

Bernardo Montero

As far as I can remember, my interest in the education of youngsters has always been at heart. Whether it was by coaching or training them to enhance their athletic skills, or by assisting them with homework, I devoted many of my summers and free time to do volunteer work with kids. Life blessed me with the ability to relate in mentoring younger people.

I began my educational career with Miami-Dade County Public Schools shortly after I graduated from Bowdoin College, Maine. As a History Major, I had the content knowledge to teach, but not the methods developed to effectively teach the social sciences devoted during college. I substituted all over Miami Dade County until I landed a pool substitute position at Rockway Middle School in 1993. After one year at Rockway, I interviewed and was offered a teaching position at Charles R. Drew Middle School.

For seven years I taught Geography, Civics, and lastly, US History to the most challenging students I have ever worked with. Charles R. Drew was incredibly rewarding for various reasons. I was a young idealist who wanted desperately to positively impact the lives of my students. I indulged in coaching sports, mentored at risk students, and was assigned team leader for several years. In summary, my experience at Charles R. Drew Middle was incredibly rewarding. It taught me to never take for granted the opportunity to impact a life, to inspire a child who up to the point of meeting me, had never been praised for anything. The one factor that kept me coming back for more was the love I received from the students. The city, as it is often referred to, opened my eyes to a new world of promises.

If one is to succeed in anything, one has to fully submerge and engage in the task at hand. The passion to effectively provide the best service possible to the customer became my mission. As the teacher on special assignment/administrative assistant at William H. Turner Technical Arts High School for two years, I began to develop my skills and talent as an administrator. William Turner was the introduction to what I eventually wanted to accomplish as an educator. I began to pursue my masters' degree in Educational Leadership with the thought of impacting on a school wide level. After two years of dedication to Turner's students, I interviewed and became an assistant principal at what was Doral Academy Middle/High Charter School.

Doral Academy was a very special experience, but then again, I am fortunate all of the schools I have worked in have been wonderful experiences with awesome memories. Doral Academy was the first school I was associated with that attained an A under our Governor's A+ Plan. I was able to implement supplemental programs to our existing curriculum which ultimately helped our students perform at their highest level. The following year, when the Middle School separated from the High School, I became the

Principal of Doral Academy Charter Middle School. We opened the 2003-2004 school year in Dolphin Mall's Cobb Theaters. With much resistance and not much faith from our parents, our students soared and achieved once again the highest possible mark by our state assessment accountability program. Again, this was an incredible team effort and I am very proud that I was fortunate to be the leader in the aforementioned endeavor.

Somerset Academy is a challenging environment where communication is the key to the success of our students. Last year was such a learning experience in my effort to understand the dynamics of our school. I love the fact that Somerset represents such a vast and expansive variety of culture reflecting the melting pot theory prevalent of Broward County's population. Our students are truly special, respectful and obedient. I can recall how I was welcomed by our student body and looking back at those moments when students were asking me if I was going to be their new leader, I hope that my job here has impacted our students in a positive way. I believe our students will be the future leaders and professionals of tomorrow.

Somerset Academy is my new chapter, my new home, one in which I have a lot to work on. As the second year of my tenure evolves, I hope that I can continue to imprint the seal of excellence in the eyes of all who look at Somerset as an educational institution.