

THE BUSINESS JOURNALS

SOUTH FLORIDA
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Education

Meet the 2021 Power Leaders in Education

By [Jeff Zbar](#) – Correspondent, South Florida Business Journal
Sep 17, 2021, 7:49am EDT

Few other sectors have been more tested by the pandemic than education. From grade school through higher ed, into the second year of Covid-19, administrators faced myriad issues. They had to balance official guidance with the expectations of K-12 parents and adult students in college-level programs. With often conflicting guidance and reports of infection, they determined whether or when to close and reopen schools, and when to transition to in-class, virtual and hybrid education.

Those on this year's Power Leaders in Education list made the grade. Most offered hybrid solutions to continue offering a quality education. Despite the challenges, many reported high student performance.

As a result, the region's exceptional academics continue to earn strong marks in national achievement reports and make the region renowned among families and employers alike.

Michael Allen

President, Barry University

Miami Shores



Under Allen's leadership, Barry University exceeded enrollment goals for fall 2020 and 2021 and expedited graduation for students in two College of Nursing and Health Sciences programs.

Birthplace: Champaign, Illinois

Education: B.A., Trinity College; M.A., Ph.D., University of Connecticut

One benefit of Covid: The pandemic reinforced the value of in-person interaction and showed how integral it is to the student experience. It pushed us to expand our technological capabilities and hybrid instruction.

I am professionally satisfied by: The promise of our students and celebrating their achievements at Barry, as well as their many successes as alumni

Favorite local getaway spot: My back patio at home

First album purchased: "Escape" by Journey

My heroes: My dad and grandfather

www.barry.edu, officeofthepresident@barry.edu, 305-899-3010

Denise Veronica Aloma

Principal, St. Thomas Aquinas High School

Fort Lauderdale



Aloma has embraced the Catholic educational system for nearly 50 years. During the pandemic, enrollment at St. Thomas remained intact and student achievement remained strong, including in Advanced Placement and dual enrollment options.

Birthplace: Kingston, Jamaica

Education: Bachelor's degree, University of Windsor; master's and doctoral degrees, education, Nova Southeastern University

I went into education: To make a difference in our beautiful world

One benefit of Covid: It triggered a resilience that has increased ingenuity, innovation and empathy.

Go-to icebreaker topic: I am always interested in an individual's life story, their passion.

Favorite vacation spot: The Greek Islands

My hero: Helen Keller

My life story would be titled: “Growing Strength”

www.aquinas-sta.org, denise.aloma@aquinas-sta.org, 954-581-0700

David A. Armstrong

President, St. Thomas University

Miami Gardens



Entering his fourth year in his current post, Armstrong has increased enrollment in each of the last three years. He is a speaker on future trends in higher education law and Title IX issues.

Birthplace: Cleveland

Education: B.A., political science, Mercyhurst University; J.D., Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

One benefit of Covid: Nimbleness and the ability to pivot

I am professionally satisfied by: Ensuring that small, faith-based higher education institutions not only survive, but thrive

Favorite vacation spot: Our timeshare in Kihei, Hawaii

First album purchased: “Hearts of Stone” by Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes

My heroes: Jesus Christ, MLK Jr. and my parents. They built up, rather than tore down.

www.stu.edu, darmstrong@stu.edu, 305-474-6800

Mike Burke

Interim superintendent, School District of Palm Beach County

West Palm Beach



Prior to being named the 27th superintendent of the A-rated school district of this summer, Burke was its CFO, overseeing a \$3.8 billion annual budget. It is the 10th-largest school district in the country with enrollment of more than 197,000 students. Burke is the longest-serving member of the district's executive leadership team, and is a member of the national Council of Great City Schools.

Raised in: South Florida

Education: B.S., finance, Florida State University; Master of Public Administration, Florida Atlantic University

www.palmbeachschools.org, 561-434-8000

Vickie L. Cartwright

Interim superintendent, Broward County Public Schools

Fort Lauderdale



Named to her current post in August, Cartwright has spent 26 years in public education. Prior to arriving in Broward County, she served as superintendent of schools for the Oshkosh Area School District in Wisconsin.

