

2023-2024

IMPACT REPORT

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Denise M. Carlin, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

It is an honor to address you as the newly elected Superintendent of Schools for The School District of Lee County. As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication and collaboration that have made these successes possible.

This Impact Report celebrates the outstanding efforts of our students, educators, staff, families, and community partners who worked together to elevate student success, strengthen community engagement, and overcome challenges with resilience and innovation. From impressive academic milestones to transformative initiatives, the stories highlighted here showcase the heart of our district – our people.

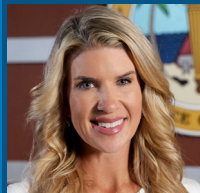
As I step into this role, I am inspired and energized by the possibilities ahead. My focus remains steadfast on our shared goals: fostering safe and secure learning environments, ensuring fiscal responsibility, improving student achievement, supporting and retaining exceptional educators, and strengthening partnerships with families and the community. Together, we will build on the progress of the past to ensure every student in Lee County has the tools they need to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support of The School District of Lee County. The achievements in this report are a testament to what we can accomplish when we come together with a common purpose: providing an exceptional education for every student. I am excited for what we will achieve in the years to come.

School Board



Samuel Fisher
District 1 (Chair)



Jada Langford-Fleming
District 6 (Vice Chair)



Melisa W. Giovannelli
District 2



William F. Ribble, Jr.
District 3



Debbie Jordan
District 4



Armor Persons
District 5



Vanessa M. Chaviano
District 7

People with Passion



Hearing Beyond Sound

Chris Hamstra lost his hearing at 10 months old, yet he never let it hold him back. Hamstra now serves as a Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher at Allen Park Elementary, a school he attended as a child. He is an inspiration to his students, motivating them to overcome the same obstacles he overcame in order to succeed. “They need to see someone like me. I like to tell them to be yourself, make good choices, and try harder in the future,” Hamstra says.

From Gateway High School to MIT

Xavier Banos likes to push himself, and his hard work has paid off — big time. In 2023, the Gateway High School student received what might be the largest single scholarship ever awarded to a student in The School District of Lee County. Questbridge, a national nonprofit that helps high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds, is covering the entire four years of his college tuition, housing, food, books, supplies and travel. The scholarship is valued at \$330,000. Banos is currently studying mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Beyond Challenges

Zeke McKeon, a first grader at Three Oaks Elementary, was diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder at eight months old that greatly impacts his ability to speak and move. Despite these challenges, he thrives academically and socially. He’s described as funny, outgoing, and hard-working. According to his school support team, Zeke has made leaps and bounds since entering kindergarten, improving his social skills, physical abilities, and writing.





CHANGE FOR CHANGE

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



OPENGATE

The School District of Lee County became the first district in Florida to deploy OPENGATE Weapons Detection Systems at every campus during the 2023-2024 school year. OPENGATE is able to quickly and efficiently screen students, staff and visitors for weapons and other contraband not allowed at school. Anyone who sets off the alarm is subject to a secondary search. OPENGATE is portable and can potentially be used to screen guests at all school events. OPENGATE enhances the District's already robust security system, which includes School Resource Officers at every school. The Guardian Program was also implemented in 2023-2024.



Two New Schools Open Their Doors

The school year started with the opening of two new schools. Amanecer Elementary is home to almost 1,000 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students. The \$56.5 million campus is the District's first Cambridge Primary School, providing students with a strong foundation for advanced learning. Lemuel Teal Middle School opened with capacity for 900 students in grades 6-8 after an extensive \$18.5 million renovation. The school was named after a longtime educator and student mentor. Both campuses helped to alleviate the student population growth in Lehigh Acres.



Franklin Park Elementary Rebuild

The new Franklin Park Elementary School started to take shape when 117 wall panels were lifted into place. The \$83.5 million project was a promise made during the 2018 sales tax campaign. The school was opened in August 2024 with 579 student stations for kindergarten through fifth grade and a 100-student capacity pre-K section. One building houses designated space for United Way, Lee Health, FGCU, and other agencies to provide support services to students and the Dunbar community.



SALES TAX RAISES \$500 MILLION

Revenue from the Half-Cent Sales Tax topped \$500 million in April 2023 and reached \$561 million at the end of the school year. The sales tax has supported the construction or renovation of eight schools to create 4,767 new student seats. Every school has benefited in some way. New roofs have been installed, air conditioners have been replaced, windows have been upgraded, lighting has been improved, and Promethean Boards have been added. The current capital plan includes eight new schools by 2032 supported by sales tax revenue.

2023-2024 Budget

Where does the General Fund Come From?

The School District of Lee County has a total budget of \$2.8 billion. The biggest part of this budget, \$1.2 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.

65%

Local Sources

Local revenues account for 65% of the District's total budget. Property taxes are the largest source of revenue from local funding.

22%

State Sources

The State's 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.

12%

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, accounting for 12% of the District's budget.

How is the money used?

44%

General Fund

Operating budget that guides day-to-day activities. 65% of this fund goes to salaries and benefits.

