




To:  Members, Board of Directors
From: Eric Williams, Ed.D., CEO & President
Date: 11/19/2025
Subject: Confidential Board Update

Notes

1. Yesterday's Board meeting reminded me how energizing it is to be in a room with people who care so deeply about our work. The questions and comments you shared will help us sharpen the draft Strategic Roadmap. I'm looking forward to continuing the conversation with committees and individual Board members over the next two months as we shape a version for Board consideration in January.
2. I've attached the agenda for our two most recent Team Huddles to illustrate the nature of our staff meetings. The November 3 meeting started with an icebreaker that allowed team members to better understand one another's strengths and included a detailed, collaborative discussion regarding the Strategic Roadmap. The November 17 meeting including two agenda items to celebrate our work and increase team members' understanding of our work, as well as updates from team members, and a presentation to prepare team members for the Luminary Luncheon. To borrow the name of a non-profit organization here in Collier County, we are "Better Together" and our Team Huddles reflect that tagline.
3. I continued meetings with various stakeholders in October and November, including the following: Naples Children Foundation Beneficiary meeting; Entrepreneurship volunteers; Local College Access Network leaders statewide meeting; Teachers of Distinction Virtual Prep; Kristina Park, CEO, Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce; Leadership Collier speaking engagement; CCPS leaders regarding schoolwide innovation grants; Christina Guillard (Senior VP, Bank of America); Leadership Collier luncheon; visit from Naples Children Foundation Board member and staff liaisons; visit from Representative Yvette Benarroch; Lorenzo Walker Tech College Partners luncheon; Collier Community Foundation learning session/networking for non-profit leaders; Claudine Ledger-Wetzel, Stock Development Corporation; Carlos Artime, Executive Director, Career & Tech Education, CCPS; Dean, FGCU School of Education; Matthew Zwack, President, O-A-K Florida; Classroom Grant Committee; Russell's Barbecue networking opportunity hosted by Russell Budd, CEO of PBS Contractors; Association of Fundraising Professionals, Collier-Lee Chapter Event honoring the Schoen Family Foundation.

I am initiating and strengthening relationships through these meetings, as well as increasing the visibility of Champions For Learning in the community.

4. If you haven't already watched one or both of the videos regarding the delivery of classroom grants, grab some popcorn and check out one or both of them. See items 5 and 6 of the communications section.
5. We look forward to seeing many of you at tomorrow's Luminary Luncheon!

Emails and Other Documents

1. *Team Huddle Agendas*; November 3 and November 17, 2025; pps.4-5
2. *Community Engagement & Volunteers*; email from Anne Stavely; November 14, 2025; pps.6-9 (including *Volunteer Newsletter*)
3. *Development Team Update*; email from Nancy Mireles; November 17, 2025; pps.10-12
4. *Educator Programs*; email from Marilyn Daniels; November 17, 2025; p.13
5. *Student Programs*; email from Kristin Carolan; November 17, 2025; pps.14-16

Communication – **Click on italicized, underlined titles to navigate to a web page.**

1. October 29th, *Champions For Learning Announces 2025-2026 Teachers of Distinction*, Naples Daily News
2. November 4th, *Champions For Learning Presents Grants to Collier County Teachers*, Naples Daily News
3. November 5th, Naples Daily News Ad – Entrepreneurship [Half Page], Image Attached, p.17
4. November 5th, *The Education Foundation of Collier County Awards \$200,000 to Collier County Educators for Classroom Grants*, Champions For Learning
5. November 9th, *Classroom Grants Delivery Day* [Video], Collier County Public Schools Facebook Page
6. November 10th, *Classroom Grant Delivery Day 2025* [Video], Champions For Learning Youtube Channel
7. November 12th, *Naples Daily News Ad – Classroom Grant Delivery Day [Full Page]*, Image Attached, p.18
8. November 14th, *Champions For Learning Receives Funding from CLA Foundation*, Champions For Learning

<https://vimeo.com/1134296131?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=cj>

Key Dates

1. Naples Luminary Circle Luncheon – Thursday, November 20th, 2025, 11am; Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort
2. Board of Directors Dinner – December 11, 2025, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Naples Yacht Club
3. Board of Directors Meeting – January 20, 2026, 3:30 p.m.
4. Night for Champions Gala – February 21, 2026, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; The Ritz-Carlton, Naples

