



**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ROBERT W. RUNCIE**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**The School Board of  
Broward County, Florida**

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September 10, 2018

*"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew."* - President Abraham Lincoln's message as he introduced the Emancipation Proclamation to Congress

Dear School Board Members,

It is an understatement to say that the past year is one we will never forget as it has tested our resolve and shaken us to our core – first with Hurricane Irma and then with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy of February 14<sup>th</sup>, which continues to send ripple effects through our community, the state and the nation. A large part of our work has been focused on recovery and support.

The preparation steps we will take during this hurricane season serve as a reminder of how Hurricane Irma impacted our District and community last school year. Our schools served as shelters where community members sought refuge from their homes. The impact of the storm closed our schools for more than a week. While the majority of our schools were closed during the restoration and recovery process, we partnered with community organizations to open several school locations to provide meals and cooling locations for many residents across the Broward community.

After Hurricane Irma, the District opened the Welcome Center, located at the Lauderdale Manors Community Resource Center. The Welcome Center provided health and social services to students and families from Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands affected by Hurricane Irma, in partnership with Memorial Hospital and Florida Department of Health. Health screenings, resources and referrals were provided to approximately 150 children and families.

As we continue to search for answers following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School on February 14<sup>th</sup>, we are committed to learning from this tragedy and finding ways to create a safer and more secure environment.

There is no perfect solution nor is there a roadmap for finding one's way in the aftermath of such a tragic event, and we are all working to take the right steps forward. While we may stumble along the way, our purpose and priorities remain clear. Our District has engaged national experts to assist through the difficult recovery process.



Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) worked with employees, parents and community partners to fortify the MSD campus and expand safety protocols. The following safety and security actions were implemented:

- The District approved a contract for the accelerated placement of 34 modular units (portables) on the campus, knowing that the 1200 building would not be available. The modular units serve as classrooms and the wellness center for students and staff. The modular units remain a necessity while the District advances the construction of a permanent replacement building for the 1200 building.
- Controlled access card (RFID) readers were installed at the primary entry points for staff. The readers require staff to "swipe" their identification badges to gain access into the main administration building.
- The first phase of the surveillance video camera system upgrade across the District was completed. Additional cameras were donated to MSD and other Parkland schools. The cameras have enhanced capabilities to provide improved surveillance throughout the school. In addition, the second phase of the surveillance video camera system was approved and will further increase security surveillance at schools throughout Broward County.
- A dedicated security person has been hired to monitor the camera system at MSD throughout the school day. This individual's sole responsibility is to monitor the camera system and alert the appropriate individuals of suspicious activity.
- A new, permanent 12-foot fence was installed around the 1200 building. The State Attorney's Office continues to require the building remain secured for evidentiary purposes.
- The District installed additional fencing and gates to establish a second perimeter on the school's campus. The additional fencing serves to limit campus access to three entrances, once inside the perimeter fence.
- All classroom door locking hardware throughout the school was replaced. The new locks ensure the doors remain locked at all times. Classroom doors are locked from the outside, while maintaining the ability for students and teachers to safely exit their rooms.
- The school's intercom system was upgraded in connection with the modular units (portables) project. The new system works with the school's digital telecommunications systems and allows all authorized staff to use it from any of the phones or other electronic devices on the campus. This includes the ability to initiate pre-recorded messaging to facilitate emergency code lockdowns remotely in campus.
- The security team on the MSD campus has doubled. The security team is now comprised of 12 campus monitors and three security specialists. The City of Parkland



and the Broward Sheriff's Office provided three School Resource Officers/Deputies (SRO/Ds) for the new school year at MSD.

Staff has worked with national trauma and mental health experts, including the National Center from School Crisis and Bereavement and the Center for Mind Body Medicine, regarding recovery efforts and supports for the MSD Zone.



