

A Comprehensive Study on Florida Middle School Performance

Client: Florida Department of Education

Overview

The knowledge and skills students gain in middle school have a lasting effect on student motivation and academic achievement in high school and beyond. In response to Florida's performance on the 2015 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), House Bill 293 required the Florida Department of Education to conduct a comprehensive study of states in which fourth- and eighth-grade students performed well on the NAEP. The objective was to identify factors that might support achievement in Florida schools. Insight was contracted to conduct this study, which considered six states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington, all with nationally recognized high performance in reading and mathematics on the 2015 NAEP.

The study used a mixed-methods approach to analyze Florida's performance on key metrics associated with students' educational experiences relative to comparison states. In

particular, the Florida legislature highlighted five policy areas for study: instructional strategies and academic expectations, attendance policies and student mobility issues, teacher quality, middle school leadership and performance, and parental and community engagement. The report identifies opportunities to address many of the high-need student populations in Florida and provides policy recommendations for the future.



Insight—

- Analyzed three extant data sources: Common Core of Data, the Schools and Staffing Survey, and the NAEP
- Conducted in-depth interviews with state education agency staff
- Compared state laws and policies
- Conducted a detailed literature review and prepared an annotated bibliography
- Identified best practices to improve performance in reading and mathematics in Florida's middle grades

Products

Final report, *A Comprehensive Study on Florida Middle School Performance*

