



To: Members, Board of Directors
From: *EW* Eric Williams, Ed.D., CEO & President
Date: 4/2/26
Subject: Confidential Board Update

Notes

1. The cover email for this Board Update includes two other attachments: the digital file for a brochure that provides an overview of our programs; and the digital file for Mentor Recruitment card (informally referenced as a "buck" slip because it is rectangular, like a dollar bill or a "buck." Hard copies of these updated documents will arrive soon. You are welcome to share the digital versions with prospective volunteers. You may also wish to refer them to our volunteers web page (championsforlearning.org/changemakers/). There is a tab along the top of our home page (and a menu icon of three short lines in the top left hand corner of our app) that now references "Volunteers" – it previously was labelled "Changemakers." Clicking on this tab or menu icon links to the volunteers web page referenced above. As described in the accompanying email from Nancy, the team is working on revising the general volunteer recruitment flyer and the volunteer web page itself. Also, after Golden Apple, a pop-up ad for mentor recruitment will be featured on our home page.
2. We appreciate many of you making time to participate in the Principals Breakfast yesterday. Your presence and kind words to principals went a long way in representing the entire community's support for principals and all of CCPS. And the gift bags (thanks Corky, Martha and others) reinforced the sense of community appreciation! As attendees probably observed, a positive vibe permeated the room and principals appreciated how seriously we took their feedback from last year's breakfast. They gave specific, helpful feedback again this year. We will compile that feedback and give it to the full Board.
3. The opportunity for CCPS elementary schools to apply for a Schoolwide Innovation grant was announced at a recent meeting of elementary school principals. Applications from schools are due to CCPS April 10, 2026. Melanie Fike (Senior Director, Professional Learning & Instructional Resources, CCPS), supported by Elizabeth Ferrieria Alves (Chief Academic Officer, CCPS), subsequently held an informational meeting for principals, media specialists, and other team members from schools interested in learning more about this opportunity (Marilyn and I also attended). A few questions were raised at the most recent meeting of the Board of Directors and so I've attached the slidedeck and one page summary document that Melanie Fike used for the

informational meeting, as well as a PDF version of the web-based application document. I also reached out to two Board members who had expressed significant interest in Schoolwide Innovation Grants to offer to meet to provide additional information. I am meeting with a Board member at 1:30 on April 14 to provide more information and answer questions regarding schoolwide innovation grants. If you are interested in joining that conversation, please let me know.

4. I attended a four-hour orientation last Friday for a Nonprofit Leadership Academy. This Academy, sponsored by the Collier Community Foundation, the Naples Children Foundation, and the Schulze Family Foundation, will have 13 additional half-day sessions prior to mid-September. The sessions address topics such as governance, strategic planning, nonprofit finance, and fundraising. I'm participating alongside other nonprofit leaders, such as Ben Bridges from St. Matthew's House and Keith Laakkonen of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.
5. Examples of other individuals and groups with whom I've met or attended events with since early March include the following: Maria Jiminez-Lara (CEO) and Sarah Zaiser Kelly (Senior Vice President) of Naples Children Foundation; a launch event for a regional Healthspan initiative hosted by FGCU at Arthrex; Melanie Fike (the Senior Director at CCPS referenced in the preceding item); Daria Wallach; Fred Koch, Elks Lodge; and weekly meetings with Richard Perry, our development consultant with Giving Pathways. Later today, Nancy and I are meeting with Mary Beth Geier, Florida Director of the Schulze Family Foundation.

Emails and Other Documents

1. *Community Engagement & Volunteer Board Update*; email from Anne Stavely; March 30, 2026; pps.4-6
2. *Development Team Board Update with two attachments*; email from Nancy Mireles; April 1, 2026; pps.7-10
3. *Educator Programs Board Update*; email from Marilyn Daniels; March 27, 2026; pps.11-12
4. *Financial and Administration Update*; email from Ann Kohler; March 30, 2026; p.13
5. *Student Programs*; email from Kristin Carolan; March 31, 2026; p.14
6. *Message from Collier County Public Schools*; March 23, 2026; pps.15-20
7. *Schoolwide Innovation Grant Documents from CCPS* (slidedeck for principals, one-page overview for principals, application forms); March 2026; pps.21-40

Communication

1. March 20th, *Naples Daily News Ad* – Golden Apple Teacher Announcement (Full Page), p.41
2. March 27th, *Naples Daily News Ad* – Golden Apple Event (Full Page), p.42

Key Dates

1. Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon – April 7, 2026; exact time TBD; The Players Club and Spa
2. 2026 District Innovation Competition – April 9, 2026; 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
3. College and Career Prep Induction Ceremonies – April 11, 2026; 9 a.m. (Pathways to Success – Foundations) and 11 a.m. (Take Stock in Children); the Bower Chapel in Moorings Park
4. Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers – April 17, 2026; the Hyatt Regency, Coconut Point

Eric Williams

From: Anne Stavely
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 4:54 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Community Engagement & Volunteer Board Update

Student Programs:

We recently cohosted a Meet & Greet with student programs for our new TSIC mentor/mentee pairs. You could feel the excitement in the room!