In addition, the District has implemented the following actions:

- Two wellness centers were established at MSD for clinical staff to provide a safe, confidential space for students to receive therapeutic services. The wellness centers have private counseling offices and space for structured therapeutic or psychoeducational groups. The space may also be utilized as a quiet space for students if needed.
- The District increased the level of staffing to support students and families, which included:
  - Family liaisons, who were appointed to serve as the direct contact for support and services for families of injured students;
  - Five trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapists assigned full-time to MSD (one therapist is assigned to work primarily with injured students and four school social workers assigned full-time to MSD, one per grade level);
  - Eight additional school guidance counselors, also referred to as District support counselors, added to existing guidance staff at each school in the MSD Innovation Zone;
  - One school psychologist assigned full-time to MSD;
  - Four additional school psychologists assigned to the elementary and middle schools in the MSD zone to provide mental health services, trainings, and evaluations, as needed.
  - One school social worker and one family therapist assigned full-time to Westglades Middle School;
  - One school social worker assigned full time to Coral Springs Middle School;
  - One school social worker assigned to serve two elementary schools in the MSD zone; and
  - The District continues to provide a full-time school social worker at Coral Springs High School, and at all high schools in the District.
- In addition, the District continued to provide staff for the Broward County Resiliency Center (BCRC), for walk-ins and scheduled counseling sessions for students, families, and community members.
- The District's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) continues to support the recovery and stabilization of all MSD zone staff members. Services are provided at school sites,



the MSD Wellness Center, and the Resiliency Center. One full-time EAP counselor has been assigned to support staff members in the MSD zone.

- The District continues to provide therapy dogs to improve social, cognitive and emotional functioning for students and staff.

While focused on enhancing safety and security on the MSD campus, Districtwide safety enhancements were implemented as well. These enhancements included:

The logo for BCPS Strong, featuring the text "#BCPSStrong" in white on a blue rectangular background.

**Video Surveillance Cameras Upgrade:** The first phase of the project to upgrade the network of 10,000 real-time surveillance cameras was completed. The upgraded camera system enhances the District's ability to leverage the upgraded system and provide additional functionality for monitoring campuses.

**Armed Safe School Officer, Marshal/Guardian Program:** The Armed Safe School Officer, Marshal/Guardian program, established in accordance with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act and in support of the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program, will be responsible for providing security and safety services for a school's campus.

**Sandy Hook Promise Foundation programs:** the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation to implement up to four no-cost, violence prevention programs (Start with Hello, Say Something, Safety Assessment and Intervention, and Signs of Suicide) into existing or new pro-social clubs at schools across the District.

**Expanded Mental Health Services | State Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan:** The District received \$5.1 million in funding from the state, specifically targeted to expand mental health services provided by the District. The expansion plan provides for 50 support positions, which include 10 school counselors, 10 school psychologists, 10 social workers, 10 behavior analysts, 5 nurses and 5 employee assistance program (EAP) counselors.

**Individual School Site Florida Safe Schools Risk Assessment:** The District submitted the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool (FSSAT), which included a school security risk assessment designed to help school officials identify threats, vulnerabilities, and appropriate safety controls for the campuses they supervise.

Submission of the FSSAT is a pre-requisite to qualify for grant funding from the state for funding allocated in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. If approved, the grant funds would be utilized to improve the physical security of school buildings based on findings of the school security risk assessments.

**Security Risk Assessment Update:** Going above and beyond the information needed for the FSSAT, the District engaged an independent security firm, Safe Havens, to conduct comprehensive risk assessments of every District school. The first phase is complete and included a physical assessment at each school to identify the physical security measures and building systems. The second phase is underway and includes an assessment at each school



to review school operations and discuss potential vulnerabilities with school administration, staff and students.

**Code Red/Active Assailant Drills:** District staff has worked with law enforcement agencies to improve "code red" active assailant training and drills for staff and students. Starting early in the school year, schools will increase the frequency of lockdown drills.

**Safety/Security Protocols:** All safety rules are continuously reinforced at all schools – procedures for locking exterior doors, classroom doors and gates throughout the day. All students, staff and visitors are required to wear identification badges on school campuses.

We remain focused on building strength as a community and finding ways to heal together. While we continue to heal and recover, we are also committed to implementing strategies and initiatives to move our District forward, while maintaining our operations as outlined in our District's Strategic Plan.

### High-Quality Instruction

While much of our focus was on recovery and support following the MSD tragedy, the District continued its focus on the components of the Strategic Plan. In the 2016/17 school year, we maintained a laser focus on *Literacy and Early Learning*. During the 2017/18 school year, the District launched the second component, under High-Quality Instruction, to focus on *Reimagining the Middle Grades*. A collaborative stakeholder approach was undertaken to redesign the middle grades experience to shift to a focus on problem and project-based learning, embedded social-emotional standards in core academic classes, the implementation of applied learning in all classes and metrics to support graduation readiness. To support this initiative, we worked to secure an award from the Community Foundation of Broward of the District three million dollars to strengthen the "School is Cool: Reimagining Middle Grades" initiative. With this invaluable funding, the initiative begins as a pilot at 10 middle schools in the 2018/19 school year.

