



**Intentionally Creating Systemic Change  
in Urban School Environments:**

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**Closing the Achievement  
Gap in Reading for  
Secondary School Students**



# Presentation Objective

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**To give principals a practical approach for making changes to maximize and target instruction specific to urban schools.**



# About Matthew Gilbert Middle

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- **Urban Middle School**
- **Population**
  - 91% African American**
  - 6% White**
  - 3% Other**
- **Title I School**
  - 82% Free or Reduced Lunch**



# About Matthew Gilbert Middle

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- **Adequate Yearly Progress**

  - 2005 FCAT results

  - Reading - 75%      Math - 71%

  - students below grade level

- **Career Academy “Inspirations” Magnet School**
- **Standards-based Curriculum**
- **School-Wide Reading Reform**



## Areas of Concern

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- **FCAT (School Grade)**
- **Academic Content Areas**
  - **Language Arts (Reading)**
  - **Math**
  - **Science**
- **Discipline**



## Plan of Action

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**Our Challenges Require  
Whole-School  
Solutions**



# Plan of Action

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School Improvement Plan  
(Academics)

+ plus

Intentional Academic Focus Plan  
(School/Classroom Climate)

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equals

**Our Plan for Success**



# Success Plan Components

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## #1 Data Driven Instruction

- Continuous Improvement Model (CIM)

## #2 Intentional Grouping for Scheduling

- Homogenous

## #3 School-wide Enrichment Periods

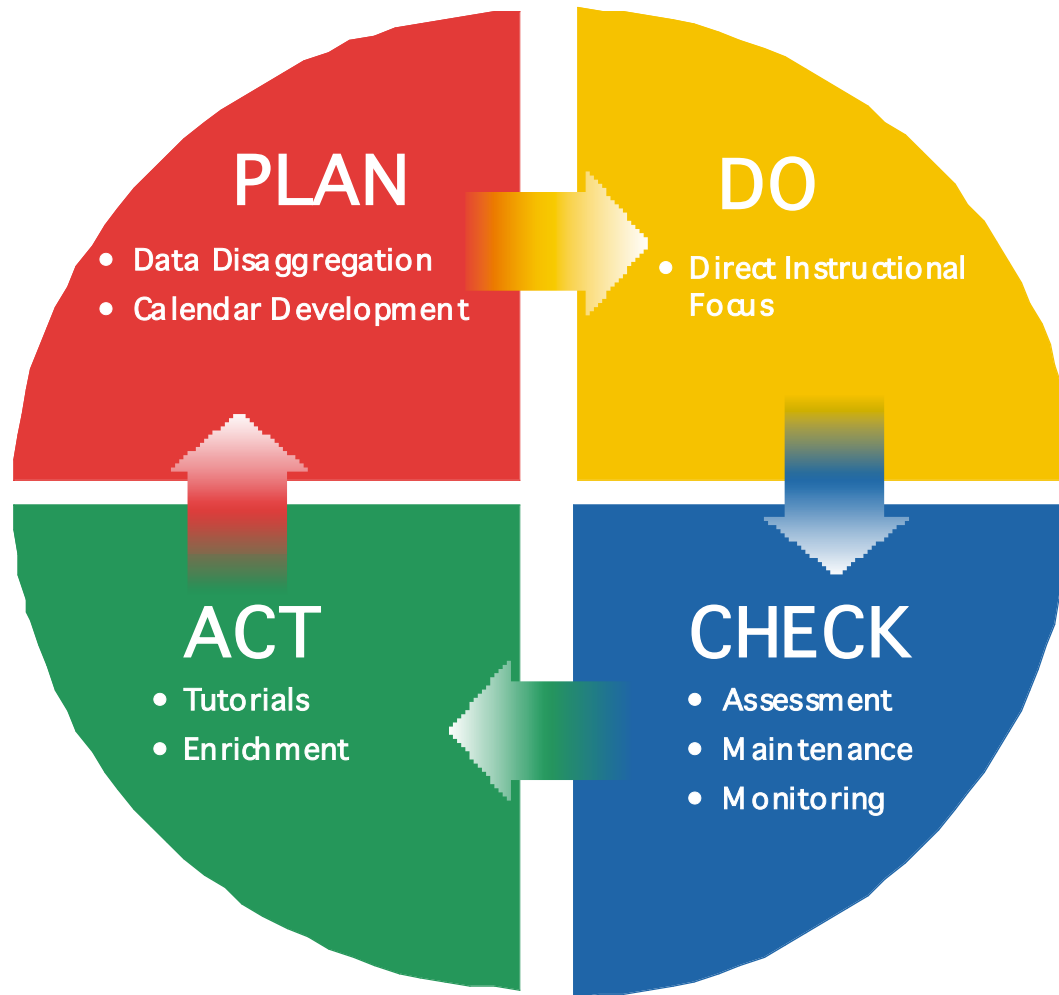
- "Success Days"

## #4 Reshape School Climate

- Student Movement
- No Lockers/Books
- No Bells

# #1 Data Driven Instruction (CIM)

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# Continuous Improvement Model

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## **1. Disaggregation Of Data**

## **2. Direct Instructional Focus**

**Should be devoted to the re-teaching of non-mastered objective**

## **3. Assessment, Maintenance Monitoring**

## **4. Tutorial, Enrichment**



## #2 Intentional Grouping for Scheduling

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- Grouping of Level 1 students for the purpose of moving by levels
  - Homogenous/Heterogeneous
- Differentiation of Instruction based on student need.
- Movement
- Discipline



