

2013 TERREL H. BELL RECIPIENT

Hattie Alexander, Principal

W. H. Council Traditional School

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Mobile County Public School System

Superintendent Martha Peck

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With the philosophy that all children can learn and be successful, Hattie Alexander, principal of W. H. Council Traditional School, leads a diverse group of students through the school's rigorous International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP). Council is a magnet school, and students are chosen by lottery, not by a placement exam. Every year, approximately 200 new students in grades K-5 from a variety of academic backgrounds and socio-economic levels, and with multiple learning styles enroll. Ensuring they all succeed requires strong leadership and an excellent staff.

In order to help students adhere to Council's high standards, tutoring programs have been put in place for students who need extra assistance, both during the school day and after school. Tutoring students meet three days per week during first semester and twice per week during second semester when they receive one hour of needs-based, intensive instruction.

Additionally, Alexander maintains the Bridges Program, which is designed for the rising kindergarten students. This program's goal is to assist kindergarten students with their transition from preschool to elementary school. For older but new students, another program, Camp Council, is designed to help them with the transition. The students review academic skills and concepts, practice school routines, and learn school expectations.

Alexander also understands that in order for students to maintain the academic excellence synonymous with Council, teachers must be well trained in the IBPY program and continuously work to improve their skills. She forms committees, using staff leaders in different areas, such as serving as an IBPYP coordinator; as math, reading, science, and writing lead teachers; and as national and local trainers, mentors, and advisory professionals. She has implemented a mentoring program in which new teachers are assigned to veteran teachers. The veteran teachers are available to provide assistance and answer questions.

Her determination to involve all stakeholders in education is evident by her close work with parents. Council is proud of its 100% participation rate in the PTA. When the school was hit by funding cuts several years ago, Alexander led a team effort to ensure the integrity of the entire magnet school program in the face of hardship.

As a Principal Leader in the Mobile school system, Alexander is involved in training other principals on curriculum-related concepts, and under her leadership, Council's tradition of excellence continues. The community embraces the school's high expectations, and Council's students excel.