



# St. Lucie County School District Report to the Community 2008

## Special points of

### Interest:

- 40,000 students
- 42 Schools
- Budget
- Technology

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St. Lucie County School District

July 2008

## FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRMAN

The St. Lucie County School District's "Annual Report to the Community" reflects a school system on a course for excellence. The many areas of successes are through the joining with our community partners such as Florida Atlantic University, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, the University of Florida, Indian River State College, the USDA and the Smithsonian Institution, along with Torrey Pines, and the many benefits they offer our schools. An endless number of other local business partners support our schools, and also provide mentors for students.

The district and school staff are passionate about the achievement of each and every child. We are clear that all employees, including Custodial and lunch room staff, school health nurse, along with the teachers, principals, support staff and the district are responsible for high performing schools.

Education is paramount to economic development in St. Lucie County, as it evolves from an agriculture community to one of science and research. This has been reflected in our schools that highlight centers of excellence, featuring academies that have obtained national recognition for the superior, relevant curriculum that engage students daily.

It is the responsibility of the School Board, and the community, to work collaboratively on the honorable mission of educating the leaders of the future. I can think of no greater challenge nor more far reaching goal.

Carol A. Hilson, Chairman  
St. Lucie County School Board

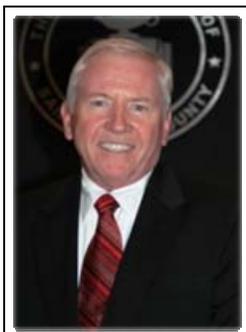


School Board  
Chairman  
Carol Hilson

## St. Lucie County School District earns prestigious accreditation



The St. Lucie County School District recently earned the prestigious district-wide accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance that engages the school community in meeting high quality standards, implementing a continuous improvement process, and ensuring quality assurance through internal and external review. The team's description commended the district foremost for the devotion to students, and student learning. Only one third of school districts in Florida have achieved this prestigious distinction.



**Michael Lannon  
Superintendent  
St. Lucie County  
School District**

## Superintendent Michael Lannon

The excitement and pride in the accomplishments of this past school year for the St. Lucie County School District -- opening two new schools, the continuing trend of improving FCAT scores and school grades, recognition by colleagues of innovative programs for students, and endorsement by education experts of St. Lucie County Schools in its organizational operations, for example -- characterize this report to the community.

The misdirection of attention from such achievements to several widely misunderstood events over the past school year cannot tarnish the luster of the months of hard work and accomplishment of thousands of students, teachers and families.

As difficult as the events that grabbed headlines have been, including the hardships suffered by a dedicated group of Indian teachers; misinterpretations and misstatements about "Abstinence Plus" units added to our secondary schools' health curriculum to combat the rising local rate of HIV/AIDS cases; and misconstrued reports of a gift from a foreign consulate, we must recognize and celebrate the overwhelming evidence of a school district "on the rise."

### ***New educational opportunities for students***

The year began with a nearly flawless opening day, with two new campuses opening their doors to students: Samuel S. Gaines Academy and Allapattah Flats K-8 schools. Several new attractor programs were made available to students this year supported through education partnerships with Florida Atlantic University and Indian River Community College, the Fort Pierce Westwood High School Marine and Oceanographic Academy (MOA) at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, and Honors Central at Fort Pierce Central High School. This coming year, plans have been put in place to establish MOA Prep, a feeder program at Forest Grove Middle School to prepare students for the high school MOA program.

Centers of Excellence for career and technical (formerly vocational) training were further established at local high schools to engage students in courses of study best suited to their skills, interests and future plans to develop the intellectual capital and the highly skilled workforce that the Research Coast's future will require, as well as advance students toward higher education. School officials from outside Florida visited our schools to see for themselves the small learning community programs with curricula choices that connect with state standards, align with industry standards and certifications, and are designed to create a greater potential for high school students to meet the demands of high skill/high wage occupations. Each program also benefits from advisory groups of local industry business partners to provide guidance and support.