5. Take Stock in Children Induction Ceremony – April 11, 2026; the Bower Chapel in Moorings Park
6. Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers – April 17, 2026; the Hyatt Regency, Coconut Point



November 3, 2025

- I. Superpower Swap Icebreaker (25 minutes)
Please break the Strengths Finder book for reference. Each team member shares with the group which of their top 5 strengths has felt like a superpower recently, explaining how they used the strength. Each team member also shares a strength like they'd like to borrow from someone else on the team in the coming weeks – name the person, their strength, and the task for which you need their strength.

- II. Strategic Roadmap
 - a. Mission, Goals & Strategies w/o KPIs (30 minutes)
 - i. Independent Review
 - ii. Overview (including process) & Clarifying Questions
 - iii. What Most Excites You? What feels like a meaningful opportunity?
 - iv. Gaps/Opportunities – What is unclear, incomplete, or missing?
 - b. Key Performance Indicators (15 minutes)
 - i. Independent Review
 - ii. Which KPIs are clear? Which are not?
 - iii. Which KPIs matter and help measure progress? Which KPIs might not be helpful?

- III. Updates (20 minutes)
 - a. Programs (Student; Community Engagement; Educators)
 - b. Development
 - c. CEO



November 17, 2025

- I. Mission Moments Scavenger Hunt – Impact Report
(10 minutes)
Think/Pair/Share: You have 4 minutes. Find one page that makes you feel proud, surprises you, or reminds you why you work here.

- II. Watch Party - Classroom Grants Videos to Make You Smile
(10 minutes)
Whole Group: What scene reminds you why classroom grants matter to our mission?

- III. Strategic Roadmap Update (5 minutes)

- IV. Updates (20 minutes)
 - a. Programs (Student; Community Engagement; Educators)
 - b. Development
 - c. CEO

- V. Luminary Luncheon Bootcamp – What You Need to Know
(20 Minutes)

Eric Williams

From: Anne Stavely
Sent: Friday, November 14, 2025 1:33 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Community Engagement & Volunteers Board Update

Take Stock in Children

- Nicole and Tracy hosted a Mentor Learning Session focused on FAFSA guidance and student volunteer opportunities. Attendance continues to increase month over month, which is encouraging.
- Mentor recruitment for the next class is progressing well. Nicole is actively vetting potential mentors and working with them to complete applications.

Entrepreneurship

- I am working to secure judges and finalize scheduling for the upcoming mid-year MVP pitch competitions.
- Laura Boyd Smidt, Regional Specialist for Uncharted Learning (creators of INCubatoredu®), visited CFL on 11/13 to conduct a training session for all entrepreneurship teachers, in partnership with CCPS.
- I have been invited to serve on the CCPS Collier Career Academy Advisory Council. The next meeting is scheduled for December.
- We have secured three new volunteers from Northern Trust. Special thanks to Chuck Carlsen for facilitating the introduction and conversation with leadership.

Educator Programs

- We hosted a Classroom Grant Selection Committee appreciation breakfast on 11/14.
- On 11/12, Marilyn, Nicole, and I led the Golden Apple Selection Committee training.

General Updates

- Eric and CFL/TSIC alum Lindsay Lydon were featured guests on WGPU's *Gulf Coast Life*. [Click Here](#) to listen.
- Kristin and I attended the Future Ready Collier relaunch meeting on 11/6.
- Nicole and I participated in the Players Club & Spa Volunteer Expo and were joined by Janet Perna.
- We also hosted a booth at the Leadership Collier Volunteer Expo at Coastland Mall. We were joined by Dottie & John Whipple.

- The first quarterly volunteer newsletter was distributed on 11/7 and received a strong 69% open rate. The next issue is scheduled for 1/2/26.

Thank you,
Anne

Anne Stavely

Director of Community Engagement

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Naples, Florida 34104

Direct: (239)687-1370

Make a Difference ~ Volunteer!