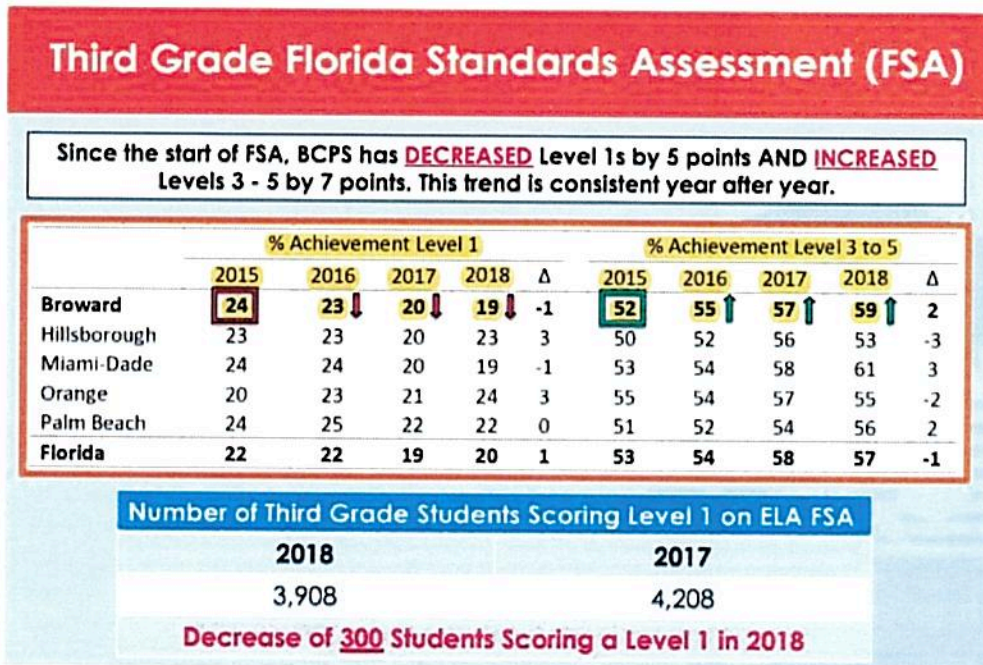
Our students showed great resilience in taking the FSA tests just two months after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. When the state released the Spring 2018 results from the Florida State Assessment (FSA) and End of Course (EOC) assessments, the results showed BCPS either maintained or increased the percentage of students scoring level 3 or higher on 16 of the 21 tested areas (subjects and grade levels) as compared to the prior year. Districtwide highlights included:

- English Language Arts (ELA) results for grades 3, 4, 5 and 8 show an increase of 2 or more percentage points for students scoring at level 3 or higher.
- Mathematic results for grades 3 and 5 show an increase of 2 or more percentage points for students scoring at level 3 or higher.

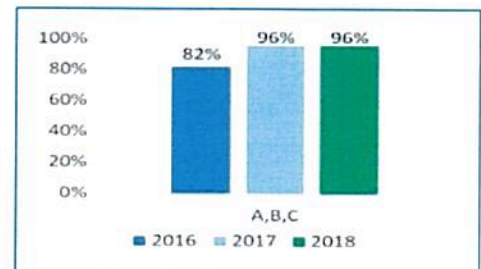
- Science results for grades 5 and 8 show an increase of 2 or more percentage points for students scoring at level 3 or higher.

Additionally, among the five largest school districts in Florida, BCPS earned the highest percentage or tied for the highest percentage of students scoring at level 3 or higher on the ELA portion of the FSA in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Since the start of FSA, BCPS has decreased Level 1s by 5 points and increased Levels 3 - 5 by 7 points. This trend is consistent year after year.



BCPS continued to show improvements when the Florida Department of Education released school grades for the 2017/18 school year. The overall results for BCPS remained steady, with some notable areas of improvement.



**The 2017/18 highlights included:**

- 96 percent of innovative District schools earned an “A,” “B” or “C.”
- 84 percent of innovative District schools maintained or increased their letter grade.
- 57 innovative District schools earned an “A.”
- 31 innovative District schools increased by one or more letter grades.