We currently have 17 Pathways to Success - Foundation mentors. We are still in need of 21 mentors (4 men and 17 women).

We are working with the student programs team to match Pathways to Success Foundations mentor/mentee pairs.

Nicole and I will host a Mentor Training session for new Pathways to Success Foundation mentors. Mentors can either attend in person 4.3 or virtually 4.6. We will continue to do this until we have recruited, onboarded, and trained all 38 mentors.

Special thanks to Bill Lutz for actively recruiting mentors for our TSIC and Pathways programs.

Entrepreneurship Program:

Dates & Times for Remaining Final School Pitches:

- March 31 @ Naples High from 8 AM to Noon (Nicole will attend on behalf of CFL)
- April 2 @ Barron Collier High from 9 to 11:30 AM (Nancy will attend on behalf of CFL)
- April 2 @ Golden Gate High from 9 to 11 AM (Nicoel will attend on behalf of CFL)

We'd be delighted to have you join us for one or more of these pitches! If you're able to attend, please RSVP to me at astavely@championsforlearning.org or 239.687.1370, so I can share additional details.

The **2026 District Innovation Competition** will be held April 9 @ Gulf Coast High from 8 AM to 1 PM. The top teams from each high school will participate. CCPS anticipates that 13 teams will participate at this year's competition.

Special thanks to Gary Personette for his invaluable support in helping secure our judges.

Educator Programs:

We will cohost (with Marilyn) a Thank You Breakfast and Debrief for the Golden Apple Committee April 2.

General Updates:

The CFL Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon will be held April 7 at The Players Club & Spa from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. We currently have 50 attendees. Nicole is phoning volunteers we haven't heard from to personally invite them to the luncheon.

CFL will participate as an exhibitor at the Arthrex Employee Volunteer Showcase April 23.

I recently spoke at the Naples Rotary Club luncheon, where approximately 75 attendees learned more about Champions for Learning and how to get involved. Fun fact, one of my tablemates was a Golden Apple Award-winning teacher from Lely High School!

Thank you,
Anne



Anne Stavelly

Eric Williams

From: Nancy Mireles
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 8:21 AM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Development Team - Board Update
Attachments: CFL_GeneralBrochure2026_V1.pdf; Mentoring Buckslip (1).pdf

Chief Development Officer (Nancy Mireles)

We have had positive momentum towards our goal of exceeding the FY-year-end budget; we have received award notice of \$50,000 from the Edward T. Bedford Foundation, collected all but \$39,250 of the committed gifts from the gala paddle raise, and we have secured two additional community sponsors and started selling individual tickets & patron tables for the upcoming Golden Apple Dinner. In the coming weeks, Eric & I will be meeting with the Schulze Family Foundation and Moorings Park Foundation to further our relationship and open discussion for FY27 support.

One of our goals is to continue to engage current and prospective donors in meaningful ways. In the next several weeks we'll be inviting donors to join us at our College & Career Prep Induction Ceremonies, Golden Apple Celebration and Cap & Gown Ceremony.

We are beginning to work on updating our organization's marketing outlets – from printed media to video and web-based resources. The changes will include updates to our Student Programs structure and program descriptions, with the addition of Pathways to Success; improved website navigation for volunteers & donors; and a cohesive branding guide for use across the organization. While bigger improvements will be made during the summer months, you will begin to see changes now:

- The menu bar on the CFL website now includes “Volunteers” (previously Changemakers) for easier navigation.
 - Coming Up: emphasis on volunteer roles and needs on the Volunteer landing page – with easy/quick highlights of the responsibilities and highest priority roles
 - Coming Up: post Gold Apple dinner we will have a pop-up ad on the main CFL website highlighting mentorship opportunities; clicking the image will take guests directly to the updated volunteer landing page giving the viewer a quick snapshot of what the needs are and how to sign up
- General Use Brochure and Become a Mentor buck slip have been updated to include Pathways to Success and are in print now and will soon be available for staff and board members to share (print file attached)
 - Coming Up: volunteer flyer is being updated for general use

Annual Giving and Grants (Rebekah Telfer)

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The Spring Appeal is beginning to hit mailboxes and return devices with donor gifts should be received in the next week or so. We received a \$50,000 grant from the Edward T. Bedford Foundation to support the Take Stock in Children Program. I submitted LOIs to the Collier Community Foundation and the Hobbs Foundation to support the Pathways to Success Program in FY27. I am currently working on applications to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation (Classroom Grants), Moorings Park Foundation (Pathways to Success), and Bank of America (to fund summer student interns). I am continuing to edit and write scripts for events taking place over the next 6-8 weeks: Pathways to Success and Take Stock in Children Induction Ceremonies, Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers, and the Volunteer Luncheon. The program outline for Pathways to Success is completed, and I will begin working on outlines for our other programs to help guide fundraising and marketing communications.

