



Community Report on Banyan Elementary School

A Traditional Parent's Perspective on School Policies and Environment

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Summary and Overall Rating

Banyan Elementary School is a Title I public school in Miami, Florida, serving PreK through fifth grade. It offers a supportive and academically sound environment within a culturally diverse community. However, as part of the Miami Dade County Public Schools district, it follows policies that affirm gender identity and promote LGBTQ inclusion at all grade levels, including early childhood.

From a traditional or faith-based perspective, Banyan Elementary receives a **3.5 out of 10** for alignment with conservative educational values. The school itself demonstrates a calm and stable culture, but district-wide mandates significantly impact the policies in place.

Read on for a breakdown of this score and more detailed information.

School Information

Name: Banyan Elementary School

Address: 3060 SW 85th Avenue, Miami, FL 33155

Grades: PreK to 5

District: Miami Dade County Public Schools

1. General Overview

Banyan Elementary serves between 332 to 344 students and maintains a student-to-teacher ratio of about 15 to 1. The school is located in the Westchester area and offers a neighborhood school environment. It provides a sense of community and close engagement among staff, students, and families.

2. Academic Standing

The school is rated above average in statewide performance. It received an 8 out of 10 from education review platforms and holds a B+ rating on academic performance. State assessment scores indicate around 72 percent proficiency in math and 77 percent in reading. Banyan Elementary offers programs in Gifted and Talented education, STEAM, and extracurricular enrichment like robotics and the arts.

3. Student Demographics

The school's population is predominantly Hispanic, with approximately 98 percent of students identifying as such. About 53 percent of the student body qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch, which qualifies the school for Title I support. The school serves a lower to middle-income community and emphasizes equity-based educational practices.

4. Facilities and Programs

Banyan Elementary consists of a main school building, portable classrooms, a library, outdoor play areas, and a YMCA-sponsored before- and after-care program. It also offers enrichment programs such as robotics, arts, and STEM activities. The campus is modest but well-utilized for student learning and engagement.

5. Values and Cultural Environment

5.1 District Policies on Gender Identity and LGBTQ Inclusion

Miami Dade County Public Schools includes sexual orientation and gender identity in its anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies. Staff are expected to affirm students' chosen names and pronouns, regardless of age or grade level. The district promotes the SAFE Network, a program aimed at creating affirming spaces for LGBTQ students and includes training for all school personnel.

From a traditional parenting standpoint, these policies may introduce sensitive topics at a developmental stage many families consider premature. The district's framework applies to all public schools, including Banyan Elementary.

5.2 School-Level Practice

Banyan Elementary does not have any known public controversies related to LGBTQ matters. While the school itself appears moderate in its daily culture, it adheres to the district's required policies, including gender identity affirmation and inclusion training for staff. Parents concerned about early exposure to such topics may want to request clarification from school administrators.

6. School Board and Political Climate

In 2022, the Miami Dade School Board voted against officially recognizing LGBTQ History Month in high schools and opposed adding LGBTQ civil rights history to senior-level curriculum. However, district policies that encourage LGBTQ inclusion remain active at all grade levels, including elementary schools. This highlights the tension between Florida state policy directives and the more progressive direction taken by the local district.

7. Parent Concerns

Traditional and religious families may raise the following concerns regarding the school's operating environment:

The school follows district policies that introduce gender identity and LGBTQ themes at an early age, which some parents believe are inappropriate for young children

There is concern over privacy, as the district may allow children to express identity preferences without notifying parents

Parents may feel the school system is prioritizing social ideology over foundational academics

While Banyan Elementary has not been a focal point of activism, its compliance with district mandates places it within a progressive policy environment

8. Conclusion

Banyan Elementary School provides a high-performing, academically enriched, and community-driven educational experience. The learning environment appears calm and balanced, and student support is evident across academic and extracurricular programs. However, families who prefer to shield their children from early exposure to gender and sexuality topics may find the district's policies incompatible with their values.

Parents with strong convictions on these matters are encouraged to speak directly with school leadership and evaluate whether the educational framework supports their beliefs.

Overall Rating: 3.5 out of 10

Score Breakdown

Policy Environment: 2 out of 10

The district enforces highly progressive policies on gender identity and LGBTQ inclusion, with training and expectations placed on staff at all schools

School-Level Practice: 5 out of 10

Banyan Elementary shows no signs of overt activism and maintains a respectful environment but adheres to the inclusive district framework

Classroom Exposure: 4 out of 10

While formal instruction on these topics is not evident in early grades, identity-related content may appear in school materials, guidance sessions, and staff interactions

Community and Cultural Tone: 6 out of 10

The school serves a supportive and culturally cohesive community, with strong academic focus and no visible disruption, although district policies remain influential

Final Summary for Parents

Banyan Elementary offers solid academics and a warm community feel. For families who strongly prioritize traditional values, however, the influence of Miami Dade County's progressive policies may create concerns. This school may be acceptable for some conservative families but is not free from the broader district mandates that shape its environment.