Birthplace: San Antonio

Education: Bachelor's degree, music education, University of Florida; master's degree, music education, Ph.D., educational administration and supervision, University of Southern Mississippi

One benefit of Covid: Educators are learning how to connect with students and provide instruction in different ways.

Favorite vacation spot: On a cruise ship

My hero: My grandfather

My life story would be titled: "Cinderella"

Hidden talents: I love to sing and play bassoon

www.browardschools.com, supt_cartwright@browardschools.com, 754-321-2600

Alberto M. Carvalho

Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Miami



Since 2008, Carvalho has served in his role at the nation's fourth-largest school system, which has over 346,000 students and 52,000 employees. During the pandemic, the district served more than 30 million meals and distributed 119,000 devices to aid distance learning.

Birthplace: Lisbon, Portugal

Education: B.S., biology/biomedical sciences, Barry University; master's degree, educational leadership, Nova Southeastern University

I went into education because: I recognized early on that sustaining America's democracy requires an educated population.

Go-to icebreaker topic: Moment of levity: La Carreta or Versailles?

Favorite local getaway spot: Anywhere I can enjoy some stand-up paddleboarding

I could spend an afternoon at: Books & Books and Austin Burke

My heroes: My father and Abraham Lincoln

Hidden talent: I can sing just like Freddie Mercury from Queen.

www.dadeschools.net, superintendentsoffice@dadeschools.net, 305-995-1429

Bruce Fawcett

Head of School, North Broward Preparatory School

Coconut Creek



Fawcett was appointed to his position after serving as assistant head of school for six years. He began this career as a high school social science teacher, and has been a department chair, assistant high school principal, and principal of the lower school before moving into his current position.

Birthplace: Billings, Montana

Education: B.Ed., Nova Southeastern University; M.Ed., Walden University

www.nbps.org, admissions@nbps.org, 954-247-0011

Dr. Julio Frenk

President, University of Miami

Coral Gables



Frenk was previously dean of the Harvard School of Public Health and Mexico's minister of health, and has held leadership positions at the World Health Organization and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. He steered the Covid-19 response at the University of Miami and its health system.

Birthplace: Mexico City

Education: M.D., National University of Mexico; master's degree, sociology and public health, and joint doctorate in medical care organization and sociology, University of Michigan

One benefit of Covid: The pandemic catalyzed the adoption of technologies to enhance the quality and accessibility of education.

Go-to icebreaker topic: The origins of the person's family last name and ancestry

Favorite local getaway spot: Fort Myers Beach

First record purchased: The single “Turn! Turn! Turn!” by the Byrds

My life story would be titled: “Identities and Legacies”

www.miami.edu, president@miami.edu, 305-284-5155

Father Guillermo Garcia-Tuñón, S.J.

President, Belen Jesuit Preparatory School

Miami



Garcia-Tuñón oversaw full, in-person learning from the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year. The school recently completed its innovation center for engineering and robotics, and is building a new chapel.

Birthplace: Miami

Education: A.A., Miami Dade College; B.A., history, Florida International University; M.A., philosophy, and M.S., education, Fordham University; M.A., theology, Instituto Santo Inacio; Ed.D., education administration, Florida International University

I went into education: To really impact the lives of young people and, ultimately, the world

Favorite local getaway spot: Any South Florida golf course

Favorite podcast: “Because Belen”

First album purchased: “Synchronicity” by The Police

My hero: St. John Paul II

www.belenjesuit.org, communications@belenjesuit.org, 305-223-8600

Gregory Adam Haile

President, Broward College

Fort Lauderdale



In the past year, the college was named a finalist with distinction in the 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and received the largest gift in its history – \$30 million from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and her husband, Dan Jewett.

