



## The School Board of Sarasota County, Florida

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### **School district breaks ground for Suncoast Polytechnical High**

SARASOTA – School district officials, high school students and representatives of the business community took another step toward “a new school, a new world of opportunities” Dec. 3 at a groundbreaking ceremony for Suncoast Polytechnical High School. Construction of the new facility is already well under way near the corner of Beneva and Proctor roads on the campus of the Sarasota County Technical Institute (SCTI). The school is scheduled to open in August 2008.

The name **Suncoast Polytechnical High School** was selected by a committee of school officials and community members and approved by the School Board in November. It was suggested by Riverview High School junior Martyna Habrat because of the variety of technology-oriented classes and career paths the school will offer.

Habrat was one of several speakers at the ceremony. She spoke of the real-world educational opportunities Suncoast Polytechnical High School will provide its students.

Other speakers included Kathy Kleinlein, chair of the School Board of Sarasota County; Gary Norris, superintendent of schools; Jennifer Putnam, principal of the new school; representatives of Schenkel Shultz Architecture and Willis A. Smith Construction, designers and builders of the school, respectively; Dale Vollrath of TRC Staffing Services, Sarasota, representing the Suncoast Workforce Board and the Suncoast Education Alliance; Kathy Baylis, president of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County; and Steve Queior, president of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce.

Steve Cantees, the executive director of high schools for the district, served as master of ceremonies. Music was provided by the Booker High School Saxophone Quartet. Riverview High School vocalist James Taylor sang the Nation Anthem and the Sarasota High School ROTC Color Guard posted the colors.

Vollrath called Suncoast Polytechnical “a dream come true...representing new horizons, visions and opportunities...to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce.” Baylis said business leaders will welcome the “focus on talent” that the new school will provide to attract and retain a wide variety of companies.

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Queior quoted author H.G. Wells, who said, “The future is a race between education and catastrophe.” Queior added, “This new school will help education win the race.”

Putnam read excerpts from essays written by middle school students who already have enrolled in Suncoast Polytechnical High School and will be part of its first graduating class in 2012. One student named Matthew said, “I love to take things apart and put them back together. I think SPHS will help to inspire me and create better goals, to help me with my dreams in life.”

The comments from students are in keeping with one of the school’s taglines: “Learn what you love. Love what you learn.”

The 67,000-square-foot high school is being built to accommodate 600 students in 23 classrooms. It has been designed to attract highly motivated students with a strong interest in technology, whether they are planning to pursue a college degree, seek other post-secondary education or enter the work force after graduation. Core curriculum classes such as language arts, math and social studies will have a technology and business focus.

A second career technical school for south county students is scheduled to open in Venice in 2009. More information about Suncoast Polytechnical High School is available at [www.sarasotacountyschools.net/sphs](http://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/sphs).

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**PHOTO CAPTION:** School Board members, Superintendent Gary Norris, Principal Jennifer Putnam and other representatives of Sarasota County Schools, the business community, and the design and construction team for Suncoast Polytechnical High School officially break ground on the new school, which is already under construction.