### ***Instructional technology advances student learning***

New state-of-the-art instructional technology that enhances student learning was installed this year in over 800 classrooms in older schools throughout the district, bringing the total number of classrooms with this learning resource to more than 1,800. The investment is part of the St. Lucie County School Board's plan and dedication to equity in schools countywide. More teachers and other resources were also directed by the school board to classrooms where children with the most need come to learn and grow.

Hundreds of students in St. Lucie County public schools earned numerous awards in rigorous regional, statewide, national and international academic competitions, from

***St. Lucie  
County  
Public  
Schools...  
Every  
Child,  
Every Day.***



science fairs to history fairs, spelling bees, speaking, and fine arts competitions. More than \$17 million in scholarships, and other highly prized academic and athletic recognitions, were awarded to our youth.

And, St. Lucie County students posted their best performance ever in core subject areas like reading, math and science, in standardized tests, including the SAT, ACT, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and the national-standard Stanford 10, where St. Lucie County students again outperformed their peers nationwide in core academic competencies. Our students also set records with major increases in the number of students enrolled in the more rigorous International Baccalaureate, the AICE program aligned with England's Cambridge University, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment courses.

### Reflection and focus on the future

In reflection, it has been a good year for the school district, though we have definitely learned from our challenges. And now, we must face the most daunting task ever confronting us -- how to slash \$15 million or more in services to children for the coming school year, and an expected cut of several more millions of dollars for the following year. By severely underfunding public education, the Florida legislature has ignored its sole paramount duty, described in the Florida constitution, as adequately providing a quality public education for every child in the state. According to U.S. Census Bureau data released just months ago, Florida ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in spending on public education in the 50 states and District of Columbia. Next to last is not adequate in anyone's estimation.

In spite of the dismal financial future facing Florida's public schools, the St. Lucie County School Board and administration remain laser-focused on the classroom as we work together during this difficult time.

I hope you find this community report helpful and informative. I encourage you to become more involved with our schools and the youth of our community as we move forward in our role as the foundation of the transformation of this region as the premier site in the state for expanded research and education, as well as a highly desirable location for families and business enterprise alike.

Michael Lannon

Superintendent, St. Lucie County Schools

**“A  
School  
System  
on the  
Rise..”**

### District to launch Parent Involvement campaign



This fall, St. Lucie County Schools will launch **“Be There,”** a national multimedia campaign designed to inspire parents to become more involved in their children's education through everyday opportunities. Look for more information later in the coming months. For more information log on to [www.bethere.org](http://www.bethere.org).



## School Grades

The St. Lucie County School District has made significant improvement at all levels. The table below indicates that 94.6% of our schools achieved a grade of "C" or higher. This represents 35 out of 37 schools that were assigned a school grade by the Florida Department of Education.

Change in Grade from 2007 to 2008



School Grade	2008	2007	Change (08-07)
A	40.5% (15/37)	28.5% (10/35)	12.0% INCREASE
B	29.7% (11/37)	14.3% (5/35)	15.4% INCREASE
C	24.3% (9/37)	34.3% (12/35)	10.3 % DECREASE
D	2.7% (1/37)	17.1% (6/35)	14.3% DECREASE
F	2.7% (1/37)	5.7% (2/35)	3.0% DECREASE

