

FOCUS Learning Academy

Senate Education Hearing on Special Education
Chairwoman: Senator Florence Shapiro

June 16, 2010

FOCUS Learning Academy School Profile

Founded in 1998

CEO: Leroy McClure, Jr.

Chief Academic Officer: Laura Middleton

Grades Served: Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade

Minority Population: 100%

Economically Disadvantaged: 85%

Special Education Students: Approximately 38% of All Enrolled Students

AYP Status: Did Not Meet Standard*

2008 School Enrollment: 325 Students

2009 School Enrollment: 421 Students

2010 School Enrollment: 540 Students

FLA Distinctives

- School chartered to serve the "Learning Different" student
- Has achieved "Recognized" scores for two consecutive years and will receive Gold Performance Acknowledgements in Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Reading, Writing, Math and Social Studies for the 2010 Accountability Year
- 5 Full-Time Certified Academic Language Therapists on campus
- Partnership with the University of North Texas for the purposes of research and in-depth student assessment
- 3 Assessment personnel
- Over 90% of special education students mainstreamed
- Comprehensive assessment of all students to determine and address specificity of disability
- Transitioned 33 students from TAKS-Modified to TAKS Accommodated or TAKS during the 2009-2010 academic year

2010 Preliminary TAKS Scores

	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
Passing	97%	93%	96%	83%	100%
Commended Performance	47%	35%	31%	29%	50%

FOCUS Learning Academy (FLA) was founded in 1998 with a mission to serve "learning different" children. As a result, parents, the surrounding community and neighboring schools recommend students to FLA as an alternative for children who have been unsuccessful in the traditional public school environment.

We are a unique charter that works to meet children where they are academically and take them to higher heights. Our criterion and norm-referenced assessments tell the story of a school that is making the grade by any standard. Our TAKS scores have been at the Recognized level for the past two consecutive years, meeting and/or exceeding the State average for assessment performance, while serving students who have previously been unsuccessful. Additionally, FLA's emphasis on ensuring students exceed the State's minimum passing standard, resulted in the school earning Gold Performance Acknowledgements in 4 of the 5 tested areas in 2010.

* Did not meet standard due to students participating in TAKS-Modified assessment beyond the 1% and 2% caps and being counted as artificial failures.

Committee Considerations

- Make special provisions for schools specifically chartered to serve students qualifying for special education with regard to Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) and AYP.
- Consider a specialized growth accountability model whereby, schools with specialized missions can document the growth of individual students.

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