

Abstract

The Increasing Diversity and Achievement through Rigorous and Engaging (I-DARE) Programs Phase II Project will support one elementary school and one high school in Lee County to create appealing and challenging magnet programs and attract diverse students. Phase II builds on the successes of the current I-DARE magnet grant that supports three middle schools. The project goal is to create high performing diverse students within each magnet school and allow these programs to thrive after the project period ends. The I-DARE, Phase II project addresses the five competitive preference priorities. The first priority, need for instance, is addressed through budget shortfall data at the federal, local, and state levels as well as the steady population growth that Lee experiences each year with an additional 1,500 – 2,000 students enrolled. Priority 2, new or revised magnet schools, is addressed by placing magnets in schools not previously benefiting from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program. Priority 3, student selection, is addressed by selecting students through a lottery process. Priority 4, increased integration and socioeconomic diversity, is measured through the student enrollment plan and through performance measures in the project. Finally, Priority 5, spurring investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones is addressed by serving an elementary school and students at elementary and high school levels that reside in multiple qualified opportunity zones.

The Project Objectives include: 1) Minority group and socioeconomic isolation will be reduced at the proposed magnet schools; 2) All students will receive high quality instruction that includes their school's systemic reforms and magnet themes in units and courses aligned with Florida Standards; 3) All students, at each magnet school, will receive magnet theme instruction; 4a) Student academic achievement will increase each year in English/Language Arts, mathematics, and science for all students; 4b) The percentage of students from major ethnic and racial subgroups attaining level 3 or 4 on the state assessments will increase; 5) Staff will receive professional development related to improvement of curriculum, instruction and magnet theme development and implementation; 6) All students will have equitable access to high quality magnet education; and 7) There will be an increase in parent participation at each magnet school.

James Stephens Elementary will adopt a STEM magnet program to provide a hands-on, engaging science, technology, engineering and mathematics curriculum to its 480 students. James Stephens will integrate STEM into all disciplines: social studies, science, English/Language Arts, mathematics and special areas such as media, art, music and physical education to create a whole school magnet approach. The school will partner with key science and engineering organizations/businesses to strengthen its infrastructure supporting STEM.

South Fort Myers High School will implement a Cambridge and Career Academy magnet program to prepare its 1,900 students for future college and career opportunities. Students may choose the Cambridge/AICE program that provides college preparation and college level coursework. Or students may choose among four career academies: Automotive & Construction, Health & Safety, Technology, and the new academy, Hospitality & Tourism where they earn industry certifications. Local business partners provide students with internships in order to receive real world, on-the-job training. Students in both programs are supported by trained and caring educators to ensure they graduate and move on to postsecondary education or professional career. UCLA CRESST's will conduct a rigorous evaluation of South's Career Academies.