

# Quarterly



The Latest from District 5

December 2023/January 2024



Dr. Jeff Holness

School Board Member, District 5



754-321-2005



jeffholness@browardschools.com

## Top Five Priorities for District 5

1. Closing Learning Gaps as a Result of the Covid Pandemic
2. Effectively Meeting the Needs of ESE Students
3. Increasing Teachers and Employees' Salaries and Benefits
4. Building Strong Community Partnerships
5. Improving School Safety and Addressing Mental Health

Dear Broward County Public Schools District 5 students, parents, guardians, caregivers and staff,

Welcome to the latest edition of Quarterly Buzz! As your dedicated School Board Member for District 5, I am excited to share updates and highlights from our vibrant school community.

In this Issue:

1. **First Day of School Excitement:** A recap of the energy and enthusiasm as students embarked on a new academic year.
2. **Weekly School Visits:** Take a look at my weekly visits to schools across District 5, where I have witnessed firsthand the dedication of our educators and the remarkable achievements of our students.
3. **District 5 Student Features:** Shine a spotlight on the exceptional talents, achievements, and stories of our incredible students.
4. **Parkway Middle School:** Building Project Update.
5. **Empowering Our Schools for Student Success Town Hall:** Explore the insights and discussions from our recent town hall focused on strategies to enhance student success and empower our schools.
6. **Habitat Build Day:** A special feature on our collaborative efforts with Habitat for Humanity, as we came together to make a positive impact on our local community.
7. **Community Resources:** Discover valuable resources available to District 5 families and students, fostering a supportive and enriching educational environment.
8. **School Board Resolutions:** Recent video PSAs (public service announcements) for causes I believe in.
9. **SMART Update:** An update on District 5 facilities and SMART projects.

Your engagement and support continue to drive the success of our schools. Thank you for being an integral part of our educational journey.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeff Holness

The School Board of Broward County  
Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building  
600 SE Third Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FLL 33301



### First Day of School Excitement

The first day of the school year brought a wave of excitement, echoing through the halls with conversations and the blossoming of new friendships. It was a day filled with smiles, laughter, and the anticipation of a year brimming with opportunities for growth and learning. As we embark on the 23/24 school year, let's embrace a year of discovery, curiosity, and endless possibilities.

Each school showcased its distinct culture, from the vibrant energy within classrooms to the collaborative atmosphere in school corridors.



Rock Island Elementary Principal Priester and AP Ballard



Classroom visit at Sunland Park Academy



Parent and student meet and greet at Welleby Elementary



Dr. Holness poses with a Welleby Elementary Family



Parent and student meet and greet at Welleby Elementary



Classroom visit at William Dandy Middle



Central Regional Director Dr. Baugh and William Dandy Principal Winston-Davis



Westpine Principal Johnson, AP Balog and food services staff



Westpine Middle student conversation and Principal Johnson



Greeting staff at William Dandy Middle



Left: Lauderdale Lakes school visit with the City of Lauderdale Lakes Commission

Right: Lauderdale Lakes School Visit with Chair Lori Alhadeff and Vice Chair Debra Hixon



Right: My first day of school itinerary included visits to 8 District 5 schools, followed by a press conference at KCW

**First Day Connections**  
School Visits Kickoff for a Great Year Ahead!

1 WELLEBY ELEMENTARY	5 WILLIAM DANDY
2 WESTPINE MIDDLE	6 ROCK ISLAND ELEMENTARY
3 LAUDERDALE LAKES MIDDLE	7 SUNLAND PARK ACADEMY
4 BOYD ANDERSON	8 PLANTATION ELEMENTARY
9 PRESS CONFERENCE	

**Dr. Jeff Holness, School Board Member - District 5**



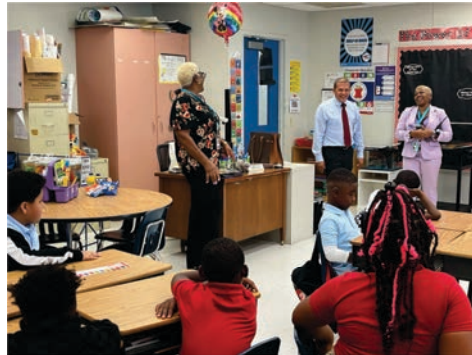
First day of school press conference



### School Visits

These visits provide me with valuable insights into the day-to-day operations of our schools and underscore the unwavering commitment of our educational community. In this and future newsletters, I will share some of my enriching experiences and spotlight the promising initiatives and noteworthy achievements I have witnessed during these insightful visits. Each school visit unveils a unique perspective, highlighting the diversity of experiences and approaches that contribute to our dynamic educational community.

