Florida Schools Increase Readiness Scores with The InvestiGator Club

Problem: During the 2010-11 school year, the Head Start Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) sites in the Manatee Community Action Agency (MCAA) had a readiness rate score below 70. MCAA was classified as low performing, and its sites were put on probation. This gave MCAA the opportunity to research and implement a new curriculum to raise its scores.

Solution: MCAA implemented The InvestiGator Club® curriculum, an inquiry-based learning system for Pre-K students, and experienced immediate results. After one year, six of the eight VPK sites increased their readiness rate scores, with three of those sites earning scores high enough to boost them out of low performing status. Palmetto, one of the VPK program sites, increased its readiness rate from 47 to 70 percent in 2012-13. Another VPK site, Pine Village, achieved 92 percent readiness in 2012-13 — the highest rate ever scored at MCAA, and one of the highest in the state.

Why Pre-Kindergarten?

Studies show that as many as 40 percent of kindergarten students begin school below grade level in reading and math. Children who attend high-quality pre-kindergarten programs are less likely to be held back a grade, less likely to need special education, and more likely to graduate high school. Students also are less involved in crime and delinquency later in life, earn more as adults, and are less likely to become dependent on welfare.

Implementing the Curriculum

Several MCAA sites piloted The InvestiGator Club during the summer of 2011 before adopting the full curriculum in the fall. The summer program began with three classrooms and then increased to 14 classrooms, involving 270 students and 14 teachers.

At Pine Village, center director Darlene Clubb created ‘Camp Investigate’ to align with the implementation. Narrowed to the basics and comprised of 300 hours of instruction, the new curriculum enabled Clubb and her students to learn and grow together.

“The InvestiGator Club provides the ideal baseline for instruction,” said Clubb. “But it’s also flexible — I’m able to expand upon it and insert my own ideas.”
Building a Foundation

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