

Subject: Oak Ridge Elementary School/Tallahassee, FL
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Sent from the Internet ([Details](#))

Dear Larry (wonderful one!),

I spoke with you this morning about the incredible progress our school, Oak Ridge Elementary, made last year. Our entire faculty heard you speak in Tallahassee during October, 2008, and we put many of your strategies in place after that. As a school, we learned and used the 12 Powerful Words, our teachers taught and expected students to use UNRAAVEL in reading and math, and our expectations for students and ourselves were HIGH. By using these strategies and things we learned from other people—especially, the use of data to provide focused instruction—our school soared!

Oak Ridge is a Title One school with 91% minority students and 90% of students on free/reduced lunch. The school had never made AYP (in fact we were under a restructuring mandate from the state) nor any school grade above a C. However, things really came together for us in 08-09; I'm proud to report that Oak Ridge made an "A" (as determined by the state of Florida) and AYP for the first time ever.

Here is a little bit of data to illustrate our success: (numbers based on AYP criteria)

*percentage of fourth graders proficient (level 3 or better) on FCAT Writing—100%

*percentage of students proficient on FCAT Math—71%

*percentage of students proficient on FCAT Reading—54% (we used "safe harbor" to make AYP in this area).

While we are not yet at the 100% success rate in reading and math, we are working towards that. I have no doubt that we can make that goal in the coming years.

So, thanks, for your inspiring lecture that helped all of us "catch fire" and provide our students and community with a school of which they can be proud! I hope that, in the near future, we will be able to attend another Larry Bell seminar so we can continue this amazing journey!

D.J. Wright
Proud Principal
Oak Ridge Elementary School
Where Learning Gives Us Wings
850-488-3124

Larry's Note: This highly challenged Florida school was able to make AYP immediately for the first time ever while also becoming an "A" school by incorporating Larry Bell's strategies.