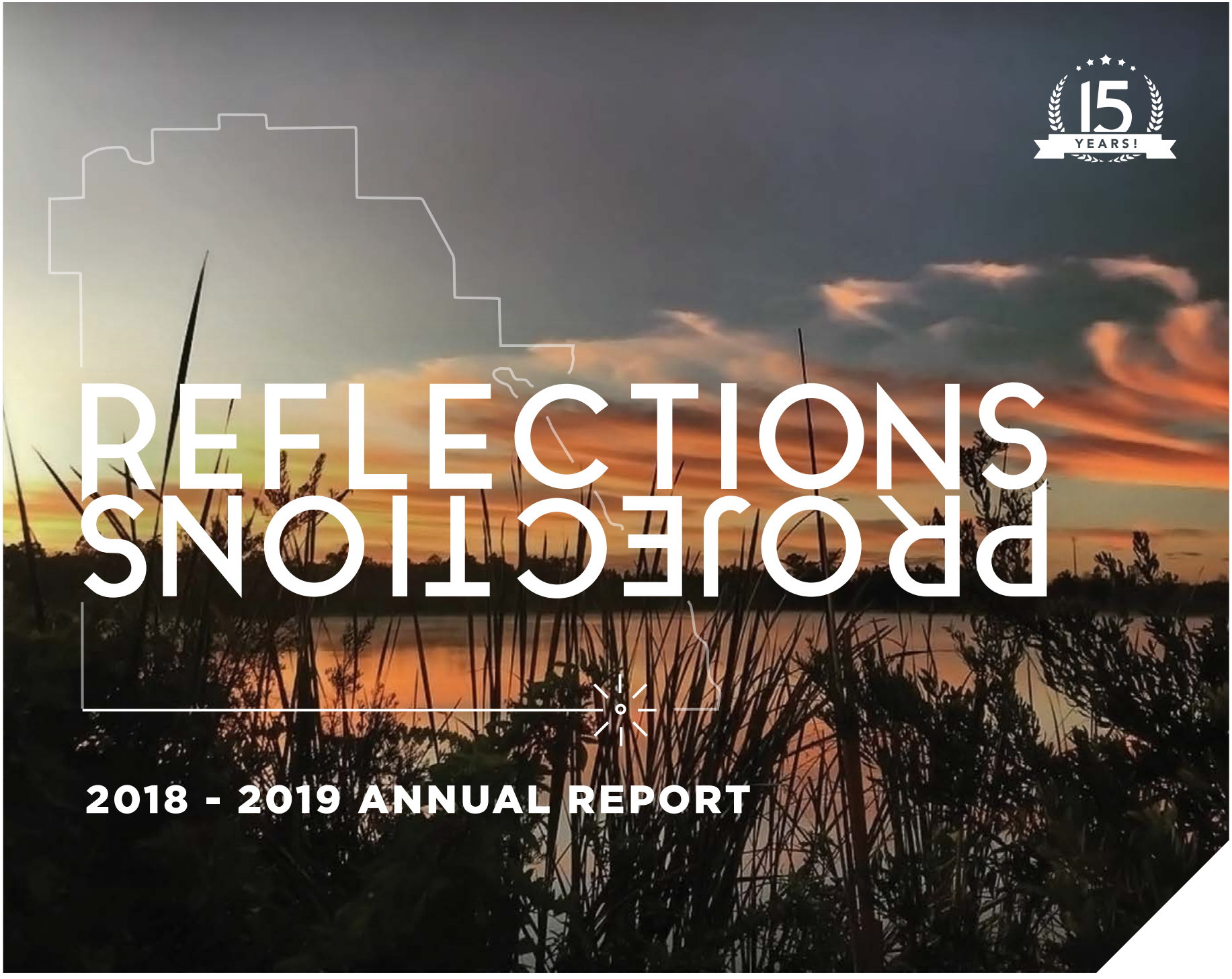
15
YEARS!
REFLECTIONS
PROJECTIONS
2018 - 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

Polk Vision actively facilitates a process through which Polk County realizes its aspirations and full potential. Polk Vision identifies and builds awareness of community priorities, promotes partnerships and encourages accountability.

ABOUT US

In 2004, citizens from across Polk County, led by private, public and civic leaders, joined forces to address critical issues facing our community and to develop a common purpose. Focus groups, town hall meetings and task forces were engaged in a nine-month process to gain insight into the priorities that unite and challenge our community. Together we examined our strengths and weaknesses, and developed a long-term vision with strategic solutions and countywide benchmarks. The strategies were adopted by public and private organizations, large and small, with a common goal to create our desired future.

Over the years, Polk Vision has remained vital and relevant through the continued engagement of citizens by conducting public meetings, forums and roundtable sessions.

A formal "refresh" of the Vision was performed in 2010 which resulted in updated strategies and adjusted benchmarks. In the fall of 2014, with the encouragement of visionary supporters, we became members of the national collective impact organization Alignment USA. Through this relationship, we integrated new structure, process and technology with the Polk Vision founding principles and areas of focus.

Polk Vision is the LEADing collective impact organization serving the entire Polk County community. We provide central coordination to align the work of hundreds of dedicated volunteers through partnerships of public, private and civic organizations working collectively to make the shared vision of improved community prosperity for Polk County a reality!

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are celebrating 15 Years since a countywide, shared Vision for our community was adopted on August 2, 2004.

That Vision represents the collective voices of over 700 residents from across the county who over many months participated in a series of focus groups and community meetings. These sessions were convened to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our county and to learn firsthand the issues of importance to the lives of our citizens. Following these sessions, Task Forces numbering nearly 400 stakeholders were formed to compile the results which led to the development of a Vision document that ultimately was adopted by a diverse 26-person Steering Committee.

Over the years, we have worked continuously to preserve the fidelity of that shared Vision. In keeping with our roots, we intentionally bring together individuals from across the county – each bringing their unique perspective, knowledge, and resources – to serve on action-focused LEAD Teams. These Teams are powerful cross-sector collaborations working towards systemic solutions to Polk County's most pressing challenges.

Sustainable change takes time; short-term fixes don't address long-term problems. The Polk County community has proven that it's willing to do what it takes to change the trajectory for today's citizens as well as future generations. We are actively addressing persistent issues like literacy, college and career readiness, community health, and public safety. But we are also celebrating the dramatic rise in high school graduation rates, the increase in district school grade, and the widespread adoption of a Resolution to close sidewalk gaps so our children can walk more safely to school.

All of this is made possible through the support and generosity of our funders; the dedication of our Board of Directors; the tenacity of our Operating Board and LEAD Teams; the willingness of our community partners to work together; and the daily support and hard work of our staff. Let us continue to do the important work achieving a brighter future for residents from across the county – for generations to come. Never has there been a time of more hope and promise for Polk County, as we build upon the successes of the past 15 years to ensure that future generations thrive and prosper—together we are truly striving toward excellence.

STAFF

REBA COIL
Program Manager

KIRSTEN SHEEHAN
Team Coordinator

PAULINE SIMMONDS-BROWN
Education & Talent Alignment Coordinator

Alex Nikdel
Chair
President, CNP

It has been an honor to serve as Polk Vision's Chair for the past year. I continue to be impressed with and appreciative of the hundreds of volunteers putting in countless hours towards the end goal of improving the lives of every citizen. One key initiative for my second year as Chair is to be more intentional about sharing the stories of our hard-working volunteers and celebrate their success. Together, I have no doubt that we will continue to make Polk County an even more amazing place to live.

Jerry Miller
Chair-Elect
Government & Community Relations Manager, Duke Energy

It's been an immense pleasure to be involved with Polk Vision for the past decade and I'm excited about continuing the organization's great work as Chair-Elect. Its strategy of collaborating with area partners and resources to achieve systemic change has proved time and time again to be successful. Our community will continue to benefit from these multi-faceted impacts for years to come.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Immediate Past Chair
President & CEO,
Lakeland Regional Health

Stacy Butterfield
Treasurer
Polk County Clerk of Courts & County Comptroller, Polk County

Terry Brigman
Operating Board Chair
CIO & Director of IT,
City of Lakeland

Jackie Byrd
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Superintendent,
Polk County Public Schools

Brad Dantzler
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Mayor, City of Winter Haven

Tony Delgado
Director
City Manager,
City of Lakeland

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Director
President,
Polk State College

Jim Freeman
Director
County Manager,
Polk County BoCC

Greg Littleton
Director
CEO & President,
Citizens Bank & Trust

Doug Lockwood
Director
Attorney, Straughn & Turner, P.A.

Larry Madrid
Director
President,
Madrid Engineering Group, Inc.

Sean Malott
Director
CEO, Central Florida Development Council

Teresa Martinez
Director
President & CEO,
Institute of Spanish Communication, Inc.

Rick Wilson
Director
Commissioner,
Polk County BoCC

Lynn Wilson
Director
Chair, Polk County School Board

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BHP: Worksite Wellness Team Co-Chair
Stahl & Associates Insurance

STEVE BISONNETTE
Quality of Life Team Co-Chair
VISTE

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Leadership Polk Alumni Chair
Polk County BoCC

SARAH CASE
Infrastructure Team Co-Chair
Next Level Planning & Permitting

PAM CRAVEN, Ph.D.
Literacy Team Co-Chair
Learning Resource Center

MARY CROWE, Ph.D.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team Co-Chair
Florida Southern College

JULIA DAVIS
Liaison
Polk TPO

TOM DEARDORFF
Benchmarks & Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team Co-Chair
Polk County BoCC

CHANDRA FREDERICK
Attendance Team Co-Chair
Polk County BoCC

SHANNON GILLESPIE
Attendance Team Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

CHRISTINE GODING
Government Advisory Team Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

JOY JOHNSON
Quality of Life Team Co-Chair
Polk County BoCC

JENNA KACZMARSKI
BHP: School Health Team Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

RYAN KORDEK
Infrastructure Team Co-Chair
Polk TPO

ERIC LABBE
Smart Communities Team Co-Chair
City of Winter Haven

JENNA LEVINE
Liaison
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

MERI MASS
Liaison
Polk Arts Alliance

MATT MUCCI
Government Advisory Team Co-Chair
AT&T

ANDREA NIKOLAI
Liaison
University of Florida/IFAS

ORATHAI NORTHERN, Ph.D.
Talent Pipeline Team Co-Chair
Polk State College

LINDSAY PERSOHN, Ph.D.
Literacy Team Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

SARA BETH REYNOLDS
Polk County School Board

SHAWN SHERROUSE
Leadership Polk Class XII Chair
City of Lakeland

LAUREN SPRINGFIELD
Liaison
Lakeland Regional Health

HOLLY VIDA
BHP: Primary Care Team Co-Chair
Bartow Regional Medical Center – BayCare

STEVE WARNER, Ed.D.
Polk County Public Schools

SUZANNE WRIGHT
BHP: Primary Care Team Co-Chair
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

KATHLEEN WRIGHT
BHP: School Health Team Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

DEBBIE ZIMMERMAN
BHP: Worksite Wellness Team Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

TERRY BRIGMAN
Operating Board Chair
CIO & Director of IT,
City of Lakeland

What a pleasure it is to see dedicated people tackle the toughest problems in our community. The focus, the cooperation, and the tireless effort to continue the work necessary to make measurable improvements is a breath of local fresh air in this time of seemingly ongoing turmoil. Polk Vision provides the glue, the connectivity, and the networking necessary to engage the best and brightest minds and hearts to maximize our combined efforts. Alignment minimizes wasted or duplicated effort and ensures all LEAD Teams are moving toward our mutual goals. We can be proud as we reflect on the accomplishments over the past year. I'm confident that every leader involved will move forward with enthusiasm to achieve even greater things in the new year. Thank you to each of you for caring and for making a tremendous difference.