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



Hello,

We're excited to launch this new space just for you — our amazing volunteers! Each quarterly issue will feature updates, opportunities, and stories that highlight the incredible impact you're making every day. Your dedication and heart keep our mission moving forward, and this newsletter is our way of keeping you connected, inspired, and informed. Thank you for being part of this journey — we couldn't do it without you!

New Faces:

Please join us in welcoming Anne, Nicole, Marilyn, and Nancy to the team. Each brings valuable experience, enthusiasm, and a shared passion for serving our community and supporting our mission.

We're thrilled to have them on board — please give them a warm welcome and be sure to say hello when you see them!

Anne Stavely, Director of Community Engagement

Nicole Luque, Volunteer Manager

Marilyn Daniels, Director of Educator Programs

Nancy Mireles, Chief Development Officer



Classroom Grants

On November 4th, Champions For Learning staff, volunteers and supporters surprised 205 Collier County educators with 293 Classroom Grants totaling \$200,000.

This would not have been possible without the amazing volunteer selection committee that reviewed hundreds of grant requests. Thank you! 8



Teachers of Distinction

On October 20th we celebrated the 2025-2026 Teachers of Distinction with a kick-off reception at the Naples Grande. This year we are excited to have 59 teachers representing 59 Collier County schools.

The Golden Apple Selection Committee will soon begin the important process of evaluating and

identifying this year's most exceptional educators. Their thoughtful work helps shine a light on the dedication and impact of teachers across our community.

Student Programs Day of Service

Twenty-six students, six mentors and student programs staff recently participated in a day of service at the Naples Botanical Garden. When students volunteer, they learn teamwork and responsibility. These experiences help them develop confidence, discover new interests, and make meaningful connections in their community.



FYI

2026 Tax Law Changes & What They Mean for Charitable Giving: Beginning January 1, 2026, new federal tax laws will take effect, changing how charitable donations are treated for tax purposes. These updates will influence who can claim deductions, how much can be deducted, and which types of gifts qualify. Understanding the new rules can help donors plan their giving strategically. [Click here](#) for more details about these changes. Should you have additional questions, please contact our development team at 239.643.4755.

As we reflect on this season of gratitude, we want to extend our sincere appreciation for your commitment to supporting our students and educators. Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful Thanksgiving full of peace and happiness.

HAPPY
Thanksgiving

// CONNECT WITH US //

Eric Williams

From: Nancy Mireles
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 11:40 AM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Development Dept. Board Updates

As we near year-end, we recognize this is a great time for us to say “Thanks” to our donors and share with them the incredible impact they’ve had on our students & educators. The team is hard at work connecting with donors in a variety of ways; including print letters, in person events & meetings, phone calls, and online communications. I am also excited to share with you the 2025 Impact Report at the Luminary Luncheon this week.

Thank you to those board members whom I’ve had the pleasure to visit with during a committee meeting or lunch. I’d love to continue to visit with each of you in the coming weeks.

- Nancy Mireles, Chief Development Officer

Development Department Updates:

Events (Wyatt Blatt, Director of Special Events)

- Luminary Circle Luncheon
 - This Thursday, November 20th – we are excited to see all board members & donors who will be in attendance; expecting 80 guests.
 - We will send each board member a listing of who will be seated at their table, in advance of the event.
- Night for Champions Gala
 - Currently focused on sponsor engagement and invitations
 - Board Members, please let us know how you’d like to be involved this year – if you will be attending or sponsoring a table. We are happy to visit with you as well to talk about opportunities.

Digital Fundraising and Marketing/Communication (Sydney Fahrenbruch, Director of Digital Fundraising & Operations)

- **Classroom Grant Delivery Day Press Coverage:** Along with Marilyn Daniels, I planned and led the Press Route for Classroom Grant Delivery Day, where we visited Palmetto Ridge High School, Corkscrew Elementary, Sabal Palm Elementary and Cypress Palm Middle School. The purpose of the press route is to get professional photography/videography for marketing purposes and invite media partners for press coverage. Eric Williams and Alfonso Mancini came along our photo/videography team (Olga Hayes and the Naples Studio), along with representatives from Naples Daily News and CCPS Communication team.
 - After Delivery Day was complete, we rolled out our marketing announcement, which included a press release distributed to media partners, posting on our website and social media channels, and sending an email newsletter. You can find links to our press release and video, as well as Naples Daily News and CCPS’s coverage of the day in the communication section.

