



While still in the first month of 2019, newly elected Governor Ron DeSantis did not waste any time getting down to business. Following, are a few of his accomplishments:

-Appointed three justices to the Florida Supreme Court. Judge Barbara Lagoa, the first Hispanic woman in history to serve on the Florida Supreme Court; Judge Robert Luck, the first Jewish justice appointed in over 20 years; and Carlos Muñiz, the first Nicaraguan-American to serve on the Florida Supreme Court.

- Signed Executive Order 19-12 (Achieving More Now For Florida's Environment), implementing major reforms to ensure the protection of Florida's environment and water quality. The order calls for: \$2.5 Billion over the next four years for Everglades restoration and protection of water resources (a \$1 Billion increase in spending over the previous four years and the highest level of funding for restoration in Florida's history); The Establishment of a Blue-Green Algae Task Force, charged with focusing on expediting progress toward reducing the adverse impacts of blue-green algae blooms now and over the next five years; Instruction to the South Florida Water Management District to immediately start the next phase of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Project design and ensure the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approves the project according to schedule; The Creation of the Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency charged with organizing and directing integrated scientific research and analysis to ensure that all agency actions are aligned with key environmental priorities; and The Appointment of a Chief Science Officer to coordinate and prioritize scientific data, research, monitoring and analysis needs to ensure alignment with current and emerging environmental concerns most pressing to Floridians.

-Called for the immediate resignations of all governing board members of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The announcement was made during a stop in Stuart to discuss the Governor's major water policy reforms to protect and improve Florida's water resources.

-Issued Executive Order 19-13, formally suspending Okaloosa County Superintendent of Schools Mary Beth Jackson. Two Okaloosa County Grand Jury Reports found that Superintendent Jackson failed to protect the children. Although Jackson was not indicted on any criminal charges by the Grand Jury, they stated that it continued "to lack confidence in (Superintendent Jackson's) abilities to serve as Superintendent of Schools for Okaloosa County. According to a letter from Commissioner, Richard Corcoran, "the Grand Jury reviewed allegations that special needs children were 'kicked, tripped, and grabbed' and that the teacher 'withheld food and sprayed students with a vinegar solution as a form of punishment.' A four-year-old boy on the Autism Spectrum, who was nonverbal, was the recipient of the majority of this abuse. The teacher received a seven-year prison sentence."

-Issued a full pardon of the members of the Groveland Four: Ernest Thomas, Samuel Shepherd, Walter Irvin and Charles Greenlee. The pardon was unanimously approved by the Executive Clemency Board. Governor DeSantis, regarding the pardon, stated, "For seventy years, these four men have had their history wrongly written for crimes they did not commit. As I have said before, while that is a long time to wait, it is never too late to do the right thing. I believe the rule of law is society's sacred bond. When it is trampled, we all suffer. For the Groveland Four, the truth was buried. The Perpetrators celebrated. However, justice has cried out from that day until this. I would like to thank CFO Patronis, Attorney General Moody and Agriculture Commissioner Fried for their support."

-Issued Executive Order 19-14, formally suspending Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel and formally announced the appointment of Gregory Tony as Sheriff of Broward County. Tony, is Broward County's first African-American Sheriff.

-Made a major announcement regarding medical marijuana policy where he called on the Florida Legislature to pass a bill that would allow Amendment 2 to be implemented as originally intended by 71 percent of Florida voters in 2016. He stated that "Florida voters overwhelmingly approved medical marijuana in 2016, and I believe the subsequent legislation has been inadequate," "Voters intended for medical marijuana to be dispensed in a way that would best benefit the patient, smoking included. That is why I am calling on the Legislature to provide me with a bill within the first two weeks of Session that will fix this issue and allow the voices of Floridians to be heard."

-Retracted 46 appointments made on January 4 and 7, 2019 by the previous administration. The retracted appointments only applied to those requiring Senate confirmation. His letter stated, "I agree many of these individuals are outstanding citizens who are experts in their respected fields," "I thank these individuals for their willingness to serve our state. They will be afforded every consideration as my office re-opens the application process to fill these critical appointment vacancies."

-Announced that Kevin J. Thibault, P.E., former Southeast Regional Senior Vice President of TranSystems Corporation, will serve as Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the DeSantis-Nuñez Administration.

-Issued Executive Order 19-19, suspending Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Susan Bucher, effective immediately.

- Issued Executive Order Executive order 19-18, officially accepting the resignation of former Broward County Supervisor of Elections Dr. Brenda Snipes, effective January 4, 2019, formally terminating her duties.

-The Florida Cabinet unanimously approved Governor DeSantis' appointment of State Representative Danny Burgess to serve as the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

-Announced a bold first step in ensuring a brighter future for Florida's economy. Governor DeSantis recently wrote a letter to the members of Florida's 23 Professional Licensing Boards, calling on them to join him, Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) Secretary Halsey Beshears on Thursday, January 31, 2019 at Valencia College in Orlando for a one-day event called "Florida Delegation" to find solutions to harmful regulations facing Floridians.

-Announced additional reimbursement assistance for Hurricane Michael recovery expenses. On Tuesday, January 22, Governor DeSantis met with President Trump to discuss his request for 45 days of 100% Federal cost share for Hurricane Michael debris removal and emergency protective measures. After their meeting, President Trump granted the Governor's request without hesitation.

-Announced the appointment of Clay Ingram as CEO of Volunteer Florida.

- Recommended Richard Corcoran, who served as a top adviser to DeSantis during the transition, for the position of Florida's Commissioner of Education. The commissioner is the state's Chief Education Officer, in charge of representing Florida's public educational system (except universities), and is appointed by the State Board of Education, whose members are appointed by the governor.

Locally, Lee County School Board is embroiled in controversy once again, following an email sent from the personal email address of former School Board chair, Cathleen Morgan, titled 'Superintendent Under Fire', and marked 'PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL... PLEASE DO NOT SHARE.' This email was sent to undisclosed recipients, reportedly including all of the School District's Advisory Committee Chairmen, and was released by Fox 4, who quoted Morgan as writing, "The Superintendent no longer has the confidence of the board." In the email, she stated that 'the new School Board is fracturing.' and she called for her email recipients to 'attend and observe the Board at work' at their workshop on Thursday, January 17. The email concluded with the Board member's phone numbers, for contact, including the personal cell phone number of new Board member, Debbie Jordan.

During the January 17 workshop, some seasoned Board Members and some newly elected Board Members expressed concern with the recent 15-20 percent salary increase given to School District executives - retroactive to June - while teachers and support staff are still working without a contract since August and are still in the fifty-fifth percentile of pay. Fox 4, covering the workshop, reported that newly elected Board Chair, Gwen Gittens "took that time to express how she felt about some decisions that were made, specifically about the districts executive salaries. 'I asked the question, this is great, how are we going to pay for it, and I was told that we found, \$22 million dollars...that was a concern to me,' said Gittens."

At the last School Board Briefing meeting, Gittens made a motion for all Board meetings to be held in the main Board Room so that they could be televised live to our community. This motion passed, and you can watch meetings live or watch tapes later to know first-hand how your tax dollars are being spent.

Workshop can be accessed at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U33lndBZVYQ>