- 94.6% of the schools in 2008 earned a Grade of "C" or higher (35 /37 schools). Compared to 2007 when 77% earned a Grade of "C" or higher (27/35 schools). This represents an increase of 17.6% over 2007.
- 57.1% of the schools improved one letter grade or more when compare to 2007. (20/35 schools)
- 25.7% of the school maintained a Grade of "C" or higher (9/35 schools).
- 82.9% of schools improved at least one letter grade or maintained a letter grade of "C" or higher (29/35 schools).
- 80.0% of Title I schools made a grade of "C" or higher (8/10 schools). Of the 8 schools, 5 made a grade of "B" or higher.
- 83.3% of the High Schools made a grade of "C" or higher (5/6 schools). The only high school that made a "D" achieves the number of points for a "C", but dropped a letter grade because of not meeting the target for the bottle quartile. We will be examining the data to determine if there is a reason for a grade appeal.
- 87.5% of the K-8 schools made a grade of "C" or higher (7/8 schools). Of these 7, 6 made a Grade of "B" or higher.
- Weatherbee Elementary Earned a grade of "B" when compared to last year's "F".
- 4 schools made Annual Yearly Progress when compared to 8 schools in 2007. However, it is typical to see a decline due to an increase in the AYP standards for 2008. The standard in Reading for 2008 was 58% compared to the 51% in 2007. The standard in math for 2008 was 62% when compared to 56% in 2007. This pattern is also reflected in state-wide data.



## School Highlights and Accomplishments

- Lincoln Park Academy sophomore Page Hoskins won fourth place in the international science/engineering fair
- Northport K-8 School sixth grade student Aldrin D'Silva won the St. Lucie County School District Spelling Bee and advanced to the national competition
- Eighth grade students Todd Condon, Morganne Lenning, and Cole Pomykacz from Northport K-8 School won first place in the state history fair
- Six St. Lucie County School District educators and administrators were nominated in the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! Recognition program, which honors educators throughout the state who promote literacy in their school districts
- Treasure Coast High Schools Athletic Director Dan Comeau, named the 2008 Athletic Administrator of the Year by the (FIAAA)
- Treasure Coast High School students Anthony Passerello and Christopher Duquesnel won the silver medal in the Robotics and Automation Technology category, and Jazmine Woods, Lymari Reyes, and Jade Woods won the bronze medal in the Crime Scene Investigation category at the 44th annual Skills USA competition
- Rohan Reddy from Lincoln Park Academy led the list of St. Lucie County middle and high school students taking home significant awards from the 53rd annual state Science and Engineering Fair
- St. Lucie West Centennial High School Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Lila Durkee, Katriina Floderus, Kaitlin AMurphins, Sara Sapp, and Crisanna Tang were honored as national finalists during the HOSA conference in Dallas.



**Page Hoskins**  
4th place, International Science and Engineering Fair



**Northport K-8 School team of Todd Condon, Morganne Lenning, and Cole Pomykacz**  
First place in state History Fair

## Career and Technical Curriculum Expands at High Schools

The St. Lucie County School District has firmly embraced high school reform, to create relevant, rigorous and rewarding programs of study at each of St. Lucie County's six high schools to best prepare students for careers or further education. Many programs result in industry certifications for program completers. Centers of Excellence directed courses of study include:

- Fort Pierce Central High School — Center for Medical and Electronic Engineering Technologies
- Fort Pierce Westwood High School—Center for Marine and Environmental Science Technologies
- Port St. Lucie High School— Center for Musical Theater and Residential Construction Technologies
- St. Lucie West Centennial High School—Center for Public Service and Media Technologies
- Lincoln Park Academy—Center for International Baccalaureate and Performing Arts Technologies
- Treasure Coast High School—Center for Innovation and Pre-Engineering Technologies



**Anthony Passerello and Christopher Duquesnel**



## Human Resources



In St. Lucie County Schools, our greatest resource is our employees. The Human Resources (HR) department strives to recruit and retain highly qualified instructional and non-instructional staff to drive student achievement in our school district.

This past year, the department placed 162 pre-service teachers in student teaching or field experience positions to provide a future source of teaching workforce for the district. The department, with the approval of the school board, also partnered with Florida Atlantic University in an innovative and successful program that brought 16 highly skilled teachers from India to teach in critical shortage areas of mathematics and science; all but one of those teachers will return to our classrooms this fall.