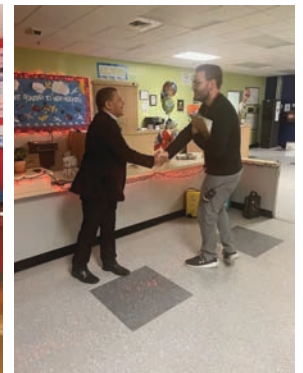
### Plantation Elementary School



All images above: photos of my school tour with Principal Pitter and Assistant Principal Rhodes-Hurley

I am thrilled to share that **Plantation Elementary has earned the prestigious "School of Distinction" Award from Magnet School of America!** Kudos to the dedicated educators and bright minds making this school a true beacon of excellence.

### Park Lakes Elementary School



All images: photos of my school tour with Principal Parris and Assistant Principal Glasford

Entering Park Lakes Elementary was truly a delightful experience, where each corner narrates a unique tale.

Commending the diverse experiences and inventive approaches that drive their dynamic educational community, I'm excited to share the fantastic news that **Park Lakes Elementary debate team has secured the 1st and 2nd positions in the categories of Oral Argument, Interpretation, and Impromptu.** A sincere round of applause to Principal Parris and the outstanding team for earning this well-deserved honor.



### School Visits

#### Welleby Elementary School



Venturing into the educational legacy of Welleby, a premier school of excellence since its doors opened in 1993.

Currently holding an .. rating and fostering the growth of around 600 students, I had the privilege of exploring the exceptional education at Welleby Elementary School alongside Principal Fuce-Ollivierre.



All images above: photos of my school tour with Principal Fuce-Ollivierre

#### Sunland Park Academy

I had the pleasure of touring Sunland Park Academy alongside Principal Ragin.

Sunland Park Academy K-3 has garnered recognition as a recipient of the prestigious Comcast Cares Day award, a testament to its impactful contributions to the community.

Since its restructuring into an Academy in 2013, the school has consistently experienced annual increases in enrollment, underscoring the positive momentum and trust it has built within the community.

Further fortifying its commitment to community engagement, Sunland Park Academy has established meaningful partnerships with the United Way of Broward County, including programs such as Community Based Connections, Reading Pals, and Community Education Alliance.

These initiatives exemplify the school's dedication to fostering holistic growth and learning experiences for its students.



Dr. Holness and Principal Ragin



### Student Spotlight



### Diana Cespedes Plantation Middle School



Diana Cespedes, a 7th grader at Plantation Middle School, immigrated to the US from Caracas, Venezuela in 2016 and triumphed over language barriers. She excels academically, consistently achieving Honor Roll status, earning accolades like Principal Honor Roll and Class President. Her passion for learning is evident through her ability to grasp complex concepts and explore beyond the classroom. Notably, she's a key member of the Student Ambassador Club, leading service activities and amplifying student voices. Diana's dedication to her peers and community is commendable, and her leadership qualities shine through her roles in both the Student Ambassador and Latinos in Action Clubs. She possesses exceptional communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, motivating and inspiring her peers and contributing to our school community's growth and development.



### Noah Gonzalez Discovery Elementary School

Noah Gonzalez is the definition of a well-rounded fifth grade student. He's passionate about his academics and is a social butterfly amongst his peers. He strives for perfection in all tasks.

Noah is a leader and humbly supports his peers. Noah is also our newly elected Student Council President. There is no limit to Noah's potential. Noah Gonzalez embodies the characteristics of what makes Discovery Elementary "A" Great Place to Be!!



