

Dede Schaffner
School Board Member
The School Board of Seminole County, Florida



Dede Schaffner is a respected advocate of public education and founder/architect of Seminole County Public Schools' nationally recognized Dividends School Volunteer Program. Ms. Schaffner began her career at the grassroots level as a parent, starting the Dividends Program as a volunteer herself with just 16 other volunteers to broaden the classroom resources for Seminole County students. Under her direction, Dividends grew to more than 18,000 volunteers and provided more than \$200 million in donated services to Seminole County Public Schools. Currently the program has almost 24,000 volunteers who provide over \$8 M worth of services to our Seminole County public schools. The program has won four national awards and four Walt Disney World Community Service Awards. Under her direction, The Foundation won Walt Disney's most prestigious award that included a \$50,000 check for scholarships for at-risk students. Dede's concern about high school dropouts prompted her to start the Compact Program with mentors for at-risk students. Hundreds of high school students have earned a high school diploma who potentially would have dropped out of school. She was also the founder of the Back to School Fair which provides backpacks with school supplies for children unable to start school each year with needed school supplies. She co-founded Arts Alive in Seminole!, an event that highlights the visual and performing arts in our Seminole County Public Schools. Proceeds from this event support cultural arts activities for all public school children in the district and support individual school's fine arts programs. Dede's concern for at-risk youth led her to be the champion for the Midway Safe Harbor, a gymnasium facility that was built with the cooperation of business, government and private donors to provide a safe harbor and recreation/education facility in the Midway area.

Dede has a B.S. in Elementary Education and a M.E. in Administration and Supervision from the University of Central Florida. Since her election to the School Board, Dede has become active with the Florida School Boards Association serving on the State Board of Directors. She has served as chairman of Seminole Community College's Board of Trustees where she is serving her third term as an appointee of the Governor. She also serves on the Foundation for Seminole Community College where she and her late husband, Bill, started the first Dream Auction to raise scholarship dollars for community college students. She is an active member of the Rotary Club of Seminole County South where she has served as president, Paul Harris Fellow, Chair of the Rotary Rising Achievers Recognition Committee, and Scholarship Committee. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Seminole County Youth Commission, United Arts, Seminole County Boys and Girls Clubs, Business Advisory Board and The Foundation for Seminole County Public Schools. She also serves on the Executive Committee for Leadership Seminole, and is a graduate of that program. Dede has also received numerous awards at the local, state and national level. She has served as a consultant in 14 different states promoting community involvement in public education. Florida Trend Magazine cited her as one of two "People to Watch" for her activities involving the business community in public education. She was the recipient of the 2009 Seminole County Golden Eagle Award, was honored by the Seminole County Regional Chamber in a Salute to Seminole's Professional Women, and received the Leadership Legend Award in 2006 as well as the 2003 Success in Seminole Award. Dede is currently serving her third term on the Seminole County School Board.