

The School District of Palm Beach County

SouthTech Preparatory Academy



2025-26 Schoolwide Improvement Plan

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SouthTech Preparatory Academy

1325 Gateway Blvd. Boynton Beach, FL 33426

www.southtechschools.org

Demographics

Principal: Pamela Galarza

School Type and Grades Served	Middle School 6-8
Primary Service Type	K-12 General Education
2024-25 Title I School	Yes
2024-25 Economically Disadvantaged (FRL) Rate	100%
School Grades History	2025-26: A (72%) 2024-25: A (73%) 2023-2024: A (66%) 2022-2023: C (54%, B was retained from 2022 SY) 2021-2022: B (55%)
Total Educator Count	32
Ineffective Educator %	0%
% Inexperienced Teachers	64.5%
Number of Students Enrolled	526

Purpose and Outline of the SIP

The SIP is intended to be the primary artifact used by the school with stakeholders to review data, set goals, create an action plan and monitor progress. The Florida Department of Education encourages schools to use the SIP as a “living document” by continually updating,

refining and using the plan to guide their work throughout the year. This printed version represents the SIP as of September 2, 2026.

School Mission

South Tech Preparatory Academy's core mission is to graduate students prepared to matriculate into a career academy program of study which will prepare them for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

School's History & Vision Statement

SouthTech Preparatory Academy has set high standards for student achievement as both a Title I and a choice school. As a feeder program to SouthTech Academy, SouthTech Preparatory Academy (STP) will provide students with a strong academic curriculum instilling the desire to pursue continuing education. Additionally, as of SY21, STP is the only CTE (career technical education) Middle School in Palm Beach County; students have the opportunity to explore career pathways which lead to a successful livelihood and produce the tenets of productive citizenship. STP will serve a racially, culturally, socio-economically, and academically diverse population with: the support of state and district resources, a career-centered, academic curriculum aligned to state standards and the involvement of parents/guardians in the adolescent development of the whole child.

SouthTech Preparatory Academy promotes academic success and financial efficiency-aligning responsibility with accountability-via the following: state standards, the School Improvement Plan (SIP), Title I monitoring, the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM), Florida Assessment (BEST, FAST), the Governing Board and the National Career Academy Coalition. All require rigorous accounting with regard to: student academic achievement, career academy success, quality and integrated instruction aligned with benchmarks and standards, allocation of human and material resources, policies and procedures, and administrative monitoring.

Data-driven instruction will be implemented; strategic formative assessments will be used to monitor learning gains over the students' middle school careers, with students taking diagnostic/progress monitoring assessments in the key subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics. The results of these assessments will drive instruction and curriculum planning. STP will also plan parent conferences around quarterly updates (report cards), ensure all IEPs (individual education plans) and 504s are met, and hold conferences with ELLs (English language learners), ensuring the most at-risk students have the support needed to be successful.

SouthTech Preparatory Academy will keep parents informed regarding school-wide progress via FAST results (3 times per year), progress reports, report cards, Parent Link, Title I meetings/parent trainings, and mailings. This stream of communication will encourage parents to take on a more active role in helping to shape the lives of their children at this critical juncture in their personal and academic development.

School Leadership Team

Name	Title	Job Duties and Responsibilities
Carla Lovett	Executive Director	Carla Lovett administers the budget, creates a positive culture for students, employees and families, improves school leadership, and creates the long-term plans for the success of SouthTech students and the school itself. She strives to create positive relationships between SouthTech and the community it supports, working with business and community leaders to bring the best opportunities to SouthTech students.
Nicole Handy	Director of Growth and Expansion	The Director of Growth and Expansion is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and pursuing strategic opportunities to broaden SouthTech School's reach and impact, with a primary focus on increasing access to high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) for students. This includes leading efforts to open new campuses and establish satellite programs both statewide and nationwide, ensuring each location is strategically placed to serve diverse student populations and meet local workforce needs. The Director will research emerging industry trends, labor market demands, and educational innovations to guide program development and campus planning. They will cultivate and maintain partnerships with business leaders, community organizations, governmental agencies, and educational institutions to create pathways that connect students to relevant, in-demand career opportunities. Duties include conducting market analyses, preparing feasibility studies, developing proposals, and overseeing the planning, design, and launch of new campuses or schools.
Pamela Galarza	Principal	The principal will monitor and work with all staff listed above to ensure implementation with MTSS and SIP support. The principal oversees the execution and monitoring of all strategies and action steps towards continuous improvement process at the school. The principal will guide and facilitate instruction with the use of best practices and school district recommended resources/materials. It is the principal's responsibility to deepen the understanding of standards and engage faculty, students, parents, and the community members to understand the standards and the vision of academic success aligned to college and career readiness. In addition, the principal hires and retains highly qualified employees, uses data to inform decisions and instruction, professional learning, performance, and student learning. The principal quickly and proactively addresses problems in instruction and student learning. Finally, as principal, Ms. Galarza must reflect on competing priorities and focus attention on those that will have the greatest leverage in improving instruction and learning.
Faten Atway	Assistant Principal	As assistant Principal, Ms. Atway supports professional learning and collaboration amongst teachers and resource staff and facilitates and leads professional learning focused on content, instruction, and pedagogical content knowledge. She must demonstrate through daily