38%

Capital Projects Fund

Our long-term school construction and repair needs.

7%

Internal Service Fund

Used for self-funded health insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and general liability insurance.

5%

Special Revenue Funds

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

3%

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

2024 Graduating Class

The School District of Lee County's graduating class of 2024, who earned more than \$60 million in scholarships, is attending colleges, universities and technical centers across the United States.

1,947

Four-year college/university

1,658

Two-year community/state college

869

Technical college/school

534

Enter workforce directly

530

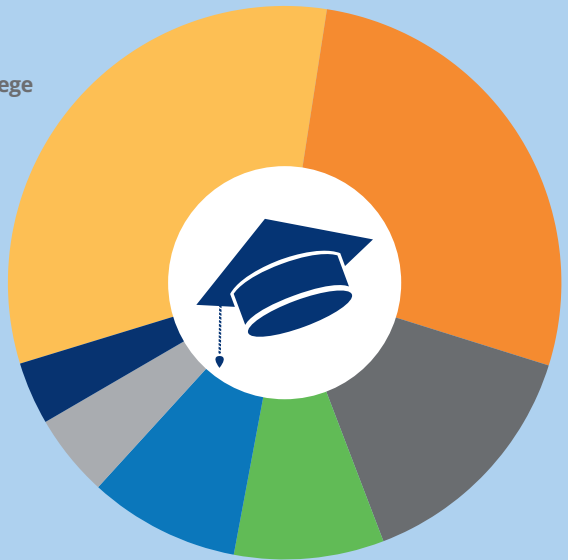
Uncertain

293

Other

222

U.S. Armed Forces



Advanced Studies and Exceptional Student 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.

60%

of high school students were enrolled in at least one advanced studies course during the 2023-2024 school year.

As of December 2023, there were:

4,117
students
participating in
gifted programs

11,905
students receiving
special education
services

Career & Tech Education

Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programs prepare individuals for occupations important to Florida's economic development.

Through our local partnerships, our students gain real-world, hands-on experience, explore different careers, and enter the job market with the skills and competencies required by today's demanding industries.



Scan the QR code for more information on how you can support future local graduates.

2023-2024 by the Numbers

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.

CTE Enrollment

36,422 Total Course Enrollment
26,015 Unique Student Enrollment

CTE Certificates

990 Digital Tool Certificates
2,784 Industry Certifications
3,774 Total Certifications
2.1% Increase from 22-23 to 23-24

Programs

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

9

Middle School Programs

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Business Management & Administration
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information Technology
- Marketing, Sales & Service
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communication
- Health Science
- Education & Training
- Engineering & Technology

16

High School Programs

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



Community Engagement

Bonita Springs Community Resource Event

Bonita Springs Elementary School hosted a comprehensive Community Resource Event, bringing together multiple departments from The School District of Lee County and a wide range of local organizations. Designed as a one-stop information hub, this event allowed community members to connect with various resources, from educational programs to health services. Representatives were on-site to provide detailed insights and personalized guidance, reinforcing the District's commitment to supporting families.



Summer Learning Programming with the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs

Recognizing the importance of a safe and enriching summer for students while parents work, The School District of Lee County partnered with the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs to host summer camps at select schools. These camps provided a welcoming space for students to make new friends, engage in academic activities, explore enrichment programs, and enjoy the excitement of summer—all within a secure and supportive environment.



Back to School Rush Event

The Back to School Rush event held at the Lee County Public Education Center was a collaborative effort between The School District of Lee County, Lee Health, the Florida Department of Health, and community partners. Families new to our area completed their physicals, screenings, and enrollment, while also meeting with community partners to learn about available resources, services, and job opportunities within the District.

Parent University

Parent University empowers parents and guardians with insights and tools to actively support their child's educational journey. Through a series of accessible courses held throughout the district, attendees explored a range of important topics, including open enrollment, school safety, and middle school proximity. Local organizations also participated, providing parents with information about their roles in the community and offering opportunities to get involved in district and community activities.

Pine Manor Community Resource Event

Families in the Pine Manor Community benefited from a resource fair that not only provided backpacks and school supplies, but also fostered valuable connections. Cape Coral Technical College offered free haircuts, while representatives from The School District of Lee County and local organizations shared information about vital resources and services. This event strengthened the bridge between the District and the community, ensuring that families have access to support as the school year begins.



2023-2024 District Profile

101,369

Student enrollment
for 2023-2024

5,702

Number of
Teachers

27th

Largest School
District in the Nation

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

8th

Largest School
District in Florida

Student Primary Language

157

different languages

156

different countries

32,315

students live in homes
where English is not the
primary language

Student Racial Diversity

46.49%

Hispanic/Latino

6.59%

Multi-Racial

31.62%

White

1.63%

Asian

13.53%

Black/
African-American

0.13%

Native American/
Pacific Islander

116

Total Number
of Schools

46

Elementary

4

K-8

17

Middle

13

Special Centers

15

High

21

Charter

The School District
of Lee County operates
the 9th largest bus
fleet in Florida.

960

Buses

580

Routes

62,992

Students Transported Daily