CHAD TAGTOW
Operating Board
Chair-Elect
Smart Communities Team Co-Chair
CIO & Senior Vice President,
Citizens Bank & Trust

Polk Vision does an excellent job bringing together leaders from across the county, both public and private, to focus on the issues, opportunities, and challenges facing Polk County. It is through these collaborative efforts that we align in the common goal of making Polk County the best it can be. The hard work of the staff, and the diligent efforts of the numerous volunteers on the various Teams is to be commended. It is in these Teams that candid discussions turn into real plans that are then executed to produce progress for the county. I am impressed with the accomplishments that came about as a direct result of volunteers, and the organizations they belong to. We are able to accomplish so much more working together than we could individually. I encourage you to get involved to help make a difference in our community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
GOVERNANCE

OPERATING BOARD
STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

FOUNDATIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS
EDUCATION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INFRASTRUCTURE
GOVERNMENT
QUALITY OF LIFE
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

LEAD TEAMS
SOLUTION DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

HOW WE'RE STRUCTURED

Polk Vision is governed by a Board of Directors which oversees the Operating Board in its leadership of Teams working collaboratively on a range of complex issues in six foundational areas of focus.

PRINCIPLES

These principles ensure our work is targeting systemic change or new ways of aligning resources to address underlying causes. Systemic change occurs when an outcome or goal has been attained. This achievement is either through the elimination of the problem or through permanently aligning programs, policies, funding streams or services to reduce the impact of the problem on a long term basis.

Polk Vision strives to:

- Align and engage all stakeholders throughout the county with strategies in six foundational areas of focus: Education, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Government, Quality of Life and Civic Engagement.
- Cultivate an environment of mutual trust and collaboration while working with transparency and a high level of accountability.
- Unify initiatives across the county through a comprehensive, collaborative, multi-faceted process that is recognized as generational; requiring significant time to achieve change and maximum impact.

L
LEARN
E
ENGAGE
A
ALIGN
D
DEVELOP

PROCESS + TECHNOLOGY

As facilitators of a county-wide collaboration among schools, non-profits, businesses, and the public sector, Polk Vision offers a framework for achieving sustained improvement.

The work is dynamic and requires continuous learning and adaptive solutions in addressing a range of complex issues. Polk Vision refers to this as our LEAD process: **Learn** all we can about an issue, **Engage** community partners knowledgeable and passionate about the issue, **Align** resources to address the issue and **Develop** plans that will result in systemic change.

This county-wide collaborative process provides the following advantages:

- ***Greater returns on investment***
  By working together toward common goals, resources are leveraged, duplication is avoided, and efficiency is greatly increased.
- ***Higher quality services***
  Utilizing expertise from multiple organizations guarantees a broader perspective and a wiser approach.
- ***Enhanced capacity***
  A collective effort enhances the impact of each organization while generating a much greater overall outcome.

Polk Vision's membership in the Alignment USA network has provided us with a technology tool to power our principles, structure and process. This online portal allows our LEAD Team members, community partners and staff to collaborate, measure and report progress, capture information and warehouse our collective work.

FOUNDATIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS

In order to achieve the overarching priority of improved community prosperity before 2030, Polk County will have:

EDUCATION
A world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

GOVERNMENT
A comprehensive system of government that is effective, efficient, diverse and responsive to the basic needs of its citizens.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
An economic development environment that attracts quality businesses with higher paying jobs, improves productivity and retains educated young people.

QUALITY OF LIFE
A quality of life that encourages diverse backgrounds to live in harmony while developing physically, spiritually, mentally and culturally within a healthy and safe environment.

INFRASTRUCTURE
Growth management and infrastructure that protects the environment, enhances quality of life, supports education and economic development and is economically sustainable.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Private sector leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premiere place to live, learn, work and play.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Each Alignment Team creates a Tactical Plan that begins with one or more of the Long-Term Outcomes listed below. The Teams work backwards from the selected long-term outcome(s) creating mid and short term outcomes and design tactics that best align community resources. This process ensures that multiple approaches are considered. For example, the Infrastructure Team links their work on sidewalk mapping with Healthy Weight, High School Graduation Rates, and Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety – demonstrating the importance of collective impact when addressing complex issues.

IMPROVE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

IMPROVE COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

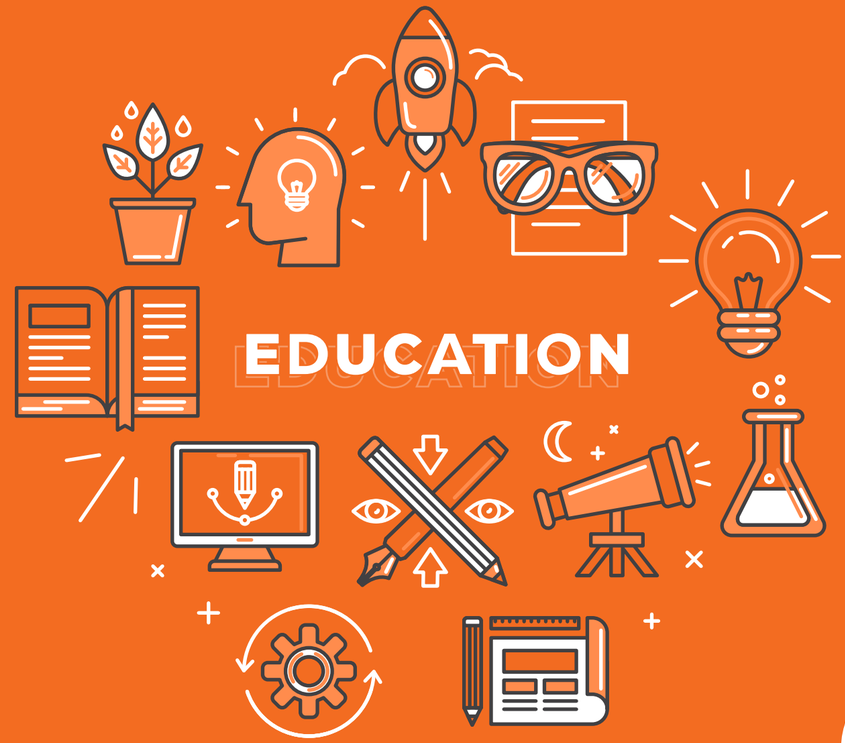
IMPROVE HEALTHY WEIGHT RATE

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SAFETY

2018 - 2019

LEAD TEAM PROGRESS REPORTS

Every LEAD Team is working to achieve long-term outcomes that directly tie to one or more foundational areas of focus. Each Team has selected a unique strategty and devised different tactics to accomplish the desired outcome.



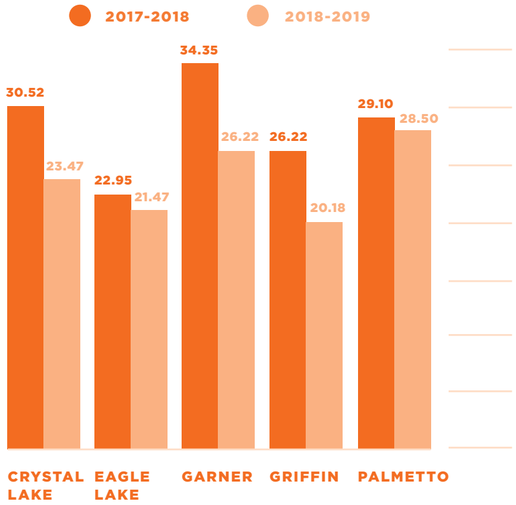
ATTENDANCE

The Polk County School District's Strategic Plan identifies reducing student absenteeism as key to improving student achievement. Studies have shown that missing ten percent, roughly 18 days per school year, negatively affects a student's academic performance.

During the 2017-2018 school year the Polk Vision Attendance Team together with Polk County Public Schools adopted a multi-pronged tactical plan for five pilot schools that included an integrated message campaign - Strive For Less Than 5™ Days Absent. Inspired by the success achieved by the Grand Rapids, Michigan School District (Believe 2 Become, 2016), the plan hinges upon school staff, parents, and community leaders collaborating to address the critical issue of school attendance.

2018-2019 marked the second year of the pilot program. The Attendance Team continued to work with the schools to implement strategies that encourage attendance early in the students' academic lives. The hope is for the commitment to become a positive habit into middle and high school and even as a future contributor to the workforce. Of the original five pilot schools, four continued through the second year. With the exit of CODE Academy from the program, Crystal Lake Elementary, A Community Partnership School, joined the pilot.

LEFT: Support at the District and School leadership level is at the core of any successful pilot program. Polk County School Board Members officially supported the launch of year two of the Challenge 5™ pilot program in Fall 2018.



ABOVE: A year to year comparison of chronic absenteeism rates show improvement in each of the Challenge 5™ Pilot Schools.

- *Crystal Lake Elementary*
- *Eagle Lake Elementary*
- *Garner Elementary*
- *Griffin Elementary*
- *Palmetto Elementary*

(Source: Polk County Public Schools)

VISION

Before 2030, Polk County will have a world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

LEFT: The Attendance Team meeting at Griffin Elementary School. Over the past year, the Team has been convening on pilot school campuses, enabling them to greet students and personally check on the campaign status with school leadership prior to the monthly meeting.

The Attendance Team's Tactical Plan continued to pursue strategies that leverage the Strive For Less Than 5™ Days Absent messaging campaign.

In September 2018, during Attendance Awareness Month, a refreshed Strive for Less than 5™ video featuring Superintendent Byrd and Sheriff Grady Judd was released along with expanded campaign materials including buttons, wall murals, posters and outdoor signs. Throughout the month, Team members and volunteers met students as they arrived at participating schools with enthusiastic words of welcome, high fives, and fist bumps. These personal greetings were so well received that the practice continued over the course of the school year with Team members and community volunteers periodically greeting arriving students.

With the help of community partners the Team plans to expand Attendance awareness activities to include student recognition and incentives. Each of the five pilot schools will continue to use messaging materials to encourage students to show up every day, on time and ready to learn.

"Our school system deserves the support of advocates who want the best for all students. I believe in Polk Vision's commitment to building a team of partners who are dedicated to reducing absenteeism. School officials, teachers, parents, and community leaders are working together at our five pilot schools to implement strategies that encourage students to Strive for Less Than Five™ Days Absent. Occasionally, we greet the students as they arrive at school. Every moment served on this committee is worth it when I see eager children arrive at school ready to learn."

— CHANDRA FREDERICK, Director, Building Division, Polk County BoCC

Permission to use Challenge 5™, Strive for Less Than Five™ Days Absent Campaign granted on behalf of Believe 2 Become (B2B), an initiative of the Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation.

CHANDRA FREDERICK
Co-Chair
Polk County BoCC

SHANNON GILLESPIE
Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

DENISE ATWELL
Florida Southern College

JACQUELINE BRYAN
Southeastern University

ALICIA FILIPPAZZO
Cracker Barrel

MATTI FRIEDT
Polk County Public Schools

ANDREA HAGEN
Heartland for Children

AMANDA HALL
Polk County Public Schools

BRENDA JOHNSON
Community Volunteer

SHARON KOCHANOWSKI
Polk State College

JANET LAMOUREUX
Polk County Council PTA

RAYMOND MIDDEL
Community Volunteer

SARA BETH REYNOLDS
Polk County School Board

MEL ROWKER
Community Volunteer

ASHLEY SHOLTZ
Early Learning Coalition

PEGGY THRELKEL
Girls Inc. Winter Haven

STEVEN WARNER, Ed.D.
Polk County Public Schools

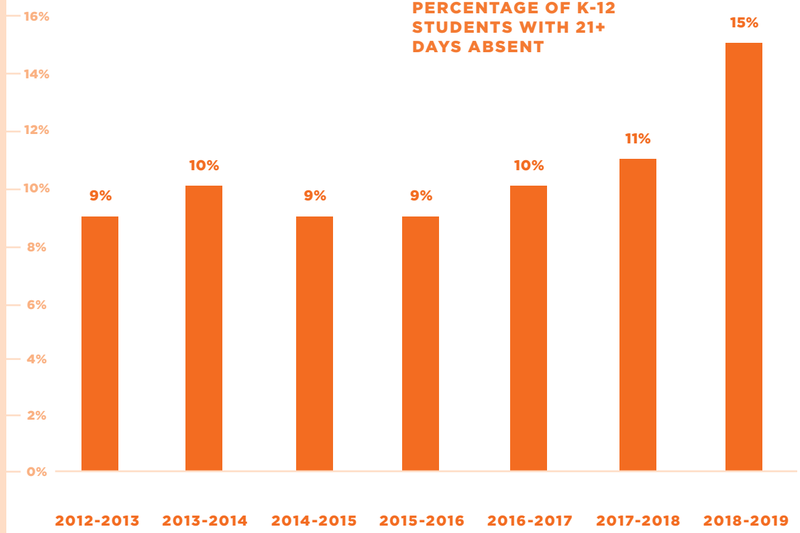
STRIVE FOR LESS THAN 5 DAYS ABSENT!

DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 3 Kindergartners were chronically absent last year. This is approximately **157** hours of class time.

6,671 K-5 th grade students were absent 21 or more days.
(Source: Polk County Public Schools)

PERCENTAGE OF K-12 STUDENTS WITH 21+ DAYS ABSENT



TOP: Central Florida Health Care held a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 16, 2019 signifying the opening of the Crystal Lake Community Health Center. The Center is situated on the school campus and provides services not only to students and their parents, but also members of the surrounding community.

BOTTOM: An increased number of after school activities were held this year such as the Fine Arts showcase which featured choral performances and student artwork across all grade levels. These events were designed to build trust within the community by attracting wider participation and deeper engagement among parents and family members.

VISION

Before 2030, Polk County will have a world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

CRYSTAL LAKE ELEMENTARY

A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

YEAR ONE UPDATE

The Community Partnership School model focuses on the whole child (physical, mental, social and emotional health, and well-being) and takes a holistic approach in providing supports for the child. The purpose of the Community Partnership School is to increase overall lifelong success in education, employment, and health for those served.

A Director for the Community Partnership School was hired in May of 2018 and, together with the School Principal, immediately began making preparations for transitioning to the Community Partnership School model starting Fall 2018. Through a shared system of governance, representatives from the five core partner organizations, along with leadership from the School District and the community, worked together as a Cabinet.

LEADERSHIP CABINET MEMBERS

JOHN HILL
Chair
Polk County Public Schools

TERI SAUNDERS
Vice Chair
Heartland for Children

PATRICIA BARNES
Polk County Public Schools

PENNY BORGIA
United Way of Central Florida

AMY BRATTEN, Ed.D.
Southeastern University

JACKIE BRYAN
Southeastern University

LISA CIGANEK
Southeastern University

ANN CLAUSSEN
Central Florida Health Care

KRISTAN FOWLER
Polk County Public Schools

TRACY GREY
Heartland for Children

ANDREA HAGAN
Heartland for Children

KIM LONG
Polk Vision

SWANYETTA PERRY
Polk County Public Schools

BILLY TOWNSEND
Polk County School Board

A top priority for leadership was the completion of the Needs Assessment which was essential in determining the initial programs and range of services. Crystal Lake students, parents and family members, as well as residents from the surrounding neighborhood participated in the surveys. Respondents helped define not only what but when services and supports should be offered to best meet their needs and schedules.

While the Assessment was being performed an additional priority was securing the key staff members necessary to coordinate the various programs and services that will be through the School. A Health Programs Coordinator was on-boarded in January 2019 to coordinate health and wellness services, data collection, community service/monitoring, and serve as liaison between the school and Central Florida Healthcare on campus providers. In Spring 2019, an After-School Programs Coordinator was hired to focus on extended learning services such as tutoring, enrichment, and clubs, and to coordinate all after school on-campus activities.

With the needs assessment completed and three dedicated staff members in place, the Community Partnership School is well positioned for the 2019-2020 School Year. Plans are to add the necessary services and supports to achieve goals of improved academic performance, increasing student attendance and reducing absenteeism, creating a positive school culture, improving student health, and increasing the level of parent, family and community engagement.

Crystal Lake Elementary School is registered with the UCF Center for Community Schools which is internationally recognized as the premier resource for innovations in community education. To ensure consistency in the quality of programming as well as to provide a strategy and framework fidelity, the University of Central Florida has developed a process to Certify Community Partnership Schools that demonstrates alignment with the UCF Standards. Crystal Lake Elementary School is tracking to become fully UCF Community School certified during the 2020-2021 school year.

CORE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

Central Florida Health Care
Heartland for Children
Polk County Public Schools District
Southeastern University
United Way of Central Florida

TOP: Students at Crystal Lake Elementary School performing for parents and family during Fine Arts Night.

BOTTOM: Community School Partners provided an update to members of the United Way of Central Florida Tocqueville Society on the implementation of the model at Crystal Lake Elementary

(Seated L to R) Penny Borgia, United Way of Central Florida; Lynn Wilson, Polk County Public School Board; Amy Bratten, Ed.D., Southeastern University; Lawrence Best, Central Florida Health Care; Kim Long, Polk Vision; Andrea Hagan, Heartland for Children; (Standing) David Robinson, DSM Technology.

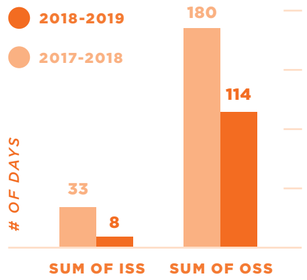
Crystal Lake Elementary, A Community Partnership School is financially supported by:

George Jenkins Family Foundation
Iron Horse Foundation
George W. Jenkins Fund within the GiveWell Community Foundation
United Way of Central Florida Community Impact Grants
Publix Super Markets Charities
Suncoast Credit Union through the Polk Education Foundation

"At Polk County Public Schools, we believe in educating the whole child, and the community school initiative is a perfect representation of that commitment. At Crystal Lake Elementary, we are removing the barriers that often stand between children and their full academic potential. By providing access to health care, after-school tutoring, and the wide variety of other resources available at Crystal Lake, we're clearing the way for our children to learn, grow, thrive and prepare for successful lives. This school stands as a wonderful example of what is possible when numerous organizations come together with a shared purpose – and what better purpose than our future, the students of Polk County. We are very thankful for the support of all the core partners who have made the community partnership school possible."

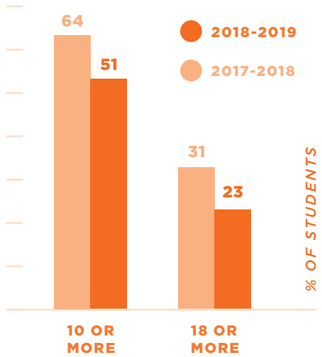
— JACQUELINE BYRD, Superintendent, Polk County Public Schools

In School Suspension & Out of School Suspension Data

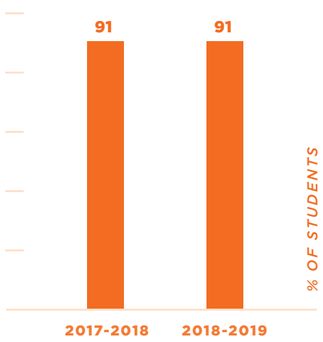


In this first year as a Community Partnership School, the student disciplinary action rates for in school suspension and out of school suspension dropped significantly.

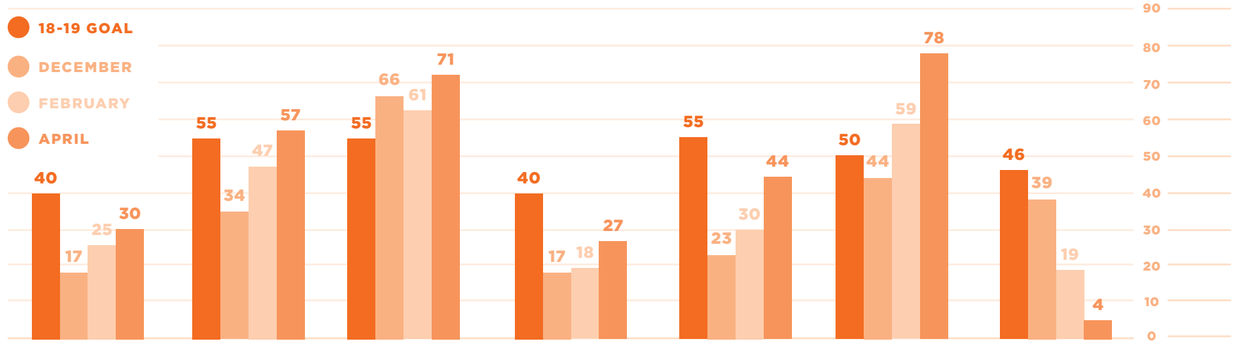
Absentee Comparison



Average Daily Attendance



There was a significant decrease in the rate of absenteeism. However, the average daily attendance rate remained the same as the previous school year.



Students completing the STAR Assessment testing throughout the school year demonstrated gains, though they continued to struggle with proficiency.

TOP: Nancy Rodriguez with the Polk County Library Cooperative reading to children attending a Summer BreakSpot at Alta Vista Elementary in Haines City. Each student received not only a free meal but participated in a learning activity and received a new book to take home.

BOTTOM: The Polk Vision Literacy Team frequently meets at the Winter Haven PEP Center.

VISION Before 2030, Polk County will have a world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

LITERACY

The Polk Vision Literacy Team is focused on improving the literacy proficiency of students in Polk County.

During 2017-2018 the Literacy Team conducted a series of meetings around the county to learn how to better align literacy support for students and families. When convening in Winter Haven, the Team found a well galvanized community effort underway through the Public Education Partnership (PEP).

In recent months PEP and Polk Vision have been working collaboratively in the Winter Haven community to develop better awareness of resources to support Kindergarten Readiness and the improvement of 3rd Grade Reading Scores. The Team hopes to replicate and scale the well-established PEP efforts in other communities across the county.

The Literacy Team piloted efforts this year to address "Summer Slide" at 9 locations through the alignment of the Polk County Library Cooperative, and the Polk County Public Schools' Books Bridge Bus and School Nutrition Department. This enabled each organization to maximize the opportunities of bringing summer reading, free meals and free book distribution to Summer BreakSpot locations around the district.

"The Literacy Team continues to learn about literacy in our communities, engage partners around literacy resources, align partnerships toward a common goal, and develop solutions that we expect will help improve the literacy rate for young people in our communities. Our team continues to build momentum through the Literacy Directory, focusing on Kindergarten Readiness for our upcoming third edition. With thanks to the Polk County Public Schools Books Bridge program, Polk County Public Schools' Nutrition, the Polk County Library Cooperative, and Winter Haven Public Education Partnership (PEP), our team is aligning sustainable partnerships around literacy. These partners provide resources and services to nourish young minds and bodies across Polk County."

— LINDSAY PERSOHN, Ph.D. Community Volunteer

PAMELA CRAVEN, Ph.D.
Co-Chair
Learning Resource Center

LINDSAY PERSOHN, Ph.D.
Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

CINTIA ALLY
Bartow History Center

DENISE ATWELL
Florida Southern College

STEVE CHAPMAN
Polk Education Foundation

TARREL DAVIS
Mulberry Community Service Center

STACY DAVIS
Polk County Public Schools

SHERI GEIGER
Usborne Books

JENNIFER KOVAC
Polk County Library Cooperative

SHAULLANDA LANCOMB
Community Volunteer

AUDREY NETTLOW
Winter Haven Public Education Partnership

COLEEN PIZZUTI
United Way of Central Florida

DIANE PLOWDEN
Polk County Public Schools

NANCY PURI
Polk County Public Schools

BEVERLY PUTNAM
Northeast Polk Literacy Council

SARA BETH REYNOLDS
Polk County School Board

ASHLEY SHOLTZ
Early Learning Coalition

JUAN SEDA
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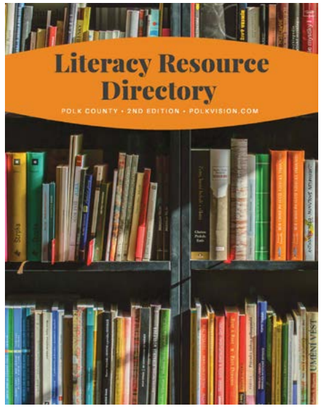
NAT WEST
Winter Haven Public Education Partnership

STEVE WARNER, Ed.D.
Polk County Public Schools



DID YOU KNOW?

