

Terry Connor
Superintendent
Sarasota County Schools
Sarasota, FL
Nominated by Chris Parenteau

Terry Connor just submitted your form: Excellence Award
Nomination Form
on [NASS](#)

Message Details:

YOUR First Name 2: Chris

YOUR Last Name 2: Parenteau

YOUR Email Address

2: chris.parenteau@sarasotacountyschools.net

NOMINEE'S First Name: Terry

NOMINEE'S Last Name: Connor

NOMINEE'S Email

Address: terry.connor@sarasotacountyschools.net

NOMINATION CATEGORY: Finance & Operations

NOMINEE'S District or Organization: Sarasota
County Schools

Basis for the Nomination: Achieving excellence in finance and operations goes beyond merely balancing a budget; it involves creating effective systems, training personnel to utilize them, and delivering measurable results. Superintendent Connor has implemented a comprehensive, high-accountability approach across various areas, including finance, human resources, food services, construction, planning, transportation, and records management. The outcomes include cleaner audits, faster workflows, smarter resource utilization, and enhanced internal capacity. All ESSER grants were successfully closed in finance, a major task that required rigorous documentation and oversight. The team trained over 100 school staff members on a new cost strip crosswalk and tool, which improved accuracy and reduced coding errors. A standardized training worksheet for bookkeepers was introduced to

document the delivery of training. Payroll audits and processing for Hurricanes Helene and Milton, totaling over \$3 million, were completed efficiently and without issues. Records management was modernized: paper documents were scanned, 1,081 cubic feet of records were destroyed, and more than 2,100 record requests were processed. Additionally, 258 forms were revised, 27 were created, and 16 were removed, cleaning up a cluttered system and improving clarity. In Food and Nutrition Services, upgrades were made alongside enhanced safety practices. Projects included kitchen redesigns and a remodeled service area at Laurel Nokomis. Training was improved through the "Lettuce Chat" series and specialized workshops. The team enhanced allergen tracking, restructured menu modification processes, and aligned medical modification forms with national standards. Over the summer, more than 111,000 meals were served, and over \$36,000 was earned back through purchasing rebates. During hurricanes, shelter operations provided over 41,000 meals, all while improving student satisfaction and maintaining cost control. On the HR side, Connor led streamlined hiring processes, improved performance evaluations, and negotiated four key contracts. A role clarification matrix and an administrative job grading system were introduced to ensure consistency across job classifications. A new pay scale for administrators was adopted, and performance evaluations for classified staff were overhauled to align with strategic goals. The implementation of a new ERP system, training portals, SharePoint hubs, and mailbox communication systems ensured that staff members were informed and equipped. Facilities and planning saw significant progress. The redistricting for a new school (the first in over 15 years) was completed, construction projects at multiple schools advanced, and new school sites were secured. A comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan and Educational Facilities Work Plan were finalized. Efforts included reducing portable classroom usage, assessing hurricane damage, and collaborating with County and Parks departments, reflecting a proactive planning culture. Transportation also achieved

practical gains. New routing strategies reduced the miles driven, and electric buses were integrated into daily service. A new CDL training course, improved dispatch, and fleet management automation increased operational efficiency. An outdated bus wash was replaced, and critical mechanic positions were finally filled. These efforts demonstrate a system built on accountability, planning, and staff development. Superintendent Connor didn't simply react to problems; he established frameworks to prevent them. This type of forward-thinking leadership defines excellence in finance and operations.