### Josiah Gaynor Piper High School

Bengal Scholar Athlete Josiah Gaynor embodies Piper High School's "RISE" Commitment, excelling in Respect, Integrity, Scholarship, and Excellence.

In 12th grade, Josiah boasts a 5.0 GPA, ranking 10th out of 631 students (top 2%). He holds an esteemed Cambridge AICE diploma and is on track for an Advanced Placement diploma. His athletic achievements include being a five-time national track and field champion. Josiah actively supports his community through mentoring and tutoring, and he is a key member of Piper's Mu Alpha Theta honors mathematics club.

He aspires to attend Harvard, Duke, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, or Florida State University, with opportunities in collegiate track and field. Josiah Gaynor is a positive force at Piper High School, poised to impact the world.

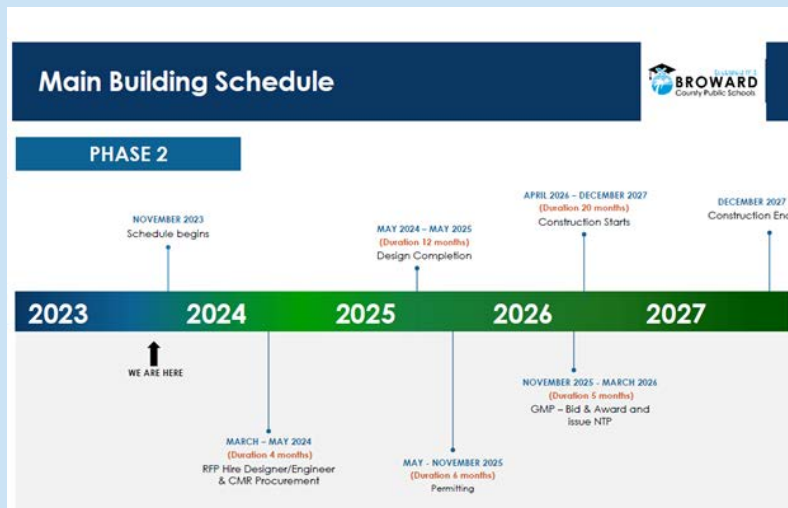




### Parkway Middle School Building Project Update and Timeline

On September 11, 2023, I convened a meeting with key stakeholders, including Broward Schools Superintendent Dr. Peter Licata, Mayor Thurston of the City of Lauderdale, Vice Mayor Lawrence "Jabbow" Martin, and Principal Flowers. The focus of the meeting was a comprehensive discussion on the Parkway Middle School new building project.

I am delighted to announce that, as a result of our collaborative efforts, we have successfully streamlined the project timeline, moving the completion date from 2029 to 2027.



To ensure transparency and keep the community well-informed about the progress of the project, I will be organizing a series of meetings with the community. These sessions are designed to provide information and updates on the development process.

Your continued support and engagement are crucial as we work together to enhance our educational facilities and create a positive impact on our community. I look forward to sharing further details with you at upcoming community meetings.



Left: A District delegation visits Parkway Middle to assess building progress




Right: Superintendent Licata and I welcome students to school.



## Empowering Our Schools for Student Success

**EMPOWERING OUR SCHOOLS  
FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**



**THANK YOU**

Greetings,

I wish to convey my deep appreciation for your invaluable contributions to the success of District 5's 'Empowering Our Schools for Student Success' initiative. Your participation in the town hall event not only ignited meaningful conversations within our community but also fostered strong engagement among board members and district leaders.


To sustain this positive momentum and ensure transparency and continued community involvement, I am in the process of organizing a series of upcoming meetings. These sessions will serve to inform and engage the community in the ongoing development of the Parkway Middle School project. Your steadfast support and active involvement remain crucial as we collaborate to build a brighter future for our students and our community.


I extend my sincere appreciation to each one of you for your active participation in 'Empowering our Schools for Student Success'; your involvement was pivotal to the success of this event.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey towards educational excellence and community betterment.

