

**Pompano Beach High School  
Pompano Beach, Florida**



**TRANSCRIPT: "SCHOOL CULTURE"**

**DAVID GORDON, PRINCIPAL:** When I was principal of Miramar High School, it had a tough reputation. And one of the things that I did immediately with my students is, when we had assemblies I said, "You know what? It's *okay* to be smart." Here, they know that they're smart, so I guess it's okay to be smarter.

**BILL BANKOWSKI, MAGNET COORDINATOR:** This is and has been, a very special kind of entity. We offer such things as global studies, international law, international finance, international business, and world languages

Once we get those eligible kids, and any student who meets those minimal criteria—all of those kids are eligible, regardless of where they rank academically. So we're taking the kids on the lower end of that scale, on the higher end of that scale; it's whatever gets pulled in the lottery. We don't have rich kids, we don't have elite kids.

For many of them, the toughest thing is the transition. It's also a shock being on a four-day schedule, because it's a very long, very rigorous day. You've got blocks that are almost two hours long and you do that four days a week—freshmen we advise them, Friday you should be studying. They start asking around and they realize that we're serious.

**STUDENT:** When I first got here, I was starting to fall asleep in my classes, become a little restless, but as I got more into it and how things worked, the whole 8 hours a day for a school day week, I got used to it. I knew what my bedtime had to be in order for me to stay up during all my classes and to keep focused.

**BILL BANKOWSKI:** We're also very much like a private school in that we can and do exit students. Freshman, their first nine weeks, if they don't meet that 2.5 they automatically go on probation. Typically, that's forty or fifty kids. Now, the reason for that is, we have to accept them based on their seventh grade scores, because the eighth grade FCAT results won't be out until after we run the lottery. So those kids are on probation, we have all of these interventions, and we touch base again with the parent several times throughout the year. Every year we exit about twenty kids. I would say probably say 70% of those kids that initially go on probation work their way off probation. For some of them, that first meeting is a wake up call. It's a wake-up call for mom and dad. They know that the University of Florida are actively recruiting our kids. So they know this is the place they want their child to be. Part of the reason we exit those kids, I have an obligation to those parents to the student sitting next to their student is here for the same reason. And that's because they want to go onto college. If they don't, that's fine and

maybe this isn't right for everybody, but this is not the place you need to be. We don't want any kid dragging down other kids.

DAVID GORDON: You come here to get an education, I'm your best friend. You come here to hurt somebody or to disrupt and not allow teaching to take place, I'm not gonna say enemy but I'm the guy that's gonna make sure you don't stay here. I'm a real stickler on safety. And not only safety physically, but safety as I've always stressed, in the classroom. That a kid's not afraid to speak out and if it's a "dumb answer" he doesn't get laughed at. The Broward sheriff's office comes in and their SWAT team does a school shooting scenario on my campus. They take a campus over and they have classroom settings or lessons going on for the new people involved with this and I sit in on that and it scares you. I invite people – you want to come see this because I always tell people, yes, I do that. I want them to know my school and know my situation and know everything about it so if that were to happen they would be familiar with Pompano Beach High School and come in and deal with needed to be done.