



Lakewood Elementary: How This Florida School Substantially Outperformed Its District's Learning Rates Through the Pandemic

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**For more of the consulting team members'* historical work visit
[InstructionalEmpowerment.com](https://www.instructionalempowerment.com)**

*Instructional Empowerment's team members served Lakewood Elementary under another company led by CEO and Executive Director of Research, Michael Toth, before Instructional Empowerment was founded. Michael Toth and the Instructional Empowerment team have perfected and applied their own evidence-based school improvement approach. Team members who served Lakewood Elementary include: Year 1 - James Mills, School Leadership Coach and Jennifer Perez, Faculty Coach; Year 2 - Vicki Luttrell-Uppenkamp and Stephanie Terrell, School Leadership Coaches and Jody Honaker, Faculty Coach; Year 3 - Kate Wolf, School Leadership Coach, and Kara Bentley, Jody Honaker, Elizabeth Buzzanca, Mindy Province, and Sue O'Rear, shared Faculty Coaches/Staff Developers.

SUMMARY:

Closing COVID Learning Loss

Rigorous Tasks With On-Grade Level Content

The consulting team members partnered with Lakewood Elementary School in St. Petersburg, FL, to provide comprehensive school advancement services. The consultants guided Lakewood to focus on a model of instruction where students work in teams on rigorous, standards-based tasks. Students engaged in challenging, grade-level or above content with their peers and developed into self-motivated learners. When the COVID pandemic shut down schools, Lakewood students were well-prepared to self-direct their own learning.

"I have visited Lakewood Elementary School several times and have witnessed the remarkable progress. What makes this type of success possible is the strong leadership of Superintendent Michael Grego and the Pinellas County Schools team. They have been wonderful partners with the team of consultants in this External Operator success story. We have the highest praise for principal Stephanie Woodford and her excellent staff along with the team of external consultants that have provided and supported the External Operator model to Lakewood."

- Michael Toth, CEO

- Lakewood Elementary School and the team of external consultants partnered to build capacity of leadership, rigorous instruction, and student academic teams within the framework of the school advancement model.
- Lakewood Elementary School performed 100% better than its Pinellas County Schools district in MATH during the pandemic disrupted 2020-21 school year.
- Lakewood Elementary School performed 142% better than its Pinellas County Schools district in READING during the pandemic disrupted 2020-21 school year.
- Lakewood Elementary School INCREASED its learning rate in MATH by 48%, while similar schools with low achievement scores in the Pinellas County Schools district decreased their rates by 9%.
- Lakewood Elementary School IMPROVED its learning rate in READING by 7%, while similar schools with low achievement scores in the Pinellas County Schools district decreased theirs by 16-22%.
- Lakewood Elementary School closed performance gaps by as much as 363% in MATH and 189% in READING.



POST COVID RESULTS:

Improving Math and Reading Performance During Fall to Winter 2020-21

Lakewood Elementary School performed **100%** better in math and **142%** better in reading than all other schools in the Pinellas County Schools district.

MATH

Pinellas County Schools District
Lakewood Elementary School

SUBJECT	GRADE	2020-21	2020-21	RATE
MATH	1	.50	.81	▲ 61%
	2	.41	1.22	▲ 194%
	3	.59	.91	▲ 54%
	4	.40	.99	▲ 147%
	5	.41	.69	▲ 67%
Wgt. Avg.	1-5	.46	.93	▲ 100%

READING

Pinellas County Schools District
Lakewood Elementary School

SUBJECT	GRADE	2020-21	2020-21	RATE
READING	1	.43	.81	▲ 90%
	2	.33	.91	▲ 174%
	3	.36	.80	▲ 121%
	4	.26	1.09	▲ 323%
	5	.28	.41	▲ 50%
Wgt. Avg.	1-5	.33	.80	▲ 142%

Post-COVID interim learning rates depicting comparisons of the entire Pinellas County Schools district to Lakewood (Elementary School, during fall to winter of the 2020-21 school year.

PRE- TO POST-COVID RESULTS: Improving Math and Reading Performance 2019-20 to 2020-21

Lakewood Elementary School, increased its learning rate in math (48%) and reading (7%) while similar schools with low achievement scores in the Pinellas County Schools district decreased their learning rates.