Warm regards,

Dr. Jeff Holness  
School Board Member, District 5

 [jeffholness\\_district5](https://www.instagram.com/jeffholness_district5)

 [JHolness\\_D5](https://twitter.com/JHolness_D5)

To watch the town hall meeting, Empowering our Schools for Student Success, click on this link: <https://www.eduvision.tv/l?egLOAmR>



### District 5 School Grades Update

I am pleased to share the recent release of the 2023 Florida [school grades results](#) by the Florida Department of Education. The 2023 FAST Assessment data indicates improvements in information baseline school grades, particularly within District 5.

Noteworthy achievements include **Endeavor Primary Learning Center**, which has elevated its school letter grade to a commendable B. **Lauderhill 6-12** has also achieved a notable milestone, securing a letter B school status. Furthermore, both **Plantation Middle** and **North Fork Elementary** have shown remarkable progress, elevating their respective school letter grades.

This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the school leadership, staff, teachers, and students. **Congratulations to all those involved in these achievements.** Additionally, I would like to commend all schools in District 5 for their concerted efforts in improving their students' performance on the FAST Assessments.

As the representative of the School Board for these schools, I regularly meet with Dr. Licata, the Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Hepburn, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Our discussions are aimed at ensuring that all schools within District 5 receive equitable resources to support student success.



Dr. Ryan Reardon  
Principal  
Lauderhill 6-12



Ms. Gretchen Atkins-Brown  
Principal  
North Fork Elementary



Mr. Tariq Qaiyim  
Principal  
Plantation Middle



Ms. Shinita Coachman-Beavers  
Principal, Endeavor  
Primary Learning Center

Congratulations to Principal Reardon of Lauderhill 6-12 (above left), Principal Atkins-Brown from North Fork Elementary (above middle), Principal Qaiyim of Plantation Middle (above right), and Principal Coachman-Beavers of Endeavor Primary Learning Center (above far right) on significantly improving their school letter grades!





### Habitat for Humanity

Participating in the Broward County Public Schools Build Day with Habitat for Humanity of Broward was a truly rewarding experience. Despite a rainy start, the event took place at "A Rick Case Habitat Community" in Pompano Beach. This marked the first-ever Build Day hosted by Habitat for Humanity in collaboration with Broward County Public Schools.



Board members and Superintendent Dr. Peter Licata, alongside future Habitat homeowners, worked side-by-side to contribute to the construction of homes. The initiative aimed not only to build houses but also to raise awareness about the crucial link between affordable housing and academic success in the community. The ambitious project, "A Rick Case Habitat Community," will consist of 76 homes upon completion, making it the largest affordable homeownership community in the county's history.

Nancy Robin, CEO and Executive Director of Habitat Broward, emphasized the significance of affordable homeownership in attracting and retaining quality educators and school staff. She highlighted the correlation between stable, affordable homeownership and a quality education, both providing children with essential opportunities.



All images above: School Board Members Debra Hixon, Nora Rupert, Daniel Foganholi and myself join Superintendent Licata and volunteers from BCPS to build a home for a local family.

# Quarterly Buzz



District 5 Featured Schools, Students and Staff



Habitat for Humanity of Broward, driven by the mission to bring people together to build homes, communities, and hope, offers a "hand up" to families who may not qualify for conventional home financing but are committed to improving their lives through hard work and achieving economic empowerment through homeownership.

For more information about Habitat for Humanity of Broward, please contact 954-945-8031 or visit [habitatbroward.org](http://habitatbroward.org). You can also follow them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/HabitatBroward](https://www.facebook.com/HabitatBroward).

My fellow board members, the Superintendent, BCPS volunteers and I rolled up our sleeves and came together to support this vital organization.



As one of its core tenets, Broward Education Foundation (BEF) is committed to equipping students for success. Too often, choosing between purchasing school supplies for their children and putting food on the table is an unfortunate reality for many parents.

Broward Education Foundation's School Supply Center helps alleviate that burden and assures teachers in Title 1 schools or those with high percentages of students from low-income families, are able to equip these students to succeed.

