



## Alachua County Public Schools Five in Five Plan

Over the next five years, Alachua County Public Schools will be implementing a series of strategies designed to transform local schools so that all children receive the high-quality education they'll need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Early Childhood Education Initiative:** Aimed at children from birth to grade three, the initiative will focus on ensuring that children in Alachua County experience high-quality early childhood care and education that will effectively prepare them for success in school and beyond. This initiative will address cognitive development (particularly language development), social/ emotional development, psychomotor development and health/nutrition, and will begin with the establishment of the Duval Early Learning Center in east Gainesville in the 2015-16 school year. The center will be dedicated to building a strong foundation for children in prekindergarten and kindergarten.

**Language Development:** Recognizing that language development is essential to a student's success in and out of school, there will be a renewed district focus on this issue. That will include specialized training for teachers and principals on the neuroscience of language and expanding opportunities for students to use language in both oral and written forms and to learn a second language. The first step of this initiative has already been taken with the implementation of the Fast ForWord program in ten high-needs schools, which will be expanded to include additional schools in the future.

**STEAM Initiative (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics):** Beginning with the highest-needs schools and ultimately expanding to all schools, this initiative will focus on expanding students' understanding of and interest in both STEM and the arts. The initiative will begin with a robotics program which encompasses all STEAM subjects and promotes student engagement, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork and other skills necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Math competition teams have been established in all elementary and middle schools to further foster student interest. Arts education will also receive renewed emphasis in all schools through the performing and visual/graphic arts. Choral groups will be established in all schools that do not currently have them, and an enhanced fine arts magnet will be established at Rawlings Elementary School in the 2015-16 school year.

**Parent Academy:** Parents are a child's first and best teacher. However, not all parents are equipped with the skills to help their children academically, socially and otherwise. A Parent Academy has been established to provide parents with those skills, with its hub at the Family Services Center in east Gainesville. This initiative will also include mobile units to deliver parent training and other services on-site at apartment complexes, churches and other locations within neighborhoods, particularly those with a high percentage of struggling students. Community partners, including healthcare providers and social service agencies, will be critical to the success of the Parent Academy.

**Global Education Magnet:** Students from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will have the opportunity to learn three foreign languages, expand their knowledge of other cultures and develop a strong sense of social responsibility. Metcalfe Elementary School will be the site of the elementary Global Education Magnet, which is set to begin in the fall of 2016. Later the program will be expanded to both a middle and high school.

**Additional strategies** that will be implemented over the next five years include but are not limited to:

- Improved instructional quality in every classroom
- More student mentoring programs
- Incentives to encourage teachers to work with high-needs students
- An initiative to ensure all families have access to computers and the Internet (Digital inclusion)
- Improved facilities, particularly in high-needs schools