundation awarded the district a \$3 million grant over three years. The grant, the largest in the foundation history, will be matched by the district. Grant money was provided by 25 local philanthropists.

The funds have been used to create pilot programs in 10 middle schools throughout the county. "It's not just in low-performing schools, but spread out over the county," Englehardt says, adding the school superintendent said he doesn't believe this type of program is being done anywhere else.

Part of the funding will be earmarked for teachers training, Englehardt says. Plus, each school will bring a full-time community liaison on board to work with students and their issues. "Our goal is a 90 percent or higher graduation rate. That's what we should be doing."

For more information about School is Cool please contact Angelica Rosas, Strategic Grants Manager at 954-761-9503 or arosas@cfbroward.org