The HR department for St. Lucie County Schools also can boast a 91 per cent retention rate for employees the past year, which contributed to there being the smallest number of vacancies ever at the opening of the 2007-2008 school year, even with hiring 683 new teachers who were provided 14 new teacher orientation training sessions. With two new schools opening, administrative teams also had to be appointed and support staff hired to help students and parents, prepare meals, maintain the campus and support the classroom. And, nearly 400 substitute teachers were provided classroom management and instructional training to maximize their time in our schools, while administrators were provided training on the nationally recognized teacher insight instrument to identify talent in teacher applicants.

Technology has also transformed and streamlined many of the tremendous volume of tasks performed by HR department staff. Almost all schools' staff and all district office departments have been trained to use the electronic system to track leave requests, and 80 hours of in-service training was offered to administrative support staff on the paperless electronic employee application system, plus the department rolled out a new web page to provide information at employees' fingertips.

But even with technology streamlining some parts of the human resources process – such as the on-line leave process that saved thousands of sheets of paper -- there are many tasks and responsibilities that remain labor intensive and require human interaction. HR department staff fingerprinted 3,324 individuals, conducted 4,568 certification reviews, processed 6,337 applications, reviewed 13,154 documents and handled over 15,000 telephone calls, and assisted in 217 law enforcement investigations.



*The greatest resource for the St. Lucie County School District ... Is our employees.*



## St. Lucie County's 2008 Teacher of the Year

Richard E. (Ted) Norman, Engineering/Manufacturing teacher at Treasure Coast High School, is St. Lucie County's 2009 Teacher of the Year and the 2008 Manufacturing Teacher of the Year for the State of Florida.

Ted joined St. Lucie County Schools at Dan McCarty Middle School in 2003 teaching introductory and exploring technology courses. He then became part of the inaugural staff at Treasure Coast High School in 2006, and is an instructor for the Engineering/Manufacturing Academy.



**Ted Norman**  
St. Lucie County  
School District  
2009 Teacher of  
the Year

Photos courtesy Mitch Kloorfain

## St. Lucie County's 2008 School Related Employee of the Year

Stephen Marcorelle, Site Maintenance Foreman at Fairlawn Elementary, is St. Lucie County's 2008 School Related Employee of the Year.

Stephen has been with the school district for 13 years, and goes above and beyond his responsibilities. He takes personal interest in encouraging academic success in the students.



**Stephen Marcorelle**  
St. Lucie County  
School District  
2008 School Related  
Employee of the Year

## Professional Development



Professional development is integral to teachers providing every student with challenging, engaging and satisfying work and support staff reinforcing instructional work. This year, professional development for teachers has focused on improving student achievement through learning opportunities that are minds-on, authentic, and can be implemented with fidelity in the classroom. In addition, all employee groups have been provided with customized professional development designed to meet their professional learning needs. A professional development web site is an invaluable resource for training opportunities that can be accessed by all employees throughout the district. In emphasizing student engagement for all learners, the second annual *Engaging All Learners Conference* occurred at Treasure Coast High School, with nationally recognized education authorities who provided targeted training focused on enhancing and differentiating mathematics instruction.

The department also launched a new electronic registrar system as a resource for employees seeking information on training opportunities and for tracking their development. The system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for registration and checking schedules. Registrants are able to self-enroll with ease via the Internet and can monitor their in-service credits with a click of the mouse. And best of all, the online catalog of courses and sessions allows employees to see what is planned months in advance.



## Technology advancements for student learning



High quality teaching and learning for every child, every day, means not only that the St. Lucie County School District must ensure that teachers are trained in the most effective teaching methods and best practices, but that the tools for effective teaching are in their hands – and their students' hands as well.

Each year, each school and classroom's technology is assessed; obsolete equipment is replaced, and computers, laptops and audiovisual technologies are refreshed toward enhancing creativity, productivity, and monitoring progress in each student's learning.