Director of Digital Fundraising & Operations (Sydney Fahrenbruch)

We have had great momentum with our communication surrounding the **Golden Apple Program**. We saw an over 1500% increase in our average social media reach with the Golden Apple Teacher announcement, and we saw great engagement with email, with both of our eblasts related to Golden Apple having an open rate of over 33%. We are continuing with production of the **Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers TV Broadcast**, airing on NBC2 on May 23rd at 8pm, by filming teacher interviews at our office this week. We will begin the social media countdown to the event highlight every Teacher of Distinction next week.

We are making progress with the branding and communication rollout for the **Student Programs expansion**, with the new program logo complete.

We have also updated our General Brochure collateral to include the new program names and are printing 1,000 copies to be used across departments. The next step is preparing a public announcement which will roll out after our induction event on April 11th.

We are also continuing digital stewardship of donors with our bimonthly donor newsletter, highlighting successes in our program and key news and updates to keep donors informed. The next newsletter will be going out Wednesday, April 1st.

Director of Special Events (Wyatt Blatt)

This week marks the beginning of our final stretch of Champions For Learning events for the fiscal year!

By the time this update is distributed, we will have successfully hosted our Principal Appreciation Breakfast. We are pleased to report full RSVP participation from principals, along with increased engagement from CFL Board Members and CCPS leadership compared to last year.

Looking ahead, next week includes two important events: our Volunteer Appreciation Event on Tuesday, April 7, at The Players Club & Spa, and our Induction Ceremonies on Saturday, April 11, at Bower Chapel at Moorings Park. In the coming days, I will be working closely with our Director of Community Engagement, Anne Stavely, to finalize logistics for the volunteer

event, and with our Senior Director of Student Programs, Kristin Carolan, to ensure her team is fully prepared for the ceremonies.

We are also just over two weeks away from the Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers Dinner, taking place on Friday, April 17, at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa. At this stage, our efforts are focused on finalizing key logistical details, many of which depend on confirmed attendance and finalized guest lists.

Major Gifts (Danielle Viens-Payne)

I have continued advancing our major gifts strategy through the Veritus Group donor qualification process. There are currently 60 major donors qualified, 84 donors at varying stages within the qualification process, 7 mid-level donors qualified, 1 planned giving donor qualified, and 272 donors in the major giving pool who will be going through the qualification process. Qualification outreach remains steady, with weekly batches of 10-20 donors receiving personalized letters followed by tailored follow-up including phone calls, surveys, and individualized touchpoints. This disciplined approach ensures we are focusing our time and resources on donors who demonstrate both the capacity and interest to deepen their engagement with Champions.

Our major gifts pipeline continues to strengthen as a result. We are building a more clearly defined portfolio of qualified prospects while maintaining intentional stewardship of current donors. I am continuing to meet with donors and prospects to discuss their philanthropic goals, explore meaningful giving opportunities, and align their interests with Champions' mission and impact.

At the portfolio level, I am continuing to build and execute individualized stewardship plans for each major donor while actively cultivating spring gift opportunities. These efforts are focused on closing out the fiscal year strongly while positioning us for continued growth in FY27. During just Quarter 3 and Quarter 4, we will have raised over \$1.75 million in gifts of at least \$1,000 and higher, attributed mostly to individuals and family foundations.

A key focus this month has been the development of strategic partnership opportunities to expand revenue and community impact. We have advanced a partnership proposal with the Naples Woman's Club to support the distribution of Career & Technical Education (CTE) scholarships to Champions students and alumni, leveraging Champions' infrastructure, student pipeline, and scholarship administration expertise to ensure the funds are awarded efficiently and reach high-impact recipients. We are piloting this partnership with up to \$15,000 provided by the Naples Woman's Club, awarding up to \$5,000 per recipient. This collaboration represents a meaningful opportunity to align missions and increase scholarship funding for Collier County students.

In parallel, we have initiated engagement with Elks Lodge 2010 to explore potential support through their community grantmaking. Initial conversations have been positive, and we are developing a proposal framework that includes potential entry-level funding in the \$5,000-\$10,000 range, with an opportunity to grow into a more significant annual investment of up to \$25,000-\$50,000. They will also be attending Golden Apple.

We were the selected charity of choice this year for the Cedar Hammock Women's Golf Association-9. They raised \$6,370 for Champions. I spoke at their kickoff event last year and

Q

Eric spoke at their closing event this year. They have some members who may want to continue to be involved, so I am working to get them engaged.

On the strategic planning front, I continue to meet weekly with our development consultant to refine our Donor Engagement Plan and ensure alignment with best practices in major gift fundraising. I am also collaborating with Mary and Nancy on updates to our donor recognition displays, beginning with the Visionary Trust Wall honoring \$1M+ lifetime donors. We have identified three donors who need to be added to this wall and are coordinating plaque creation and a celebration reception.

