

**Florida Association of District School Superintendents
State Board of Education
March 30, 2022
Collier County School Board Office
5775 Osceola Trail
Naples, FL 34109**

Dr. Kamela “Kam” Patton
Superintendent, Collier County Public Schools
Florida Superintendent of the Year 2022, Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)

Good morning, Commissioner Corcoran and Members of the State Board. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you this morning on behalf of my colleagues and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents.

Across our great state, students, teachers, principals, and staff are getting ready for the home stretch of what has been another year of challenges and opportunities. As we prepare for the final administration of the FSA, we look forward to learning what we have done successfully to combat learning loss as a result of COVID-19 and what more we need to do as a result of the challenges the pandemic has continued to impose throughout this school year. Our students and teachers have worked hard these last two years, and they need to know how proud of them we are.

In addition to our preparations for the end of the school year, your superintendents are looking to the future. All districts should now have access to their American Rescue Plan funds, which will allow them to start implementing their plans to speed our recovery. Further, the Legislature recently passed an historic budget that included more funding for reading, mental health, and safe schools. It also added a significant allocation for our veteran teachers. Finally, it is exciting to know that no school board employee in the state will earn less than \$15 an hour. Unprecedented staffing shortages have presented us with enormous challenges, and we hope that these measures will help draw more people back to the greatest calling in the world – educating and serving our children.

Local Collier Initiatives