



**National Association of
School Superintendents**
United in Common Purpose: Each Other's Success

Name

Dr. Julio Nazario-Valle, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer

Current School District and Location

**Volusia County School District
DeLand, Florida**

INTRODUCTION

Meet Dr. Julio Nazario-Valle, Chief Academic Officer for Teaching, Leading, and Learning at Volusia County Schools in Florida. The district has recently earned a "B" grade for the 2023-24 school year, coming just 3 points shy of an "A" grade, with 97% reaching proficient ratings A/B/C. Based on preliminary 2024-25 data from recent state assessments, Volusia County Schools have achieved remarkable growth with an increase of 'A' and 'B' rated schools, decrease of 'C' rated schools, elimination of all 'D' rated schools, and 100% of schools now rated proficient (A/B/C). It has shown remarkable improvement in statewide rankings, moving from 40th to 29th place among Florida school districts.

Dr. Nazario-Valle's exceptional educational background and transformative leadership experience have prepared him well for superintendency. His unwavering focus on data-driven reform, innovative instructional strategies, and collaborative leadership has earned him recognition as an emerging model leader in our field.

Education

Dr. Nazario-Valle earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Higher Education Leadership with an emphasis in curriculum development from Nova Southeastern University. He holds a Master of Science (MS) in Educational Leadership and Administration from Nova Southeastern University and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Mathematics and Secondary Education from Northeastern Illinois University."

Experience

His career in education includes a range of successful experiences, beginning with teaching mathematics in Chicago. After relocating to Florida, he continued teaching while simultaneously serving as a college math professor.

Dr. Nazario-Valle's administrative career includes serving as principal in multiple high-needs schools, where he orchestrated profound turnarounds. Most notably, he led the rapid transformation of a struggling 100% Title I middle school, improving its grade significantly in just one year through hands-on leadership, candid data conversations, and purposeful coaching.

In recognition of his exceptional leadership abilities, Dr. Nazario-Valle was named Lead State Director for the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of School Improvement. In this role, he

oversaw statewide reform initiatives targeting chronically underperforming schools. His administration yielded impressive results: over 50 schools exited state watchlists, 100% of F-schools showed improvement, and 84% of struggling schools achieved letter grade gains.

Currently serving as Chief Academic Officer in Volusia County Schools, one of Florida's largest districts with 70 schools serving over 60,500 students, Dr. Nazario-Valle continues to engineer substantial advancement in student outcomes through his strategic vision that elevates evidence-based practices while welcoming teacher voice and feedback.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Dr. Nazario-Valle has an impressive record of achievements in educational leadership, including but not limited to:

- Increasing graduation rates to 97% in our traditional high schools in Volusia County Schools
- More than doubling the number of A-rated schools in his district
- Ensuring no elementary or middle schools declined a letter grade under his leadership
- Leading Volusia County Schools to a district grade of "B" for the 2023-24 school year, just 3 points shy of an "A" grade
- Improving the district's statewide ranking from 40th to 29th place among Florida school districts
- Guiding four high schools to achieve an "A" grade for the first time since 2018
- Successfully leading the transformation of a struggling 100% Title I middle school in just one year
- Overseeing reform initiatives that helped over 50 schools exit state watchlists during his tenure at the FL Department of Education
- 2024-25 School Performance (Preliminary Data): Led academic initiatives that contributed to VCS's dramatic improvement, including an increase from 17 to 25 "A" rated schools and elimination of all "D" rated schools, with 100% of schools now rated proficient
- Career and Technical Education Expansion: Oversaw programs that resulted in over 4,400 industry certifications earned and a 66.7% college and career acceleration rate
- Class of 2024 Student Success: Academic leadership contributed to students earning \$32M in scholarship money, 110+ Associate Degrees, and 300+ Seals of Biliteracy
- Graduation Rate has increased from 88.9% in 2022 to 93.7% in 2024.

The 2025 preliminary data indicates that 100% of all Volusia County Schools are proficient with zero schools underperforming. Volusia County Schools is slated to be an A district by the Florida Department of Education. This will be the first "A" since 2009.

While these accomplishments are impressive, Dr. Nazario-Valle considers his most outstanding achievement to be creating empowering cultures centered on equity and achievement. He says, "My greatest accomplishment isn't measured in statistics alone, but in building systems where every student can succeed, and every educator feels empowered to make a difference. I strive to blend compassionate understanding with data-driven accountability to forge progress even in the most challenging contexts."

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. JULIO NAZARIO-VALLE

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Today's superintendent faces a complex landscape that requires adaptive leadership and strategic vision. The role demands not only educational expertise but also political acumen, financial stewardship, and community engagement skills. One of the biggest challenges for superintendents today is navigating the increasingly diverse needs of students while balancing limited resources.

Effective superintendents must be data-driven, yet people-centered, making decisions that consider both quantitative metrics and the human impact on students, staff, and communities. In my role as Chief Academic Officer at Volusia County Schools, one of Florida's largest districts with 70 schools serving over 60,500 students, I've seen firsthand how superintendents must be skilled communicators who can build coalitions across diverse stakeholder groups while articulating a compelling vision that inspires action and maintains transparency about challenges and limitations.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

My leadership journey at Volusia County Schools has reinforced that sustainable improvement isn't about implementing programs but about building human capacity and systems that support continuous growth. The most effective initiatives fail without buy-in, and the most well-designed systems falter without adequate support.

Working in one of Florida's largest districts, I've learned that educational leadership is fundamentally about relationships. When teachers and staff feel valued, supported, and heard, they bring their best selves to their work with students. Our recent preliminary results from state assessments—showing an increase from 17 to 25 'A' rated schools and elimination of all 'D' rated schools—demonstrate that when we create safe environments where candid conversations about data and performance can occur, genuine improvement follows.

Perhaps most importantly, I've developed a deeper understanding of how systemic inequities manifest in educational outcomes. Addressing achievement gaps requires more than technical solutions—it demands confronting difficult realities and making bold, sometimes unpopular decisions in service of all students.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

Something I've found tremendously effective is implementing structured data review cycles that combine accountability with support. Rather than using data merely to identify deficiencies, we use it to target resources and professional learning opportunities precisely where they're needed.

This approach involves regular data reviews with school leaders that follow a consistent protocol: identify strengths, pinpoint specific challenges, determine action steps, and provide needed support. By maintaining this balance of pressure and support, we've created a culture where data isn't feared but embraced as a tool for continuous improvement.

At Volusia County Schools, this systematic approach has contributed to our remarkable growth—our preliminary 2024-25 data shows 100% of our 70 schools are now rated proficient. I've also learned the power of visibility and authentic presence in schools. When district leaders regularly visit classrooms not for evaluation but for genuine engagement with the teaching and learning process, it sends a powerful message about priorities and values. This practice helps bridge the perceived gap between 'the district' and schools, fostering greater cohesion and alignment throughout the system.

Submitted by
Dr. Julio Nazario-Valle
Name


Signature

5/30/2025
Date