

2018-2019

A Message from Superintendent Gent

We look forward to welcoming your students back to our campuses on Monday, August 13th for an exciting new year that kicks off on the heels of breaking summer news. St. Lucie Public Schools (SLPS) has catapulted to all-time highs based on historic academic achievement by our students. We are now ranked 5th in Florida based on graduation rates which have continued a steady climb from 45th to 13th to 5th over the last few years. This is matched by the growth of our District grade. We're a strong B – only 1.5% away from an A – and at 22nd, we're among the top one-third in the state. The District has surged in three years from 45th to 32nd to its current spot at number 22.

Keeping the learning environment safe and secure for our students and staff is of paramount importance to the District. That's why our team, led by the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office (SLCSO), has worked in earnest over the summer to ensure a minimum of one school resource deputy is

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assigned to each SLPS campus. In addition, School Security Chief Brian Reuther has been appointed as the School Safety Specialist. In this role, he has worked in tandem with our law enforcement partners to conduct security surveys and risk assessments for all District schools. He has reviewed District policies, training protocols, and security staffing models. A variety of resources to support efforts in these areas have been put in place by leveraging resources and strengthening community partnerships.

SLPS has been at the forefront of school safety as per its mission, and over the last six years, the Board has invested almost \$6 million in safety and security upgrades. Page 2 outlines an overview of work that has been completed recently as well as projects that are underway as we prepare to welcome your students for another productive school year.



*Single Point of Entry
Retrofit*



*SLPS Proudly Partners
with Local Law Enforcement*



*Multi-agency Support for
Training Staff on New Safety
Protocols*



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- Improved surveillance efforts with security cameras
 - Reduced the number of school entry points on campuses
 - Strengthened protocols related to securing schools and classrooms in the event of an on-campus threat
 - Delivered safety protocol procedures and training updates
 - Strengthened facilities with enhancements to *fencing*, alarms, and intercoms
 - Updated procedures and system for school-based visitor screenings
 - Implemented Crime Stoppers and See Something/Say Something campaigns
 - Formed an Inter-Agency School Safety Committee
 - Expanded mental health services for students and staff
 - Provided Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
 - Formed Threat Assessment Teams on each campus
 - Incorporated new protocols and guidelines for front office access

While a great deal has already been accomplished, this important work is ongoing, and as we approach the beginning of a new school year, we remain focused on strengthening our infrastructure and uniting with our community partners to provide the safest and most secure environments for teaching and learning.

We wish all our families a safe and productive school year.

Sincerely,

E. Wayne Gent

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Superintendent



NEW ENTRY DOOR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Securing Our Campuses

As part of this ongoing commitment to school safety, we are implementing a new Entry Door Access Protocol at the main entrance of each school *effective immediately*.

At the front door it is expected that all visitors will state the purpose of their visit and/or specify with whom they have an appointment or are there to see. Once this is verified, the visitor will be buzzed into the building.

Visitors must present themselves to the main office immediately upon entry. Visitors will be required to show photo identification and obtain a visitor's pass.

It is imperative that visitors do not hold the door open for any other visitors behind them. Each visitor must be acknowledged individually through the entry door access/buzzer system.

Front office staff will be required to call law enforcement and notify school administration and security if visitors are uncooperative, do not adhere to the procedures, or become threatening.

We know that this protocol is more stringent than past practice and may inconvenience our visitors who are always welcome in our schools; however, the safety of our students and staff must remain our priority. If you require clarification regarding the new protocol, please contact the school principal, who will answer questions you have to ensure that you understand and adhere to our protocol. With your cooperation, our schools will be more secure for students and staff.
