

## District again wins top state award for promoting healthy learning environment

Alachua County Public Schools is one of just 13 school districts across Florida to be named a winner of the 2019-20 Florida Healthy School District Gold Award by a coalition of state organizations focused on promoting healthy learning environments.

This is the second time the district has earned the coveted Gold Level status. The district was also recognized in 2017. The designation lasts for two years and is based on an extensive list of criteria that cover health and physical education, health services, nutrition, counseling, school environment and family involvement, among others.



The criteria were developed by the Florida Partnership for Healthy Schools, a statewide organization whose stated mission is to “create health literate and health practicing students and staff in all Florida schools.”

“These districts embody the coordination, determination and cognizance it takes to prioritize physical, emotional and social health as a part of overall education,” said Melodie Griffin, Communications Chair, Florida Partnership for Healthy Schools, about the award winners. “This recognition program reminds districts that their efforts are valued and used as exemplary models for how health-conscious enhancements can be implemented in schools.”

Included in the district’s application for the Gold Award were school nurses, the district’s numerous and award-winning food and nutrition programs, the System of Care for children and families in crisis, school-based flu immunizations, health and physical education, and many other programs, people, services and initiatives. The district also has an extensive network of local organizations that support those efforts.

“We recognize that students who are healthy are better able to focus on school,” said Superintendent Karen Clarke. “That’s why we work so hard to meet the physical, mental and emotional needs of students.”

The award was presented to the School Board of Alachua County during its business meeting on September 17 by Joe Davis, Executive Director of the Florida Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, on behalf of the Florida Partnership for Healthy Schools.

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