

TOGETHER PCS



KEEPING PACE WITH PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Welcome to TogetherPCS, the district's monthly newsletter featuring students, staff, alumni, coaches, curriculum, community partners and so much more!

In this issue, we meet East Lake High School alumna Kiana Hamm, a senior concept artist for Amazon Games. We also talk to St. Pete High School pickleballers, who recently painted courts and held their first tournament on campus. And we continue to focus on the middle school experience as scholars from multiple middle schools participated in a field to the St. Petersburg Grand Prix and another group of students visited the Lunch Lab, where they sampled and rated potential menu items for next school year.

Do you know someone who should be featured in TogetherPCS? Please click the "Nominate Here" button below. Let's do this TOGETHER!

[NOMINATE HERE](#)



Pinellas County Schools' next Listen & Learn session will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11, at The Dali Museum. Sessions give students, families, staff and community members opportunities to learn more about the district and engage with PCS leaders and Board members. The March Listen & Learn session will focus on the arts. The session will be recorded but not live-streamed.

WHAT'S INSIDE



Limited seats available for PCS Summer Enrichment Camps

Applications for Pinellas County Schools Summer Camps are open! Families can choose from more than 50 summer camp offerings, ranging from STEM to the arts to fitness activities. The district is expanding camp opportunities and providing options in June and July. This year, camps will have a cost of \$75 per session and a rate of \$25 per session for students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Applications close March 9.

Due to changes to this year's Summer Bridge program, summer camps may be an appealing opportunity for more families. Elementary Summer Bridge will be for students who have demonstrated a need for extra support in reading based on state reading criteria. Middle School Summer Bridge will focus on credit recovery. Schools will be reaching out to parents whose children are eligible in the coming weeks. Registration for Summer Bridge will begin after spring break.

www.pcsb.org/summercamps



Pickleball craze takes over St. Pete High

Junior Olivia Hoyt spent most of her summer last year playing pickleball with family and friends, so it seemed only natural to continue playing – and get more people involved – when the school year started.

“We all just love pickleball,” said Olivia, who is one of the co-presidents of St. Petersburg High School’s ever-growing Pickleball Club. “It’s definitely a good way for our community to get together and a good way for kids to make friends.”

Although the club first launched more than two years ago, as pickleball has soared in popularity, so has St. Pete High students’ interest in the sport. The club has more than doubled in size since its inception and now has its own courts on campus.

“This was a really underutilized area of campus,” said Rachel Koral, the visual arts department chair and Pickleball Club sponsor of the dilapidated tennis courts behind the school. “So we’ve spent hours painting our own courts, which allows the club to meet right after school and play.”

Watch the video and read the full article

Gibbs' Larry Murphy named coach of the year

Gibbs High School Head Varsity Basketball Coach Larry Murphy was named the National Federation of State High School Associations Coach of the Year on Tuesday night after his team won its semi-final game 65-50 in the state tournament in Lakeland. The NFHS promotes amateur sports participation and athletics programs at the high school level

and serves 19,500 high schools nationwide.

"It's great to have a coach who makes sure you take accountability," said senior point guard Jacob Daniels.

Congratulations Coach Murphy!



ACHIEVE TOGETHER

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Kiana Hamm, a 2014 graduate from East Lake High School, is now a character concept artist for Amazon Games.

Kiana Hamm is one of the lucky ones.

From the early stages of doodling in her middle school notebooks and swapping sketchbooks with friends, Hamm knew she wanted a career in drawing.

But how that translated into her becoming a character concept artist for Amazon Games just 10 years after graduating high school is beyond her wildest dreams.

"I always loved drawing and I was always very creative and liked coming up with stories and characters," Hamm said. "I've been very lucky that once I figured out that this was the industry I wanted to go into, I haven't strayed too far from it.

"It's something I'd been considering throughout my high school career."