		decisions and actions that the school's priority is academic success for every student. The Assistant Principal assists with eliminating barriers and distractions that interfere with effective teaching and learning. Supports the principal in building a culture of pride, trust, and respect. Monitors the implementation of cultural competence, equity, and access within the instructional practices at the school center. She also monitors and improves instruction by visiting classrooms to support and monitor instruction. In addition, she oversees all school-wide assessments, including FSQ, USA, Diagnostics, ACCESS, EOCs, CTE, and FAST, ensuring compliance with all testing regulations and procedures.
Tricia Clarke	Assistant Principal	Ms. Clarke assumes a proactive approach to discipline and safety issues, coordinating the Dean's activities and duty assignments to maintain a positive and secure learning environment. She assigns disciplinary consequences for rule infractions in accordance with the District Discipline Matrix and monitors the continuity and follow-up of assigned discipline, ensuring timely parent notification and enforcement of discipline contracts. Working closely with the Dean of Students and other school personnel, she coordinates investigative and prevention efforts to maximize the prevention and cessation of inappropriate activities. As the manager of the school's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system, she promotes consistent expectations and positive student behavior.
Sophia Dummond	ESE Coordinator	The ESE Coordinator manages the caseload of ESE students and assists teachers and staff in coordinating ESE Services and related services for students with disabilities. She coordinates, organizes, and facilitates IEP meetings to ensure necessary participants are in attendance. Collaborates with teachers to provide suggested strategies and accommodations to best meet the individual needs and assist students in meeting goals as defined in the IEP. Provides families with required information regarding IDEA Procedural Safeguards. Finally, she establishes and maintains cooperative working relationships by consulting regularly with internal and external customers such as: students, parents, teachers, counselors, related service providers, agencies, etc.
Telisha Kelly	Academic Coach	The Middle School Academic Coach plays a critical role in supporting teachers to improve instructional practices, strengthen curriculum delivery, and ensure alignment with the Florida Standards. This position serves as a mentor, resource, and instructional leader, working closely with educators to enhance student achievement through effective teaching strategies and standards-based instruction. The Academic Coach collaborates with school leadership and instructional staff to develop, implement, and monitor curriculum plans, ensuring consistency and rigor across grade levels and subject areas.

School Data

School Grade Component	2026			2025			2024		
	School	District	School	District	State	State	District	State	State
ELA Achievement	78%	64%	62%	71%	61%	59%	62%	57%	56%
ELA Learning Gains	67%	63%	61%	74%	61%	59%	67%	61%	58%
ELA Lowest 25%	72%	58%	55%	78%	57%	55%	70%	57%	54%
Math Achievement	68%	65%	63%	67%	62%	60%	52%	59%	58%
Math Learning Gains	67%	61%	59%	70%	61%	59%	59%	62%	62%
Math Lowest 25%	78%	52%	51%	76%	54%	53%	72%	57%	54%
Science Achievement	59%	65%	64%	58%	62%	61%	43%	60%	58%
Social Studies Achievement	74%	78%	77%	76%	74%	74%	80%	70%	70%
Acceleration Rate	85%	83%	81%	92%	79%	77%	94%	73%	73%

Sub Group Data	2026			2025			2024		
	SWD	ELL	FRL	SWD	ELL	FRL	SWD	ELL	FRL
ELA Achievement	62%	70%	77%	47%	62%	70%	33%	46%	60%
ELA Learning Gains	64%	62%	65%	68%	74%	73%	66%	63%	67%
ELA Lowest 25%	57%	68%	69%	85%	83%	81%	63%	67%	70%
Math Achievement	43%	61%	65%	51%	62%	66%	22%	38%	50%
Math Learning Gains	62%	64%	66%	74%	73%	70%	52%	57%	57%
Math Lowest 25%	61%	79%	76%	69%	76%	73%	71%	63%	71%
Science Achievement	40%	39%	57%	55%	33%	55%	16%	13%	39%
Social Studies Achievement	47%	67%	75%	59%	63%	74%	64%	74%	80%
Acceleration Rate	60%	75%	87%	84%	91%	91%	88%	98%	94%

Data Reflection

The school's 2026 academic performance data demonstrate a strong and effective schoolwide instructional program, with student outcomes exceeding district and state performance in multiple accountability components. These results indicate that broad schoolwide academic achievement is not the primary area of concern.