MATH		Pinellas County Schools District			Similar Schools			Lakewood Elementary School		
SUBJECT	GRADE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE
MATH	1	.69	.50	▼ -27%	.69	.44	▼ -36%	.71	.81	▲ 13%
	2	.62	.41	▼ -33%	.64	.52	▼ -19%	.77	1.22	▲ 58%
	3	.56	.59	▲ 6%	.54	.62	▲ 14%	.72	.91	▲ 26%
	4	.42	.40	▼ -4%	.52	.48	▼ -8%	.59	.99	▲ 66%
	5	.29	.41	▲ 45%	.29	.38	▲ 35%	.33	.69	▲ 108%
Wgt. Avg.	1-5	.51	.46	▼ -9%	.54	.49	▼ -9%	.62	.93	▲ 48%

READING		Pinellas County Schools District			Similar Schools			Lakewood Elementary School		
SUBJECT	GRADE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE	2019-20	2020-21	RATE
READING	1	.59	.43	▼ -28%	.67	.38	▼ -42%	1.04	.81	▼ -22%
	2	.50	.33	▼ -33%	.55	.42	▼ -23%	.87	.91	▲ 5%
	3	.39	.36	▼ -6%	.52	.50	▼ -3%	.61	.80	▲ 32%
	4	.34	.26	▼ -25%	.52	.45	▼ -13%	.43	1.09	▲ 153%
	5	.30	.28	▼ -7%	.37	.47	▲ 26%	.72	.41	▼ -43%
Wgt. Avg.	1-5	.42	.33	▼ -22%	.53	.44	▼ -16%	.75	.80	▲ 7%

Pre and post COVID interim learning rates depicting the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school year comparisons for the district and similar schools with low achievement scores in the district.

PERFORMANCE GAP RESULTS: Closing Performance Gaps

The Applied Research Center examined the change in performance gaps using benchmark assessment data from Lakewood Elementary School. It compared assessment results of Black students to non-Black students, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) to students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and students with disabilities (SWD) to students with no disabilities. The tables below depict the degree to which students in these three categories closed the performance gap in math and reading.

Closing Performance Gaps: MATH

Black/Non-Black	FRL/Non-FRL	SWD/Non-SWD
1 st Grade – 363% ^{ttt}	1 st Grade – 260% ^{tt}	1 st Grade – 100%
4 th Grade – 20%	2 nd Grade – 33%	2 nd Grade – 47%
5 th Grade – 74%		4 th Grade – 109% ^t
		5 th Grade – 62%

^t Percentages over 100% mean the gap closed entirely and performance of the group listed first outperformed the group listed second.

^{tt} Percentages over 200% mean the gap closed entirely and performance of the group listed first more than doubled that of the group listed second.

^{ttt} Percentages over 300% mean the gap closed entirely and performance of the group listed first more than tripled that of the group listed second.

Closing Performance Gaps: READING

Black/Non-Black	FRL/Non-FRL	SWD/Non-SWD
1 st Grade – 189% ^{ttt}	2 nd Grade – 86%	1 st Grade – 11%
2 nd Grade – 134% ^t	5 th Grade – 60%	2 nd Grade – 31%
		3 rd Grade – 26%
		4 th Grade – 75%
		5 th Grade – 33%

Note: The district identified 83% of Lakewood's students as qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

ABOUT THIS METHODOLOGY: School Advancement Model

The team of external consultants implemented a school advancement model to improve access and equity to a rigorous education for all students. The consulting team implemented strategic, customized frameworks that involved all stakeholders to establish a vision, set goals, outline action steps, and ultimately succeed.

APPENDIX

Learning Rate Calculations

Hedges' G effect sizes were calculated to estimate the average rate of learning for each grade level and assessment.

The rate of learning was calculated by taking the difference in performance divided by the average gain.

The average amount of learning was calculated for the Pinellas County Schools district, similar schools, and Lakewood Elementary School students.

Calculations of Performance Gaps

Benchmarks for performance data within each student category were calculated by taking the difference between the mean scale score for each group in the category divided by the standard deviation of data for all students.

Performance gap data among student categories was calculated for Lakewood Elementary School students to assess change over time.

ESSA Evidence Standards

The School Advancement Model meets the federal ESSA evidence requirements for LEA or school activities, strategies, or interventions.

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