Nancy Mireles, CNP

Chief Development Officer

3606 Enterprise Avenue, Suite 150 Naples, Florida 34104

Direct: (239) 687-1372

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**CHAMPIONS FOR
LEARNING**

Eric Williams

From: Marilyn Daniels
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 3:11 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Educator Programs Board Update

Educator Programs – Board Update

Classroom Grants Cycle Overview (2025–2026)

Teachers continue to express gratitude for Classroom Grant funding. A teacher recently reached out, inviting me to her classroom to see her grant project in action. I'm very excited about this visit! In just a few weeks, the grant cycle for the 2025-2026 school year will conclude. Teachers must spend their grant award money, as indicated in their budget itemization, and complete an Outcome Report, or funds will be returned to Champions For Learning. We will be in touch with potential volunteer committee members as we begin planning for the SY27 Classroom Grant cycle.

Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program (2025-2026)

Golden Apple Prize Patrol was an incredible experience! Thank you to the entire CFL team for the collaborative effort in planning and executing the many details of this day. From scheduling to donor participation, to committee members – every person's involvement made this a success! Each Golden Apple recipient has tasks to complete over the new few weeks leading up to the event; including interviewing at the CFL office, preparing speeches, working with student speakers, and planning for a classroom visit with media coverage. We are very excited to celebrate this year's group of educators at the Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers!

[Gulf Coast News Video and Article](#)



Tommie Barfield Elementary – Leadership Day

Tracy Jones and Marilyn Daniels participated in the 5th Annual Leadership Day at Tommie Barfield Elementary! Tommie Barfield is a Lighthouse School; a

rigorous certification achieved through implementation of Franklin Covey's work, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The day was filled with kindergarten through 5th grade student leaders showcasing their school culture, academic achievement, leadership clubs, and school collaboration. It was an energizing and inspiring day!



Educator Programs

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ChampionsForLearning.org



"Celebrating 35 years of supporting Collier County Students and Educators"

Eric Williams

From: Ann Kohler
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 10:35 AM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Financial and Administration Update

Finance

- Primary focus has been on the new budget software and the FY27 budget. I have been meeting with Martus to work on the integration of the software with BlackBaud. I have also been attending Martus training. This week we will be training the CFL employees who will be working in Martus.
- Meeting with Blackbaud to discuss features in software which are currently not being used.
- Meeting with Bill.com regarding bill payment options to help streamline our payment process and reduce risk of fraud.

Administration & IT

- Meeting this week with Entech for alternative assessment of the current IT needs at CFL.
- Meeting this week with Marilyn Scire benefits broker.

Ann Kohler

Chief Finance & Administration Officer

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ChampionsForLearning.org



CHAMPIONS FOR
LEARNING

"Celebrating 35 years of supporting Collier County Students and Educators"

Eric Williams

From: Kristin Carolan
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 2:03 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Student Programs Board Update

Student Programs:

As of March 16th, we have 30 new 8th grade Take Stock In Children Students and 38 8th grade Pathways to Success Students. All of our Take Stock students have been paired with a mentor. On March 19th, we held their Meet and Greet so students and mentors could get to know one another. We have 14 Pathways students matched with mentors, and we are planning their Meet and Greet for April 9th. As we continue recruitment, matching will occur. I anticipate having another Meet and Greet for students matched later toward the end of April or beginning of May. We look forward to Inducting all our 8th graders on April 11th. I have already begun work on creating one program for Induction next year which will include our very own CFL Pledge for students, parents, and mentors.

Our 10th grade contract signing occurred on March 31st. We have 43 new Pathways to Success students joining Champions For Learning.

Leonard's Photography was onsite to take senior photos for our Class of 2026 this past week. Seniors have been in workshops completing scholarship applications and going over their college offers with staff. As of March 26th, 92 percent of our Seniors completed the FASFA and received their results.

On April 1st and 2nd, Suncoast Credit Union will be at Champions to discuss Finance and Budgeting. This is open to all our current students. College Readiness Coaches are also beginning their Q4 advocacy meeting with students.

I had a very productive call with United Way, where we discussed teaming up at their free tax completion events next year to assist families with FASFA. Since we are almost at the end of tax season, they will be referring families that need assistance over to us.

Kristin Carolan

Sr. Director of Student Programs
3606 Enterprise Avenue, # 150
Naples, FL 34104

Direct: 239-687-1376

Office: 239-643-4755

kcarolan@ChampionsForLearning.org

Eric Williams

From: Collier County Public Schools <do-not-reply@collierschools.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 12:00 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: News + Notes March 2026

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 **CCPS | NEWSLETTER**



NEWS + NOTES
Connecting Families + Community with CCPS

March 2026



A NOTE FROM

Dr. Leslie C. Ricciardelli

Superintendent of Schools

Congratulations to our six 2025-2026 Golden Apple Recipients! Alongside Champions For Learning, I had the honor of visiting each recipient's classroom last week to surprise them with this well-deserved recognition. [Click here](#) to watch this year's prize patrol video and please join me in congratulating our recipients:

- **Elias Cuevas** (Immokalee High School, U.S. History)
- **Connie Kinstler** (Big Cypress Elementary School, Kindergarten)
- **Wende Malik** (Vineyards Elementary School, 3rd Grade)
- **Shanna Moss** (Manatee Middle School, Earth and Space Science)
- **Julie Raymond** (Osceola Elementary School, 4th Grade)
- **Stephanie Scalise** (Veterans Memorial Elementary School, 3rd Grade)

Golden Apple is a community-driven program that celebrates outstanding educators through nominations from students, parents, and community members. We look forward to celebrating our Golden Apple Recipients and this year's Teachers of Distinction cohort at the 36th Annual Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers Dinner on April 17 at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point. The celebration will also be featured on Gulf Coast NBC during the Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers television program, airing Saturday, May 23, at 8:00 p.m.

