



PERSONAL | PASSIONATE | PROGRESSIVE



2022-2023

# IMPACT REPORT

239.334.1102 | [www.leeschools.net](http://www.leeschools.net) |     



## Christopher Bernier, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

**At this time last year, our District was embarking on the recovery journey from Hurricane Ian. Today, as we reflect, there's a sense of pride and gratitude for the collective perseverance that has propelled us forward in providing a world-class education.**

While Hurricane Ian may have inflicted substantial damage to our school buildings, it is crucial to recognize that schools extend beyond physical structures. They are sanctuaries of learning, growth, and inspiration. Even in the face of a storm, the noble pursuit of teaching and learning prevails, illustrating that education thrives in the hearts and minds of our students, educators, and staff.

*This 2022-2023 Impact Report* delves into the remarkable resilience and recovery of our schools. Despite the focus on reopening and rebuilding, our dedicated team of professionals made significant strides in areas such as student academic achievement, adult education and technical careers. These programs not only impact students' lives but also contribute to building a robust economy in Lee County for decades to come.

The report also sheds light on how the District's responsible management of revenue from the half-cent sales tax has spearheaded crucial capital improvements at schools and ushered in high-tech enhancements in safety and security.

With a focus on the future, we have remained committed to actively listening and learning before leading. Hosting numerous town hall sessions, we have gathered valuable input from parents, staff, students, and teachers which will play a pivotal role in guiding the District's actions in the future.

As we enter the 2024 school year, we hold unwavering confidence in our ability to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our students. I invite you to explore more about our initiatives aimed at ensuring that each student achieves his/her highest personal potential and encourage you to join us in making an even greater impact in the upcoming school year.

## Governance Team 2022-2023



**Armor Persons**  
District 5 (Chair)



**Samuel Fisher**  
District 1 (Vice Chair)



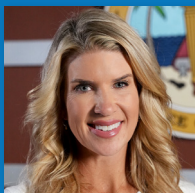
**Melisa W. Giovannelli**  
District 2



**Chris N. Patricca**  
District 3



**Debbie Jordan**  
District 4



**Jada Langford-Fleming**  
District 6



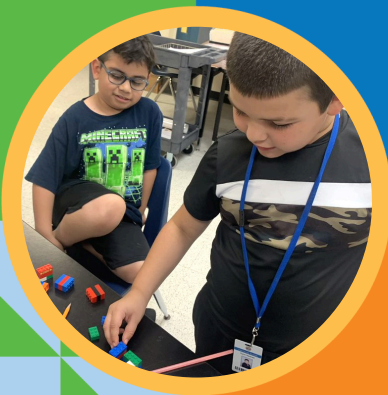
**Cathleen O'Daniel Morgan**  
District 7

# School Grades on the Rise

Students excelled in the classroom despite the devastating impact of Hurricane Ian and new state testing standards.



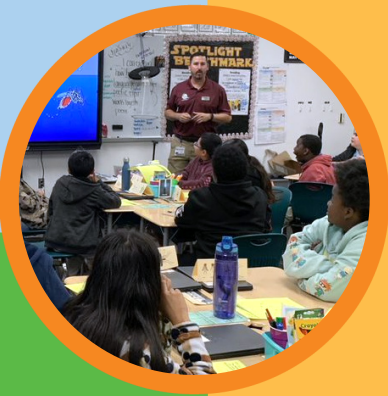
Fort Myers Middle Academy



G. Weaver Higgs Elementary

We celebrated the 18 schools that earned an "A" grade in the Florida Department of Education's 2022-2023 School Grades Report, as well as 14 schools that improved their grades from the year before.

Most notable were **G. Weaver Higgs Elementary**, **Manatee Elementary** and **Fort Myers Middle Academy** rising to a "C" and being released from state supervision. The District improved its overall score by 6 points, enough for an "A" under the old standards, but a "B" for the 9th straight year with the new standards.



Manatee Elementary



# CHANGE FOR CHANGE

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



## Franklin Park Rebuild

The rebuild of Franklin Park Elementary School got its start in 2023. To make good on a sales tax campaign promise, students and staff began the second semester in off-site portables so demolition of the original campus could take place. The new school will open in August of 2024 as the District's first Community Partnership School with services from the United Way, Lee Health, FGCU and other partners incorporated into the campus to provide community wrap-around services on site.



## Amanecer Elementary and Lehigh Acres Middle School Construction

As the school year started, the first walls were being raised into place and Amanecer Elementary revealed its school colors and Falcon mascot. By the end of the school year the \$56.5 million campus was nearly ready for almost 1,000 new students in fast growing Lehigh Acres. The project also included adding 200 student stations to Lehigh Acres Middle School. The \$7 million expansion included 12 new classrooms and extra resource rooms that were ready in time to be used for spring testing.



