

Pinellas County Schools

“Get Engaged in Education”



Office of Strategic Partnerships

Family & Community Relations



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*You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give.
-Winston Churchill*

*“A one hour investment
equals a lifetime of returns
for you and our students.”*

The Office of Strategic Partnerships

Pinellas County Schools Office of Strategic Partnerships Family & Community Relations was started in 1981 to improve students' academic achievement and enhance the quality of life for students and families.

The mission of the Office of Strategic Partnerships & Family & Community Relations is to establish ongoing relationships between the families, district, schools and the community while empowering all stakeholders to support 100% student success.

Goals

- Mobilize and channel resources into school system
- Engage stakeholders by fostering a greater understanding of PCS school system and programs
- Provide volunteer, tutor, and mentor support for students
- Increase family engagement
- Enhance community relations between PCS, families and the community

The Office of Strategic Partnerships & Family & Community Relations is comprised of the following areas:

- Volunteer Program
- Family & Community Engagement
- Community and Business Partnerships
- Parent Advocacy
- Student Programs
- Awards & Recognitions
- Workshops/Trainings

Volunteer Programs

Volunteers are making a big difference in Pinellas County Schools by helping students develop skills, knowledge and positive attitudes that are attributes of productive citizens. They provide enrichment opportunities; build a strong foundation for students and encourage them to make choices about colleges, careers or post-secondary training programs. This booklet will provide information about the volunteer opportunities, district policy and procedures, and the roles/responsibilities of a volunteer. We urge you to become a strong advocate for volunteerism by sharing your positive experiences with others and encouraging them to become involved.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers and community partners are making a difference by helping students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are the hallmark of a quality education. Lending a hand, listening, offering encouragement and a smile, can help shape a child's future. From elementary to high school, volunteers are sharing their time and talents and are welcome in the classroom. All volunteers must complete a volunteer registration form and pass a background check prior to volunteering.



Why Mentor?

All mentoring programs offered are during the school day on school grounds or at school sponsored events. There is no outside contact or sharing of personal information, including phone numbers, emails and social media venues between mentors or mentees.

Mentoring Supports Education

- Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and 37% less likely to skip a class (*Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*).
- Mentors help with homework and can improve their mentees' academic skills.
- Creates positive behavior toward peers.
- Less likely to skip school.
- Greater parent trust can be developed.

Mentoring Support Day-to-Day Living

- Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem.
- Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs and 27% less likely to start drinking (*Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*).
- About 40% of a teenager's waking hours are spent without companionship or supervision.
- Mentors provide teens with a safe place to share.
- Mentors teach young people how to relate well to others and help them strengthen communication skills.

Mentoring Programs

There are thousands of boys and girls across the districts that are ready and waiting to be matched with a mentor. Mentoring programs include:

- **General Mentors** - For students who need one-on-one guidance, support and an additional adult in their life as a role model.
- **5000 Role Models of Excellence** A group mentoring program designed to boost the self-image, and increase the social skills and academic performance, of targeted males.
- **Girlfriends of Pinellas County** A group mentoring program designed to empower young ladies through academic support. Students are provided resources and tools to encourage high self-esteem and self-reliance.
- **Peer-to-Peer Mentoring** - High school seniors mentor incoming freshman. Seniors provide support and guidance to students.
- **The Born Eagles Youth Network** This program is a collaborative effort across a broad cross section of students, parents, community agencies, and corporate citizens. The program is committed to promoting positive youth development, learning and networking.

Mentoring Village Email Communications - Pinellas County Schools offers an interactive digital environment called "Chat-A-Way." Chat-A-Way is a new communications setting that provides mentors with additional channels to interact with their student(s) between face-to-face sessions.

Additional Volunteer Programs

If you can't become a mentor, opportunities for involvement are ample and varied, both in terms of time, commitment and time of day.

- **Tutors** – work one-on-one or with small groups of students who need reinforcement with basic skills in core academic subjects.
 - English for Speakers of Other Languages – Tutors help students of all ages who speak other languages to learn English. Volunteers do not need to speak the students native language.
 - Adult Literacy Tutors – Tutors work with adults who are learning basic academic skills and preparing for the General Education Diploma (GED) examination.
- **Speakers*** – Throughout the school year, speakers share on a variety of topics with students in the classroom. The Speakers Bureau encompasses a list of approved speakers who are willing to share their experiences, careers and knowledge with students.
- **The Great American Teach-In*** – is an annual event sponsored by Pinellas County Schools and Duke Energy. Families and the community are invited into schools to speak with students on a variety of topics. Participants are able to provide a personal perspective on their career choice, hobbies or personal experiences pertaining to education or overcoming obstacles personally or professionally.