Student enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is now available. If you have an incoming kindergarten student or will be new to CCPS for the 26-27 school year, begin the enrollment process now to ensure your child is ready to start school in August. Everything you need from required documents to step-by-step instructions can be found at www.collierschools.com/enroll.

Our CCPS Soccer Night with FC Naples is coming up on Saturday, March 28, 2026. Join us at Paradise Coast Sports Complex as FC Naples takes on Forward Madison FC. Tickets start as low as \$11.50 and can be purchased at www.collierschools.com/SoccerNight. We look forward to seeing you there!

~ Dr. Leslie C. Ricciardelli



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UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE

March 25
Early Dismissal Day (Professional Learning for Teachers)

April 3
No School for Students and Teachers

April 14



Regular School Board Meeting at 8:30am

April 15
School Board Work Session (Policy) at
9:00am

DISTRICT CALENDAR

**2026 CCPS
LEGISLATIVE
PLATFORM**

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HIRING**
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A NOTE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

Ms. Kelly Mason, Board Member

On March 18th the School Board held a budget work session in preparation for the upcoming 2026-2027 budget hearing. There is still confusion about the school district budget, especially when it is compared to the budgets of other local government entities like the Collier County Commission and the Naples City Council. Recently, it was quoted that, "The current Collier County School Board is the only taxing entity that has consistently voted to raise taxes on Collier Residents year after year."

Despite our efforts to be extremely transparent and provide detailed information at board meetings as well as one-page information documents on our website regarding the budget, these comments continue to be made. At first, I thought these comments were from a place of confusion and inexperience as the budget is complex, but it appears it is being done for political reasons. Regardless of their intentions to mislead the public, it is important for me to set the record straight.

The Collier County School District is the ONLY local taxing authority that is mandated by the State to have what is known as the “Required Local Effort” millage rate. The School Board can’t change the RLE millage rate dictated by the State. In addition, the discretionary millage is incorporated into FEFP funding levels established by the Legislature each year. Because the Florida Legislature has a Truth in Millage statute, government entities must inform voters if the proposed millage is greater than the rollback rate, it is considered a tax increase. Why not go back to the roll back rate, so there wouldn’t be a tax increase? The School Board can’t change the required local effort dictated by the state.

At no time has this school board initiated a tax referendum or a sales tax referendum like many other school boards in the state. If you recall, the voters approved a tax-neutral referendum in 2024, which in no way added additional taxes to the residents of Collier County. Further, the only millage rate we can adjust is the capital millage. The Board did lower the capital millage during the 2024-2025 budget adoption.

Fiscal Responsibility is one of the Board’s five priorities. Since 2022 our Board and District staff have worked together to reduce wasteful spending and prioritize spending based on a positive return on investment. The Superintendent created workgroups that focus on spending reductions for all department budgets. We will continue our efforts to be wise stewards of taxpayer dollars.

With Gratitude,

Kelly Mason, School Board Member



SCHOOL BOARD MEETING RECAP

Click [here](#) for a high-level overview of some of the important topics from the last Regular School Board Meeting.

CCPS
FAMILY NEWS

CCPS
FAMILY NEWS



ITECH PINS INAUGURAL PROFESSIONAL NURSING COHORT

Immokalee Technical College (iTECH) celebrated a historic milestone as its Professional Nursing (LPN to RN) students were formally pinned during a special ceremony honoring their achievement. iTECH is proud to be the second technical college in the State of Florida to launch a Professional Nursing (LPN to RN) bridge program. Through the generous support of FutureMakers Coalition, this program was offered to students at no cost. Naples Comprehensive Health (NCH) served as the full clinical partner for the cohort, providing students with hands-on training and real-world clinical experience essential to their professional development. This milestone represents not only the success of 12 nursing professionals, but also the strength of community partnership in expanding access to high-quality healthcare education and addressing regional workforce demands.



CCPS SHOWDOWN: HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS COMPETITION

CCPS high school students recently put their engineering skills to the test in an exciting Vex Robotics competition by designing, building, and driving their own robots to compete in a fast-paced challenge. We are so proud of the creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving they demonstrated every step of the way!

[Click here to watch video](#)

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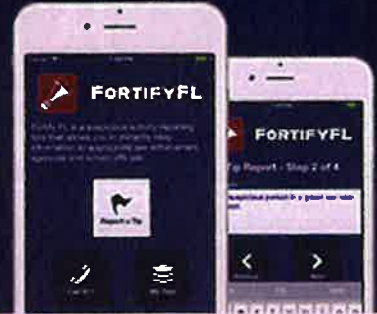
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FEEDBACK WELCOME

Let us know what you think about the newsletter, our website, or if you have suggestions for future newsletters.