- 2 schools increased by two letter grades:
  - Sunshine Elementary School increased to an “A” in 2018, from a “C” in 2017.
  - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Montessori Academy increased to a “C” in 2018, from an “F” in 2017.
- Only one innovative District school received an “F.”
- Overall, BCPS earned a District grade of “B” for the fifth year in a row, narrowly missing an “A” designation by two percentage points. The District’s overall grade also includes the performance of charter schools.

In addition, the District achieved the highest graduation rate (81%) since 2011, when Florida adopted the Federal Uniform Graduation Rate method.

### Continuous Improvement

Throughout the 2017/18 school year, staff also continued to focus on another Strategic Plan goal – continuous improvement.

### Management Processes and Operational Efficiencies

- The Grants Administration & Government Program supported interdepartmental coordination and budget development for the Project SERV (School Emergency Response to Violence) (\$1M) grant awarded from United State Department of Education (USDOE) in response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy.
- The District continued to successfully implement the Business Support Center (BSC) model where centralized business services are offered to 160 schools as of June 2018. The BSC’s vision is to continue to provide schools a greater opportunity to focus on student learning and achievement.
- Food and Nutrition Services conducted high school student focus groups in 30 high schools. Focus groups document student preference and perception of school food service. This information is utilized to inform enhanced meal options and customer service trainings for staff.
- The Strategic Initiative Management (SIM) Department completed 49 Performance Management Reviews involving 25 departments. These reviews provided invaluable insights about the progress of key performance indicators, benchmarking, use of best practices, and opportunities for process improvement.
- Student Transportation & Fleet Services’ customer complaints, escalated through the Office of School Performance and Accountability (OSPA), decreased by 43% from the 2016/17 school year.
- The Office of Finance implemented a phased approach to realigning the school allocation plan to follow guidelines, which are equity-based and a transparent budget document to provide information regarding the District’s budget.



- The Office of Finance also worked on refunding several COPS (certificates of participation) saving the District over \$10M.
- The District received the highest bond ratings in a decade from Standard & Poor's and Moody's, the two largest rating agencies.
- The District's SAP software system was upgraded to a cloud-based solution, providing improved performance throughout the District.

## People

BCPS dedicated staff members work tirelessly to provide our students and families with a quality education and safe learning environments. The District remains committed to providing supports and opportunities for staff to reach their highest potential. A few highlights of improvements to the processes impacting staff included:

- In 2015, the District's the Leadership Preparation Pipeline was extended to include full-release internships for aspiring central office directors. The program was further expanded in 2017/18 to include a leadership preparation pathway for principals aspiring to lead in operational divisions of the organization.
- For the third consecutive year, the District hosted the National Principal Supervisors' Conference with over 400 attendees. A portion of the proceeds from the 2017/18 conference was used to award seven \$500 scholarships to deserving seniors.
- In conjunction with Florida Atlantic University, the Principal Rapid Orientation and Preparation in Educational Leadership (PROPEL) Program was completely revised and implemented with its eighth cohort of participants.
- As a way to combat the decrease in teacher education graduates, the teacher recruiting team deployed a social media marketing strategy targeting groups of candidates who showed an interest in education, teaching, or working with kids. This target strategy resulted in a 33% increase of applicants applying for BCPS job fairs. On the first day of school, BCPS had less than 1% of its teaching positions vacant.
- The HR compensation team made significant strides with increasing pay for teachers through differentiation of pay increases via the annual salary program for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years. This was accomplished through targeted distribution of awards (i.e. offering larger increase percentages to experienced teachers paid near the lower end of the salary scale and smaller increases / lump sum awards for teachers compensated at the higher end of the pay scale). In prior years, equal distribution of increase percentages were offered across-the-board. In terms of impact in 2016, 43% of BCPS teachers earned salaries of \$50k or better, compared to 58% in 2018 (an increase of 35% in a two-year span).
- During the 2017/18 school year, peer reviewers assisted all teachers in need of support, based on classroom observation scores. Only 0.2% of BCPS teachers ended with less than an "Effective" Instructional Practice Score.
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) team provided crisis response services to approximately 1,500 employees immediately following the MSD tragedy. There has been a drastic increase of employee utilization of EAP services since 2/14/18. (Up 20% over last year for the same period).



