

Education Summit II Summary

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012 brought together 650 thought leaders at Harborside Event Center for four hours of discussion about education. The theme of the second Market Watch Education Summit was career and college readiness—the ultimate measure of our success. Mei-Mei Chan, President and Publisher of The News-Press Media Group welcomed all at 7:30 am and told the audience, “We must make bold strategic commitments today to produce highly skilled, career-ready youngsters for tomorrow. And we must continue to advance our job base to entice those students to stay right here in Southwest Florida. We’re focused on education because it’s an economic imperative.” Chan said to the audience, “Some of you have asked why The News-Press Media Group has taken a leading role in this effort. The answer is simple. It needed to be done, and we have the power and responsibility to make it happen. We have been making a difference as your trusted home-town source for nearly 129 years.”

Following Chan was a welcome from the summit’s Platinum Sponsor, Florida Gulf Coast University’s President Dr. Wilson Bradshaw. Bradshaw thanked all for participating and gave a special acknowledgement to his colleagues on the Alliance of Educational Leaders, under the current leadership of Dr. Joseph Burke, Superintendent of the Lee County Public Schools. Founded in 1999, the Alliance is comprised of the CEOs of Southwest Florida’s K-20 institutions that are regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). He mentioned the Alliance is pleased to have the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board as a partner. It is a unique regional alliance that has advanced the agenda for Southwest Florida’s educational and workforce development for more than 10 years.

Terry Eberle, Vice President and Executive Editor and Steve McQuilkin, New Economy and Education Editor, then gave a riveting *State of Education Report by The News-Press Media Group*, delivering a thorough and thought provoking analysis of the current state of Florida’s educational status globally, nationally and our regional standing statewide. They focused the audience’s attention over the next three years, when Florida will face a seismic upheaval in transformative requirements for K-12 and continued funding constraints, increasing demands and whirlwind technological changes for K-20 public education. They spoke about an impending train wreck that is built on good intentions, but threatens to derail our efforts. The train wreck was referring to the state’s plan to implement three major changes

during the next three years: Common Core Standards, new standardized tests and a performance pay system for teachers. School superintendents agreed it is simply too much at once.

Equipping the leaders with new insights on Leadership to manage the impending changes necessary came from the Featured Speaker, Dean Williams of Harvard University. In Chan's introduction of Williams she stated that when the summit planning committee began brainstorming for an insightful and inspiring speaker for this summit, they talked about someone who excelled in education, either as a researcher or a hands-on leader. They talked about systems analysis, someone who can help us probe to the essential critical issues of this complex structure. And, because there is no magic formula, we talked about leadership, someone who could provide fresh views to how individuals can work better together toward a common purpose. What the committee found in Dean Williams was the marriage of all those areas of expertise. He is a faculty member of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, chairing its executive education program--*Global Change Agents: Leading with Commitment, Creativity and Courage*—and running the World Leaders Interview Project to draw insights on leadership. He is the author of *“Real Leadership: Helping People and Organizations Face Their Toughest Challenges”* and is completing *“The Global Change Agent.”* In a 60 minute talk on Leadership, filled with humor and many paradigm-changing insights, he left the audience with *The Leadership Lessons of Dean Williams*, printed in The News-Press the following day.

The crowd was eager to hear next from the Keynote Speaker, Governor Rick Scott, who announced prior to the event he was releasing his new initiative, titled “College and Career First.” Governor Scott did not disappoint, proposing more accountability in education, more support for teachers and fewer regulations that waste time and money. The result, Scott hopes, is a stronger education system that builds a stronger economy. “My mission is for Florida to be the best place in the world for jobs,” Scott said. “Our work will not be done until every Floridian who wants a job has one.” For details of Gov. Scott's Plan go to: <http://www.news-press.com/section/educationsummit>

Before Governor Scott departure, Mei-Mei Chan announced to him and all attending, the development of a new initiative named Workforce 2020. Workforce 2020 will be driven by the Regional Economic Research Institute at Florida Gulf Coast University. It will analyze workforce trends locally and internationally to identify existing needs and emerging trends in business. Founding investors for Workforce 2020 include: The News-Press Media Group, Partnership for Collier's Future Economy, The Lee County Industrial Development Authority, The SWFL Workforce Development Board, Arthrex, Edison

State College, FGCU, Hodges University and Manhattan Construction, raising already \$65,000 of the \$100,000 needed.

After a short break, the Summit welcomed some of Southwest Florida's most prestigious business leaders who discussed the challenges and opportunities of doing business today and in the future in Southwest Florida. The panel's moderator was JON CECIL, Chief Human Resources Officer at Lee Memorial Health System. The panelists were:

- DEBRA KENT FAULK, Community Affairs Officer, Wells Fargo & Company
- KEVIN HAWKESWORTH, President and CEO, Shaw Development, LLC.
- FELIX LLUBERES, Applications Architect and CEO, Position Logic
- KIMBERLY PRESANZANO, Area Operations Manager, CenturyLink
- ROBERT ALLAN SIMPSON, President and Chief Executive Officer, LeeSar
- KATIE G. SPROUL, Co-CEO of the Barron Collier Companies
- SARA K. STENSRUD, Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chico's FAS

Following was an Education panel to discuss the challenges ahead and the cooperation they need from the business community and the community at large. Moderated by MICHAEL V. REAGEN, President and CEO, The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce & President of the Leadership Collier Foundation. The panelists were:

- DR. JEFFERY ALLBRITTEN, President, Edison State College
- SCOTT BASS, Superintendent, Glades County Public Schools
- DR. WILSON BRADSHAW, President, Florida Gulf Coast University
- DR. JOSEPH BURKE, Superintendent, Lee County Public Schools
- DR. TERRY MCMAHAN President, Hodges University
- RICHARD A. MURPHY, Superintendent, Hendry County Public Schools
- DR. KAMELA PATTON, Superintendent, Collier County Public Schools
- PAM STEWART, Commissioner, Florida Department of Education
- DR. DOUGLAS WHITTAKER, Superintendent, Charlotte County Public Schools

The panels were led in discussions on areas of education and preparation that have and have not been meeting expectations, especially in the year since the first Market Watch Education Summit, where many expectations were created. Both panels discussed a report from local businesses that Southwest Florida high school students entering the workforce are not well prepared with the basics, and many lack problem solving, critical & creative thinking, and customer service skills. Many of the business leaders on the panel were involved in the Teacher Immersion program organized by the Alliance of Educational Leaders. Teachers took a day to immerse themselves into area businesses to learn first-hand the skills and education necessary to meet various jobs. Edison State College President Jeff Allbritten said the summit opens the doors for future conversations, and he's especially interested in hearing what business leaders want in their future employees. "Help us understand what the needs are," Allbritten said. "We'll turn around and make it happen."

Following the summit was a reserved Stakeholder Working Lunch facilitated by Dean Williams. A group of 96 participant sponsors and stakeholders from Southwest Florida's educational institutions and businesses met for a working lunch in Harborside's Atrium. Two tables each were devoted to one of the three topics for discussion: Improving Academic Achievement, Increase STEM Focus and Support & Develop Teachers. Each table was led by a moderator, who reported their findings back to the group at

large. Each table had a 'scribe' to record and summarize. A general report from the lunch will be delivered back to the Alliance of Educational Leaders and the Market Watch Education Summit planning committee to implement strategies and initiatives throughout the year and to plan for future summits.