

# Where Super and Intentional Meet

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## Education

BY JENNIFER VIGNE SRQ DAILY SATURDAY PERSPECTIVES EDITION SATURDAY DEC 3, 2016

We're all familiar with the saying that a school principal is both a "prince and a pal." But what of the Principal of the Principals? In the case of Sarasota County Schools, Lori White, who steps down after serving as School Superintendent for eight years, has been "super" and "intentional." To honor a person who has had a 40-year career impact on a school district as solid as this one is a monumental task.

So the Education Foundation of Sarasota County has risen to the task. Its Lori White Endowment Fund will serve educators throughout Sarasota County seeking professional development and striving for excellence. The endowment fund will be strengthened by a generous capping grant of \$50,000 made possible by the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation upon the completion of \$150,000 raised by March 2017.

Launched at the Education Foundation's first annual Legacy Society Breakfast at the Ritz-Carlton, the fund is already gaining momentum. Supporters of education from every sector—Sarasota Classified/Teachers Union, School Board members, retired educators, business leaders, philanthropists and nonprofit and community sponsors—joined together at the Legacy Society Breakfast to celebrate this exemplary leader and passionate advocate for education. Remarks by Board Chair Tom Koski and EFSC student intern and Sarasota High School senior Sarah Marin bookended an uplifting speech by the Superintendent herself. During her talk, Lori shared her background as an Alta Vista Elementary School student who loved school and was chosen from among her Sarasota Junior High School peers to attend a new program called the Pine View School for the Gifted. A student in the first graduating class of 35 students, she was excited to extend her passion for helping children with disabilities at a one-of-a-kind program at Florida State University, where she thrived in the collaborative environment of scholarship students.

As she began her career with Sarasota County Schools, Lori was encouraged by educators like Mary Watts and Wilma Hamilton. In turn, she has been an inspiration to countless educators, administrators, students, parents, community leaders and businesspeople. Her lifelong commitment to education merits praise because of her superior leadership and her intentional approach to curriculum and the business of running an A-rated district, one of only three in the state of Florida.

Now is the time to show our appreciation.

You may have your own story of gratitude from receiving a superlative education in this county. Or perhaps you have a child, grandchild or neighbor who has benefited from the programs, policies and processes Superintendent White has deftly and gracefully put into place, often against tough odds and during trying times. Whether you give \$5 or five figures, your gift means something to the teachers who shaped you, and to the woman who shaped the environment for our teachers to do their best. We'd love to hear your story and we welcome your support.

*Jennifer Vigne is president of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County.*