Through the robust collaboration with the Federation of Public Employees (FOPE), the Office of Facilities and Construction's Physical Plant Operations (PPO) and the Facility Service Program (FSP) facilitators, several enhancements to the program were implemented during the 2017/18 school year, including:

- The FSP Basic Program Assessment was translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole;
- The FSP Basic Program offered two days of hands-on training - allowing more employees to demonstrate their skills and knowledge; and
- The FSP test was reviewed by members of PPO / FSP Custodial Committee and recommended changes resulted in revisions made to questions and format.

The overall results show more employees attended and passed the Facility Service Program as compared to the two previous school years.

**FSP Data for Fiscal Years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18**

FSP Courses	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% + / -
BASIC PROGRAM OVERALL ATTENDEES	117	136	156	+13%
BASIC PROGRAM ATTENDEES PASSED	78	111	129	+14%
BASIC PROGRAM PASS PERCENTAGE	67%	82%	83%	+1%
ASBESTOS AWARENESS	164	167	188	+12%
LOCKOUT / TAGOUT	173	155	187	+17%

### SMART Bond Program

All schools have at least one SMART funded project underway. 1,519 of the 1,572 projects or 96 percent of all SMART facilities projects are in progress or have been completed as of June 30, 2018. The safety and security of students and staff continue to be the District's highest priorities. The District expedited Single Point of Entry projects in 2017 and remains on target with its goal to complete all Single Point of Entry projects by the end of 2018 or prior to the first quarter of 2019 at the latest.



Data through June 30, 2018

## Effective Communication

Following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, District staff and the Public Information Office received an unprecedented number of media inquiries and information requests from local, national and international outlets. While working diligently and collaborating to respond to numerous media outlets and stakeholders following the tragedy at MSD, District staff also remained focused on enhancing communication and engagement externally and internally. Across various departments, staff collaborated for many projects and activities, including but not limited to the following:

- Launched the **new District website**, browardschools.com, on a new web platform. The District administrative offices and schools now share the same web platform, allowing the District to “push” Districtwide messages to all school websites. The new web platform, which is part of an integrated communication tool, was heavily utilized when schools were closed during Hurricane Irma to keep parents and stakeholders updated and informed regarding the closure and re-opening of schools. The new District website consolidated more than 94 disparate department websites on a single web platform.
- Launched the **new staff intranet, *INSite***, to serve as an information hub for staff-focused information and communications.
- Published, in partnership with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Broward College, ***Saluting Educational Excellence***, a publication highlighting the District’s high schools and the 2018 Grad Ad, a publication featuring select BCPS high school graduates and their post-secondary schools. The 2018 Grad Ad was featured in the Sun-Sentinel.
- Produced the **“What’s New in BCPS”** publication to keep parents, staff and other stakeholders informed regarding new District initiatives and other important District news.
- Created, in partnership with the Office of Student Support Initiatives, the ***Military-Connected Students and Families brochure***, to provide important information specific to and for military-connected families.
- Implemented ***Community Connections*** to provide parents and other stakeholders to improve learning experiences within the community.





### Awards/Recognitions and Other Significant Accomplishments

While staff focused on the tremendous support recovery effort following the tragedy at MSD, we also saw that our teachers and staff maintained our commitment and passion to our students and families. Throughout the District, various recognitions were received and accomplishments were achieved including, but not limited to:

- BCPS was recognized as a Gold Achievement Healthy School District Florida Healthy School District, earning the highest achievement level of Gold. BCPS is one of only 15 school districts the state honored with the Gold level status for the two-year period of May 2018 – April 2020. This was the first time for this award in BCPS. A total of 50 school districts received one of the three achievement levels, bronze, silver or gold.
- 15 students from Bethune, Lake Forest and Walker Elementary Schools performed at the National Turnaround Arts Talent Show at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., along with international musicians and celebrated artists.
- 11 schools were recognized by Magnet Schools of America with various awards for their magnet programs.
  - Liberty Elementary School's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Museum received the President's Award and Magnet School of Excellence recognition.
  - Sunrise Middle School's Montessori program received the Magnet School of Excellence recognition.
  - Eight schools received the Magnet School of Distinction recognition for their programs. These schools and programs include:



School Name	Program(s)	School Name	Program(s)
Apollo Middle	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	Fort Lauderdale High	Cambridge and Pre-Law & Public Affairs
Atlantic West Elementary	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Museum	New River Middle	Marine Science
Attucks Middle	Cambridge	Plantation Middle	International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program
Beachside Montessori Village K-8	Montessori	South Plantation	Environmental Science and Everglades Restoration

- Two schools, New River Middle and South Broward High, were recognized as Nationally Certified Schools for their marine science programs.
- Apollo Middle was also recognized as a Nationally Certified Demonstration School for their Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program.

