

BOARD MEMBERS

Tina Certain
Robert P. Hyatt
Leannetta McNealy, Ph.D.
Gunnar F. Paulson, Ed.D.
Mildred Russell

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Carlee Simon, Ph.D.



An 'A-rated' District

Mission Statement: We are committed to the success of every student!

District Office
620 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida
32601-5498

www.sbac.edu
(352) 955-7300

NEWS RELEASE

For more information, contact:
Jackie Johnson/(352) 955-7545

For Immediate Release
September 23, 2021

District receives federal reimbursement for state funding cut due to mask requirement

Alachua County Public Schools is the first school district in the nation to receive a grant from the federal government to make up for funding withheld over mask requirements in schools.

The district has been awarded an initial sum of \$148,000 by the U.S. Education Department through its Project Safe grant program. The program reimburses school districts for funding withheld by a state government because of mask requirements and other COVID-related protocols.

Superintendent Dr. Carlee Simon was informed of the award during a phone call earlier today with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. The Secretary also personally congratulated Dr. Simon for the steps the district has taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools and the community.

“With these grants, we’re making sure schools and communities across the country that are committed to safely returning to in-person learning know that we have their backs,” Secretary Cardona was quoted in a just-issued [news release](#). “I commend Alachua for protecting its students and educators, and I look forward to working with them to provide students their best year yet. Every student across the country deserves the opportunity to return to school in-person safely this fall, and every family should be confident that their school is implementing policies that keep their children safe.”

“I’m very grateful to Mr. Cardona, President Biden and the federal government for the funding,” said Dr. Simon. “But I’m even more grateful for their continued support and encouragement of our efforts to protect students and staff and to keep our schools open for in-person learning.”

So far, the Florida Department of Education has withheld two months-worth of salaries for the four School Board members who voted for the mask mandates, including Board chair Dr. Leannetta McNealy, vice chair Tina Certain, Board member Rob Hyatt and Board member Dr. Gunnar Paulson. That amounts to nearly \$27,000.

#####