[Read the full article](#)



Mark your calendars and plan to join us on May 5 for a star-studded evening at the Mahaffey Theater, celebrating the arts and entertainment as students compete in the Walker's Rising Stars Scholarship Program. Created by Dr. Jeffrey Walker and the Pinellas Education Foundation, Walker's Rising Stars Scholarship Competition is a year-long initiative that helps students hone their audition, portfolio and performance skills. Participants in Walker's Rising Stars compete for college scholarships in six categories: Culinary Arts, Dance, Instrumental, Theater, Visual Arts and Vocal Performance. For the first time, this is a FREE ticketless event! Visit pinellaseducation.org/walkers to see the student finalists who will be performing and learn more about the event.



Celebrating Volunteers

Last week, our volunteers gathered to celebrate an incredible year of service. 30,000+ volunteers have donated nearly 400,000 hours of service to support student success across the county. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for your time and dedication to our district. Special congratulations to our top 3 Outstanding School Volunteers!

Isabella Rosado Glasford, Youth Volunteer at Eisenhower Elementary

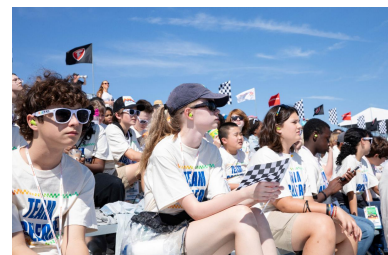
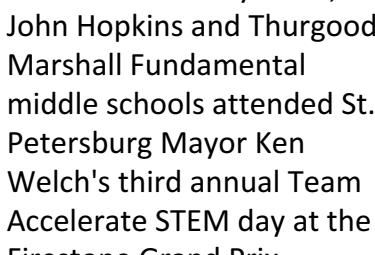
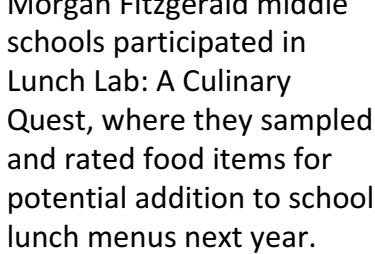
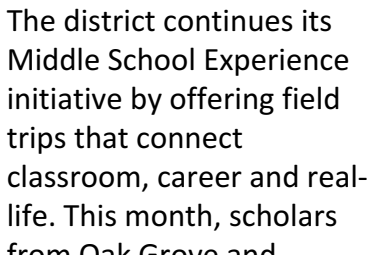
Courtney Williams, Adult Volunteer at Fairmount Park Elementary

Vernon Bryant, Senior Volunteer at Richard O. Jacobson Technical High



Are You a PCS Alumni?

What are you up to now? Use the link below to update Pinellas County Schools on family, career and life for a chance to be featured in TogetherPCS! Tell us more here.



The district continues its Middle School Experience initiative by offering field trips that connect classroom, career and real-life. This month, scholars from Oak Grove and Morgan Fitzgerald middle schools participated in Lunch Lab: A Culinary Quest, where they sampled and rated food items for potential addition to school lunch menus next year. Students from Bay Point, John Hopkins and Thurgood Marshall Fundamental middle schools attended St. Petersburg Mayor Ken Welch's third annual Team Accelerate STEM day at the Firestone Grand Prix.

Watch more here



The Superintendent Says...

"We have had an amazing month of achievements throughout our district! From celebrating our Carwise and Vyrle Davis fellows to our Regional Spelling Bee competitors and our all-county arts performers, PCS has a lot to celebrate going into Spring Break. A big thank you to all of our mentors and outstanding school volunteers who were recognized this month as well. I couldn't be more proud of our students and staff and the community that supports them."

To help spread the word, please forward this newsletter to community members who are interested in public education. Sign up by clicking the button below.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)



VISION: 100% STUDENT SUCCESS
MISSION: EDUCATE AND PREPARE EACH STUDENT FOR COLLEGE, CAREER AND LIFE

PCS Compliance Statement