In the academic year 2022/23, more than 130,000 students received school supplies valued at more than \$2 million dollars. Through the generosity displayed in Broward County's largest back-to-school supply drive; and by corporations, foundation partnerships, grants, and individual donors, Broward Education Foundation provides school supplies for our county's most vulnerable children.



Class of 2023 BEF Hall of Fame Inductees

To learn more, visit <https://browardedfoundation.org>.



## FAFSA Boot Camp Tuesday, February 13, 2024

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (also known as FAFSA) is an important component in a student's post-graduation toolbox. It is also a detailed application that can be intimidating for some students and parents to complete.

In an effort to support BCPS families, Broward Education Foundation has teamed up with Bridge2Life and BRACE School Counselors to host a FREE, two-hour event that guides high school seniors and their families through the application process.

In addition to step-by-step guidance and individual guidance if needed, the event features dinner, information about scholarship options and a \$20 Amazon Gift Card for seniors who complete the 2024-2025 FAFSA.

The event is FREE and open to all Broward County Public Schools high school seniors and their parents, guardians and caregivers. It will be held at Boyd Anderson High School, located at 3050 N.W. 41st Street in Lauderdale Lakes on Tuesday, February 13th.

Please bring a laptop or cell phone to access critical material and be sure to obtain your FSA ID before February 7th to bring to the session. You must register for the event at <https://bitly.ws/3acGL> or scan the QR code in the image below.

Space is limited, so please secure your spot today!

**PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:**

- ✓ Step-by-step FAFSA® completion guidance
- ✓ 1-on-1 guidance, if needed
- ✓ Informative Handouts
- ✓ DINNER
- ✓ A \$20 AMAZON GIFT CARD for each high school senior who completes the 2024-25 FAFSA®

# FAFSA® BOOT CAMP

Free Application Federal Student Aid

**FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
PARENTS, GUARDIANS**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>  
6PM- 8PM**

Boyd Anderson High School Auditorium  
3050 NW 41<sup>st</sup> Street  
Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33309

*Space is limited! Secure your place NOW!*  
<https://bitly.ws/3acGL>

**IT'S FREE!**

Apply for your FSA ID by February 7<sup>th</sup> to have it for BOOTCAMP!

You MUST bring your laptop or cell phone!

**BROWARD** County Public Schools  
**BRIDGE2LIFE**  
Broward Education Foundation  
Broward County Public Schools



**Claim Your Future Showcase  
January 31, 2024**

**IT IS TIME FOR BROWARD COUNTY STUDENTS TO CLAIM THEIR FUTURE**

**CLAIM YOUR FUTURE**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Wednesday,  
JANUARY 31, 2024  
8:30 AM ~ 1:00 PM**

**Amerant Bank Arena**



The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Broward County Public Schools, Career, Technical, Adult, & Community Education (CTACE) department are planning to show the future workforce the great career opportunities we have right here at home. Help us engage with the students of today, who will become the workforce of tomorrow.

The Claim Your Future Showcase bridges the classroom to the workplace and how Broward County Public Schools, in partnership with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, can connect business interests to the purpose of public education.



**Additional Information Coming Soon!**  
For assistance, please contact the CTACE Department at (754) 321-8400.



*We look forward to seeing you!*



The School Board of Broward County, Florida, prohibits any policy or procedure which results in discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. The School Board also prohibits equal access to the flag, Scouts and other designated youth groups. Individuals who wish to file a discrimination and/or harassment complaint may call the Director, Equal Educational Opportunities/ADA Compliance Department & District Equity Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator at 754-321-3150 or TeleType Machine (TTY) 754-321-2158. Individuals with disabilities requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) may call Equal Educational Opportunities/ADA Compliance Department at 754-321-3150 or TeleType Machine (TTY) 754-321-3150. [browardschools.com](http://browardschools.com)



## Summer Youth Employment Program Application Window is Open Now!

# GET READY!

## SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

**Earn \$14 Per Hour**

**APPLICATION OPENS ON  
DECEMBER 1, 2023  
AT 9 AM**



**IF YOU ARE A BROWARD COUNTY RESIDENT  
AGES 16 - 18 AND WANT A REAL-WORLD JOB THIS SUMMER,  
DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY!**

## Limited Slots Available!

For more information and to apply, visit us at  
**[www.CareerSourceBroward.com/SYEP](http://www.CareerSourceBroward.com/SYEP)**



A proud partner of the  
American Job Center  
network

Find Us On:



SCAN ME



PRESENTED  
BY:



**Children's Services Council  
of Broward County**  
Our Focus is Our Children.



An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.