Birthplace: Queens, New York

Education: B.S., Arizona State University; J.D., Columbia University School of Law; summer fellow, Higher Education Management Institute, Vanderbilt University

I went into education because: College transformed my life

I am professionally satisfied by: Experiencing our students fulfilling their dreams

Favorite local getaway spot: Times Square Pizza with my daughters

Favorite podcast: "Revisionist History"

I could spend an afternoon at: Barnes & Noble

First album purchased: "II" by Boyz II Men

My life story would be titled: "Together We Serve"

www.broward.edu, officeofthepresident@broward.edu, 954-201-7401

George L. Hanbury II

President and CEO, Nova Southeastern University

Fort Lauderdale



Hanbury has served as NSU's sixth president since 2011. Last year, the school brought in the largest freshman class in its 57-year history.

Birthplace: Norfolk, Virginia

Education: B.S., Virginia Tech; M.S., public administration, Old Dominion University; Ph.D., public administration, Florida Atlantic University

I am professionally satisfied by: Being able to sit at the table where young people are developing their values and expanding their knowledge and education.

Favorite vacation spots: Italy and Jamaica

I could spend an afternoon at: West Marine

First album purchased: The Righteous Brothers

My hero: My mother

www.nova.edu, 800-541-6682

Scott Jones

Head of School, Westminster Christian School

Palmetto Bay



Last fall, Westminster Christian was the first school in South Florida to open with on-campus, in-person learning with live synchronous options during the pandemic.

Birthplace: Fairfield, Illinois

Education: B.A., political science and music, Rice University; M.Ed., educational leadership, University of Hawaii

I went into education because: I love making a positive difference in students' lives.

In the year ahead: Schools must be intentional about developing culture, connection and community.

Favorite podcast: "Renewing Your Mind" with R.C. Sproul

I could spend an afternoon at: Books & Books

I would take a yearlong sabbatical in: Chiang Mai, Thailand

www.wcsmiami.org, headofschool@wcsmiami.org, 305-233-2030

Arthur Keiser

Chancellor, Keiser University

Fort Lauderdale



Keiser oversaw growth in the school's student satisfaction survey during the 2019-20 academic school year as the university shifted to virtual learning during the pandemic.

Birthplace: Philadelphia

Education: B.A., history, Tulane University; Graduate School of History, University of Florida; Ph.D., Union University

In the year ahead: More colleges and universities will increase their use of virtual learning, both on campus and online.

I could spend an afternoon at: Bass Pro Shops

First album purchased: "Child Is Father to the Man" by Blood Sweat and Tears

I would take a yearlong sabbatical in: Argentina

www.keiseruniversity.edu, artk@keiseruniversity.edu, 954-776-4476

John Kelly

President, Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton



In the past year, FAU has doubled research expenditures, enrolled a record number of National Merit Scholars, increased graduation rates and raised the profile of its athletics. In 2021, it was ranked 136th among top public schools by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Birthplace: Greenville, South Carolina

Education: B.S., Clemson University; M.S., Ph.D., Ohio State University

I went into education because: I love learning and helping others learn. It's the doorway to everything!

I am professionally satisfied by: Seeing "first in family" students achieve great things

First album purchased: "Let It Bleed" by the Rolling Stones

My heroes: All of my great faculty mentors throughout my career

My life story would be titled: "Unbridled Ambition: Be Passionate, Pursue Your Goals"

www.fau.edu, president@fau.edu, 561-297-3450

Cliff Kling

President, Gulliver Preparatory School

Miami



Kling has served independent schools for 20 years and joined Gulliver in January 2018. In February, the school broke ground on the Center for Student Life, a 60,000-square-foot facility on its Marian C. Krutulis PK-8 Campus.

Birthplace: Columbus, Mississippi

Education: B.S.B.A., accounting, Georgetown University; J.D., University of Mississippi School of Law

One benefit of Covid: It showed us that we have the ability to make rapid changes when we have to. This muscle memory will serve us well as we make future changes.