## Fort Myers Technical College Renovations

Fort Myers Technical College expanded its offerings with an \$18 million renovation project. The remodel created enough rooms to add Diesel Maintenance Mechanic and Computerized Numerical Control programs. FMTC received a nearly \$1 million Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant to support them. New space was also created for the plumbing, major appliance and electricity programs. The welding program took over the space those programs used to occupy.

## Riverdale Remodel

Academics and athletics will benefit from the renovation project started at Riverdale High School. All of the school's portables were removed to construct a new science building. At the same time, a new gym will be built. Riverdale is one of the largest high schools but has the smallest gym.

The \$69.5 million project started with a redesign of the student parking lot and front entrance to increase the number of cars that could line up on campus for drop off and pick up.



# 2022-2023 Budget

## Where does the General Fund Come From?

The School District has a total budget of \$2.413 billion. The biggest part of this budget, \$1 billion, is the general operating budget, used for most daily operating expenses. A very large budget may seem hard to understand, but our budget is just like your budget at home.

60%

### Local Sources

Local revenues account for 60% of the District's total budget. Property taxes are the largest source of revenue from local funding.

20%

### State Sources

State revenue makes up less than one-third of revenues The School District of Lee County receives. The Florida Department of Education oversees state funding and distributes funds to all districts through numerous formulas, grants, allotments and programs.

20%

### Federal Sources

Federal funds are very restrictive and may only be used for specifically designated programs. Federal funds are the smallest source of revenue for the District and account for 8% of the District's budget.

## How is the money used?

44%

### General Fund

Operating budget that guides day-to-day activities. 68% of this fund goes to salaries and benefits.

31%

### Capital Projects Fund

Our long-term school construction and repair needs.

11%

### Special Revenue Funds

Includes federal grants and entitlements that are received by the District.

7%

### Internal Service Fund

Used for self-funded health insurance, workers compensation insurance, and general liability insurance.

4%

### Debt Service Fund

Used to pay the principal and interest on bonds that we issue to finance school construction and renovation.

3%

### Child Nutrition Fund

Used for operating our schools' nutrition programs.

# 2023 Graduating Class

The School District of Lee County's graduating class of 2023, who earned more than \$41 million in scholarships, is attending colleges, universities and technical centers across the United States.

**1,987**

Four-year college/university

**1,392**

Two-year community/state college

**682**

Technical college/school

**525**

Uncertain

**455**

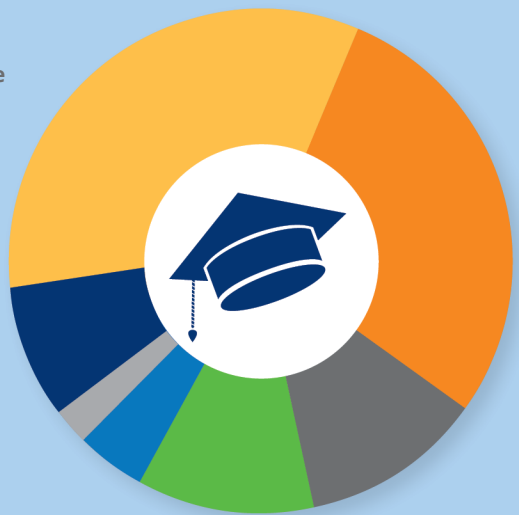
Enter workforce directly

**432**

Other

**193**

U.S. Armed Forces



## Advanced Studies, Gifted & Special Education

District offerings include the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), Advanced Placement (AP), Honors programs and Dual Enrollment at the high school level in each attendance zone.

**64%**

of high school students were enrolled in at least one advanced studies course during the 2022-2023 school year.

**As of December 2023 there are:**

**4,236**

students participating in gifted programs

**11,414**

students receiving special education services

# Career & Tech Education

The School District of Lee County is expanding opportunities for students that will prepare them for a variety of career paths during middle school and high school, setting them up for career success after graduation.

There's more than one route to a prosperous future beyond the traditional college experience, and students are recognizing the significant opportunities presented by career and technical education.



## 2022-2023 By the Numbers

### CTE Enrollment

**35,392**

Total Course Enrollment

**26,293**

Unique Student Enrollment

### CTE Certificates

**1,210**

Digital Tool Certificates

**2,768**

Industry Certifications

**3,978**

Total Certifications

**21%**

Increase from 21-22 to 22-23

## Programs

Career & Technical Education consists of **14** different career clusters. Within each of these clusters are multiple programs that prepare students for occupations important to Florida's economic development.

Each program includes the academic and technical skills required to be successful in today's economy.

### Middle Schools

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Business Management & Administration
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information Technology

### High Schools

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communication
- Business Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Engineering & Technology
- Finance
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

# People with Passion



## Conquering Cancer

Bonita Springs Elementary 4th grader Kimmy Hachey returned to school in August 2022 for the first time in two years. At seven, she was diagnosed with a form of leukemia that had only a 20% survival rate. By nine, this self-described “tough cookie” was cancer free and immediately said she wanted to return to school when asked by her mom. Kimmy’s teachers say she blossomed being around her friends again and thrived academically.



