

## FCAT Fair/ FCAT Night

*Hammocks Middle School and Leisure City K-8 Center  
Miami and Homestead, Florida*

Two Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP) in Miami-Dade County Public Schools organized similar workshops designed to provide students, parents, and community members with information about the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Hammocks Middle School implemented an FCAT Fair while Leisure City K-8 Center hosted an FCAT Night. Both practices sought to build partnerships and provide information on the state tests.

Hammocks Middle School held their FCAT Fair on a Saturday morning. The fair began in the courtyard at 8:15 a.m. with refreshments and entertainment, and then moved to the auditorium at 9:00 for a general assembly. During the general assembly, administrators gave parents an overview of the FCAT exam and its scoring. Once the assembly ended, parents attended three 30-minute breakout sessions in individual classrooms. During the breakout sessions, teachers lead hands-on activities in all subject areas. At the end of the fair, parents had a chance to ask questions. Approximately 150 parents attended the fair and benefited from the knowledge they gained about the FCAT.

“It is very evident that many dedicated individuals worked together to create this fantastic event,” said one Hammocks parent.

Administrators, teachers, and reading leaders at Leisure City K-8 Center teamed up to organize FCAT Night. The ATP believed that parent concerns and fears about the FCAT exams existed because of a lack of knowledge about the exams. As a result, FCAT Night helped parents learn about the FCAT, which

grade levels take the exam and when, and how to prepare. In addition, parents participated in FCAT simulated passages, multiple-choice questions, and graded responses. The school explained each answer with a detailed response and gave reasons why other answers might be plausible. Due to a large non-English speaking population, meetings were held in both English and Spanish. The school provided childcare so that parents with younger children could attend.

Both schools faced minimal costs while implementing their FCAT events. Hammocks Middle School relied on donations from local businesses to provide the door prizes and refreshments. School staff members who worked the events did so on a voluntary basis. Leisure City K-8 Center also relied on staff members to volunteer their services for the event. In addition, publishing companies donated materials such as pencils and bookmarks for FCAT Night.

Parents who participated in the FCAT Fair and FCAT Night felt more at ease about the exams. They credited the teachers and administrative staff for their hard work.

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