## The 2024/2025 School Choice Window is OPEN until February 2, 2024

BCPS is a national leader in offering innovative, personalized learning programs to meet students' interests and prepare them for college and careers.

During the School Choice application window, families can apply for magnet programs, Nova schools and school reassignments to attend schools other than their assigned schools.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to explore the District's School Choice options by visiting [browardschools.com/schoolchoice](https://www.browardschools.com/schoolchoice). Families can access information by student interest, grade level and individual school name.

Click on the icons below to learn more about the options available for students in the 2024/2025 academic school year. Apply today at <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/56757>





I am proud our District recognizes nearly 100 important topics each year with resolutions indicating our support. These range from Veteran's Day and Black History Month to resolutions championing gun safety, celebrating teachers and honoring core communities within Broward County and beyond. The topics span from Native Americans to Haitian Flag Day, these videos reflect topics that matter to the Board and to our stakeholders. Thank you for watching.

### Disability Mentoring Day and Month

To watch the video, click on image on the left or visit <https://www.eduvision.tv/?egOAymA>



### Diversity Awareness Month

To watch the video, click on image on the right or visit <https://www.eduvision.tv/?egOLEel>



### National Homeless Youth Awareness Month

To watch the video, click on image on the left or visit <https://www.eduvision.tv/?egORmmD>



### National Mentoring Month

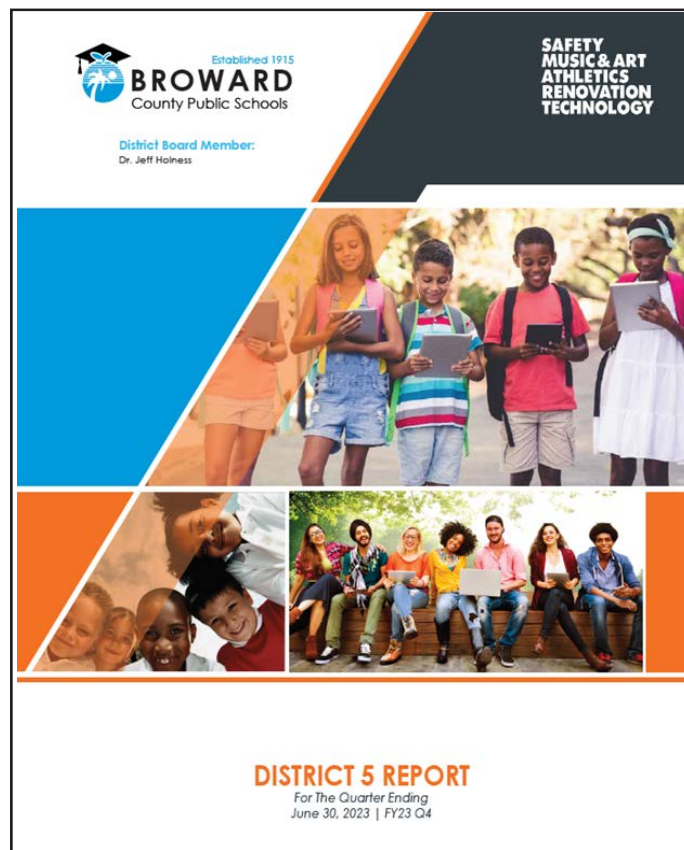
To watch the video, click on the image on the right or visit <https://www.eduvision.tv/?eLeLLmO>





### District 5 Facilities Update

SMART projects remain major priorities for the District. Click on the images below to review the latest news and updates on District 5 Smart renovations. You can also visit <https://bcpsmartfutures.com/district5/>



Click the image above for an update on District 5 construction projects through June 30, 2023