- **Tax Law Changes Communication:** Along with Becky and Danielle, we facilitated a communication plan to donors regarding 2026 Tax Law Changes that affect giving. On the digital side this included posting an overview of these changes to our website and sending an eblast to all donors that have given in the last 18 months, and posting a link to the page on our website to our social media channels.
- **CCPS Video Production:** Next Friday, November 21st, Eric and I will be meeting with Chad Oliver (Chief Communications Officer at Collier County Public Schools) and his team at CCPS regarding utilizing the school's new video studio to shoot video footage to be used to create videos for our marketing and development use. In preparation we have put together a concept doc outlining potential footage we can capture, focusing on the Golden Apple program and highlighting student and educator impact.
- **Updated Marketing Collateral:** Designs for our General Brochure and Ways to Give Brochure have been complete and have been sent to print, we will have these new collateral pieces in the coming weeks and ready to be utilized.

Annual Giving and Grants (Rebekah Telfer)

- Grants Awarded for FY26
 - **CFEF Matching grant – awarded \$108,971.59** for College and Career Preparation Program, first payment of \$65,354.07 received
- November Grants/Reports in Process
 - Publix – will be requesting \$10,000 to support a Night for Champions event sponsorship
 - EverBank – invited to submit a grant to support students
 - CFEF mid-year report due for the FPL STEM educator peer-learning grant
- Impact Report 2025
 - Extra copies of the Impact Report have been received at the office
 - Pressitge will be coordinating the mailed versions this week
 - Additional mailings for guests invited to but not attending the Luminary Circle Luncheon will be coordinated by the Development Team internally after the event
- Year End Appeal
 - Letter design and mailing lists have been finalized and sent to Pressitge to begin printing
- General
 - Kristin and I met with Sue Guben and Susan Bailey from the Women's Giving Circle to explain our work as The Education Foundation of CC and how we collaborate with CCPS – it seems like they are more interested in awarding grant funding to a specific CCPS school
 - Working to update Champions For Learning's Nonprofit Directory with Collier Community Foundation
 - Helping team finalize script for the Luminary Circle Luncheon
 - Helping team finalize speeches for the AFP National Philanthropy event
 - I'm working on organizing a three-year history of grant applications submitted and awards received to better help us project anticipated funding to be received

Major Gifts (Danielle Viens-Payne)

- Alumni Council met on November 13

- **They would like to invite the Board to their December social on December 18th from 6-8pm at The Cove at Paradise Coast. Please RSVP with Danielle at DViensPayne@championsforlearning.org if you'd like to attend.**
- They completed 90 donor thank you notes for major gifts and first-time gifts made from January-March.
- Assisting Wyatt with Luminary Circle Luncheon
- Distributed the new 2026 tax law changes information to donors (worked with Becky and Sydney)
- Exploring potential hosts for 1-2 more parlor meetings in the Spring
- Working with Wyatt, Anne, and key Board members on cultivating and stewarding corporations
- Working with Mary on updating the donor walls
- Attended Russell's Barbecue with Eric, Nancy, Wyatt, and Nicole (networking)
- Leading the volunteer and networking opportunity for CFL staff to volunteer at Farm City BBQ on 11/26 (10:30am-12:30pm shift)
- Continuing personalizing major gift stewardship plans for each donor
- Continuing cultivating end of year gifts

Development Operations (Mary Polli)

- Continuing to provide support to the department with donor acknowledgements, reports and prep for annual giving statements.

Nancy Mireles, CNP

Chief Development Officer

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Direct: (239) 687-1372

Championsforlearning.org



**CHAMPIONS FOR
LEARNING**

Eric Williams

From: Marilyn Daniels
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 3:01 PM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Edu Board Updates

Classroom Grants Cycle Overview (2025–2026)

District-wide Classroom Grant Surprise Delivery Day was exciting and rewarding! We awarded 293 classroom grants for 205 individual teachers, totaling \$200,000 in current award distributions!

We held a Thank-You breakfast to the Classroom Grant Volunteer Committee on November 14th, and truly appreciate the committee's work this year!

Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program (2025-2026)

We hosted the first Golden Apple Selection Committee training on November 12th to prepare members for scoring the Teacher of Distinction written submission forms and in-person presentations. The TOD presentations will take place at the CFL office during the week of December 8th.

One of last year's Golden Apple Recipients, Gina Manville DeJager at Barron Collier High School, and former Teacher of Distinction, Jessica Stricker at Corkscrew Elementary School, will be attending the Luminary Luncheon as representatives for Educator Programs. Both Gina and Jessica are also Classroom Grant Recipients!

We continue to collaborate with our CFL staff and CCPS on next steps:

- Golden Apple Committee planning with Anne and Nicole
- Schoolwide Innovation Grant planning with Eric and CCPS

We so grateful for your continued support of Educator Programs!

Educator Programs

Office: 239.643.4755

EducatorPrograms@championsforlearning.org

ChampionsForLearning.org



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

Eric Williams

From: Kristin Carolan
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 11:02 AM
To: Eric Williams
Subject: Board Update: Student Programs
Attachments: paste.png; paste.png

Student Programs:

CFL held 9th and 10th grade workshops in the first week of November. Our Seniors attended Hit Submit Day on November 4th. This is an opportunity for them to complete college applications with mentors and staff here at the office. The student programs team was out at Lely High School to assist students with FASFA on the 5th. Thirty-six students and four parents were served there. Tracy also presented on FASFA during our Zoom mentor learning session. Twenty mentors attended. On the 18th staff will be working with students and parents on FASFA at Barron Collier High School. Collier Community Foundation and our team hosted a community FASFA and Scholarship Connector workshop here at the office on November 11th and 15th. SHRM came out to present the 2nd part in their series "Don't Sweat the Interview..." for all CFL students. Students learned interview skills and participated in mock interviews. Next week they will be learning how to build a resume. Ninety-three percent of our Take Stock students are currently averaging two mentor sessions a month. Eighty-nine percent of our students have all their semester 1 one on one coaching sessions completed. We held Career Explorations: Community Services and IT on November 17th.

Anne and I attend the First Future Ready Collier meeting in a year. They have a new Director and are ready to get back to holding meetings and collaborating regularly again. I also attended a meeting at Island Walk with Janet and Eric. The residents have decided to make us the beneficiary of their fundraiser to contribute to our Sue Filip Fund in support of student programs.





Kristin Carolan
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To serve as a catalyst for educational success by investing in Collier's students and educators.



Become an Entrepreneurship Volunteer for Collier County students!

Collier County Public School's Entrepreneurship Program offers **project-based authentic learning in a real-world environment**. The entrepreneurship classes are unlike standard classes in that they are very collaborative and hands-on. We are looking for **current or retired business professionals** to volunteer as team mentors, coaches, and judges. Team mentors facilitate learning by guiding and encouraging students to find solutions themselves. Coaches are subject matter experts who share their knowledge via lectures and lessons. Judges offer strategic direction to student teams during their pitch presentations.



How To Get Involved

Contact GetInvolved@championsforlearning.org or scan the QR Code to learn more about this opportunity.





Champions For Learning Awards Collier County Educators with Classroom Grants



The Education Foundation of Collier County - Champions For Learning staff and volunteers surprised Collier County educators on Tuesday, November 3rd with funded Classroom Grants. Champions For Learning awarded **293 grants totaling \$200,000 to 205 Collier County educators**, fueling innovation and creativity in classrooms across our community.



“Each funded Classroom Grant empowers a Collier County educator to bring meaningful learning experiences to their students. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our community, whose support allows us to invest in educators and ultimately in the success of every student they inspire.”

- Dr. Eric Williams, President and CEO of Champions For Learning

YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT ON COLLIER COUNTY CLASSROOMS!

While we are thrilled with the support that the community has shown already, there's still a significant number of Collier County educators that remain in need of support to fund their projects.

Unfunded grants and additional requests submitted by educators will remain open on the online Classroom Grant portal until March. You can utilize the online Classroom Grant portal to view unfunded grant requests and select specific requests to fund by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.finditfunditflorida.com/collier/

