



CCR-25

Mayor's lunch for principals and students

Every year, the mayor of Weston, Florida (49,000), invites the principals of every school in the city to a lunch with city government leaders. The lunches provide a welcome opportunity for principals and their students to learn about the many city services that are available as well as enhance relationships between city staff and the schools.

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Implementation notes

Leadership/staffing Invitations to the lunch come from the mayor, who always attends. Other city staff who participate include the city manager, police and fire chiefs, director of community services, and director of communications. Generally, the principal and one student from each of the city's 14 public and private schools attend the lunch.

Timeline Weston's mayor has hosted the lunches every year since the city was incorporated in 1998. Invitations generally go out in August, and the lunch usually takes place in October.

Budget/funding The city pays less than \$500 to provide lunches for 14 principals, 14 students, and invited city staff.

Program description The program starts with introductions and brief presentations by city staff focusing on services and programs available to schools, such as speakers for school programs and parks and recreation activities. The principals and students are then invited to talk about ways that the city can help them. Both principals and students often bring up concerns about dangerous traffic during drop-off and pickup hours, as well as a range of other issues. The atmosphere is informal and fun, and students and principals are encouraged to speak their minds. The lunch always includes kid-friendly food and goodie bags for principals and students. These gatherings allow school representatives to associate names with faces and encourage schools to contact city staff whenever the need arises. City



staff enjoy the opportunity to meet principals and students in a relaxed atmosphere instead of during an emergency.

Results The principals and students appreciate the recognition that the city provides, as well as the opportunity to meet city staff who can help their schools. As a result of the lunches, the city's year-round interactions with its schools have increased significantly during the past few years. Following one of the lunches, the city manager and engineer hired a helicopter to view the traffic problems mentioned by the principals and students, and they made several road changes as a result. The close associations built through the program have also enhanced school safety programs.