Kindergarten Readiness
47% in Polk; State **53%**

3% increase over 2017

47% of Polk County Kindergartners assessed as being ready for Kindergarten in the Fall of 2018.
(2018 Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener)

1% increase over 2017

52% of Polk County 3rd Grade Students scored proficient in English Language Arts.
(2019 Florida Standards ELA Reading Assessment)

Updated annually, the 2nd edition of the Literacy Resource Directory was published in the Fall of 2018 and is available for download on-line.

The 3rd edition is currently in development and is scheduled for publication in Fall 2019.

Reflecting the Team's focus on early preparedness, the 3rd edition will include an expanded Kindergarten Readiness section.

To view the Literacy Resource Directory visit: portal.polkvision.com/literacy-team

LEFT: During a session hosted by Lakeland Electric, Sean Malott, President and CEO of Central Florida Development Council, led a skills gap discussion with Lakeland business representatives.

TALENT PIPELINE

The Talent Pipeline Team is convened in partnership with the Central Florida Development Council. The Team is focused on aligning community resources through innovative collaborations to fill the gap of high skill, high wage jobs in Polk County.

FINDING YOUR FUTURE WORKFORCE: ***Education & Industry Roundtables***

In October of 2018, the Team hosted "Finding Your Future Workforce" a series of six roundtable discussions convened across the county. The goal was to hear directly from business leaders what they were experiencing with the Polk County labor market. During facilitated discussions, 133 cross-sector industry representatives were asked to identify and rank the jobs and skills needed in their workplace and to identify skills gaps in the available talent pool. While each employer reported varying degrees of difficulty in finding technically proficient applicants, 100% of those attending ranked soft skills as the number one most needed and the number one ranked skills deficit among applicants and the recently hired. These local findings were confirmed through data reported by CareerSource Florida and the Department of Economic Opportunity.
(Skills Gap and Job Vacancy Survey, Statewide 2018)

VISION

Before 2030, Polk County will have a world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

ADDRESSING THE GAP

With soft skills emerging from the roundtables as the number one skills gap, the Team began researching for an effective learning tool to address this need. The Team chose the State of Florida funded platform Florida Ready to Work which offers free of fee staff support, training modules, instructors guide, on-line systems and evaluation methods. Students can earn Soft Skills e-Badges and a Soft Skills Credential following coursework completion and a proctored exam. Over the late spring and throughout the summer of 2019, five Polk Vision partners began using the platform to pilot Florida Ready to Work with their students. Feedback from the students and course facilitators will be used to chart the next steps in the creation of a local program.

With the goal of graduating the first class of Polk Certified Ready to Work students in Spring of 2020, the Talent Pipeline Team is hoping Florida Ready to Work will serve as a key component of a larger course of study which will include experiential training and a capstone project.

TOP: The inaugural Countywide College Career Fair held at the Polk State College Lakeland Campus.

BOTTOM: Lakeland RISK club Teen Business Camp high school students participating in the Polk County Soft Skills training pilot.

CONNECTING STUDENTS & EMPLOYERS

A subcommittee of the Polk Vision Talent Pipeline Team has been working to facilitate three collaborative projects to further bridge learning-to-earning and positively impact economic development:

- A Countywide College Career Fair
- A toolkit for businesses with common descriptions regarding internships and other work experiences to help industry navigate the complexities of higher education career experience placement
- Adoption and promotion of a common software platform to connect students and business

In September 2018 the subcommittee hosted a first of its kind Countywide College and Career Fair with 40 businesses participating and over 200 students attending. Plans are underway for the second annual event scheduled for September 27, 2019 and once again hosted by Polk State College Lakeland Campus.

POLK COUNTY INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

The subcommittee is also finalizing a Polk County Guide to Internships that will define and align the terms and protocols of work experiences for both interns and employers. Scheduled for publication in Fall 2019, the guide is intended to streamline the process for businesses, students and educational institutions through the use of common descriptions regarding internships and other work experiences.

FINDING TALENT THROUGH A COMMON USE PLATFORM

The leading early talent network which unites post-secondary students and employers is now more widely available in Polk County due to the support of the Central Florida Development Council. Recognizing that employers are interested in connecting with students in an effective and efficient manner, the CFDC implemented a grant opportunity for those institutions transitioning to the use of a common career center software called Handshake.

Handshake is a technology platform focused on connecting students with work experiences, including internships. The platform enables easy access for employers to tap into a pool of candidates attending any post-secondary institution joined in the Handshake network.

For more information, visit joinhandshake.com

ABOVE: In June of 2019, Polk Vision together with Polk County Career Academies hosted a professional development training for Polk County Public Schools' Middle School Counselors at the Bartow History Center.

> "The diverse feedback regarding technical and soft skills, credentials, and employment trends has been invaluable and impactful. We are using this data to direct our efforts toward enhancing the employability skills of our local talent pools, such as our piloting of the Florida Ready to Work platform. Additionally, we share this data with our secondary and post-secondary education partners to further help students strategically plan for meaningful careers."
>
> — ORATHAI NORTHERN, Ph.D., District Dean of Workforce Education & Economic Development, Polk State College

ALIGNING CAREER ACADEMY PATHWAYS FROM MIDDLE TO HIGH SCHOOL

Aligning Career Academy Pathways from Middle to High School was developed to provide counselors with local workforce information and better prepare them to assist students with early career planning. More than 40 middle school counselors and assistant principals connected with representatives from 13 area businesses in roundtable discussions during this day-long session.

Business leaders provided an overview of their particular industry and the types of jobs available at their workplace. Conversations included the essential skills for an entry-level employee, earning potential, and industry outlook in the following sectors:

- Agricultural Science and Construction
- Public Service and Medical
- Manufacturing, Supply Chain, and Transportation Logistics
- Business, Hospitality and Entrepreneurship
- Technology and Engineering

POLK COUNTY POST-SECONDARY HANDSHAKE MEMBERS

Florida Southern College
Florida Polytechnic University
Polk State College
St. Leo University
Southeastern University
Webber International University

LEFT Featured on the home page of the web site are the students from Lake Region iMAG Academy who created the name, logo and tagline.

(L to R Marissa Rivers, Jordan Garcia, Noah Harper, and Larry Washington, Jr.)

BE THE FUTURE BE U™ ***is two things: it is a collection of resources and it is a community of engaged students focused on preparing for their future.***

The Be The Future Be U™ web site has been created to support students in achieving their job and career goals while providing parents with helpful information and resources. Developed for use by middle school and high school students, the site contains age-appropriate information on topics ranging from advanced high school course selections to early college admission options. It's all about planning and Polk Vision has launched this on-line tool to help students and their parents connect to local, state and national resources.

In Spring 2018, Polk Vision reached out to students at Lake Region High School iMAG Academy requesting the design of a brochure to promote career planning for students. Be The Future Be U™ was born from their creative collaboration and has evolved beyond a simple brochure to the development of a web site designed to support an on-line community and an interactive information trading post.

DID YOU KNOW?

Polk Vision is the designated member organization representing Polk County as a part of Florida College Access Network.

For more information visit floridacollegeaccess.org

TOP: Over 60 Kathleen High School students provided valuable input to the development of content for Be The Future Be U™ .

BOTTOM: Sixth Grade Class members at Union Academy were introduced to Be The Future Be U™ by Polk Vision Intern, Marissa Barnes. Students navigated the web site, answered a series of questions and then provided feedback and suggestions for content.

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, content for the web site was vetted and contributed to locally by Polk County Public Schools Counseling Services Department and through focus groups and training sessions held with students, school counselors and teachers. These various groups helped identify ways to bridge the many disconnects between students and the career planning process. Students and parents from across the county are encouraged to send in valuable tips as well as gain access to on-line resources. School counselors view the web site as a tool that can be used to reinforce critical information in a fun and interactive way. With input from staff members representing over 40 schools, it has been made clear this initiative is not only wanted but needed for today's students. After conducting in depth focus groups and information sharing sessions with students from ages 13-18, the engagement and excitement for scholarships, academic advice, and inspirational guidance tailored specifically for students like them was made clear. Each student deserves an opportunity to put their best foot forward on the path to success.

What Students Are Saying!

- "I like that the website gives valuable resources to students so they can have what they need to go to the next level, and as a senior, I appreciate it."
  — 12 Grade Student / Alpha Phi Alpha, Men of Tomorrow Institute
- "I like how it shows you what you need to do and how you can do it. It shows you that you need to work harder."
  — 6th Grade Student / Union Academy

DID YOU KNOW?

5% increase in High School Graduation Rate
Polk **80.4%** for 2017-18
State **86.1%** for 2017-18

(Florida Department of Education -Florida's High School Cohort 2017-18 Graduation Rate, March 2018)

1.1% *increase since 2013 of Polk County residents with a high-quality degree or credential Polk **28.2%** in 2013 to **29.3%** in 2017; State **38.6%** in 2013 to **48.3%** in 2017

**Includes post-secondary certificate, after 2014, an associates degree or higher for residents aged 25-64; U.S. Census.*

(Data published by Florida College Access Network-February 2019)

Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is one of the best predictors of whether a high school senior will go on to college. National data reports that seniors who complete the FAFSA are **63%** more likely to enroll in postsecondary education.* **59%** of Florida high school seniors who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) qualify for a Pell Grant, one of the largest forms of federal aid available to low-income students.

However, Florida ranks **34th** in the nation for FAFSA completion.

42.6% of Polk County's 7,220 12th graders completed a FAFSA for the 2018- 2019 school year.

- 2.6% decrease from the 2017-2018 school year.

The decrease is reflected both at a State change **- 1.5%** and National change of **- 0.3%**.

**(2017-National College Access Network analysis of Education Longitudinal Study 2002).*

The Talent Pipeline Team and its work as the Local College Access Network is funded by:

Higher Education Coordinating Council for the Attainment Innovation Partnership Award

College Access and Success Initiative, a program of the Florida Philanthropic Network, made possible through funding from the Helios Education Foundation and the Kresge Foundation and administered through the CASI Challenge Fund within the GiveWell Community Foundation

Helios-Florida College Access LCAN seed grant

Wells Fargo Foundation

City of Lakeland Florida Community Services Grant Funds

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McKeel Academy

BART BLANKENSHIP
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Saddle Creek Logistics Services

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United Way of Central Florida

NAOMI BOYER, Ph.D.*
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Southeastern University

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Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce

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Polk County Public Schools

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LINDSAY ZIMMERMAN
Central Florida Development Council

**Served as Chair thru March 2019*

VISION

All of Polk County will have the fastest, most affordable and most accessible high-speed internet services possible by 2030.

SMART COMMUNITIES

Sustainable economic development, growth, opportunity and innovation are dependent on affordable high speed internet access. Having a shared vision among all of the Polk County communities helps to ensure the alignment of broadband infrastructure necessary to meet the growing demand.

The Smart Communities LEAD Team continues its work in educating and building community consensus around the vital importance of a robust broadband network to support Polk County's economic growth and prosperity.

Affordable, accessible high-speed internet facilitates many critical activities:

- Enables small business to compete in a global marketplace
- Means safer streets and communities
- Supports research and training at colleges and universities
- Greater opportunities for our students
- Better, faster, more effective healthcare

The Smart Communities Team aided by the Government Advisory Team drafted a formal Resolution supporting broadband expansion that has been adopted by:

- City of Auburndale
- City of Bartow
- City of Davenport
- City of Fort Meade
- City of Haines City
- City of Lake Alfred
- City of Lake Wales
- City of Lakeland
- City of Polk City
- City of Winter Haven
- Polk County BoCC
- Town of Dundee

"The Smart Communities Team seeks to identify ways to leverage technology and broadband infrastructure to solve problems that exist in our county. In order to attract STEM jobs we must have the infrastructure in place to accommodate the needs of these businesses. As the Polk County Public School District continues to increase bandwidth to its individual schools, our students will have greater learning opportunities and better testing environments. With the expansion of the municipal fiber network we are laying the groundwork to support future technologies such as 5G networks and better data collection, resulting in improved delivery of services, and improved public safety. Polk County could leverage Smart technology to improve traffic flows, better use of power, water, and other consumable resources. There is virtually no limit to the ways that technology can be used to solve the problems our county faces. We must be forward thinking when addressing our problems in order to achieve the progress we so desire."

