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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Education Foundation of Sarasota County names new College, Career and Life Readiness Initiative team**

SARASOTA, Florida – Jennifer Vigne, President of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County, has announced Suzanne Burke as the Director of College, Career and Life readiness.

In her new role, Burke is the liaison with the Sarasota County Schools district and campuses, as well as community partners, in focusing exclusively on the Education Foundation's strategic initiative centering on students' readiness for postsecondary success.

A Florida native, Burke earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Florida. Her master's and doctorate degrees in curriculum and instruction are from the University of Texas at Austin.

Burke, who began her career in education as a classroom teacher, previously led curriculum design and professional development with emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and was associate superintendent for academics in Austin, Texas.

The Foundation strengthened its College, Career and Life Readiness Initiative team with the addition of two new dedicated advisors who will staff Student Success Centers at North Port and Riverview high schools, the district's pilot schools participating in the initiative.

Rebecca Lewis, College Career Advisor at Riverview High School, is a Sarasota native. She previously worked in admissions and advising at local colleges including University of South Florida Sarasota Manatee, State College of Florida and New College of Florida, and in a corporate marketing office. Lewis has a bachelor's in business administration from the University of South Florida.

Jenna Thiel, College Career Advisor at North Port High School, worked in education for 14 years as a recruiter and academic advisor before joining the Education Foundation. She has a bachelor's in business from the University of South Florida (USF) Sarasota-Manatee and a master's degree in career and technical education from USF.

### **About the Education Foundation**

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County is an independent partner working to advance philanthropic support for Sarasota County Schools. Its mission is to enhance the potential of students, promote excellence in teaching and inspire innovation in education. Guided by the belief

that education changes lives, the Education Foundation strives to match each donor's passion with high-impact projects created to ensure students graduate with purpose and are prepared for a post-secondary pathway. The Education Foundation of Sarasota County and its philanthropic investors are champions for students, teachers, and schools. For more information on how to be a champion for education, visit [EdFoundationSRQ.org](http://EdFoundationSRQ.org).

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*Pictured (l-r) Suzanne Burke, Ph.D., Rebecca Lewis and Jenna Thiel of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County.*