[CCPS Website](#)

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Collier County Public Schools
p: (239) 377-0001

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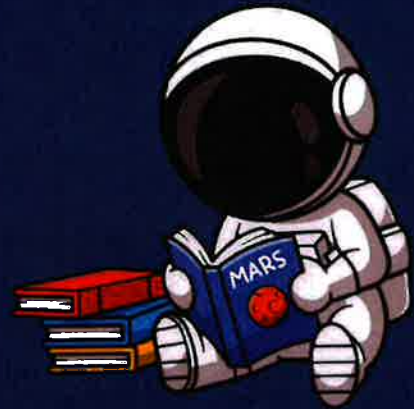
Dr. Leslie C. Ricciardelli

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Schoolwide Innovation Grant



1

Purpose of the Grant

Empowering Schools Through Innovation

The Schoolwide Innovation Grant aims to support transformative change in media centers, leveraging media centers as hubs for improving reading, writing, research, and inquiry across the curriculum, thereby equipping students with the competencies needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.



2

Why Strategic Alignment Matters

This initiative is essential for fostering **future-ready skills** in our students, ensuring they are equipped with the competencies required for academic excellence and success in a rapidly evolving world.



3

Opportunity Overview: Funding for Innovation



Three-Year Grant Supporting Elementary Transformation

- \$450,000 commitment
- Three elementary schools
- \$150,000 per year (\$50,000 per school)

4

22

Innovation vs. Renovation

Focus on Transformative Instructional Practices

Innovation

The grant fosters **innovative approaches** to instruction, emphasizing collaborative, inquiry-driven, literacy-rich, environments that go beyond mere upgrades, aiming to enrich student engagement and learning outcomes.

Renovation

Unlike a simple **renovation**, this initiative focuses on strategic instruction rather than just physical improvements, ensuring that the transformation aligns with educational goals and student needs.



5

3-Year Model



Research & Planning

In the first year, schools will focus on **researching best practices**, developing a collective vision, and planning for small-scale previews of innovative media center transformations.

Expansion & Integration

Years two and three will emphasize expanding the program, integrating new practices into daily instruction, and ensuring a deep engagement with the innovative strategies established.

Documented Impact

Throughout the grant period, schools will document the impact of their initiatives, collecting data to showcase improvements in student learning and effective collaboration in media centers.

Continuous Improvement

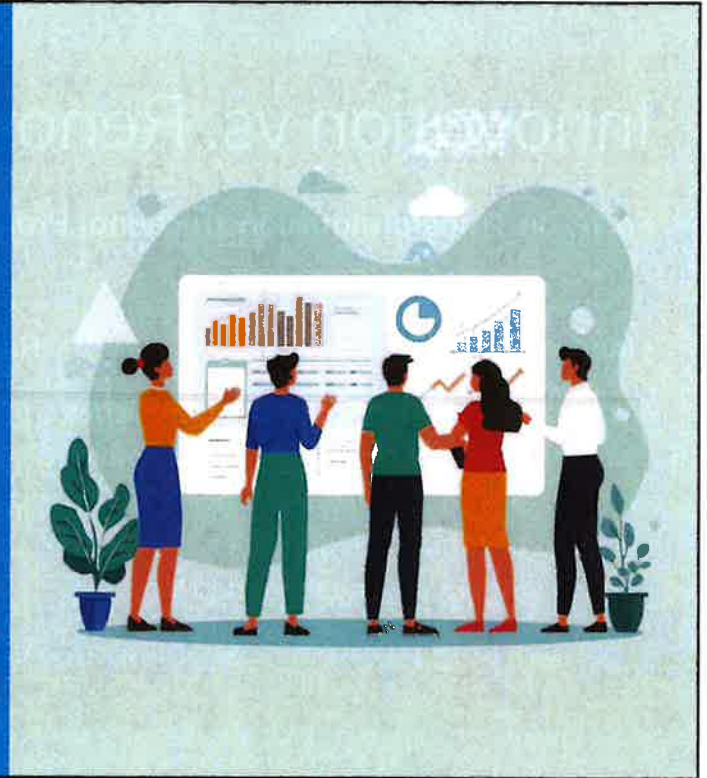
Regular reflection sessions will allow schools to adjust their strategies, ensuring that the project evolves based on feedback and the changing needs of students and educators.

6

23

Year 1: Research and Planning

In Year 1, schools will focus on **research, visioning,** and developing a strategic plan, culminating in a small-scale preview implementation to set a strong foundation for future expansion and integration.



7

Year 1 Outcomes

Building Foundations for Success

Clear Vision

Establishing a **shared vision** among stakeholders is crucial, ensuring that all participants understand the objectives and are aligned towards transforming the media centers into collaborative spaces.

Strategic Plan

Developing a robust **strategic plan** during Year 1 enables schools to outline specific goals, methodologies, and timelines that support the overall vision for enhancing instructional environments.