— CHAD TAGTOW, CIO & Senior Vice President, Citizens Bank & Trust

ERIC LABBE
Co-Chair
City of Winter Haven

CHAD TAGTOW
Co-Chair
Citizens Bank & Trust

TINA BARRIOS, PH.D.
Polk County Public Schools

CLIFF BENNETT
Polk State College

AMY BLACK
Polk County Public Schools

STACY BOLTON
Lakeland Regional Health

TERRY BRIGMAN
City of Lakeland

RICHARD BROWN
City of Auburndale

FRANK CANOVACA
City of Bartow

TERRI-ANNE CRAWFORD
Polk County Tax Collector

WILLIAM DEWITT
Polk State College

STEVEN ELIAS
Pennoni

ERCAN ELIBOL
Florida Polytechnic University

JEE HOON KIM
City of Auburndale

DOUG LEWIS
Polk County BoCC

PAUL MEYER
City of Lakeland

STEPHANIE MONK
Polk County Sheriff's Office

BILL MUTZ
City of Lakeland

HIEP NGUYEN
City of Winter Haven

NICK NICHOLAS
DSM

BRIAN ROSS
City of Haines City

CHRIS RUDOLPH
Polk County Tax Collector's Office

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STEVE SOWARDS
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PAT STEED
Central Florida Regional Planning Council

MARK THOMAS
Warner University

WILLIAM TWYFORD
City of Winter Haven

BILL WARD
Polk County Sheriff's Office

ABOVE: The Smart Communities Team meeting in February 2019 to discuss the links necessary to create a connected, multi-jurisdictional municipal system and the adoption of technology to facilitate data driven decision making and problem-solving efforts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Polk County ranks in the bottom 25 in the nation for high speed internet use (358th of 381)

(Source: American Community Survey, 2013)

Bottom 10 in the nation for STEM jobs (91st of 100)

(Source: WalletHub, 2014)

Bottom 10 in the nation for households with broadband subscriptions (94th of 100)

(Source: Brookings, 2014)

ABOVE: By walking to school, children can gain their daily recommended amount of physical exercise, as well as gain increased cognitive learning. Communities can become safe places to walk simply by starting with the trip to and from school.

"There are many infrastructure issues we could probably be discussing as part of this Team, but right now our top priority and focus is addressing safe access to schools."

— RYAN KORDEK, Transportation Planning Administrator, Polk TPO

VISION

Before 2030, Polk County will have growth management and infrastructure that protect the environment, enhance quality of life, promote education and economic development, and are economically sustainable.

INFRASTRUCTURE

FOCUS ON SIDEWALKS

Polk Vision and the Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) have a shared goal of reducing pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Sidewalks are an important component of aligning resources to establish pedestrian connections between developed areas, schools and parks, and provide a healthy and safe environment.

On a typical school day, thousands of school children throughout the county are walking along portions of major roads in order to get to and from school or a bus stop and many of these roads lack sidewalks. Polk Vision's Infrastructure Team in partnership with the Polk TPO have evaluated the sidewalk needs surrounding 140 Public Schools in Polk County and identified 179 miles (28%) of major roads within one mile of a school that do not have sidewalks.

As part of this evaluation, the top 74 schools with the least amount of sidewalk were evaluated and a list of sidewalk needs for these schools has been developed.

The Infrastructure Team is sharing this list of candidate projects with municipal and county leaders and is seeking formal resolutions of support for closing these sidewalk gaps. A number of sidewalk projects included in the school sidewalk evaluation have been approved and funded by Polk County and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and scheduled for construction within the next few years. The Infrastructure Team will continue to coordinate with Polk County and various local governments, as well as the Polk TPO and FDOT in order to obtain funding for additional sidewalk needs identified within one mile of a public school.

SARAH CASE
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City of Lakeland

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ANGELA USHER
Polk County Public Schools

NELSON VEGA
City of Haines City

KIMBERLY WARREN
Atkins

ABOVE: During a tour of Lakeland's Traffic Management Center, the Team learned about recently completed street and traffic safety projects.

CANDIDATE SIDEWALK PROJECTS

Phase I (2017) – **10 Public Schools** **59** Candidate Sidewalk Projects (**23 miles**) with an estimated cost of **$8.7 Million**

Phase II (2018) – **20 Public Schools** **84** Candidate Sidewalk Projects (**35 miles**) with an estimated cost of **$13.1 Million**

Phase III (2019) – **63 Corridors** **63** Candidate Sidewalk Projects (**46 miles**) and 137 street light improvements. The estimated cost has not been determined at this time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Polk has one of the largest highway networks in the State of Florida. **There are over 1,000 miles of major roads** traversing all of Polk County's jurisdictions which include State, County and City roads and is one of the largest in the State of Florida.

Approximately **60 percent** of the major roads in Polk County currently **do not have sidewalks** on at least one side of the road.

To address this need, Polk County BoCC has **increased funding** for sidewalk expansion by 100% - **$1 million in 2016 to $2 million today**.

In addition, Polk County Public Schools have allocated **$250,000 each year** to sidewalk projects since 2017.

(Source: Polk TPO)

Visit: polk-county.net/boards-and-committees/sidewalk-advisory-committee for more information.

ABOVE: Students from Inwood Elementary School participate in National Walk & Bike to School Day in October of 2018.

VISION

Polk County will have a Quality of Life that encourages diverse backgrounds to live in harmony while developing physically, spiritually, mentally, and culturally, within a healthy and safe environment.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SAFETY

Drivers in Polk County hit and kill pedestrians and bicyclists more frequently than drivers in larger and more densely populated counties in Florida. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team's goal is to decrease the number of pedestrian and bicyclists injured and killed in crashes. Recognizing changing the culture takes time and commitment, the 35-member Team is comprised of individuals from a wide variety of local governmental agencies, hospitals, K-12, higher education, and private businesses. The Team has devised a multi-pronged approach to making Polk County a safer place for pedestrians and bicyclists based on Education, Enforcement and Engineering. In 2019 the Team's tactical plan was finalized and includes: 1) safety messaging, 2) engineering (including conducting road audits), 3) public outreach, and 4) in-school education.

The work of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team has resulted in a deeper collaboration between the Polk County TPO and Polk County Public Schools to increase educational efforts on the issue of pedestrian and bicycle safety. In addition, the Team has aligned efforts with the Infrastructure Team to prioritize sidewalk coverage around Polk County Public Schools. This year a partnership with the School Health Team resulted in a 50% increase in the number of schools participating in the Walk to School events that took place in October of 2018. Goals for the upcoming year include the launching of a ***Be Seen Be Safe*** educational effort, to implement additional Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety educational training in Polk County Public Schools and to work with our law enforcement to engage in the High Visibility Enforcement campaign.

LEFT: On May 15, 2019 members of the community participated in the Ride & Walk of Silence around Lake Hollingsworth in Lakeland. This event raised awareness of pedestrians and cyclists' rights to public roadways as well as honored those pedestrians and cyclists who have been injured or killed.

"In Polk County, a pedestrian or bicyclist dies every two weeks in a traffic crash. These persons are more than a statistic - everyone has a name and loved ones who will miss them dearly. Every traffic fatality is a tragedy. The Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Team is working with community partners towards a future with zero traffic-related fatalities. Anything less is a continuing tragedy. Success will rely on a "3-E" approach: Engineering (safer streets), Education (better safety habits) and Enforcement (everyone following the rules of the road)."

— TOM DEARDORFF, Executive Director, Polk TPO

POLK COUNTY

FDOT Completing FLORIDA'S STREETS

5 YEARS OF PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE DATA (2014-2018)

HOW MANY CRASHES INVOLVING BICYCLISTS & PEDESTRIANS OCCURRED IN POLK COUNTY OVER 5 YEARS (2014-2018)?

2,371 NUMBER OF CRASHES

1,777 INJURIES

115 FATALITIES

77% of pedestrian and bicycle crashes result in an injury or fatality

19% of all people killed in vehicular crashes were pedestrians or bicyclists

The Lakeland-Winter Haven metropolitan area is ranked the 5th most dangerous metropolitan area for pedestrians in the 2019 Dangerous by Design Report.*

The Lakeland-Winter Haven metropolitan area became more dangerous for pedestrians between 2016 and 2019*

1 Pedestrians or cyclists **INJURED A DAY**

1 Pedestrians or cyclists **KILLED EVERY 2 WEEKS**

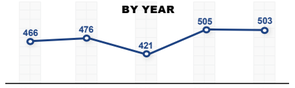
Pedestrian and bicycle fatalities per year per 100,000 population:

3.65 IN FDOT DISTRICT 1 vs **3.49** IN POLK

PEDESTRIAN CRASHES	BICYCLE CRASHES
1,076 INJURIES	696 INJURIES
94 FATALITIES	21 FATALITIES
1 in 5 pedestrians hit by motorists were killed or severely injured	1 in 9 bicyclists hit by motorists were killed or severely injured

WHEN DID CRASHES OCCUR?

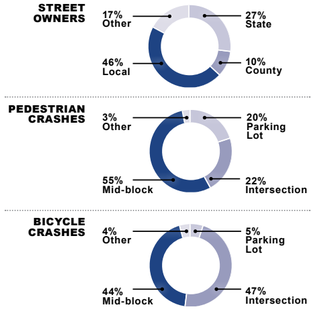
BY YEAR



BY MONTH BETWEEN 2014-2018

*Red background indicates peak season

WHERE DID CRASHES COMMONLY OCCUR?



ADDITIONAL FACTORS

60% of crashes occurred in daylight

Lighting conditions during fatal crashes:

20% Daylight 49% Dark

4% Dusk/Dawn 25% Dark but lighted

23% of fatalities involved alcohol

This Data Applies to Polk County

Sources: Signal Four Analytics 2014–2018 * Smart Growth American Dangerous by Design 2019

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Florida Southern College

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Florida Bicycle Association

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ED TRAIL
City of Haines City

TODD VARGO
City of Lakeland

NELSON VEGA
City of Haines City

DAVID WHEELER
Florida DOT

KATHLEEN WRIGHT
Polk County Public Schools

QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION

Polk County will have a Quality of Life that encourages diverse backgrounds to live in harmony while developing physically, spiritually, mentally, and culturally, within a healthy and safe environment.

ABOVE: On May 15, 2019 the Quality of Life Team took a tour of the various resource centers serving the Florence Villa and Boggy Bottoms neighborhoods which included the Winter Haven Recreation Center, PEP Education Center, and the Wilfred Smith Community Center.

> "We need to look at the places where there are no lanes intersecting so that we can fill in those gaps in services through connectivity."
>
> — STEVE BISSONNETTE, President, VISTE

QUALITY OF LIFE

The Quality of Life LEAD Team is comprised of representatives from across Polk County including non-profits, social services, government, health care, education, and faith-based organizations. Through this diverse membership, different perspectives are gleaned when probing the wide ranging and complex issues contributing to the Quality of Life in Polk County.

Although health is one of the important domains of quality of life, there are many other aspects — jobs, housing, schools, as well as natural and built environments. Intangibles such as culture, values, and spirituality are also key to overall quality of life that add to the complexity of its definition.

Throughout the Fall of 2018, the Team hosted a number of guest speakers and explored a variety of topics in order to set the Team's focus for the coming year. The Team also sought feedback and guidance from other Polk Vision LEAD Teams to determine how best to align efforts in achieving the long term vision of the organization.

What the Team discovered was that regardless of the topic, a recurring observation was the need for deeper awareness, understanding and broader community engagement. Polk County is so vast that even providers serving the same population can be unaware of the other's range of services. In an attempt to best manage these efforts, the Team decided to focus on the Winter Haven community, and then methodically advance their work to other areas of the County.

Current and future community outreach strategies are geared to share information and resources through an ongoing learning network allowing cross-sector collaboration with other Polk Vision LEAD Teams. Progress is being made on improving engagement through knowledge and information sharing among Team members. Broadening community-wide involvement will further assist in linking people to services, as well as create opportunities to connect, learn, and engage ... for all aspects of quality of life.