The District continued to offer a robust choice model for families with more than 150 magnet and innovative programs such as marine science, technology, aviation, fine and performing arts, music, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), communications and broadcasting, environmental science, and much more. During the 2017/18 school year, the following programs were developed and implemented throughout the county:

- Cypress Bay High School - Lightning STEM Academy, which creates a track for students to achieve an Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma through the Cambridge International Program and earn Bright Futures Scholarships, while emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) content across an array of classes.
- Cypress Bay High School - FBI Cyber/STEM Program, which is designed for students who have a strong interest in learning about and pursuing careers in the cyber field. BCPS students who complete the specific FBI Cyber/STEM Program requirements will receive a FBI Cyber/STEM Certificate and commencement cord upon graduation.
- Dillard 6-12 and Monarch High School - Cambridge International Program, which prepares students for college and careers by offering rigorous curriculum and opportunities to earn college credits while in high school. The Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses provide students opportunities to earn the internationally renowned AICE diploma recognized by colleges and universities all over the world.
- Plantation Middle School - Controlled Environmental Agriculture program, which integrates engineering and plant science through technology. This innovative program provides students with the opportunity to participate in research-based activities and problem-solving strategies to learn the principles and practices of sustainable commercial food crop production.
- Plantation High School - Gifted Academy, which is the District's first Gifted Academy and provides specialized learning that is tailored to meet each student's personal goals.
- Stranahan High School - THE CUBE offers comprehensive experiences to develop student-led innovation. THE CUBE, which stands for Creative & Unique Businesses Emerging, provides students entrepreneurial learning opportunities through, customized curriculum, college credits and scholarships, redesigned learning labs, and industry certifications. Students explore, design and produce innovative products while experiencing career pathways based on their interests.



In 2017/18, the District continued to expand programs geared toward providing opportunities for all of students. A few examples include:

- BCPS middle school and high school students enrolled in career and technical pathways earned more than 12,000 industry and digital tool certifications.
- More than 15,000 BCPS students in elementary, middle and high school participated in the District's debate initiative, which is the largest debate program in the nation. Debate is offered in all middle and high schools and continues to expand through elementary schools and centers. In June 2018, our District proudly hosted the 2018 National Speech & Debate Tournament Competition. The national event included the best debate students from across the nation - approximately 8,000 middle and high schools participated in competition categories including traditional debate, public speaking and interpretation of literature.
- BCPS led the state in the provision of Early Intervention Services for ESE. Enrollment numbers indicate that we provide Early Intervention to at least double the amount of students enrolled in similar very large size alike districts in Florida.
- BCPS continued to expand the Dual Language program to now include 43 schools offering dual language program. The program provides students with the opportunity to become fully bilingual by learning, listening, speaking, reading and writing in English and the target language.
- The District also maintained its commitment to increase computer science and STEM opportunities, by offering more robotics opportunities for students and expanding the SECME STEM Olympiad program in schools across the District. More than 50,000 students participated in computer science courses and activities.
- As part of an Equity and Opportunity Initiative, District staff developed a coherent equity plan to reflect priorities and practices that expand educational opportunities for all students. This included building the professional capacity of over 300 instructional and leadership staff to address pervasive inequalities in student academic and developmental outcomes; focusing on parent and community engagement in the school-based efforts to define, identify and address inequities; and analyzing data through an equity lens for shared leadership in driving change.
- The National Academy Foundation recognized three distinguished high schools, which include Blanche Ely High, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, and Atlantic Technical Magnet High for exemplary career academies. J.P. Taravella High won first place for Virtual Enterprise International competition's 'virtual business'.



- BCPS introduced a Head Start Enrollment Round-Up for early learners. Parents came to established sites, based on their child's school site, to register their child for the 2018/19 school year and complete sensory screenings on the children.
- BCPS graduating seniors earned more than \$106 million dollars in scholarships and Bright Futures.

At every level of the organization, we remain committed to supporting our students, our community – and each other. We know and understand that our District and our entire Broward community is forever changed by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy.

Our shared recovery process is difficult and ongoing. We must pledge to remain focused on doing everything in our power to ensure our schools are as safe as possible, while we maintain thriving learning environments. As we reflect upon about we have all been changed, we must also think about how we will act anew...together.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Runcie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Robert W. Runcie