System-wide, technology is also used to support teaching and learning, staff development, community awareness, and accountability through:

- Education Broadcast Signal (EBS), Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), video over IP and automated circulation systems in each school's media center for educational broadcasting.
- Application servers at each school site that provide software applications for teaching and learning for both students and teachers.
- Computer and software support of individual English instruction for students whose first language is not English.
- Credit retrieval labs with software designed for self paced, guided instruction for both middle and high school students.
- Secure internet access for parents to monitor their child's attendance and academic progress.
- Programming that supports instruction, professional development, community awareness and parenting skills broadcast through the district's television studio.
- Mainframe computer systems for accountability in student management and business applications.

### Technology Infusion investments for 2007-2008 school year included:

- A power-savings automation program for computers was installed throughout the district
- Over 800 classrooms throughout the district in older schools were retrofitted with a Panasonic Classroom Audio Visual System (CAVS) system that enhances instruction, student attention and retention
- Desktop computers were upgraded in nearly 500 schools
- Projectors for enhanced instruction were installed in 50 schools
- Over 1,500 laptop carts for mobile instructional support were provided to school throughout the district
- Tablet computers with "Smart Software" were provided to schools in the north county to provide equity with newer schools
- Aging telephone systems were replaced in older schools for better communication
- A server to store podcasting messages was installed and pilot programs were operated in several schools
- A project to upgrade the entire database management processes was initiated
- An imaging system was installed in the Student Records department which has vastly increased the department's effectiveness
- The Publications Department was able to greatly increase its capacity due to upgrade in equipment



**WLX-TV**  
**St. Lucie County**  
**School District's**  
**Education and**  
**Professional**  
**Development**  
**television**  
**channels are**  
**streaming**  
**through the**  
**internet**



## Fast Facts

### Key Indicators—that St. Lucie County Public Schools are “on the rise”

- **ACT/SAT Scores**— Increasing student participation to 40% of students taking the SAT was identified as a district objective in 2006-2007 Academic Business Plan. This objective was achieved with 51% of students participating in the exam. The number of students taking the ACT exam has increased as well.
- **Graduation Rate**—has exceeded the average rate for the state of Florida since 2003.
- **Drop Out Rate**— remains lower than the average for the state of Florida and has decreased by 3 percentage points in the past three years.
- **Advancement Placement**— Since 2004, the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses has almost doubled to 720 students district-wide.
- **Student Attendance**—Average daily attendance in all grades has increased with the greatest improvement in secondary grades, particularly in the middle grades (6-8) and in grades 11 and 12. In addition, the number of students absent for more than 20 days has decreased significantly in alternative schools, and had decreased slightly in high schools.
- **Positive Behavior Support Schools**—In the 25 schools currently participating in the PBS program, the average number of students in out-of-school suspension per school day has decreased significantly since 2004.



*The mission of St. Lucie County Public Schools is to ensure all students graduate from safe and caring schools, equipped with knowledge skills, and the desire to succeed.*

## Facilities Accomplishments 2007-2008

The Facilities Department has had yet another busy year as our district continues to build new schools. New facilities opening this August are: Fort Pierce Central High School's new campus on 25th Street in Fort Pierce; Palm Pointe/ FAU Educational Research School at Tradition; Allapattah Flats K-8 School's permanent location; and Southbend K-8 School at the former site of Allapattah Flats K-8. Other projects are the new auditorium acoustics at Lincoln Park Academy; phase II of the sports field and parent pickup at Northport K-8 School; additions to Treasure Coast High School; installation of technology in classrooms across the district; and ongoing school marquee replacements district-wide.



The new Fort Pierce Central High School



## Maintenance Accomplishments 2007-2008

The Maintenance Department instituted the School Dude Maintenance Direct, Preventative Maintenance and Utility Direct software packages to track work orders, preventative maintenance, energy costs and savings. The district is now able to view and analyze in-depth productivity reports.

Training on the School Dude program was provided to maintenance staff and school-based users to facilitate a more streamlined and cost-effective maintenance work program.

Inventory analysis software and control procedures were instituted with embedded personnel and oversight to further enhance productivity.

