

Monday, January 11, 2021

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capital
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

Happy New Year! Thank you for your leadership balancing COVID-19, Florida's economy, and budget. Florida is making progress on every front.

Here in the Tampa Bay area, a group of community and business leaders convene for lunch each month to discuss topics of interest to the region. Once a year we invite our local (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco) superintendents to get an update on education issues and ask where we can be helpful. We launched our 2021 lunch series with a briefing from Dr. Mike Grego (Pinellas), Addison Davis (Hillsborough) and Kurt Browning (Pasco) just this past Monday.

One of the areas we discussed was COVID-19 impact on the schools, budget, student, teachers, and parents as we all represent many employees in the Tampa/Greater Bay area. We all believe the best place to learn is in the classroom and while the remote teaching has progressed this year, having our teachers and staff feel safe to do what they do for our kids in school and then feel safe in their home life seems to advocate strong consideration for prioritizing teachers in your continued vaccination distribution schedule. Based on our discussion, we strongly encourage you to prioritize the inoculation of K-12 teachers in the state vaccination plan. We believe that this decision will have a positive impact on the safety and in-person education of our children and will greatly enhance the effectiveness of our workforce. We appreciate that you are making the best decisions based on vaccine availability and impacted audience needs. We know you will make the best decision for all of Florida in this evolving distribution process.

Please know this interested business leadership group meets for lunch the first Monday of every month and would welcome your participation ANY month. We have been virtual for a while but hope to get back to in-person lunches later this spring/early summer.

Thank you for your consideration of this advocacy and your service to our great state. Wishing you good health every day!

Best,

Carlos Alfonso
CEO, Alliant Partners

Lee Arnold
Executive Chair, Collier International Florida

Richard Beard
President/Owner, R.A. Beard & Co

Michael Carrere
CEO (Retired), Lykes Bros. | GP, Carrere
Capital, LLP

Gregory Celestan
CEO, Celestar Corporation

Alan Bomstein
CEO, Creative Contractors, Inc.

Daniel Doyle Jr.
CEO, Dex Imaging

Maryann Ferenc
President/Owner of Mise en Place

Damian Fernandez
President, Eckerd College

Richard Gonzmart
President, Columbia Restaurant Group

Richard Hume
CEO, TechData

Tom James
Chairman, Raymond James Financial

Fred Lynch
Operating Partner, AEA Investors

Stephen J. Mitchell
Senior Partner, Squire Patton Boggs

Harold W. Mullis
President Emeritus, Trenam Law

Tom Pepin
President/CEO, Pepin Distributing Company

John Ramil
President/CEO Retired, TECO Energy

John Couris
President/CEO, Tampa General Hospital

Thomas L. duPont
Chairman/Publisher, duPont Publishing Inc.

C. Samuel Ellison
Chairman, EWI Construction LLC

James L Ferman, Jr.
CEO/President, Ferman Automotive Management

Judy Genshaft
President and Professor Emerita, USF

Oscar Horton
President/CEO, Sun State International Trucks LLC

Tommy Inzina
President/CEO, BayCare

Rhea Law
Attorney at Law, Fmr Chairman/CEO, Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney

Allan S. Martin
Chairman, Atlantic Merchant Capital Investors

Mark Mondello
CEO, Jabil

Les Muma
Community Leader and Philanthropist

Lou Plasencia
CEO, The Plasencia Group

Steve Raney
Chairman/CEO, Raymond James Bank

Kathleen Shanahan
CEO, Turtle & Hughes

Craig Sher
Executive Chairman (retired), The Sembler
Company

Hon. Alex Sink
State of Florida CFO (2007 – 2011)

Tready Smith
CEO/Founder, Bayshore Capital Advisors, LLC

Chris Sullivan
Partner, MVP Holdings

Chuck Sykes
President/CEO, Sykes Enterprises, Inc.

Jeff Vinik
Owner, Tampa Bay Lightning

Cc: Richard Corcoran, Commissioner of Education
Shane Strum, Chief of Staff