



HR Connections

November 2023 Quarterly Newsletter

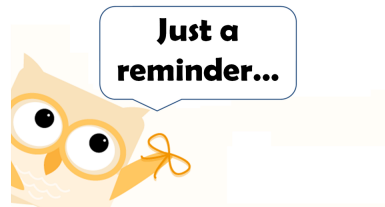
A Message from Dr. Allison Foster, Executive Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations

As we approach the Thanksgiving Break, the HR team and I would like to take a few moments to thank all our incredible employees who provide a wonderful, nurturing environment for our students every day. We wish you a joyful and restful Thanksgiving. We hope this time provides the opportunity to recharge and reflect on the positive difference you make in the lives of our students. Our goal in HR is to support all employees in fulfilling their personal goals. We hope this newsletter provides information to help you get the most from your HR department. If you have any questions about HR or the services we provide, please contact your HR generalist!



Important Reminders!

- Please verify that your payroll deductions taken from your December 15 paycheck were posted correctly for the selections you made during Open Enrollment. The deductions taken in December are for benefits effective January 1, 2024, except Flexible Spending; the first payroll deduction for 2024 Flexible Spending will begin in the January 15 paycheck.
- 2024-2025 Intent: If you are currently on a leave of absence for 23-24, your Leave of Absence Intent for 24-25 is due by March 1, 2024; please watch your USPS mail for your paperwork. Contact your HR Generalist if not received by mid-February.

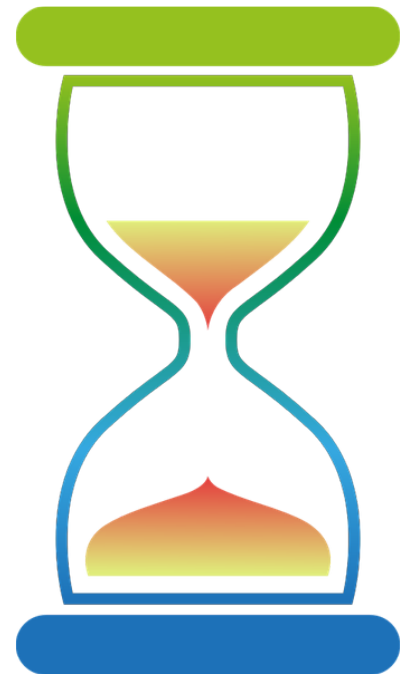


Time is running out...don't let your flexible spending account (FSA) vanish!

If you have a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for the current calendar year (2023), all expenses must be incurred by December 31, 2023.

Based on IRS rules, the plan requires you to use all of the money in your account(s) by the end of the plan year on December 31, 2023, and submit claims for reimbursement by March 31, 2024, or you will lose the remaining balance.

Questions? Contact WEX at 1-833-CALL-WEX (225-5939) or go to their website at www.wexinc.com.



Upcoming FRS Workshops

You are invited to participate in FREE informative employee webinars to help you take action in planning your financial future. Visit www.myfrs.com or Telephone (Toll Free): 866-446-9377



Below is the upcoming webinar schedule. Pre-registration required - select your workshop for the pre-registration link.

- "[Nearing Retirement in the FRS](#)" on 12/7/23 from 5:00pm - 6:30pm

Save the date! Registration links coming soon!

- "New Employee Retirement Plan Choice" on 1/10/24 from 5:00pm - 6:00pm.
- "Income Tax Planning" on 2/8/24 from 5:00pm - 6:30pm.
- "Using the FRS to Plan for Your Retirement" on 3/18/24 from 4:30pm - 6:00pm.
- "Social Security and Your Retirement" on 3/18/24 from 6:15pm - 7:15pm
- "Nearing Retirement in the FRS" on 4/24/24 from 5:00pm - 6:30pm

Recruitment News

Do you know someone interested in working for Sarasota County Schools? We have job openings available such as bus drivers, food and nutrition services, custodial, classroom aides, and substitute teachers. If you know anyone who might be interested, please spread the word! All the available opportunities can be found on the Sarasota County Schools website at www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/jobs



New SurgeryPlus Starting January 2024

SurgeryPlus provides you with access to excellent and affordable care for many planned surgical procedures. It's already included in your medical benefits at no additional cost to you. You will not have to pay your deductible for any covered procedure, and you will receive a cash incentive paid directly to you! Pay less for your procedure and earn a cash reward!



For more information on SurgeryPlus, including simple steps to get started, [click here](#).

[Click here](#) to view covered procedures and reward tiers. For member portal instructions, [click here](#).

Final Teaching Internships

We are excited to announce that teaching interns, in their final placement, will now earn \$15 an hour and Clinical Educators will also receive a supplement, thanks to funding from the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation.



If you are interested in taking the Clinical Education Course, one of the requirements to host an intern, [please complete this survey \(click here\)](#).

A Note on Address Changes

With insurance cards being mailed out after Open Enrollment and W2s just around the corner, this is the time of year to confirm that the address we have on file for you is correct. Please log into your employee portal [here](#) with your A# and district password and view your profile to verify your address. Any changes can be made directly on the portal and do not require an address change form to be submitted.