Some projects include:

- Reworking generators and adding circuits at Bayshore Elementary, C. A. Moore K-7, the district offices, and Manatee K-8 School
- Refinishing the gym floor and stage flooring at Dan McCarty Middle School, Forest Grove Middle School, Southern Oaks Middle School, and Southport Middle School
- Upgrades of Fire Alarm, Intercom, and Burglar Alarms at Bayshore Elementary, Garden City Elementary, Lakewood Park Elementary, Parkway Elementary, Savanna Ridge Elementary, Southern Oaks Middle School, White City Elementary, Central Warehouse, and Village Green Elementary
- Energy Management Projects at Dan McCarty Middle School, Frances K. Sweet Elementary, Floresta Elementary, Lawnwood Elementary, Morningside Elementary, Savannah Ridge Elementary, Southern Oaks Middle School, Southport Middle School, and St. Lucie West K-8 School
- Kindergarten playgrounds upgrades at Bayshore Elementary, Floresta Elementary, Fort Pierce Magnet School of the Arts, Garden City Elementary, Mariposa Elementary, Morningside Elementary, Port St. Lucie Elementary, and White City Elementary
- City Elementary, and Windmill Point Elementary
- Voluntary Pre-K additions at Garden City Elementary, Lakewood Park Elementary, Lawnwood Elementary, and White City Elementary
- District-wide building update for DOE at Oak Hammock K-8 School, St. Lucie West K-8 School, West Gate K-8 School, and White City Elementary School
- Adding the new gym at Manatee Elementary to complete its conversion to K-8 School
- Additions to MOA at Harbor Branch and MOA PREP at Forest Grove Middle School



**Palm Pointe Educational  
Research School**



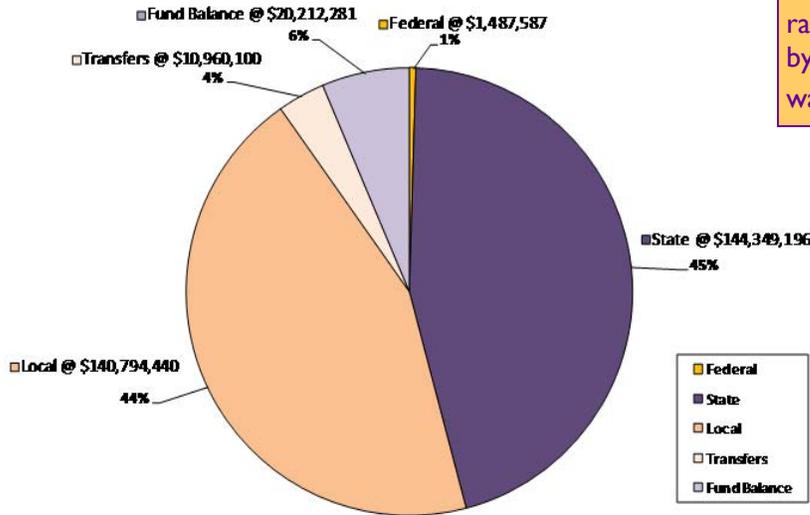
- HVAC projects at Port St. Lucie High School, Forest Grove Middle School, Southport Middle School, Parkway Elementary, and Village Green Elementary
- Auditorium remodel at Port St. Lucie High School



## Finance/Budget

St. Lucie County School District managed to weather the budget cuts last year without impacting student instruction. The district is the fourth lowest in the state in administrative costs per student.

