COPPER CORRIDOR
MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL

Established 1916
Current building 1967
500 students in grades 6-12
High School Health & Wellness Grant: *There Is No D In Miami*
Parent Commission Grant: *I've Got Something Better to Do*
SELF-DIRECTED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

- Facilities
- 100% Highly Qualified Teachers with a Strengthened Curriculum
- 7 Career & Technical Programs & a Graduation Requirement
- 64 hours of Dual Enrollment College Credit within the Building
- Disciplinary referrals reduced by 80%
- Sharply reduced self-reported student use of drugs & alcohol, if not marijuana
- Implemented parent communication & collaboration efforts
2021, THE YEAR OF EXODUS
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AND THEN THE TELEGRAPH FIRE
KIDDING ASIDE, OUR COMMUNITY IS IN A DIFFICULT PLACE

- There are few jobs and fewer prospects
- No real economic developments are on the horizon
- Drug use is rampant, and the attendant crime overwhelming
- The Internet inhibits communal activity and social interaction
- Only 25% of our students live in a home with both parents present
- Most of the other social agencies – sports leagues, community service groups, youth pastors, summer programs, public pools, summer job programs, Scouts – have declined or disappeared
- The students during Miami’s decline 1990-2010 have little experience of continuous employment, little sense of community cohesion, and are now our students’ parents
- Our families are shattered – divorce, drugs, incarceration, shift work
- We have come to feel like Don Quixote, tilting alone against the giants
ALL OF THIS THROUGH THE NEW LENS OF COVID

- Significant instructional & learning losses
- 26 parents, guardians & custodial grandparents
- Variant waves
- Student ennui
- Time to treat the virus like the weather and move on
But while true,
none of this is helpful,
so we decided to do some
independent rethinking
Are specific challenges rural problems or Miami problems, and which can we reasonably attack?
How best can we deploy limited resources and build on past successes to meet our students’ needs?
ARE CHALLENGES GENERALLY RURAL OR SPECIFICALLY MIAMI?

- Lack of Economic Development
- Teacher & Counselor Shortage
- Access to Educational Resources
- Equitable Internet Access
- Loss of Community
- Student Opportunities At & Outside School
- Building Choices Into Students’ Futures
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Employment-intensive mining is unlikely to resume

Mining & related skill sets require intensive training & extensive experience

Students often face a choice between pursuing education and training OR remaining in the community

This false dichotomy can be undermined with diligence

A nationwide problem with specific local characteristics that we can effectively attack
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Approaching retirement bulge plus dropping enrollments in teacher preparation programs

Limited ability to compete with larger urban & suburban districts

Five years into a grow-your-own project

Collaborating in the Arizona Student Opportunity Collaborative

A growing nationwide problem but a chance to affect on the margins
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- In-person access limited by distance & cost of transportation
- Traditional curriculum increasingly expensive with decreasing shelf life
- Constant mandates from state & federal government
- Lack of early childhood resources
- Absence of healthy activities & alternatives outside school

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**Solutions must be creative & piecemeal**
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Need equitable & affordable access for education, healthcare, job training, employment & full participation in the Republic

Requires massive infrastructure investment

One-to-one access for students

Final Mile Project

Solutions must piecemeal & timed to exploit infrastructure & technology developments
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Society-wide loss of connection

Urban–Suburban–Rural Divide

Urbanormativity

Separating student career opportunities from geography

**Opportunities to redefine perceptions, opportunities & limits**
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CTE, Extracurriculars & Athletics

Work-based learning opportunities limited by MSHA, geography & safety concerns

Creating internal program relationships

No real opportunities for church & community activities

Significant opportunities to improve opportunities
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Accepting that change is just a factor of life
Creating a picture of a successful life – education, career, family, personal
Learning to plan, implement & adapt
Transitioning I’ve Got Something Better to Do into I’ve Got Someone Better to Be

Significant opportunities to improve opportunities
IF WE STOP LETTING THE CHALLENGES CIRCUMSCRIBE OPPORTUNITY, THERE ARE WAYS TO MOVE FORWARD
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We can effectively attack specific local characteristics
Affect a nationwide problem on the margins
Solutions must be creative & piecemeal
Exploit infrastructure & technology developments
Redefine perceptions, opportunities & limits
We have opportunities to improve opportunities
Significant opportunities to improve opportunities
WITH THAT CHANGE IN ATTITUDE, HERE’S OUR PLAN

- Explicitly teach change & flexibility
- Continue all of our important programming on drugs, alcohol, relationships, safety, & personal development
- Move forward with I’ve Got Something Better to Do and Miami Orchard & Farm
- Implement the I’ve Got Someone Better to Be – interests, education, career, personal
- Flip the programming to reach families through students
IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO CHANGE; SURVIVAL IS NOT MANDATORY
- W. EDWARDS DEMING

- Explicitly teach change & flexibility
IT IS OUR CHOICES, HARRY, THAT SHOW WHO WE ARE, FAR MORE THAN OUR ABILITIES.

- ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

- Continue all of our important programming on drugs, alcohol, relationships, safety, & personal development

Everybody Matters
THE WORLD BELONGS TO THE FEW PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY.

- HOWARD SCHULTZ

- Move forward with *I’ve Got Something Better to Do* and Miami Orchard & Farm
IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT.

- WALT DISNEY

- Implement the I’ve Got Someone Better to Be – interests, education, career, personal
SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

- The challenges facing rural communities are profound, complicated & longstanding.
- There are no easy answers and no one is riding to our rescue.
- We must find our own way and solve our problems.
- But that's what rural communities have always done and when we buckle down, we’re good at it.
WHERE DOES IT LEAVE US AT MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL?

- We’ve decided to count our blessings and get to work.
- We have good kids, an extraordinary staff and a supportive governing board.
- We have been lucky to receive support from GOYFF, Helios & others, and will continue to solicit that help.
- We have begun solid programs that show both early results and great promise.
- Now we continue with the hard work.
Questions

Glen Lineberry, Principal
glineberry@miamiusd40.org
480.329.3677