

Power Up: Building Capacity on Both Sides of the Table

For 35 years, JLRD has engineered the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems behind schools across Florida. The firm started small in 1991, and much of what it has become was shaped by its work with the School District of Palm Beach County.

Capacity building has been the throughline of that growth. For JLRD, it has meant deepening what the firm does under one roof and staying with a project from design through construction, so the engineer who designs a system stays connected to how it gets built. A District project moves through one connected team rather than a chain of handoffs. It has also meant developing the next generation of engineers and project managers, and being deliberate about the small businesses and subconsultants the firm brings alongside it.



That last part matters most to this theme. As a prime, JLRD's readiness is tied to theirs. The strongest small businesses on a team treat certification as a starting point, learn the District's procurement process closely, document everything, and deliver on the first opportunity so there is a second. When a small firm shows up prepared, the whole team is stronger, and it is part of why JLRD stays engaged with the Office of Small Business Development.

"Capacity is not something you announce. It is something you build, project by project, and it is strongest when the small businesses around you are building it too."
— Chuck Gableman, President and CEO, JLRD



Performance, in this work, shows up on an occupied campus. Much of JLRD's District work is renovation completed while school is in session, where phasing, life safety, and air quality cannot slip. That same discipline carried into the firm's role as Engineer of Record for Florida's first LEED Gold and Platinum schools and into its current net zero energy school work.



JLRD is grateful for OSBD's mission and glad to support it, including through the A&E Summit and Small Business University, a program JLRD came up through as a graduate itself. That perspective, having built capacity from the same starting point many of these firms are at now, is part of why the firm stays engaged. Capacity is most valuable when it is shared, and JLRD looks forward to continuing that work with the District and the small-business community it serves.