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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY FEATURES A STUDENT AND A CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHER



Getting to know other students is easier in a smaller environment such as a Smaller Learning Community.

InnoVators

**BIG SCHOOL ?
 SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES DOWNSIZE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Face it—as a new freshman arriving in a new high school with maybe 2,000 students, the sheer size alone can be daunting. Finding classes, meeting new people, figuring out the schedule—all of these add to the initially confusing mix of making your way in high school.

Relax. You're not alone. And—your school district has made it easier for you, keeping their eyes on your future after high school. How? Each school is divided up into **Smaller Learning Communities, or SLCs.**

SLCs are just that—communities of teachers and students that are subsets of—or smaller than—the total school as a whole. The SLC movement came about as a direct result of the shootings at Columbine. Concern for student safety has become a primary focus for the nation and parents. One of the changes needed was to break down large high schools of 1,000 or more students into smaller, more personable family-like atmospheres within the larger high school. Students better get to know—and are known by—their peers and teachers. It's not only safer; it just feels better to everyone when somebody knows your name.

SLCs Focus on Careers

There are different types of SLCs such as freshmen learning centers, career pathways, and career academies. For example, SLCs may focus on careers in healthcare, business, engineering, technology, fine and performing arts, public service (such as law enforcement and fire professions), and college prep.

These SLCs provide:

- Small, safe, and supportive learning environments that are personalized and inclusive of all students
- Challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum that prepares students for post-secondary school, careers, and productive citizenship and
- Collaborative partnerships among educators, parents, businesses, and other community resources that broaden learning opportunities.

SLCs Get Results

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) in 2006 has completed 15 years of research on students involved in SLCs and specifically career academies. Their findings show students involved in career academies have:

- Higher attendance rates
- Lower drop-out rates
- Higher self-esteem and satisfaction with school
- Lower discipline problems
- Higher promise for at-risk and disengaged students
- Lower incidence of school violence
- Higher academic standards and sense of connection with teachers, other students, and school programs and
- Lower sense of student apathy, isolation, and alienation.

This is all good news for students, parents, and our community.

New Advisors Will Help Guide Students

Through the efforts of the Adult, Career and Technical Education Department (ACT) the School District of Manatee County is the recipient of a 7.2 million dollar Federal Smaller Learning Communities grant. We have received the first three years of funding (4.2 million). The remaining two years of funding will be dependent on how we meet the deliverables during these three years.

Our grant application was designed to meet the many diverse needs of the students in our six high schools. To support our students directly, our application included a request for funds to provide for six **Academic Advisors** and six **Career Advisors**. Each of our six main high schools will have one Academic and one Career Advisor on location. These advisors will work together with the administration, guidance, and staff to support the students with opportunities for career and post-secondary exploration and scholarship funding, among other things. The advisors will endeavor to assist the current staff to:

- Prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed for success in the workplace and/or post-secondary education
- Develop and reinforce the academic skills necessary to raise student achievement on high-stakes tests and
- Focus curriculum planning and professional development for teachers around student needs to achieve the academic standards and essential skills required for the real world.

Communities and employers will reap the benefits of well-prepared graduates ready to further their education, embark on a career, and take on the world.

Welcome New Advisors

The new Academic Advisors and Career Advisors come from education as well as business and industry and are a welcomed addition to the schools. The advisors assigned to each high school are:

<u>School</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u>	<u>Career Advisor</u>
BHS	Kristin Kreiling	Laura Roberts
BRHS	Kelli Kennedy	Christie Gionfriddo
LRHS	Vito Bavaro	Michelle Todoroff
MHS	Patti Hartman	Alan Anderson
PHS	Lynda Elkin	Millie Torres
SEHS	Brandy Braver	Towann Jenkins



(Academic Advisor Photo included)

(Left to right) Patti Hartman, Lynda Elkin, Brandy Braver, Vito Bavaro, Kelli Kennedy, and Kristin Kreiling



(Career Advisor Photo included)

(Left to right) Towann Jenkins, Alan Anderson, Millie Torres, Christie Gionfriddo, Michelle Todoroff, and Laura Roberts



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