## Hunger Hero

Jaye Dahlke is a hunger hero. The Riverdale High School parent, graduate and cafeteria worker continued serving breakfast and lunch while undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer. She even started the Fun Friday selfie station so students could take a break. Tyson Foods named her one of five National Hunger Heros and donated \$5,000 to help the Riverdale garden provide more food to the cafeteria.

## AAA National School Safety Patroller of the Year

Eliza Odom has a passion for keeping her classmates safe. Every morning and afternoon she helps students to and from class as part of the Safety Patrol at Diplomat Elementary. For her leadership, safety skills and dedication, she was named the AAA Safety Patroller of the Year for both Florida and then the nation. Eliza also mentors’ younger students, raises money for heart health and volunteers for several charities.





# The Road to Recovery

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, Hurricane Ian came ashore in Lee County as a Category 4 hurricane with 155 mile per hour winds causing an estimated \$7 billion in damage.

## Our Schools

**Fort Myers Beach Elementary** was submerged by storm surge, damaging most of the campus beyond repair. Students resumed classes at San Carlos Park Elementary. After a thorough review, the outer classroom buildings and cafeteria were demolished. The historic building was salvaged and renovations started so students could return in the fall of 2023.

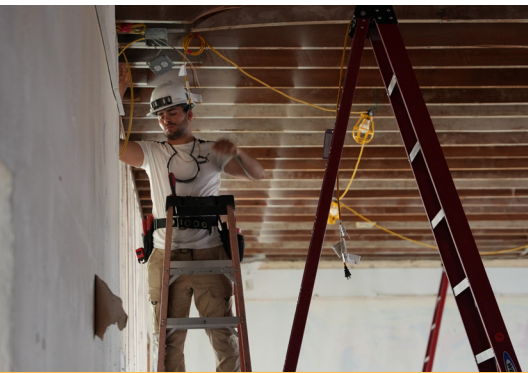
**Hector A. Cafferatta Jr. Elementary** in Cape Coral lost the majority of its roof. Students resumed classes at two elementary schools until a portable campus was established in December. The school will be demolished and a new Hector A. Cafferata will be built as a K-8 on land a few miles away. The new school opens in 2025.



**The Sanibel School** experienced about 4 feet of storm surge and extensive damage to the original campus. The newer section on higher ground fared much better. Students returned to classes at San Carlos Park Elementary while repairs were made. The Sanibel School reopened in February.

**Lexington Middle School** in Fort Myers was inundated with up to 2 feet of storm surge while **Diplomat Middle School** in Cape Coral experienced roof and window damage. Students started classes remotely while repairs were made and returned to their schools on October 31st.

For the remainder of our schools, nine safety criteria were established and certified building inspectors hired to confirm the conditions were met. The first 13 schools opened on October 17th, only 19 days after the hurricane. By the end of the week, October 21st, all had reopened.



**100 School District buildings were damaged with the losses estimated as high as \$230 million.**

## Our Community

The School District immediately recognized the impact across our community and volunteered to help. With the support of other Florida school districts, several distributions were held to hand out food and water. In partnership with the Miami Dolphins, we helped hand out hurricane supplies, hot meals and water. Student groups organized and participated in clean up efforts and our employees supported their friends and neighbors.

## Our Employees

Grace and compassion were extended to our employees, as more than 200 were known to have lost their homes. We offered Days of Support to connect staff with FEMA, community organizations, legal help and mental health support. Employee pay was never interrupted. We allowed those who needed extra time to ease their way back into work or take time off for necessary appointments.

## Our Students

The quick return to school was with them in mind to return to a sense of normalcy. Students were connected with the organizations that could meet their emotional and physical needs. We eased back into learning with extra support to help make up for the time lost.

# 2022-2023 District Profile

**99,354**

Student enrollment  
for 2022-2023

**12,040**

Number of  
Employees

**33<sup>rd</sup>**

Largest School  
District in the Nation

**8<sup>th</sup>**

Largest School  
District in Florida

## Student Primary Language

**161**

different languages

**155**

different countries

**46,617**

students live in homes  
where English is not the  
primary language

## Student Racial Diversity

**42.90%**

Hispanic/Latino

**6.24%**

Multi-Racial

**35.94%**

White

**1.69%**

Asian

**13.06%**

Black/  
African-American

**0.14%**

Native American/  
Pacific Islander

**116**

Total Number  
of Schools

**45**

Elementary

**4**

K-8

**16**

Middle

**13**

Special Centers

**15**

High

**23**

Charter

The School District  
of Lee County operates  
the 9<sup>th</sup> largest bus  
fleet in Florida

**912**  
Buses

**616**  
Routes

**62,992**

Students Transported