Accordingly, the school will focus improvement efforts on targeted areas identified through the comprehensive needs assessment, including specific subgroup achievement gaps and Science performance. Resources, evidence-based interventions, professional learning, and progress-monitoring activities will be aligned to these identified needs to ensure continued improvement while maintaining strong performance in areas in which the school currently meets or exceeds district and state outcomes.

1. Strengths

A review of the 2026 school performance data demonstrates that the school has a strong overall academic program, particularly in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The school exceeded both district and state performance across all three ELA accountability measures. ELA Achievement was 78%, compared with 64% for the district and 62% for the state. ELA Learning Gains were 67%, exceeding the district by 4 percentage points and the state by 6 percentage points. Performance among the Lowest 25% was also a significant strength, with 72% demonstrating an ELA learning gain, compared with 58% for the district and 55% for the state.

Mathematics performance also reflects strong academic outcomes. Math Achievement was 68%, compared with 65% for the district and 63% for the state. Math Learning Gains were 67%, exceeding the district by 6 percentage points and the state by 8 percentage points. Most notably, 78% of students within the Lowest 25% demonstrated a mathematics learning gain, compared with 52% for the district and 51% for the state.

These results indicate that the school's core instructional program, targeted academic supports, and intervention practices are producing strong outcomes for the overall student population, including students performing within the Lowest 25%. Therefore, the school's improvement efforts will focus on targeted areas of need rather than broad schoolwide academic remediation.

2. Identified Needs

Science Achievement represents the most significant schoolwide academic area of need. In 2026, 59% of students demonstrated proficiency in Science, compared with 65% for the district and 64% for the state. Science is the only major academic area in which school performance was substantially below both district and state performance.

Social Studies will also be monitored, as the school's 74% achievement rate was slightly below the district rate of 78% and state rate of 77%.

Although overall ELA and Mathematics performance is strong, continued attention will be given to learning gains and the consistency of academic growth across all student groups. The school will continue to strengthen instructional practices through PLC collaboration, common

assessments, targeted intervention, and an increased emphasis on authentic cognitive engagement rather than student compliance alone.

3. Equity Focus

The school's equity review demonstrates that overall school performance does not fully reflect the experiences and outcomes of all student subgroups. Therefore, the school will intentionally examine subgroup performance and ensure that resources and instructional supports are directed toward students demonstrating the greatest need.

Students with Disabilities (SWD) remain an important equity focus. SWD ELA Achievement increased substantially over the past three years, from 33% in 2024 to 47% in 2025 and 62% in 2026, demonstrating significant progress. However, a 16-percentage-point achievement gap remains between SWD students and the All Students group, which achieved 78% proficiency in ELA.

Additional SWD data demonstrate areas requiring targeted attention. In 2026:

- SWD ELA Learning Gains were 64%, compared with 67% for All Students;
- SWD ELA Learning Gains for the Lowest 25% were 57%, compared with 72% for All Students;
- SWD Science Achievement was 40%, compared with 59% schoolwide;
- SWD Social Studies Achievement was 47%, compared with 74% schoolwide; and
- SWD Acceleration was 60%, compared with 85% for All Students.

These data indicate a need to continue strengthening specially designed instruction, access to rigorous grade-level content, targeted literacy and content-area intervention, and equitable access to accelerated and college/career readiness opportunities for Students with Disabilities.

English Language Learners (ELLs) demonstrate relatively strong performance in several areas, including 70% ELA Achievement, 62% ELA Learning Gains, and 68% ELA Learning Gains among the Lowest 25%. However, Science Achievement remains an equity concern, with only 39% of ELL students demonstrating proficiency. ELL Acceleration was also 75%, compared with the schoolwide rate of 85%.

Economically disadvantaged students demonstrate outcomes generally closer to schoolwide performance, including 77% ELA Achievement, 65% ELA Learning Gains, 69% ELA Lowest 25% Learning Gains, and 87% Acceleration. However, performance will continue to be monitored to ensure that economic status does not create barriers to academic achievement, acceleration opportunities, or access to supplemental supports.

Equity-Based Response

The school will use these findings to ensure that strong overall school performance does not obscure achievement or opportunity gaps among individual student groups. Equity will be addressed through student-level data analysis, targeted evidence-based interventions, differentiated and specially designed instruction, flexible small-group support, PLC data reviews, instructional coaching, and intentional allocation of personnel and resources.

