

EDUCATION

More high school kids graduating in Miami-Dade

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Overall, Florida saw its graduation rate hit 80 percent — up nearly 10 percentage since 2006-2007 — and its dropout rate decline for the sixth straight year.



Statewide, Florida hit 80 percent graduation rate, up nearly 10 percentage points since 2006-2007. At the same time, the state's dropout rate declined for the sixth straight year to 1.9 percent. CHRIS CUTRO / FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

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- G. Holmes Braddock Senior High boosted its rate from 70 percent to 90 percent — a 20 point increase;
- Miami Norland Senior upped its rate from nearly 65 percent to 82.5 percent;
- Miami Southridge Senior, from 63 percent to 76 percent;
- Barbara Goleman Senior, from about 67 percent to nearly 85 percent;
- Northwestern Senior, from nearly 72 percent to over 80 percent; and

- Booker T. Washington, from about 69 percent to 80 percent.

Several principals said attention to attendance, college-preparation and counselors' support for students have helped drive improvement.

At the southwest, suburban campus of Braddock, where 3200 students attend, every senior had a counselor assigned to them, said principal Manuel Garcia. Counselors checked on issues, such as extra tutoring or if students needed to enroll in adult education or virtual classes to make up credits.

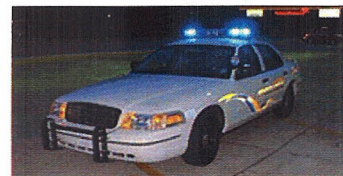
"It's just focusing and bearing down and making this happen," Garcia said.

Still, local education observer Brian Peterson questioned how some schools posted double-digit gains in a single year.

"I think that's extraordinary that a school as large as Braddock could have a 20 point increase in one year. That seems almost impossible," he said. "I think that's really really hard for a school to accomplish. I'd be interested to see how they did it."

Florida Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson praised the work of teachers, students, parents and schools in a statement. "As educators, we each play a significant role in helping our students achieve academic success, and graduation is one critical step toward the path to college and career," Robinson said.

It could become harder for Florida schools to top or match these rates in the future, as the state has increased its graduation course requirements and is poised to increase the minimum score students need on the FCAT to graduate high school.



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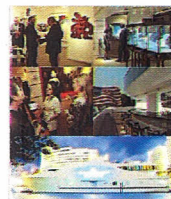
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