Favorite podcast: “At the Table” with Patrick Lencioni

I could spend an afternoon at: Edwin Watts Golf

First album purchased: “Moving Pictures” by Rush

My hero: My grandfather, Leslie Henderson

www.gulliverprep.org, ckling@gulliverprep.org, 786-709-4059

William Kopas

Head of School, NSU University School

Davie



Kopas has overseen adaptation to a blended learning environment, while raising overall standardized test scores. Earlier this year, NSU University School students won first and second place in the inaugural U.S. Physics Olympiad for Middle-School Students.

Birthplace: Cleveland

Education: B.S., education, University of Michigan; M.S., educational leadership, Northern Arizona University; Ed.D., organizational leadership, Nova Southeastern University

I am professionally satisfied by: Hearing students speak at graduation of the impact an individual teacher, administrator or staff member had on their lives

I could spend an afternoon at: The Home Depot

My life story would be titled: "God's Laughing: How I Grew Up with Only Brothers and Survived as a Lucky Father of Only Daughters"

www.uschool.nova.edu, wk128@nova.edu, 954-262-4419

Thomas G. Kruczek

President, Christopher Columbus High School

Miami



During the pandemic, Kruczek has overseen construction of the school's Marcus Lemonis and Mario Sueiras Center for Science & the Arts. His career includes positions with the Walt Disney Co., president of Notre Dame College in Cleveland, and dean of the Lynn University College of Business & Management.

Birthplace: Whiting, Indiana

Education: Bachelor's degree, psychology, and MBA, University of Notre Dame

I am professionally satisfied by: Hearing stories about how Columbus H.S. has changed lives

Favorite vacation spot: Cody, Wyoming

Favorite podcast: "The Ben Shapiro Show"

First album purchased: "Europe '72 (Live)" by the Grateful Dead

I would take a yearlong sabbatical in: Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

My life story would be titled: “Never a Dull Moment”

Hidden talent: I make great smoked baby back ribs.

www.columbushs.com, 305-223-5650

William Laurie

Founder and CEO, American Heritage Schools

Plantation and Delray Beach



Laurie’s career education began in 1952 as a fourth-grade teacher, later becoming a principal. In 1958, he opened a school for children with mild learning differences and, in 1971, he founded American Heritage School. Today, the school serves some 4,650 students in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Birthplace: Winter Haven

Education: B.A., University of the South; M.Ed., University of Florida

I am professionally satisfied by: Watching our students grow academically, artistically and athletically gives me one of the greatest joys in my professional life.

Favorite vacation spot: The mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina

First album purchased: Nat King Cole

I would take a yearlong sabbatical in: Northern Scotland, where the Laurie side of my family is from

My hero: My mother

www.ahschool.com, william.laurie@ahschool.com, 954-472-0022

Dana Markham

President, Pine Crest School

Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton



Markham began with Pine Crest more than two decades ago as a pre-kindergarten teacher. She was named president in 2011. From August 2020 through June 2021, all students were offered the option of in-person or remote learning and extracurricular activities.

Birthplace: Fort Lauderdale

Education: B.A., elementary education, University of Mississippi; M.S., early childhood education, and Ed.D., child and youth studies, Nova Southeastern University

I am professionally satisfied by: Watching students discover their inner strengths and learn how they best contribute to a group for the greater good

Favorite local getaway spot: The beach. It serves as a reminder of how fortunate we are to live and work in South Florida.

My hero: My father

My life story would be titled: “Keep Moving Forward”

www.pinecrest.edu, communications@pinecrest.edu, 954-776-2142

Ava L. Parker

President, Palm Beach State College

Lake Worth Beach



Parker was named to her post in 2015, becoming the first female president at Palm Beach County’s largest college. In 2019, the school was named an Aspen Prize Top 150 U.S. Community College.

Birthplace: Milton, Florida

Education: B.S., journalism, and J.D., University of Florida

In the year ahead: The ability to choose between in-person, live-online and hybrid to best meet students' needs will forever be a part of education.

Go-to icebreaker topic: If you could have front row seats at a concert for any artist dead or alive, who would you choose?