School leadership will regularly disaggregate academic, learning-gain, intervention, and acceleration data to determine whether identified gaps are narrowing. When subgroup performance does not demonstrate sufficient improvement, instructional strategies, interventions, professional learning, scheduling, staffing, and other available resources will be adjusted accordingly.

The school's goal is not only to maintain performance that meets or exceeds district and state outcomes, but to ensure that all student groups have equitable access to rigorous instruction, academic support, acceleration opportunities, and the resources necessary to demonstrate achievement and meaningful academic growth.

Planning for Improvement

SouthTech Preparatory Academy earned 72% of the possible points in the 2025-2026 school year; our goal is to earn 76% of the possible for the 2024-2025 school year. The 2025 goals are:

School Grade Component	Earned 2026	Goal 2027
ELA Achievement	78%	80%
ELA Learning Gains	67%	70%
ELA Lowest 25% Learning Gains	72%	75%
Math Achievement	68%	70%
Math Learning Gains	67%	70%
Math Lowest 25% Learning Gains	78%	80%
Science Achievement	59%	65%
Social Studies Achievement	74%	80%
Acceleration Rate	85%	90%

If SouthTech hits all of these goals, we will earn 680 points (76%). In order to achieve these goals, a number of action steps are occurring:

Action Step 1: Implement a Consistent Data-Driven Instructional Cycle Using FAST Progress Monitoring

Teachers, instructional coaches, and school leadership will use FAST PM1, PM2, and PM3 data in ELA and Mathematics to identify student strengths, skill deficits, achievement gaps, and students requiring additional intervention or enrichment.

Following each FAST progress-monitoring window, PLCs will analyze data by student, grade level, subgroup, achievement level, and benchmark/standard. Particular attention will be given to students performing at Levels 1 and 2, Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students within the Lowest 25%.

Between FAST assessment windows, teachers will use common assessments, classroom formative assessments, student work, and course performance to monitor whether students are progressing toward identified goals.

The instructional cycle will follow:

Assess → Analyze → Identify Needs → Reteach/Intervene → Reassess → Adjust Instruction

PM1 will establish the beginning-of-year baseline, PM2 will be used to evaluate midyear progress and adjust interventions, and PM3 will be used to determine end-of-year growth and achievement.

Persons Responsible: School Administration, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, ELA Teachers, and Mathematics Teachers

Action Step 2: Provide Targeted ELA and Mathematics Intervention Based on Individual Student Need

Students who are not demonstrating sufficient progress in ELA or Mathematics will receive targeted intervention based on FAST data, common assessments, classroom performance, and identified standards or skill deficits.

Interventions may include differentiated small-group instruction, push-in support, pull-out intervention, explicit instruction, targeted reteaching, additional guided practice, and increased opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery.

ELA intervention will emphasize reading comprehension, vocabulary, written response, analysis of complex text, and identified foundational literacy needs.

Mathematics intervention will emphasize prerequisite skills, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, mathematical reasoning, and standards identified as areas of weakness through FAST and classroom assessment data.

Intervention groups will be flexible and data-driven. Students will enter, exit, or receive intensified intervention based on demonstrated progress rather than remaining permanently assigned to a group.

Persons Responsible: ELA Teachers, Mathematics Teachers, Reading/Intervention Teachers, Math Coach, ESE Teachers, MTSS Coordinator, and School Administration

Action Step 3: Establish Quantitative Midyear Progress Targets Using FAST PM1 to PM2

The school will use FAST PM1-to-PM2 growth as a formal midyear indicator of progress toward annual ELA and Mathematics goals.

For ELA and Mathematics, the school will work to:

- reduce the percentage of students performing at Levels 1 and 2 by at least 5 percentage points from PM1 to PM2;
- increase the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency or progress toward proficiency;
- monitor the movement of individual students across achievement levels;
- specifically review the progress of students within the Lowest 25%; and
- disaggregate PM1-to-PM2 performance by SWD, ELL, economically disadvantaged, and other identified subgroups.

Students who do not demonstrate sufficient growth between PM1 and PM2 will receive revised or intensified intervention during the second semester.

Persons Responsible: School Administration, ELA and Mathematics Teachers, Instructional Coach, MTSS Coordinator, and PLC Facilitators

Action Step 4: Use PLCs to Increase Cognitive Engagement and Improve Student Learning

PLCs will focus on improving the quality of Tier 1 instruction by examining the difference between student compliance and authentic cognitive engagement.

