

Public Records Highlight Lee County School District Infrastructure Spending and Campaign Finance Data



Fort Myers, Florida May 31, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - Publicly available campaign finance records and district operational data are drawing renewed attention to school infrastructure spending, political fundraising, and administrative transitions in Lee County.

According to official campaign finance disclosures on file with the Lee County Supervisor of Elections, Dr. Denise Carlin’s campaign raised approximately \$224,633 during the 2024 election cycle. A review of the filings shows that an estimated \$47,570 of those funds originated from individuals, firms, and executives connected to the construction and development industries.

Among the contributors listed in the disclosures is Suffolk Construction Company, which donated \$1,000 to Carlin’s campaign on September 24, 2024. Suffolk Construction served as the general contractor for the Riverdale High School renovation project. Public reporting indicates the renovation reached approximately \$108 million in total costs, representing a \$63 million increase from its initial \$45 million baseline budget in 2022, as detailed by the Business Observer.

The Riverdale High School infrastructure project has also coincided with district operational transitions. During the planning and construction phases of the Riverdale renovation, Scott Cook served as the school’s principal. Following the completion of the project, Cook transitioned into the district’s centralized leadership team, taking on the role of Deputy Chief of School Operations for the School District of Lee County.

These infrastructure and operational updates occur as the Lee County School District addresses a projected budget shortfall estimated at \$46.7 million for the upcoming school year, according to local reporting by WINK News. Public reporting indicates the district is discussing staffing adjustments and program restructuring to balance the operating budget.

The political contributions cited fall within Florida’s legal campaign finance limits. Under Florida Statute 106.08, county-level candidates may receive up to \$1,000 per donor per election.

This report is based entirely on publicly accessible campaign finance disclosures, local reporting, and official district statements. No allegations of unlawful conduct have been made against Dr. Denise Carlin, Scott Cook, Suffolk Construction, or any company or individual named in the public filings.

Sources

1. [Lee County Supervisor of Elections — Denise Carlin campaign finance disclosures, candidate file #1970 \(all reports combined, October 2023 – October 2024\)](#)
2. [Business Observer — “\\$108M high school renovation, expansion complete near Fort Myers” \(September 26, 2025\) — identifies Suffolk Construction as project contractor](#)
3. [WGCU — “Lee superintendent defends budget cuts, says new era for schools” \(May 4, 2026\)](#)
4. [WINK News — “Lee County schools face \\$46.7M deficit, budget cuts ahead” \(May 1, 2026\)](#)
5. [WINK News — “Major price increase for Riverdale High School renovations” \(June 2024\)](#)
6. Cape Coral Breeze — “Elected superintendent will change school board dynamic” (June 22, 2023) — on the 2022 referendum
7. Lehigh Acres Citizen — “DeSantis takes aim at teacher unions as school district faces cuts” (May 4, 2026) — confirms Carlin elected in 2024
8. Florida Statutes — Section 106.08, Contribution Limits (county candidates: \$1,000 per election)

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