Favorite local getaway spot: The Breakers

I could spend an afternoon at: Bergdorf Goodman

My life story would be titled: "The Small-Town Girl Who Believed She Could Do Anything"

www.palmbeachstate.edu, enrollmt@palmbeachstate.edu, 561-868-3501

Madeline Pumariega

President, Miami Dade College

Miami



Pumariega is the first female president to lead Miami Dade College, the institution she attended decades earlier as a student-athlete. She was previously president of the college's Wolfson Campus and was the first female and Hispanic chancellor of the Florida College System.

Birthplace: Hialeah

Education: Associate degree, Miami Dade College; bachelor's degree, St. Thomas University; master's degree, Florida Atlantic University; doctoral candidate, higher education, Barry University

I went into education: If it wasn't for Miami Dade College and the opportunity to play basketball, I am not sure if I would be here today as president.

First albums purchased: Rush and Leif Garrett

If I had a yearlong sabbatical: I would take courses on current topics like artificial intelligence and fintech

My hero: My mother, who passed away last year

www.mdc.edu, 305-237-8888

Jason Rachels

President, Calvary Christian Academy

Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood



Throughout the pandemic, Rachels oversaw the offering of in-person or online instruction to all students. The school grew by over 300 students this year.

Birthplace: Macon, Georgia

Education: B.A., Greek and sociology, Mercer University; M.A., religion, and Ed.D., curriculum and instruction, Liberty University

One benefit of Covid: It led schools to offer better ways of providing robust education opportunities for students who need to be at home due to illness or other reasons.

Favorite podcast: “Parenting on Purpose”

I could spend an afternoon at: Barnes & Noble

First album purchased: “War” by U2

I would take a yearlong sabbatical in: Colorado

My hero: Dallas Willard

Hidden talent: Solving the Rubik’s Cube

www.ccaeagles.org, jasonr@ccaegles.org, 954-905-5110

Maria Cristina Regueiro

President and CEO, Florida National University

Hialeah



The school, founded by Regueiro and her late husband, Dr. Jose O. Regueiro, has provided educational and community support programs, such as food drives and vaccines, during the pandemic.

Birthplace: Havana

Education: B.S., electrical engineering, City College of the City University of New York; middle management degree, University of Miami; doctoral degree, educational leadership, University Central of Ashdod

One benefit of Covid: It pushed people out of their comfort zone and provided an opportunity for much growth.

Favorite vacation spot: Spain

My hero: Dr. Jose Regueiro, my late husband, best friend, soulmate and business partner

My life story would be titled: “A Challenging and Blessed Journey”

www.fnu.edu, mregueiro@fnu.edu, 305-821-3333, ext. 1002

Mark B. Rosenberg

President, Florida International University

Miami



In 2009, Rosenberg became the fifth president of FIU, and the first FIU faculty member to ascend to the university's presidency. Among other accolades, FIU this summer earned the highest score among Florida's public universities according to the Florida Board of Governors performance-based funding scores. The 97 points, which measures four-year graduation rate, retention rate, cost of attendance to students and employment of recent graduates, represented a nine-point improvement over FIU's score last year. The school also received a \$40 million donation by philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and her husband, Dan Jewett.

Birthplace: Athens, Ohio

Education: B.A., Miami University; M.A. and Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

president.fiu.edu, oop@fiu.edu, 305-348-2111

Dr. Debra A. Schwinn

President, Palm Beach Atlantic University

West Palm Beach



Named the ninth president of PBAU in 2020, Schwinn previously served as a dean, administrator and professor at the University of Iowa, the University of Washington and Duke University. A member of the National Academy of Medicine, Schwinn led a laboratory that the National Institutes of Health funded for 27 years.

Birthplace: Mansfield, Ohio

Education: B.A., chemistry, The College of Wooster; M.D., Stanford University School of Medicine

I went into education: To reshape truly mission-based activities for even greater effectiveness going forward

I am professionally satisfied by: Inspiring excitement about the future while solidifying fiscal foundations

Three traits that describe me: Christ-centered, innovator, contemplative

My hero: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Hidden talent: I am a classically trained violinist and CrossFitter.

www.pba.edu, debra_schwinn@pba.edu, 561-803-2004