



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contacts:

Kim Long, Polk Vision

[kim@polkvision.com](mailto:kim@polkvision.com)

863.940.2888

## Every Kid Healthy Week

BARTOW- Polk Vision kicked off the 2017 Every Kid Healthy Week with a proclamation at Tuesday evening's School Board meeting. Polk Vision Executive Director Kim Long attended the School Board meeting and the proclamation recognized five elementary schools participating in Polk Vision's Building a Healthier Polk Healthy Schools Initiative. Administration and staff from Highland City Elementary School, Inwood Elementary School, Medulla Elementary School, Padgett Elementary School, and Wahneta Elementary School were recognized for their commitment to this initiative, which is aimed at improving student health and academic achievement through an initial focus on increased physical activity and nutrition.

"We are thrilled to be part of an initiative that prioritizes student health and acknowledges that proper nutrition is critical for maximum student achievement," says Jenna Kaczmarek, Polk County School Nutrition Director and co-chair of Polk Vision's School Health Team. The Healthy Schools Initiative, developed by Polk Vision's Building a Healthier Polk School Health Team, is aimed at promoting wellness within the school, emphasizing the benefits that result from integrating health and education in the school setting.

This year marks the 5th annual celebration of Every Kid Healthy Week – a weeklong national observance of school health and wellness which began Monday. It was started by Action for Healthy Kids in 2013. The purpose of this observance is to recognize schools' efforts to improve student health, wellness, and academic achievement through nutrition, physical activity, and education.

The observance is also a part of the Healthy Schools Initiative, developed by Polk Vision's Building a Healthier Polk School Health Team. The initiative is set to launch in August 2017, and will continue throughout the 2017-2018 school year. For the first year of the program, each school has been asked to work on a goal related to physical activity or nutrition. Kathleen Wright, Physical Education Curriculum Specialist for Polk County Schools and chair of the School Health Team, emphasizes the benefits of integrating health and education within the school setting.

"This initiative highlights the importance of working across all disciplines within the school and the greater community to ensure that children are healthy, safe, supported, engaged, challenged, and ready to learn. Our goal with this initiative is to help build each school's capacity to create a sustainable culture of health and wellness among both staff and students," Wright said.

For more information on Every Kid Healthy Week, please visit: <http://www.everykidhealthyweek.org/>

For more information on Polk Vision and the Building a Healthier Polk Initiative, please visit: <http://portal.polkvision.com/>