## #3 School-wide Enrichment Periods

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### **“Success Days”**

- Whole-school
- Suspended curriculum
- Standards-based sessions
  - Critical Thinking
  - Language Arts
  - Math
- Addresses deficiencies identified by assessments (district and school benchmarks, school mini assessments)



# Reasons for “Success Days” at Matthew W. Gilbert Middle School

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- **Data on 2004-2005 FCAT Reading**
  - 25% of students reading at or above grade level – 17% to 25% = 8% gain
  - 59% of students making a year's worth of progress in reading – 47% to 59% = 12% gain
  - 66% of struggling students making a year's worth of progress in reading – 66% to 66% Retention Rate impacted Scores



# Reasons for “Success Days” at Matthew W. Gilbert Middle School

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## **Data on 2004-2005 FCAT Math**

- 29% of students at or above grade level in math – 14% to 29% = 15%
- 70% of students making a year's worth of progress in math 56% to 70% = 14%



# Reasons for “Success Days” at Matthew W. Gilbert Middle School

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## **Data on 2004-2005 FCAT Writes**

- 68% of students are meeting state standards in writing. 78% to 68% = 10% decline in scores: The writing cut score moved from 3.0 to 4.0



## The Real Reason for “Success Days”

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- **Realized Students were not getting the deep instruction they needed to succeed on our State Assessment**
- **Needed to provide an intervention for students to assist them in acquiring academic skills.**
- **Some FOLKS....Just Were NOT TEACHING!**



# DeSensi Training

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## Band Aids:

- BLITZ Program
- ID performance groups
- Scrimmages with feedback and assistance

## Systemic Changes:

- Real Time Scrimmage With Feedback
- Equivalent Assessment
- Escalating Assessment and Work



## **“Success Days” - Gilbert’s Band Aid**

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It accomplishes the following

- Performance Groups
- Scrimmages
- Escalating the Work
- Team Teaching



## “Success Day” Goals

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- The student will acquire the language critical to perform tasks (Concept base, Language of the task, language of the thinking required)
- The student will translate the task to long term storage ( organized/elaborated the learning so that it can be stored and retrieved in an independent application)
- The student will create meaning for the learning (thoughtful work not rote practice) (independently use the learning in a way that creates meaning)
- The student will experience work at the LEVEL of ENGAGEMENT required by the assessment (Complexity, operational level)



## Structure of “Success Days”

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- Training and materials provided for each “Success Day”
- Lessons developed based on the academic needs of students and our school.
- The academic focus or area of weakness for Matthew W. Gilbert school is MAIN IDEA!



## Structure of “Success Day”

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- All Electives/P.E. and Science and Social Studies Classes postponed during ‘Success Days’
- The day (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.) divided into three academic class sessions:
  - Critical Thinking, Language Arts & Writing, and Math
- Teachers paired together based on strengths and weakness for co-teaching purposes
- Students grouped together according to Math levels



## #4 Reshape School Climate

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### **2004 – 2005 Discipline Data**

- High number of altercations during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.
- Students would arrive in large numbers (walkers, bus riders, car riders) and gather in crowds to await entrance.
- Students would be dismissed in large groups, as well (walkers, bus/car riders)



# Redesigned Procedures

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## Redesigned Procedures

- Arrival - By grade level students report to designated pick up area (6<sup>th</sup> grade – gym, 7<sup>th</sup> grade – auditorium, 8<sup>th</sup> grade – cafeteria). Teachers pick up classes and escort students to classrooms.
- Dismissal – Students riding busses return to designated areas for dismissal (6<sup>th</sup> grade – gym, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade – auditorium). Teachers assigned busses and escort students to bus when they arrive.
  - Car riders and walkers are dismissed separately.
  - Students ARE NOT allowed to loiter on school grounds



## No Lockers/Books

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Increase time on task by eliminating locker breaks within the schedule.

- Classroom sets of books
- Students assigned books for home use
- Eliminated “No Books – No Work” excuse



# Hallway Movement

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- Students scheduled according to FCAT reading levels
- Students move by groups with teacher escort eliminating opportunities for disruption and tardiness
- Teachers provide whole-class bathroom breaks
- Individual students escorted by security or appropriate adult to locations outside classroom if need arises (nurse's station, guidance, etc.)



# No Bells

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## **Traditional Bell Schedule**

- Students would immediately run yelling and screaming into hallways at the sound of the bell.
- Students would disregard late bell, reporting to class tardy or in some cases NOT AT ALL! Skipping more prevalent.

## **No Bells Schedule**

plus class movement with teachers has resulted in a more orderly change of classes and has dramatically decreased tardiness and skipping!



## Additional Components

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- **School-wide Reading Strategies**
- **Parent Expectations**
- **Mentoring/ HOST Lab**
- **Media Opening Early/Late**
- **After-school Academic Focus**
- **Period Planning Tutoring**



## Reading Performance Strategies

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- **Critical Thinking Block Activities**  
**Timed Reading Drills**  
**Book-of-the-Month**  
**“Jump-Start” Time**  
**(FCAT Preparation)**
- **Matthew Gilbert “Pocket Strategies”**



# Parent Expectations

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- **Attendance**
- **Behavior**
- **School on Time!**
- **Call School**
- **Academic Status**
- **Join PTA**



# Questions/Comments

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