**Revenues and Fund Balance  
General Fund FY 2007-08**

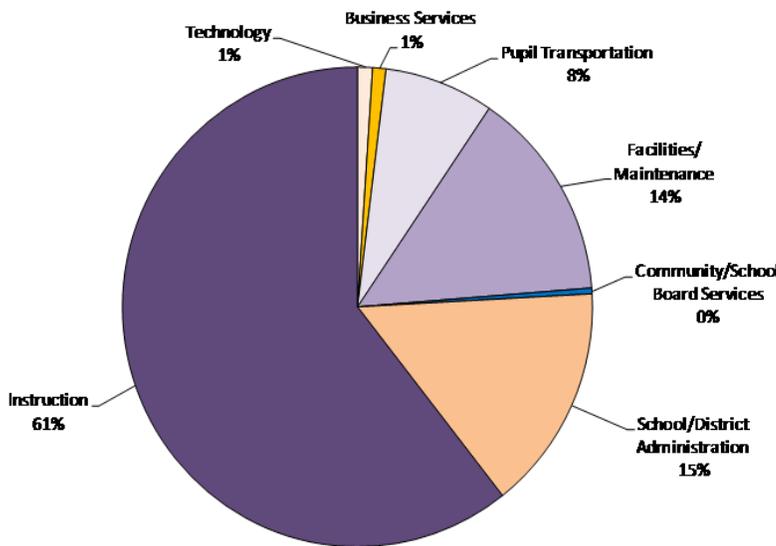


**Superior Bond Rating**  
The most recent debt issue rating for the school district by Moody's rating agency was Aaa.

**Fiscal Responsibility**  
St. Lucie County Schools general fund administrative expenditure per student is the fourth lowest in the state.

- Department Highlights and Accomplishments:**
- All teachers and non-personnel employees received bonuses
  - The health risk assessment was added to employee benefits plan
  - Introduced monthly wellness newsletter
  - Requested proposals for health insurance, which will result in a new network, and improved discounts

**Expenditures  
General Fund FYI 2007-2008**



**Best Practices**  
St. Lucie County Schools was the first district in the State Florida to earn the Seal of Best Financial Practices under the more rigorous standard from the state program accountability office.



Parents can keep track of their child's assignments, attendance and report cards by logging on to the parent portal at [www.stlucie.k12.fl.us](http://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us), click on the Parents tab, and click on the Parent/Portal link.

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A Publication of St. Lucie  
County Public Schools  
Communications  
Department

## St. Lucie County School District

### Transportation



The School District undertook a comprehensive review of the St. Lucie County School District's transportation system with regard to its placement of stops for safety. An independent expert, TransPar Group, Inc., found that the placement of stops by the district was consistent with state regulations, keeping with procedures of other well-operated district systems, that the staff complied with written policy and procedures, and the accident rate was extremely low. To continue to reduce the accident rate and improve safety the School District will initiate a public information campaign on driver and pedestrian awareness at the start of the 2008 school year. The district also recognized 17 business benchmarks to improve efficiency and safety the district has begun tracking those benchmarks in the review of the district's transportation system.

### Growth Management Department

In cooperation with the City of Fort Pierce, City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County, the school district took the lead in developing a Public School Facilities element in each local government comprehensive plan. Each comprehensive plan requires that school capacity be reviewed as a part of the development review for residential development. School capacity has to be available within three years of the development impact.

Additionally, the comprehensive plan requires that to amend a future land use map, that proper school planning be included for siting of schools in proximity to the residential units.

The department also:

- Completed a demographic study that allows the district to project student enrollment by geographical area (traffic analysis zones)
- Established a preliminary plan to meet school needs in all 3 zones based upon current approved or proposed developments.
- Reviewed land use amendments that impact the ability for the school board to provide adequate public schools.
- Worked with the City of Port St. Lucie to amend the land development code to require the construction of sidewalks for new development with existing roadways on 60 foot rights-of-way.
- Rezoned sites for use as a school.

### R.S.V.P.—Retired Senior Volunteer Program

St. Lucie County Schools' volunteer and mentoring programs provide opportunities for adults to help children with self esteem and academic performance. Over 9,200 adults are registered and cleared to volunteer their time in our schools. This past year, more than 387,000 volunteer hours were logged in our schools, worth more than \$3 million.



Thirty seven schools earned a Golden School award, which reflects the volunteer and community involvement of students and faculty. Seven secondary schools earned a Silver School award for students working with elementary school students. Thirty two schools earned the coveted Five-Star School award, for their level of business partners, community involvement, student community service, and School Advisory Council participation.