Pilot Program

Implementing a **pilot program** allows schools to test innovative practices on a small scale, gathering data and insights that inform larger-scale integration efforts in subsequent years.



8

Years 2–3: Expanding and Integrating

Focus on **deep integration** of innovative practices in media centers, documenting impacts on student learning while encouraging collaboration among schools and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.



9

Project Design

Instructional Practices & Student Learning Experiences

Instructional Approaches

Leverage the media center as a hub for collaborative, literacy-rich, reading, writing, computation, research, and inquiry across disciplines

Scheduling or Programming

Supports collaborative learning in media centers

Professional Learning

Including teacher stipends that supports educators in implementing collaborative instructional practices, literacy strategies, and effective integration of the media center into daily instruction

Furniture, layouts, or technology

Selected specifically to support identified instructional practices and learning rather than as stand-alone enhancements



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!

Industry Themes in Education

Fostering Skills for Future Careers

The grant emphasizes key themes such as engineering, computer science, medical fields, and entrepreneurship, ensuring students develop relevant skills and knowledge for future success.



11

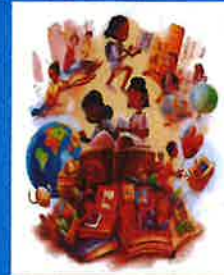
Transforming Media Centers into Learning Hubs



Collaboration
Media centers promote **team-based learning** and creativity



Inquiry-Driven
Instruction in media centers fosters **critical thinking skills**



Literacy-Rich
Students regularly **read, write, discuss, and create**, using a variety of texts and formats, with strong support from educators and peers



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Impact on Schools

Fostering Enhanced Learning and Innovation

The **Schoolwide Innovation Grant** empowers schools to cultivate a vibrant culture of innovation, enhancing student engagement and fostering collaboration through transformed media centers that support inquiry-driven learning.



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Leadership Roles in Innovation

Media Specialists as Project Leads

Media Specialists will lead the initiative, collaborating with school-based leadership teams to ensure the **successful implementation** of innovative practices in media centers and instructional strategies.



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Autonomy with Guardrails

Balancing Flexibility and Shared Expectations

Shared Expectations

Schools will operate with **defined expectations** that guide innovation, ensuring a cohesive approach while allowing for individual adaptability to meet unique community needs.

School Flexibility

Each school retains the **freedom** to tailor their programs within the structured framework, fostering creativity and innovation while aligning with district objectives and innovative practices.



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District Support

Comprehensive Assistance for Success

Funding Management

The district will oversee all aspects of funding management, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and aligned with the goals of the Schoolwide Innovation Grant.

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development will be provided to support media specialists and educators, enhancing their skills to effectively implement the grant initiatives within their schools.

Coaching & Measurement

District TSAs will assist schools in measuring impact, guiding them through the integration process, and ensuring alignment with strategic educational goals for continuous improvement.



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Application Overview

Simple Questions

The application is designed to be brief, consisting of 8 focused questions that assess your school's readiness, vision, and commitment to innovation.

Application Deadline: April 10, 2026

Application Link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/rs9pUmVE2C>



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Application Sections: Vision, Commitment, Collaboration



Vision

Establishing a clear direction for success.



Commitment

Dedication to innovative educational practices.



Enhancing Student Experiences

Collaboration

Working together to achieve transformative outcomes.

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Key Qualities for Application Success

We seek schools that demonstrate **readiness, a clear vision**, and strong commitment to innovative practices, ensuring impactful transformations in their media centers for enhanced student learning and collaboration.



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Q&A Session

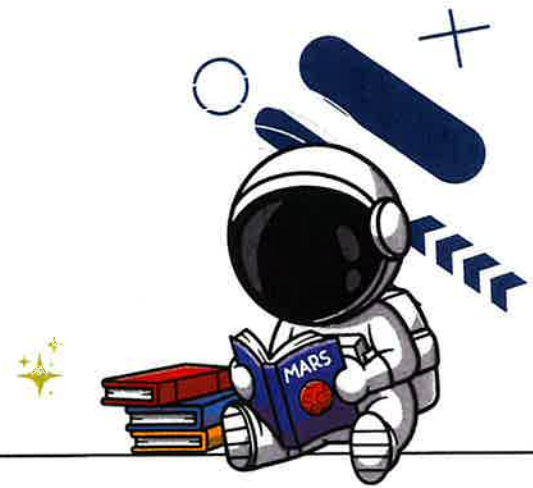


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Schoolwide Innovation Grant

Collaborative Learning Through Innovative School Environments



OVERVIEW

CCPS, in partnership with Champions for Learning, is launching a three-year Schoolwide Innovation Grant to support elementary schools in designing innovative learning environments that foster literacy-development, as well as collaboration, inquiry, and future-ready skills for students. Three elementary schools will be selected through a brief application process.