Teachers will collaboratively plan and implement strategies that require students to actively think, discuss, question, analyze, collaborate, problem-solve, write, explain their reasoning, and demonstrate understanding rather than primarily listening to instruction or completing tasks passively.

PLC teams will examine FAST progress-monitoring data, common assessments, student work, and classroom experiences to determine whether increased cognitive engagement is translating into improved student performance.

The school will specifically work toward increasing ELA and Mathematics Learning Gains by at least three percentage points through stronger Tier 1 instruction and increased cognitive engagement.

Persons Responsible: PLC Facilitators, Classroom Teachers, Instructional Coach, and School Administration

Action Step 5: Strengthen Science Instruction, Particularly in Grade 8

Science teachers and instructional leadership will analyze available assessment data, common assessments, classroom formative assessments, and student work to identify standards and concepts requiring additional instructional attention.

Grade 8 Science instruction will emphasize standards assessed on the Statewide Science Assessment, including opportunities for students to apply scientific concepts, interpret data, analyze models, develop academic vocabulary, and engage in inquiry and problem-solving.

Students who are not demonstrating mastery will receive targeted reteaching and small-group support. Particular attention will be given to subgroup performance, including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.

Science data will be reviewed during PLCs and monthly accountability meetings to determine whether instructional adjustments or additional supports are needed.

Persons Responsible: Science Teachers, Instructional Coaches, ESE Teachers, PLC Facilitators, and School Administration

Action Step 6: Monitor Subgroup Performance and Address Equity Gaps

School leadership and instructional staff will disaggregate FAST ELA and Mathematics data and other academic performance data by student subgroup throughout the school year.

Particular attention will be given to Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged students, students within the Lowest 25%, and any subgroup demonstrating a significant achievement or growth gap.

Following PM1 and PM2, students within identified subgroups will be reviewed at the student level to determine:

- current achievement level;
- growth from the previous progress-monitoring window;
- specific standards or skills requiring intervention;
- intervention currently being provided;
- response to intervention; and
- whether additional or intensified support is necessary.

Instructional strategies, intervention frequency, group size, scheduling, ESE supports, and available resources will be adjusted when data indicate that students are not making sufficient progress.

Persons Responsible: School Administration, ESE Coordinator, MTSS Coordinator, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, and Classroom Teachers

Ongoing Monitoring of Implementation

Progress toward schoolwide goals will be reviewed through FAST PM1, PM2, and PM3 data in ELA and Mathematics; common assessments; classroom formative assessments; student work; Science assessments; course performance; PLC data reviews; classroom walkthroughs; and monthly accountability meetings.

The school will use PM1 as the baseline and PM2 as a critical midyear checkpoint. If PM2 results indicate that the school, grade level, subgroup, or individual student is not on track to meet the established annual outcome, instructional strategies and interventions will be revised or intensified during the second semester rather than waiting until PM3 or end-of-year state assessment results.

Positive Culture & Environment

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Team meets monthly to review schoolwide data, identify areas of need, evaluate the effectiveness of current supports, and develop strategies that promote a positive, safe, supportive, and academically engaging learning environment.

The PBIS Team utilizes a comprehensive approach that recognizes the connection between academic engagement, student well-being, behavior, attendance, and overall school climate. Monthly meetings focus on strategies designed to:

- Increase academic performance, active participation, and student engagement in learning;
- Improve students' social-emotional competence and ability to successfully navigate academic and social expectations;
- Reduce disciplinary incidents through proactive, positive, and preventative supports;
- Decrease incidents and reports of bullying and strengthen students' sense of safety and belonging;
- Increase student attendance and decrease patterns of unexcused absences and tardiness; and
- Improve overall organizational health, student connectedness, and school climate.

The PBIS Team will review available attendance, tardiness, discipline, bullying, academic, student engagement, and school climate data to identify patterns and determine areas requiring additional support. Student, parent, and staff feedback will also be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of schoolwide practices.

When data indicate an area of concern, the team will identify appropriate strategies, assign responsibilities for implementation, and review progress during subsequent monthly meetings. Supports may include positive recognition systems, student mentoring and check-ins, targeted attendance interventions, social-emotional supports, increased opportunities for student voice and leadership, family outreach, and instructional strategies designed to increase active student participation.

Consistent with the school's Positive Learning Environment Area of Focus, the PBIS Team will also examine student engagement beyond behavioral compliance. While students may demonstrate appropriate behavior, follow expectations, and remain on task, the school will continue to focus on whether students are actively thinking, participating, collaborating, problem-solving, and taking ownership of their learning.

Through this ongoing monthly review process, the PBIS Team will use data and stakeholder feedback to continuously strengthen the learning environment and ensure that schoolwide practices support both student academic success and overall well-being.