STEVE BISSONNETTE
Co-Chair
VISTE

JOY JOHNSON
Co-Chair
Polk County BoCC

MARCIA ANDRESEN
Polk County BoCC

BRAD BEATTY
Heart for Winter Haven

PENNY BORGIA
United Way of Central Florida

TIM BROWN
NE Winter Haven Neighborhood Association

TAYLOR FREEMAN
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

DR. DANIEL HAIGHT
Lakeland Regional Health

MINNIE HASSEL
Association for Inwood Community, Inc.

CATHY HATCH
Polk County BoCC

TIM MITCHELL
Parker Street Ministries

ANDY PALMER
City of Winter Haven

CRAIG PICKOS
FloridiansForRecovery – Polk County

ROB QUAM
Lake Wales Care Center

BEN RUCH
Polk County Public Schools

GALE SHARP
Polk County BoCC

BRENDA TORRES
Central Florida Regional Planning Council

NICOLE WALKER
University of Florida/IFAS

JEFF WARE
Winter Haven Hospital – BayCare

STEVE WARNER, Ed.D.
Polk County Public Schools

NAT WEST
Winter Haven PEP

DEE DEE WRIGHT
Polk County Public Schools

DID YOU KNOW?

25.4% of Polk County Children (18 and under) Live in Poverty.

FL Office of Economic and Demographic Research (2016)

16.4% of Polk County Residents Live in Poverty.

FL Office of Economic and Demographic Research (2016)

During the 2018 - 2019 School Year Over **3,736** Polk County School Students Experienced Homelessness.

(Polk County Public Schools)

ABOVE: Central Florida Health Care hosted the Team in March for a discussion on improving community engagement and how to connect the multiple resources and agencies available for residents throughout the county.

LEFT: Winter Haven Chief of Police, Charlie Bird, presented the "Neighborhood on the Move" initiative with Anita Silwal from the City of Winter Haven to the Quality of Life Team at Garner Elementary School.

"There have been many 'aha' moments expressed by Team members who continue to learn from each other through these alignment meetings. I am energized by the future opportunities ahead of us. To be part of something that positively affects people and the community in which I live is rewarding."

— JOY JOHNSON, Relations Administrator, Health & Human Services Division, Polk County BoCC

BUILDING A HEALTHIER POLK

An Expanded Focus

In 2012, the Building a Healthier Polk Initiative began as a community-driven response to the startling obesity rates in Polk County. With obesity directly linked to chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes which are major causes of death and preventable hospital stays, the data galvanized a movement among stakeholders across Polk County. Working cooperatively with the Florida Department of Health, Polk Vision convened a large cross-sector group of subject matter experts to prioritize objectives in addressing the alarming rate of obesity in our community. This group came to be known as Building a Healthier Polk.

Reducing the obesity rate and improving the physical health of our citizens will continue to be of great importance to the work of collaborative partners. However, Polk County's 2019 Community Health Assessment ranked mental health problems as the #1 most important health problem to address in order to improve the health of the community. With a reported rise in the numbers of suicides, hospitalizations for mental disorders and self-inflicted injuries, the call for collaborative action is clear.

During the next year, Polk Vision together with the Florida Department of Health in Polk County and other key partners will begin exploring how the Building a Healthier Polk initiative can be expanded to include ways to better align supports for mental and behavioral health services in our community.

"Through conducting regular community health assessments, we are able to learn about the health and quality of life needs our residents face. While obesity continues to be a major concern in our community, several data sources and key community partners have indicated that mental and behavioral health has emerged as an area of high need. Through expanding the work of the Building a Healthier Polk Initiative, we will be able to collaboratively address the most urgent health needs of our county."

— DR. JOY JACKSON, Director of the Florida Department of Health in Polk County

VISION

Reduce the Obesity rate (BMI<30 in Polk County to less than the state average (from 36.9% to 26.4%).

WORKSITE WELLNESS

POLK WELLNESS PROFESSIONALS IN THE LEAD ON WELLNESS

The Polk Wellness Professionals have been instrumental in the Building a Healthier Polk movement since it began in 2012. This group has been focused on tactics to support, develop and enhance Worksite Wellness programs in local businesses. Their expertise and resources have been invaluable to raising awareness and advancing a culture of health in our community.

WELLNESS EXCHANGE EVENTS

During 2018-2019 the Worksite Wellness Team conducted two roundtable events which provided an opportunity for wellness and HR representatives from local businesses to come together to learn about best-practices regarding worksite wellness and share ideas.

They also introduced and reviewed the new CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard. This newly revised ScoreCard provides an evidence-based tool for businesses to asses and improve worksite wellness programs and policies.

At the conclusion of the 2018-2019 volunteer year, it was determined that, moving forward, Polk Wellness Professionals will take the lead on Worksite Wellness initiatives in Polk County. Polk Vision, the Florida Department of Health in Polk County, and Building a Healthier Polk, will continue to raise awareness in support of the efforts of this group.

LEFT: Bank of Central Florida started their own employee wellness program, called Intelligent Living, this past year. Through this program, employees hear from guest speakers on a variety of health and wellness topics, receive monthly newsletters, and participate in health related challenges and activities.

DID YOU KNOW?

The CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard is a **free** validated **self-assessment tool** that assists employers in identifying gaps in their health promotion programs and helps them to prioritize high-impact strategies for health promotion at their worksites.

To learn more, visit: cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/healthscorecard/index

"We're committed to providing wellness activities and education for our employees because we care about their well-being. We strive to encourage healthy habits among our employees, and we hope other local organizations join us in these efforts. Together, we're helping to build a healthier Polk, one employee at a time."

— SARAH BETZER, VP/Human Resources Director, Bank of Central Florida

LIZ ANTAYA
Co-Chair
Stahl & Associates Insurance

DEBBIE ZIMMERMAN
Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

KELLY ANDREWS
Kelly Andrews, LLC

SARAH BETZER
Bank of Central Florida

JULI DAVIS
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

DONNA KAY DINKINS
Senior Solutions Group

SCHATZIE HAINES
Community Volunteer

ALISON KENNEDY-HAND
Florida Presbyterian Homes

JENNA LEVINE
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

BRITTANY LYNN
BayCare

KAREN MOORE
Peace River Center

ANDREA NIKOLAI
University of Florida/IFAS

LAUREL SMITH
Polk State College

MARIE WILMOT
FIPR Institute and Phosphate Research

PRIMARY CARE

For the past several years, the Primary Care Team has focused on preventing and reducing childhood obesity through the 5-2-1-0 prescription program.

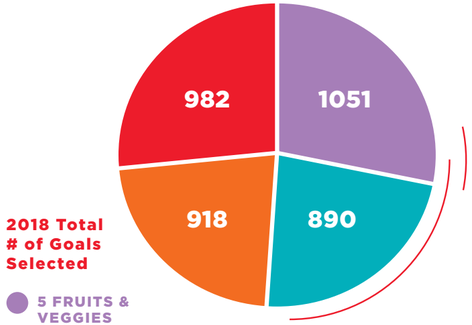
This program aims to provide simple steps towards achieving and maintaining a healthy weight among children by developing healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

2018 CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES

- A total of 27 pediatric providers, including pediatricians and pediatric ARNPs participated, representing 3 practices across Polk County.
- A total of 1,587 prescriptions were disseminated and 3,841 goals were selected by patients.
- The most popular goal selected was eating 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
  - This goal was selected 1,051 times.
- The least popular goal selected was 2 hours or less of recreational screen time each day.
  - This goal was selected 890 times.

VISION Reduce the Obesity rate (BMI<30 in Polk County to less than the state average (from 36.9% to 26.4%).

2018 Total # of Goals Selected

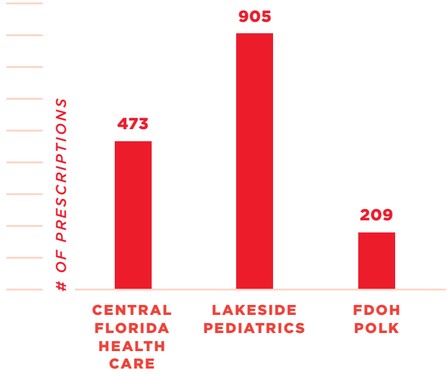


- 5 FRUITS & VEGGIES
- 2 HOURS OR LESS SCREEN TIME
- 1 HOUR OR MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- 0 SUGARY DRINKS

"Polk Vision's 5-2-1-0 program is a wonderful intervention to address childhood obesity. During my pediatric clinical rotation, I gave 5-2-1-0 prescriptions to my patients and their families. Through these prescriptions, it opened the door to have conversations and answer questions about healthy eating and healthy living. To successfully reduce the incidence of and prevent complications from obesity, it will require efforts not only from the patient, but also from those involved in their life: families, healthcare providers, and the community at large."

— SAMMIE INEVIL, MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner Student, Florida Southern College School of Nursing and Health Sciences

2018 Total # Prescriptions Disseminated Per Practice



ABOVE: Dr. Anchundia, a pediatrician with Central Florida Health Care Center in Haines City, assists a patient with making healthy choices using the 5-2-1-0 prescription.

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE 5-2-1-0 PARTNERSHIP

The 2018-2019 school year was the first year of implementing the 5-2-1-0 prescription tool into the ARNP curriculum at Florida Southern College. The goal is for students to utilize the tool with pediatric patients during practicum rotations and discuss use of the 5-2-1-0 prescription with their primary care preceptors.

In the fall of 2018, the Team hosted a forum on "Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids" for Florida Southern students, emphasizing the local resources and programs that are available to fight childhood obesity and promote healthy habits. Team Co-Chairs made additional presentations at the beginning of each semester with students who would be using the prescription tool in their clinical rotations.

In the spring of 2019, the Team was contacted by a Florida Southern ARNP student who was completing a clinical rotation at a local pediatric office. She had been using the 5-2-1-0 prescription tool in her rotation and shared the idea with the other providers at the office, who expressed interest in participating. The Team visited the office to introduce the program to the providers and distribute the 5-2-1-0 toolkits. This additional practice has now been added to the Team's data collection as a fourth participating partner.

HOLLY VIDA
Co-Chair
Bartow Regional Medical Center - BayCare

SUZANNE WRIGHT
Co-Chair
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

PENNY BORGIA
United Way of Central Florida

DR. DEB CANTERO
Florida Southern College

ERMELINDA CENTENO
Central Florida Health Care

DR. SAIRAH CHACHAD
Lakeside Pediatrics

DR. LINDA COMER
Florida Southern College

DR. JOY JACKSON
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

JENNA LEVINE
Florida Department of Health in Polk County

PAULA MCGHEE
Polk County BoCC

DR. MELANIE MICHAEL
Florida Southern College

XIOMARA RIVERA
Simply Healthcare

SCHOOL HEALTH

Establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behaviors. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Recognizing that public health and education serve the same children, there has been a call for greater alignment between the education system and health sectors. This includes an intentional integration and collaboration of services aimed at improving each child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

In response to this call, the Polk Vision School Health LEAD Team began implementation of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework during year one of the Healthy Schools pilot.

The pilot was created to address the alarming rate of overweight and obese students in Polk County. Family and community involvement in schools is important to the academic achievement, social/emotional development and overall health of students. When schools engage families in meaningful ways, families in turn can support and reinforce healthy behaviors at home. Community agencies and volunteer groups can provide valuable resources to enhance student health and learning outcomes through after school and organized off-campus activities.

The coming year will find the Team with continued emphasis on increasing physical activity and improved nutrition. Focus will be placed on strengthening the pilot schools' campus and community network and implementing strategies to improve the overall Healthy School environment. The Team plans to expand its efforts to include social-emotional health initiatives at each of the pilot schools.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 out of every 3 children are **overweight or obese**

Only 1 out of every 3 children are **physically active every day**

Only 1 in 2 children **eat enough daily fruits and vegetables**

(Alliance for a Healthier Generation)

VISION Reduce the Obesity rate (BMI<30 in Polk County to less than the state average (from 36.9% to 26.4%).

LEFT: A student at Inwood Elementary having her helmet fitted in preparation for Bike to School Day.

RIGHT: On April 23, 2019 during a meeting of the Polk County Public Schools Board, Wahneta Elementary was recognized as a Community Health Champion for providing a healthy school environment for students and families.

