



**Cynthia Saunders**  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
**Biography**

Cynthia Saunders was sworn in as Superintendent of the School District of Manatee County on June 28, 2018. Her nearly 30 years of service in education in Florida include experience as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal as well as time in district administrative and leadership positions including curriculum and staff development, Executive Director of Secondary Schools and Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Services.

Ms. Saunders came to Manatee County in July 2013 as Executive Director of Secondary Schools and became Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Services in March 2015. With the help of her leadership, experience and community spirit, the School District of Manatee County has seen momentous gains academically, financially and in terms of community support during her tenure, as demonstrated in the following ways:

- As Executive Director of Secondary Schools from 2013-2015, the Manatee District exceeded the state average in the percentage of high schools receiving an A or B grade and no Manatee District high school received less than a C grade.
- Prior to her becoming the Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Services, the Manatee District had received a “C” grade from the state for three consecutive years. Since 2015, the Manatee District has received a “B” grade four out of the last five years (2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), and was just six points shy of an “A” grade in 2019.
- When Ms. Saunders arrived in Manatee County in 2013, the District had 18 “D” or “F” schools. By the summer of 2019, following her first year as Superintendent, the District had eliminated all “F” schools and had only two “D” schools.
- The District’s Fund Balance (financial reserves) have grown from \$14.4 million in 2013 to more than \$34 million in 2019, causing global financial ratings firms to significantly upgrade their ratings of the district.
- Thanks to a one-mill property tax increase passed by Manatee County voters in March 2018, the average teacher pay increase in 2018-2019 was more than \$6,200, and employees of the district have received pay increases for five consecutive years.

Ms. Saunders attributes the accomplishments of the last six years to the hardworking students, teachers and support employees of the school district, and to the support of the citizens of Manatee County.

Ms. Saunders holds a Master’s Degree (M.S.) from Nova Southeastern University in Educational Leadership, and a Bachelor’s degree (B.S.) in Mathematics Education at the University of Central Florida.

Mrs. Saunders is married to George “Rock” Saunders. They have one son, Casey, and are proud grandparents.