

LASTINGER CENTER *for* LEARNING

Who We Are ▶

The Lastinger Center for Learning, part of the University of Florida College of Education, is an innovative school-improvement program created to increase student achievement in high-poverty elementary schools around the state. Through hands-on training, UF professors partner with teachers and principals to improve the quality of teaching, learning, leadership and parental involvement.

Impact ▶

The Lastinger Center has created the Florida Flagship Schools network to reach out to 18 at-risk schools in Duval, Alachua, Collier and Miami-Dade counties. All of the schools have received D or F school grades at some point in the last five years. Since the Lastinger Center's involvement, almost all participating schools have seen their grades improve. Lastinger Center professors and staff actually embed themselves in the classrooms at participating schools for first-hand observation and demonstration of experimental teaching methods.

Reading teacher Randi Garlitz (right) says the hands-on professional development training led by UF education professors helped her school, Gainesville Williams Elementary, earn its first-ever B grade.



Key Initiatives ▶

Rigorous professional development in high-poverty schools

The Center works with elementary schools to increase student achievement by improving educator practice. Emphasizing an inquiry-based approach, Center personnel and UF faculty members partner with teachers and principals to engage in a year-long cycle of continuous improvement that focuses on collaborative assessment of student work, analysis of teaching dilemmas, lesson study and action research.

Teachers and principals from flagship schools each have their own networking groups that meet regularly during the year—including at annual, UF-hosted summer institutes.

Job-embedded, practice-based master's degree program

The Lastinger Center seeks to develop and retain master teachers in under-resourced schools by bringing a job-embedded graduate program to teachers in their schools. Teachers study research-based best practices in their courses and then receive coaching and mentoring to immediately implement those practices in their classrooms. Participants receive a full-tuition scholarship in return for a five-year commitment to teach in a high-poverty school. This novel program not only increases the knowledge and skills of teachers in these challenging schools, but helps to transform these sites into learning communities, where learning is the focus for children and adults alike.

"We are rolling up our sleeves and going into high-poverty schools and assuming some accountability for improving student achievement. If a teaching practice proves effective, let's get it off the shelves and into the hands of educators immediately."

- Alyson Adams,
Program Coordinator for
the Lastinger Center

Alachua County (Gainesville)

Duval Elementary
Joseph A. Williams Elementary
M.K. Rawlings Elementary
Prairie View Elementary

Miami-Dade County

Dr. W. A. Chapman Elementary
Florida City Elementary
Kelsey L. Pharr Elementary
Laura C. Saunders Elementary
Lenore B. Smith Elementary
Paul L. Dunbar Elementary
West Homestead Elementary
Maya Angelou Elementary

Collier County (Immokalee)

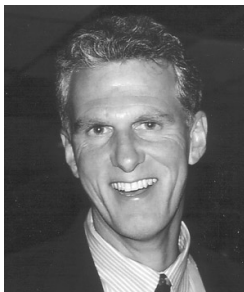
Pinecrest Elementary
Lake Trafford Elementary
Village Oaks Elementary
Highlands Elementary

Duval County (Jacksonville)

Long Branch Elementary
Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary

The Team

- 11 UF education professors
- 18 principals
- Approximately 400 teachers
- 11,500 students



Dr. Don Pemberton is the founding director of the Lastinger Center, created in 2002. He previously founded and served as president of Take Stock in Children, a statewide organization promoting the academic success and college matriculation of children living in poverty.

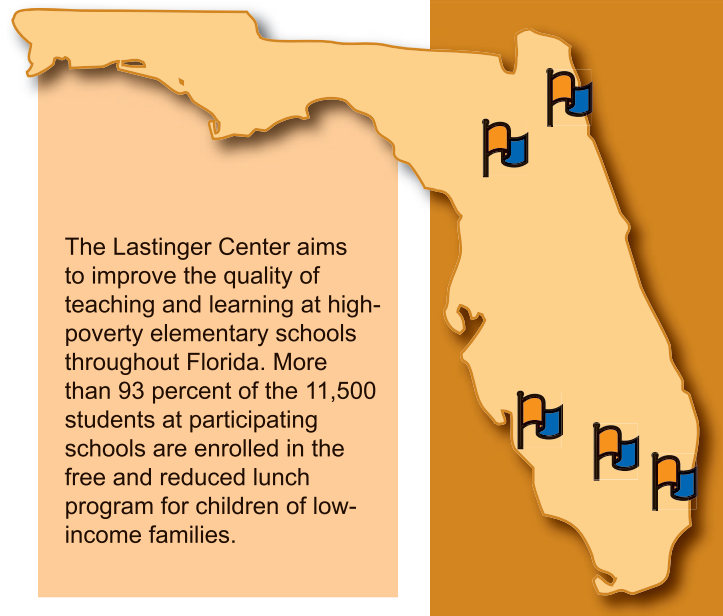
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◀ Florida Flagships
Schools Network



◀ Center Leadership

◀ Contact Information