(L to R: Holly Vida, Kim Long, Colette O'Keeffe-Boggs, Marlene Taveras, Nildalis Caraballo, Lisa Miller)

"BayCare's Children's Wellness and Safety Center wishes to express its gratitude to Polk Vision for opening doors for us in the community and the Polk County School District. With their assistance we have made great strides in educating families on the importance of physical activity and nutrition. We look forward to continuing the partnership in an effort to create a healthier Polk County!"

— COLETTE O'KEEFFE-BOGGS, Senior Children's Wellness and Safety Specialist, BayCare - St. Joseph's Children's Wellness and Safety Center

JENNA KACZMARSKI
Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

KATHLEEN WRIGHT
Co-Chair
Polk County Public Schools

KAREN BESSINGER
Lakeland Regional Health

TIFFANI FRITZSCHE
Peace River Center

IVY GONZALEZ
Tri-County Human Services

AUDREY KELLEY-FRITZ
Polk County Public Schools

DEANNA KIRKLAND
Florida Department of Health
in Polk County

ILEANA KNISS
Peace River Center

JENNA LEVINE
Florida Department of Health
in Polk County

MENDI MCDOWELL
BayCare - St. Joseph's
Children's Wellness and
Safety Center

ANDREA NIKOLAI
University of Florida/IFAS

COLETTE O'KEEFFE-BOGGS
BayCare - St. Joseph's
Children's Wellness and
Safety Center

SHERRY SCOTT
Polk County Public Schools

DEIDRE SKAGGS
Polk County Public Schools

ABOVE: Students, parents, volunteers and faculty participated during National Walk & Bike to School Day at Wahneta Elementary School.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS PILOT STRATEGIES

The 2018-2019 school year marked the second year of the Healthy Schools pilot aimed at improving student health and academic achievement. Each Healthy School implemented tactics to increase the consumption of healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables combined with increased physical activity.

Recognizing that every school has a unique set of circumstances, flexibility in adopting a range of strategies was encouraged so that school leaders and staff could best serve the needs of their students and families.

Highland City Elementary

- Nutrition Lessons
- Bike Rodeo and Helmet Fitting
- National Walk & Bike to School Day
- 5-2-1-0 Lesson and Campaign

Inwood Elementary

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Vegetable of the month
- Bike Rodeo and Helmet Fitting
- National Walk & Bike to School Day
- 5-2-1-0 Lesson and Campaign

Medulla Elementary

- School Garden
- Brain Breaks
- National Walk & Bike to School Day
- 5-2-1-0 Lesson and Campaign

Padgett Elementary

- Brain Breaks
- Nutrition Lessons
- National Walk & Bike to School Day
- 5-2-1-0 Lesson and Campaign

Wahneta Elementary

- Morning Mile
- Nutrition Lessons
- Brain Breaks
- Pulse Check Lesson
- Food Nutrition Labels Lesson
- Lunch Bunch – SEL Goals
- National Walk & Bike to School Day
- 5-2-1-0 Lesson and Campaign

VISION Before 2030, Polk County will have a comprehensive system of government that is effective, efficient, diverse and responsive to the basic needs of its citizens.

LEFT: Held at Polk State College Center for Public Safety, the 2018 Mayors Roundtable included 11 Mayors as well as the Chairman of the Polk County BoCC. The discussion was moderated by Katie Worthington Decker, Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce.

GOVERNMENT

The Government Advisory Team's mission is to bring together all levels of local government to create more awareness, cooperation and support of the long term Vision for Polk County. This includes providing review and guidance on both foreseen and unforeseen opportunities that potentially impact the organization's objectives and the work of its various LEAD Teams as established by the Polk Vision Board of Directors. The Government Team also works to effectively engage citizens by producing the Leadership Exchange Series which includes educational offerings such as the Mayors Roundtable, State of the County, Legislative Warm-Up, and other topically relevant workshops.

2018 MAYORS ROUNDTABLE

For the 8th consecutive year, the Polk Vision Government Team hosted a half-day roundtable for the Mayors of Polk County. This unique event allows local elected leaders to discuss topics critical to their communities and the county as a whole.

Mayors from across Polk County together with the Polk County BoCC Chair sat down on September 12, 2018 for a wide ranging discussion. Topics included transportation, infrastructure, broadband, affordable housing, water issues, public safety, and fire rescue. Also discussed was how to improve coordination among city and county leaders when addressing state legislators regarding shared concerns.

2018 BALLOT READY

In October 2018, Polk Vision conducted a voter education forum in partnership with the Polk County History Center. The event featured speakers who explained the numerous ballot amendments and referendums that appeared on the 2018 General Election Ballot. Topics included the Constitution Revision Commission, Florida Legislative and Citizens Initiatives, the Half-Cent Sales Tax, Homestead Exemption, and Polk County Charter Amendments.

2019 LEGISLATIVE WARM-UP

On January 18, 2019 renowned author, political scientist, and University of South Florida professor Dr. Susan MacManus moderated a panel discussion with members of the Polk County Legislative Delegation.

With the 2019 Legislative Session bringing changes in key leadership positions in both the House and Senate, the discussion included an overview of how these changes may impact the state as well as other important issues likely to be addressed during the 2019 Legislative Session.

2019 STATE OF THE COUNTY UPDATE

The State of the County Update held on April 23, 2019, brought together residents from across Polk County to hear from Board of County Commissioners' Chair, George Lindsey, and County Manager, Jim Freeman.

Topics addressed included county investments in election equipment and a new fire station; the Florida Poly Corridor; the Polk County Water Cooperative; and an update on infrastructure projects being forecast to keep pace with Polk County's growing population.

> "The Government Advisory Team is a critical cog in the Polk Vision wheel. Working with the other teams allows the group to advocate on issues that impact the county. The members are a cross-section of dedicated leaders throughout Polk County with the common goal of making positive changes to the quality of life of our residents. It has been an honor to serve as Co-Chair the past 2 years and I look forward to continuing to identify the challenges, opportunities and goals that will showcase Polk County to the rest of the state and country."
>
> — MATT MUCCI, Regional Director, External Affairs, AT&T

TOP: 2018 Ballot Ready Panelists *(L to R) Carol Walker and Sharon Hammerberg from Polk County Property Appraiser's Office; Polk County Supervisor of Elections, Lori Edwards; Judge John Stargel, 10th Judicial Circuit Court; Alice Hunt, member of the Polk County Charter Review Commission; Angela Usher, Polk County Public Schools' District.*

MIDDLE: Delegation members in attendance for the 2019 Legislative Warm-Up *(L to R) Florida House Representatives Melony Bell – District 56; Josie Tomkow – District 39; Colleen Burton – District 40; Sam Killebrew – District 41; and Senator Kelli Stargel – District 22. The event was hosted by Polk State College Center for Public Safety.*

BOTTOM: During the 2019 State of the County Update, Chairman Lindsey (L) answered questions regarding economic development and jobs growth. The event was hosted by the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

CHRISTINE GODING
Co-Chair
Community Volunteer

MATT MUCCI
Co-Chair
AT&T

MARGARITA ALFARO
Polk County Tax Collector's Office

STACY BUTTERFIELD
Polk County Clerk of Courts & County Comptroller

BETSY CLEVELAND
Polk County Supervisor of Elections Office

MEAGIN COLSON
Polk County Sheriff's Office

SUSAN COPELAND
Polk Education Foundation

GWINNELL JARVIS
Polk County Sheriff's Office

TRACY MOUNCEY
Tracy Mouncey & Associates

DONNA SHEEHAN
City of Winter Haven

MICHAEL SPAKE
Lakeland Regional Health

LEA ANN THOMAS
Polk County BoCC

LYNN WILSON
Polk County School Board

The 2018-2019 Leadership Exchange Series was made possible through funding by AT&T, Citizens Bank & Trust, and Duke Energy.

LEADERSHIP POLK

As the only countywide leadership development program in Polk County, Leadership Polk is comprised of individuals who have demonstrated a high level of civic engagement in their local community. Started in 2007, the program brings together accomplished leaders from across the county with the goal of developing a diverse network of resourceful, informed and proactive visionaries committed to building a more vibrant future for our community.

Over the course of ten months, the program immerses participants in an inspiring and enlightening curriculum that examines critical issues that impact our region. Leadership Polk is timely, topically relevant, dynamic, and exposes participants to a broad range of perspectives through site visits, facilitated conversations and experiential learning. Most importantly, lasting relationships are forged with engaged, cross-sector leaders from all over Polk County.

TOP: Class XII at the Detroit Tigers training facilities at Publix Field - Joker Marchant Stadium in Lakeland.

BOTTOM: Draken International hosted the Class during a visit to the Lakeland Linder Airport.

TOP LEFT: The class was provided the unique opportunity to tour Merlin Magic Making in Lake Wales where LEGO creations are designed and fabricated for world-wide distribution.

TOP RIGHT: During a visit to MaxiJet. in Dundee, class members learned how this local, family owned irrigation company is leading the way in water conservation innovations.

BOTTOM: While experiencing the University of Florida/IFAS Citrus Research & Education Center (CREC) in Lake Alfred, participants learned how scientists are studying ways to manage the Diaprepes root weevil which is a serious threat to Florida groves today.

VISION

Before 2030, Polk County will have leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premiere place to live, learn, work and play.

Did You Know?

- **323** participants have graduated from the program
- **13 of the 17** municipalities have been represented
- **31** business categories have been represented
- **10%** of participants represent a diverse minority population
- **45%** of participants identify as female

"Having grown up in Polk County, attended college here, and worked here most of my adult life, I thought I knew most of what there was to know about Polk County. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that not only is there so much more to the county than I knew, but I also had the opportunity to meet leaders from all over the county with a vision and a passion to further enhancing our great county. Our larger cities and smaller towns all bring something unique to the tapestry of Polk County."

— MARYEMMA BACHELDER, Director of Communications, Lake Wales Medical Center, Class XII

LEADERSHIP POLK ALUMNI

The Alumni Association is committed to remaining a strong and relevant resource for its members as well as advancing the work of Polk Vision. Alumni members are encouraged to uphold the purpose of Polk Vision and through their actions have a positive impact on the economic health, leadership and quality of life in the community.

WE TRULY BELIEVE:

- The Leadership Polk experience should be the beginning of a journey of intensified awareness, interest, concern, and pride of our communities.
- That membership in the Alumni Association will continue to assist you in advancing your goals and objectives as an investment for professional, civic, and personal development.
- Through relationships with colleagues who share similar involvement, commitment, and passion, Alumni will discover avenues for Polk County to become an even greater place to live, learn, work, and play.

VISION Before 2030, Polk County will have leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premiere place to live, learn, work and play.

ABOVE: Alumni members enjoying an evening of networking at Revival in downtown Lakeland.

ABOVE: Alumni events are a great way for class members to reconnect. Here Alumni members are enjoying a fun night out at Publix Field at Joker Marchant Stadium.

ABOVE: An excursion in June, brought together over 40 members of the Leadership Polk Alumni Association for an in-depth look at the new SunTrax tolling facility. Expert presentations from the Florida Turnpike Association, Florida Polytechnic University Advanced Mobility Institute and the Polk County Transportation Planning Organization provided insights in the areas of interstate tolling systems as well as autonomous and self-driving vehicles. Following the discussion, alumni members hopped on a bus for a tour of the new SunTrax facility.

JOHN BOHDE
Chair
Polk County BoCC
Class VI

DEENA WARE
Chair-Elect
Town of Dundee
Class IV

LORI MARTINI
Immediate Past Chair
GiveWell Community Foundation
Class VI

MJ CARNEVALE
Treasurer
City of Winter Haven
Class IX

SHAWN SHERROUSE
Secretary
City of Lakeland
Class IV

STEPHANIE COLON
Programs and Events Chair
Prime Meridian Bank
Class VIII

ALAN RAYL
Membership Chair
Rayl Engineering and Surveying, Inc.
Class IV

KATHRYN BEVILACQUA-ELY
At Large
Grater Bartow Chamber of Commerce
Class XI

PENNY BORGIA
At Large
United Way of Central Florida
Class II

STACY BUTTERFIELD
At Large
Polk County Clerk of Courts & County Comptroller
Class III

SARAH CASE
At Large
Next Level Planning & Permitting
Class V

ED LUNZ
At Large
The Lunz Group
Class IV

KIM LONG
Executive Director
Polk Vision
Class I

YOUTH LEADERSHIP POLK CLASS III

On the evening of July 31, 2019, 25 of the original 32 participants were celebrated for having successfully completed the necessary course work and attendance requirements of this evolving program.