THREE YEAR MODEL

Year 1

Research, Visioning & Small-Scale Preview

- Principal and Media Specialist project leads
- School-based innovation planning committee
- Professional learning to support instructional design/space planning
- Design of collaborative learning environment
- Launch of a small-scale preview implementation
- Reflection and refinement to inform Year 2 expansion
- Collaboration with partner implementation schools

Years 2 & 3

Expanded Implementation & Impact

- Increased student access
- Cross-grade integration
- Deeper instructional integration
- Documentation of student learning and program impact
- Ongoing refinement to sustain implementation
- Collaboration with partner implementation schools
- Potential expansion to additional schools in future years

Industry-Inspired Learning Focus Areas

- Engineering & Design Thinking
- Computer Science & Digital Literacy
- Health & Medical Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Architecture & Construction
- Media & Communication
- Entrepreneurship & Business
- Advanced Technology & Robotics
- Civic Leadership & Public Service

PROGRAM DESIGN

Shared Expectations

- Principal and Media Specialist leadership
- School-based innovation committee
- Commitment to Year 1 planning and preview
- Phased expansion over three years
- Reflection and district collaboration

District Support Includes

- Fiscal management & purchasing
- Professional learning
- Implementation support and coaching
- Impact measurement support

JOIN US TO LEARN MORE:

March 25th | 8:30am



<https://colliercountyschools.webex.com/meet/fikeme>



Schoolwide Innovation Grant Application

Deadline for Submission April 10, 2026

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

School Information

1. School Name

2. Principal Name

3. Principal E-Mail

4. Media Specialist Name

5. Media Specialist E-Mail

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Readiness & Commitment

6. **School Readiness & Capacity for Innovation** (125–300 words)

Describe evidence that your school is ready to engage in Year 1 planning, design, and small-scale preview implementation. Include:

- Leadership commitment
- Faculty openness to innovation
- Collaborative learning structures
- Track record of successful implementation

7. **Media Specialist Leadership & Professional Learning Commitment** (125–300 words)

Describe how the school will:

- Support the Media Specialist as instructional leader
- Protect time for learning, research, and planning
- Prioritize this as a key leadership role

Instructional Design & Student Experience

8. Vision for Innovative Collaborative Learning (125–300 words)

Describe how students will engage in collaborative, inquiry-based learning. *Optional: Include any way that this could be connected to industry themes.*

9. Schoolwide Implementation (125–300 words)

Describe the scheduling, programming, or instructional structures that will allow this work to be integrated schoolwide.

Professional Learning & Collaboration

10. **Building Staff Capacity** (125–300 words)

Describe how your school will prepare teachers to effectively use the space in Years 2 and 3.

Learning Environment

11. Location & Space for Innovation (125–300 words)

Describe where this work will live in your school and why that location supports your instructional vision.

[Empty text box for response]

Measuring Impact

12. **Metrics for Success** (125–300 words)

Describe how your school will measure:

- Frequency and type of use
- Teacher participation
- Student engagement

District Partnership

13. District Support Needed *(125–300 words)*

Describe what district-level support your school anticipates needing over the three-year period.

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Commitment Checklist

14. Please indicate your agreement with the following commitments:

- Protect time for Media Specialist professional learning
- Establish a school-based innovation planning committee
- Participate in district learning experiences and site visits
- Develop an implementation plan
- Identify a location for the innovation space
- Launch a small-scale preview implementation during Year 1
- Use preview data to inform expansion in Year 2
- Create a plan for measuring usage and impact
- Expand and deepen implementation in Years 2 and 3
- Participate in joint meetings with partner schools and district staff
- Engage in reflection and continuous improvement

Signature

15. Principal Name (Typed Signature)

16. Date

_____ 

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Champions For Learning Announces Collier Golden Apple Recipients

Champions For Learning's Golden Apple program celebrates outstanding educators across Collier County, uniting the community to recognize teachers who exemplify excellence in the classroom. This year, more than 5,700 Thank-A-Teacher nominations were submitted for nearly 1,500 educators, demonstrating the incredible appreciation our community has for its teachers. From these nominations, 58 Teachers of Distinction representing schools across Collier County were selected, with six ultimately receiving the prestigious Golden Apple Award.

Congratulations to the 2025-2026 Golden Apple Recipients!

Elias Cuevas, Immokalee High School
Connie Kinstler, Big Cypress Elementary School
Wende Malik, Vineyards Elementary School
Shanna Moss, Manatee Middle School
Julie Raymond, Osceola Elementary School
Stephanie Scalise, Veterans Memorial Elementary School





CHAMPIONS FOR LEARNING™

Golden Apple

CELEBRATION OF TEACHERS



Join us for the **Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers Dinner**, a first-class community event that shines a spotlight on educators.



Tickets & Tables

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS
\$350



PATRON TABLES
\$3,000

Includes 8 tickets and table seating with a Teacher of Distinction, Principal, and their guests



Friday, April 17, 2026

6PM

HYATT REGENCY COCONUT POINT RESORT & SPA

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ChampionsForLearning.org/GoldenApple

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Wyatt Blatt, Director of Special Events | 239.434.3201 | wblatt@championsforlearning.org



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