



Vision and leadership transform school into a 21st century learning community.

School Profile

School Name:
Escuela Superior Medardo Carazo
Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico

School Enrollment:
672 students

Grades:
10-12

» Escuela Superior Medardo Carazo Overview

Escuela Superior Medardo Carazo, named after a dedicated local teacher and administrator, was built in the 1950s to serve the community of Trujillo Alto. After educating students for more than a half century, the school needed to update its pedagogy and facilities for the 21st century.

» Challenge

Students at Escuela Superior Medardo Carazo were receiving only average grades on key high stakes tests which negatively affected teacher, student, and school community morale. “Medardo Carazo [was] the school that no one chose to go to because students were known for cutting class,” says Director Mayra Monroy. The school was formally identified by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico as a school in need of transformation and as a result was eligible for funds made available by the School Improvement Grant from the United States Department of Education. To raise achievement and engagement, the school needed a new vision, strong leadership, and targeted professional development. The school also needed an updated building with new technology so that students could learn the technical skills required to succeed in college and career.

Escuela Superior
Medardo Carazo
SUCCESS STORY »

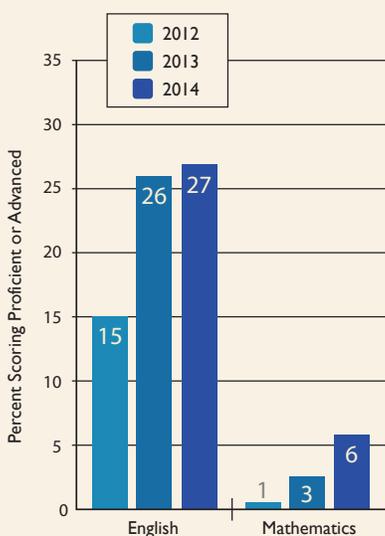
“At Medardo Carazo, I have personally observed the gusto of the director Mayra Monroy and her faculty and their dedicated daily actions to educate students and prepare them for career and college. For me, the happiest moment was when Pearson organized a “graduation night” known as Gran Día de Logros to recognize the growth and perseverance of the school’s teachers, practitioners, and director as reflected by the student achievement and school improvement.”

– Christopher Mannix,
Director of Services, Pearson



From left to right:
Mayra Monroy, Director of Medardo Carazo,
Nilsa Nieves, Teacher of Chemistry, and
Christopher Mannix, Director of Services, Pearson

FIGURE 1: Level of Proficiency on the Pruebas Puertorriqueñas de Aprovechamiento Académico (Puerto Rico Exams of Academic Achievement)



» Solution

The Puerto Rico Department of Education engaged Pearson in March 2012 to assist in the transformation of Escuela Superior Medardo Carazo. Pearson partnered with the school and the Puerto Rico Department of Education to implement its Schoolwide Improvement Model, a research-based framework which builds a data-driven culture, aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and improves student, teacher, and community engagement.

Pearson worked closely with staff members to understand stakeholder concerns. Before implementation, a needs assessment and gap analysis was conducted at Medardo Carazo to determine strengths and areas for growth. In addition, a variety of data was gathered from across the school and community. In 2012, targeted professional development sessions were conducted and the decision was made to move into a new, 21st century building that incorporated new technology and modular seating more conducive to group projects in each classroom.

» Results

Over the past two years, Pearson School Improvement coaches have been mentoring teachers daily to help them better align curriculum, instruction, and assessment programs. Classroom observations and ongoing professional development also ensure teachers have the necessary knowledge to prepare their students for critical high stakes assessments. With the intervention of Pearson coaches, the percentage of students scoring “proficient” or “advanced” has increased 12 points in English and 5 points in math.

Medardo Carazo’s new data-driven culture has fostered a strong accountability for both teachers and students and improved engagement. For example, the front office of the school features data walls that illustrate core concepts, grade distributions, and high stakes testing scores. “Students set their own goals and manage their own path toward those. It encourages them to strive for better. Data is used for education so teachers can better help students,” Monroy states.

With the new building, Medardo Carazo offers a more inviting atmosphere to prospective students. As a result, enrollment has increased since the redesign, from 593 students in 2012-2013 to 672 in 2013-2014. Students and teachers work in more collaborative classrooms with flexible seating for group work. “The students teach each other and they feel more free. They feel like they’re in college,” says Monroy. “Even the teachers are more comfortable with this type of instruction. The Schoolwide Improvement Model has changed their way of thinking.”

In addition, some after school programs were launched with Pearson’s assistance, as part of an initiative known as extended learning time. Pearson contracted with staff from the Polytechnical University to coach Medardo Carazo’s teachers in robotics. From there, a robotics program was introduced at the school. Remarkably, Medardo Carazo students entered in a robotics competition and won, marking the first time a new team entry came away with first place.

Even more impressive is the 98% graduation rate that Medardo Carazo is now seeing. Monroy concludes, “Medardo Carazo is now the school that everyone wants to go to. We’re exceeding student capacity and the new building has encouraged that.”

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