The evening concluded with the Leadership Polk Alumni Association awarding $500.00 scholarships to four of the graduating students. These scholarship awards are being held and administered by the Polk Education Foundation.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP POLK

Youth Leadership Polk completed its third pilot year in the summer of 2019. The program is made possible through a collaborative partnership between Polk Vision and Girls Inc. of Lakeland and Bartow; Girls Inc. of Winter Haven; and Boys & Girls Club of Polk County.

Designed as a youth engagement program, the experience is intended to instill students with a sense of belonging, support social and emotional development, explore potential careers, and expand their knowledge of Polk County.

Youth Leadership Polk Class III was comprised of 8th through 12th grade students convened in day-long sessions, once a week for seven weeks. Students learned components of environmental responsibility, government and public policy, history and culture, community health, and public safety while expanding their academic knowledge.

Members of the Leadership Polk Alumni Association and other dedicated business leaders from across the county volunteered as guest speakers, hosts and instructors. This year's curriculum was expanded to include Junior Achievement instruction modules covering financial literacy in preparation for a visit to Finance Park in Tampa.

Before 2030, Polk County will have leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premiere place to live, learn, work and play.

LET'S TALK BUSINESS

During a visit to LEGOLAND Florida Resort, students learned about the various careers available in the number one economic driver to Florida's economy - tourism.

CAREER PLANNING

Florida Southern College hosted students for a discussion regarding pathways to successful careers. Topics included how to apply for scholarships, resume writing, and dressing professionally. The day concluded with a tour of the nursing department where participants learned about careers in the medical field.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Mind-Body connections were made during a visit to Bok Tower Gardens. Students received yoga instruction followed by a lesson on nutrition as they prepared smoothies from a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

2019 VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS & GUEST SPEAKERS

NOLEN BAILEY
CPS Investment Advisors

STACY BUTTERFIELD
Polk County Clerk of Courts & County Comptroller

BETSY CLEVELAND
Polk County Supervisor of Elections Office

STEPHANIE COLON
Prime Meridian Bank

TAVIA CONNER
City of Haines City

PAM CRAVEN, Ph.D.
Learning Resource Center

PATRICK FAGAN
Citizens Bank & Trust

DERIC FEACHER
City of Haines City

CHANDRA FREDERICK
Polk County BoCC

ABDIEL GONZALEZ
5th and Hall

STACY HEACOCK-WEEKS
Heacock Insurance

CHRISTINA INGRASSIA
Florida Southern College

JAMES KEENE
City of Haines City

JEN LAY
Keller Williams Realty, Inc.

JOSH LEWIS
Morgan Stanley

LORI MARTINI
GiveWell Community Foundation

HONORABLE DANA MOORE
10th Judicial Circuit Court

TRACY MOUNCEY
Tracy Mouncey and Associates

ORATHAI NORTHERN, Ph.D.
Polk State College

BONNIE PARKER
Citizens Bank & Trust

SARA BETH REYNOLDS
Polk County Public Schools

MARTHA SANTIAGO, Ed.D.
Commissioner, Polk County BoCC

GEORGE TINSLEY
Tinsley Family Concessions, Inc.

ASHLEY TROUTMAN
Northwestern Mutual

DEENA WARE
Town of Dundee

PHIL WEGMAN
Furr & Wegman Architects, P.A.

CREATIVE ARTS INDUSTRY

Careers in arts & entertainment took center stage when students visited Harrison School of the Arts for an in-depth look into the world of sound engineering.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SAFETY

An entire day was devoted to exposing students to the many and varied career opportunities in county and city government and law enforcement.

The itinerary included a visit with Polk County Commissioner, Dr. Martha Santiago. Students then were assigned roles and took part in a mock County Commission Meeting.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The day-long capstone experience began with a visit to Finance Park in Tampa. Students were randomly assigned various scenarios related to personal income and financial decision-making. They were tasked with establishing banking services and managing expenses such as housing, transportation, insurance, furnishings, and health care, as well as making investment decisions.

TOP LEFT: Bonnie Parker of Citizens Bank & Trust assisted with the student learning exercises during the visit to Finance Park.

TOP RIGHT: At the Polk County Sheriff Aviation Unit students learned the role of aviation in law enforcement and the tactical vehicles that are used in protecting citizens.

BOTTOM: Polk State College Lakeland Campus hosted the concluding capstone activities. Leadership Polk Alumni volunteered to review resume's and perform mock interviews with students.

HOST LOCATIONS

Bok Tower Gardens

Catapult

Central Florida Media Group

CNP

Concord Coffee

Florida Polytechnic University

Florida Southern College

Gourmet Goodies

Harrison School of the Arts

JA Finance Park

Lakeland Regional Health

LEGOLAND Florida Resort

MADE

Polk County BoCC

Polk County History Center

Polk County Sheriff's Office (Support Services Hangar)

Polk State College

Ritz Theatre

Rochelle School of the Arts

Southeastern University

SUN 'n FUN

SunTrax

VISTE

"I truly enjoyed interviewing 'my' girls and having open discussion with them. Even though the intent was for me to teach them, in reality we learned a lot from each other."

— LORI MARTINI, Chief Philanthropic Officer, GiveWell Community Foundation

2018 - 2019
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Boys and Girls Club of Polk County

PENNY BORGIA
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Polk County Public Schools

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ANGIE ELLISON
InnerAct Alliance

KAY FIELDS
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TIFFANI GOZDUR*
Citizens Bank & Trust

KRISTEN HATHCOCK
Polk County Public Schools

LAUREN SPRINGFIELD
Lakeland Regional Health

CURTIS REDDICK
Boys and Girls Club of Polk County

HOLLY VIDA
Bartow Regional Medical Center - Baycare

NICOLE WALKER
University of Florida/IFAS

LISA WATKINS
Winter Haven Housing Authority

** 2019 Volunteer Instructor*

TOP: While their students were participating in mock interviews, a total of 28 parents and guardians received information on how to navigate career planning and tips on accessing resources including an introduction to the Be The Future Be U™ web site.

BOTTOM: Leadership Polk Alumni Association sponsored a graduation dinner for students and their families with a key note address from Troy Smith with Geico.

Youth Leadership Polk is a Program of Polk Vision and is funded in part by Leadership Polk Alumni Association. Class III was sponsored by:

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Bok Tower Gardens
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CareerSource Polk
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Children's Home Society
Circle B Bar Reserve
Citizens Bank & Trust
Citizens' Oversight Committee
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DSM Technology Consultants
Duke Energy
Early Learning Coalition of Polk County
FIPR Institute
First Baptist Institutional Church
Five Star Family Growers
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Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Polytechnic University
Florida Ready to Work
Florida Turnpike Enterprise
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Lakeland Linder International Airport
Lakeland Magic
Lakeland Regional Health
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Learning Resource Center
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Lenny's Grill & Subs - Bartow
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PEARLS
Peace River Center
Pediatric Partners of Winter Haven
Pennoni
Peterson & Myers
PGTV
Polk Arts Alliance
Polk Career Academies
Polk County 4-H
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
Polk County Clerk of Courts
Polk County Council PTA
Polk County Farm Bureau
Polk County Fire Department
Polk County History Center
Polk County Library Cooperative
Polk County Long Range Planning
Polk County Property Appraiser
Polk County Public Schools
Polk County School Board
Polk County Sheriff's Office
Polk County Supervisor of Elections
Polk County Tourism & Sports Marketing
Polk County Tax Collector
Polk Education Association
Polk Education Foundation
Polk Museum of Art
Polk State College
Polk State College Center for Public Safety
Polk State College Foundation
Polk State Corporate College
Polk Transportation Planning Organization
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United Way of Central Florida
University of South Florida
Visit Central Florida
VISTE
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Webber International University
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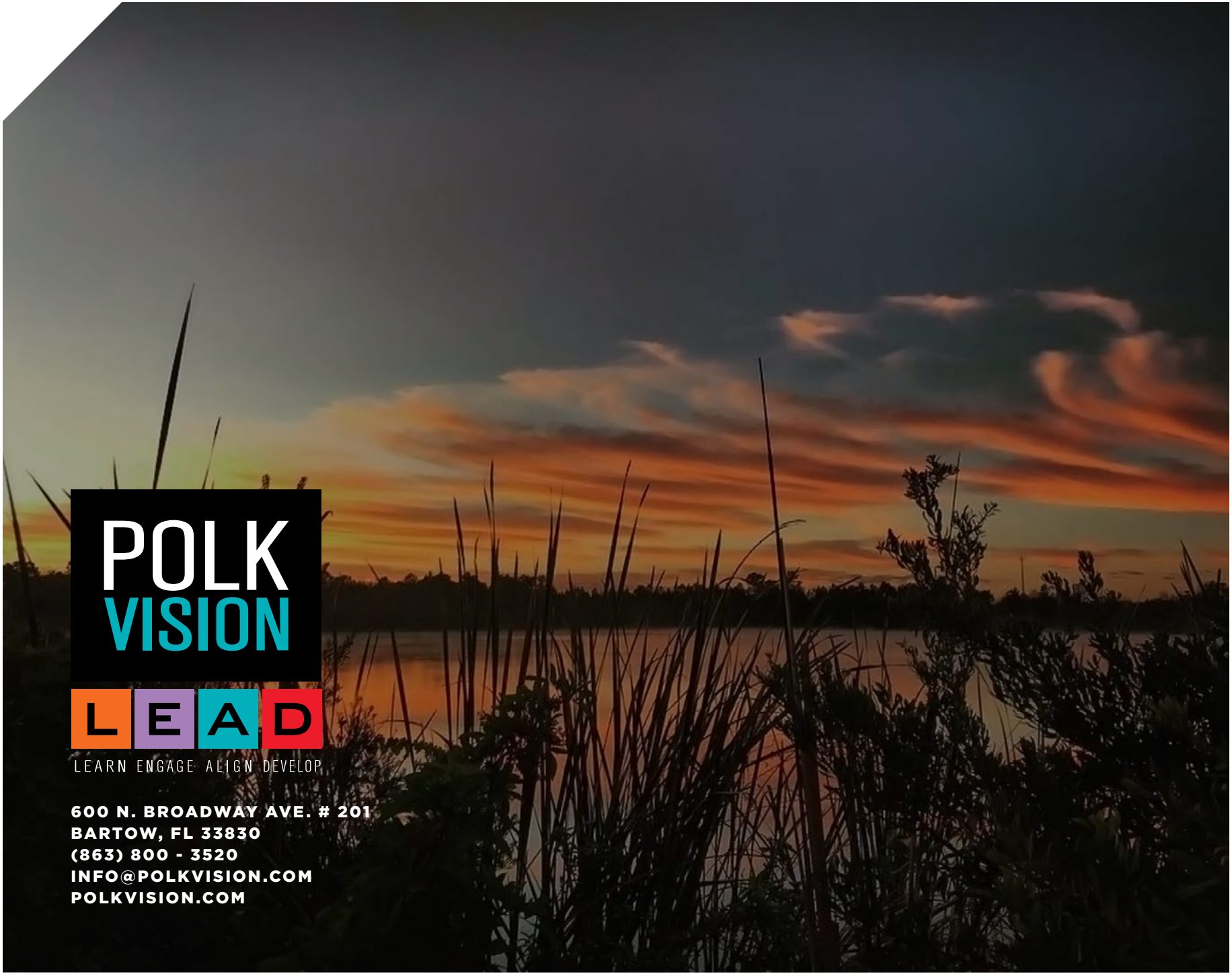
Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce
Winter Haven Economic Development Council, Inc.
Winter Haven Hospital
Winter Haven Housing Authority
Winter Haven Police Department
Winter Haven Public Education Partnership
Winter Haven Recreation & Culture Center
Woman's Club of Winter Haven
YMCA of West Central Florida



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