Workforce Success Updates

Workforce Success Training

Administrative Assistants - Principal and cost center heads received the new Administrative Assistants Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) notebooks recently. Also, the meeting for administrative assistants are happening bi-monthly; it is a time to collaborate and share best practices.

Upskill Pathways for Classified Staff - Do you want to move up in the district? [Click here](#) or scan the QR Code below to get started. Please let us know what your goals are to advance in the district.

Training Bundles for Classified staff are available in Vector Solutions, developing opportunities for growth and skills for more advanced positions. Check with your department head or supervisor to see what is available or what is being developed at this time.

"Your **SUCCESS** Is Our Goal"

Email WorkforceSuccess@sarasotacountyschools.net

Erin Watson, Training Coordinator



Certification Updates

ADDITIONAL PATHWAYS TO THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

- **General Knowledge Exam Waiver** waives passage of the general knowledge (GK) test for an educator who has been provided three years of supports and instruction after failing the GK test and who has been rated effective or highly effective for each of the last three years.
- **Professional Education Test Waiver** eliminates passage of the professional education test for an educator who has successfully completed a professional education competency (PEC) program, completed the professional preparation courses, and who has been rated effective or highly effective for three years.
- **Subject Area Mastery Waiver for Subject Area Exam** will allow educators to demonstrate subject area mastery if they have a master's or higher degree in a bachelor level subject area for which a Florida subject area examination exists.



DOE UPDATES

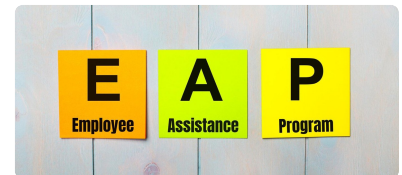
- Temporary Certificates are valid for five years (excluding SLP and Athletic Coaching certificates).
- The Reading K-12 subject area exam can no longer be used to add the Reading Endorsement after July 1, 2024.
- Educators with the ESE K-12 coverage must complete 40 Reading Renewal credits to renew beginning August 30, 2030.
- Educators with the Educational Leadership coverage must earn a minimum of 20 in-service credits in Florida's Educational Leadership Standards to renew beginning August 30, 2030.

Please contact your certification specialist if you have any questions:

- Andrea Jordan, Certification Specialist: Assigned Schools - Alta Vista, Atwater, Bay Haven, Booker Middle, Emma E. Booker, Fruitville, Heron Creek, McIntosh, Oak Park, Phillippi Shores, Pine View, Sarasota High, Tatum Ridge, Tuttle, and Wilkinson.
- Keisha Wilson, Certification Specialist: Assigned Schools - Booker High, Brentwood, Cranberry, Garden, Glenallen, Gocio, Gulf Gate, Laurel Nokomis, Suncoast Polytech, Triad, Toledo Blade, Venice Elementary, Venice Middle, Venice High, & Woodland.
- Heather Walsh, Certification Specialist: Assigned Schools – Ashton, Brookside, Englewood, Lakeview, Lamarque, North Port High, Riverview, Sarasota Middle, Southside, Suncoast Technical College, Taylor Ranch, and all Charter Schools.

Employee Assistant Program (EAP)

The holidays can be a time of joy, but may also bring stress and sadness.



SCS provides Free EAP and Work-Life Services to all board-hired employees and members of their household, regardless of insurance coverage, to offer short-term counseling and other services. Starting 12/1/23, EAP will be provided through Deer Oaks, a behavioral health organization, and participants may receive up to five counseling sessions per issue. Call 1-888-993-7650 or visit [their website](#) (username and password both “scs”).

**[Telus \(formerly named LifeWorks\)](#) is the current EAP provider through 11/30/23. Participants may receive up to three counseling sessions per issue. Call 1-844-664-0379 or visit [their website](#) (username and password both “scs”).

Mobile Mammography is Coming to a School Near You!

About 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. The 15 minutes you spend on the Mammogram Bus may save your life.



[Click here to be directed to the 3D Mobile Mammography site for scheduling.](#)

Additional Details:

- Women 40 & older, no script or referral needed (under 40 requires a script)
- 1 mammogram per year
- 3D digital mammograms - no extra charge on the bus
- Appointments take 10 to 15 minutes
- Results sent to Patient and her Doctor
- Private and Convenient

Registration is open and available for staff to schedule at any SCS location.

No-Cost Premium Calm Subscription for Board-Hired Employees

Board-Appointed employees have access to a no-cost premium subscription to Calm by [using this link to register](#) (additional registration details below).



Haven't activated your free Calm Premium subscription yet?

- Visit this link:
<https://www.calm.com/b2b/sarasotacountyschools/subscribe>
- Sign up with your name and email address (or log in to an existing account).
- Validate your SCS subscription by providing your employee A# (including the A).
- Once complete, you can download the Calm app and log into your new account.

Challenge Starts 11/13 and Ends 12/31!

Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight, this **FREE** seven-week challenge provides you with strategies and resources to help *maintain* your weight throughout the holiday season.



Sign up for this FREE challenge: Maintain, Don't Gain



Human Resources