Speaker Guidelines: Materials that carry advertising may not be distributed without prior approval from the Area Superintendent's Office. Collection of student names, addresses or telephone numbers is prohibited. Advocating a particular political viewpoint is not permitted. Appropriate dress is requested. Teachers or School Board employees must be present and support the speaker throughout the presentation. See additional speaker guidelines on the website. www.pcsb.org

- **Classroom Assistant** – Volunteers work closely with the teacher to assist with tasks such as record keeping, preparing instructional materials and preparing bulletin boards.
- **Chaperones/Field Trip Drivers** – Chaperones accompany students and teachers on excursions to museums, exhibits, musicals, plays, etc. Transportation may be on a bus or volunteers may be asked to drive. Field trip drivers must be Level II screened, have a valid driver's license and car insurance.
 - **Enterprise Village** is the school system's "mini-mall," an economic education project for fifth-grade students. Volunteers help students as they learn about the free enterprise system. Training is required.
 - **Finance Park** is a hands-on simulation for eighth-grade students, which enables them to build foundations for making intelligent, lifelong, personal and financial decisions.
- **PTA/PTSA** – These organizations are a group of parents/guardians who work as a team to assist the school with the academic performance of students. The PTA/PTSA represents the voice of parents' rights and responsibilities.
- **School Advisory Council Member (SAC)** – Schools elect SAC members to represent a broad cross section of the school's student body. SAC functions as a resource to the principal. Members work as a team to accomplish school improvement goals.
- **Media Center/Library Assistant** – These volunteers assist with students' request for services. They may also work at the circulation desk, cataloging and shelving books.
- **Front Office Assistant** – Volunteers assist with typing, data entry, answering telephones and other assorted office duties.
- **Activities Volunteers (Boosters)** – Volunteers lend a hand to support school extracurricular clubs, groups and events. Volunteers are involved in activities such as PTA/PTSA and boosters clubs, serve as volunteer coaches, or assist with sports, music or drama programs.

Volunteer Requirements

Prior to being placed as volunteers, the family and community liaisons at the school, will provide you with a brief orientation on school policy and procedures.

General Volunteers

- All new volunteers must complete a volunteer registration form and provide a copy of a government-issued photo ID (i.e., driver's license, Florida ID card, passport or military ID).
- Returning volunteers will reactivate in the volunteer system on a yearly basis. They do not need to fill out the volunteer registration form.
- Volunteers are to sign-in at the front desk, and log their hours in the Volunteer System. Volunteers will be given a login and password.
- Volunteers will work under the direction and supervision of an assigned teacher or other PCSB staff member at all times.
- Volunteers are to maintain strict student confidentiality. Volunteers are required to view the confidentiality video and sign the confidentiality form if they are working with educational records or personal identifiable information.
- Volunteers will follow school guidelines for student dress code. Dress comfortably, but remember that you are a role model for our students.
- Volunteering is a privilege. If policies and procedures are not followed, the school-district has the right to revoke the services provided.

Background Screening

- All volunteers must pass a local/national criminal history background check before they can begin volunteering.
- A more stringent level screening, called Level II is required for all volunteers who are allowed unsupervised contact with students. Before a volunteer obtains a Level II screening, they must register, and receive, an approved local background check, according to Pinellas County

School guidelines. All Level II volunteers will receive a photo ID badge that they must wear while volunteering. Unsupervised contact does not include unanticipated, unsupervised contact that is infrequent and incidental.

- All non-School Board employees attending an overnight field trip or day field trip as a chaperone/driver must be Level II approved. There are no exceptions.
- PCS students who wish to volunteer must be registered and submit two letters of recommendation before they can begin volunteering.
- Teachers who take a personal day to volunteer are required to complete a volunteer registration form and log their hours in the volunteer system.
- A college intern who is doing course work (i.e., observation



hours, practicum or a final internship) must be fingerprinted and cleared as Level II by the Human Resource Department and placed in the volunteer system prior to entering a school. College students must have their University I.D. on them at all times. The

school liaison will confirm their status prior to starting their course work.

- Vendors who are providing a paid service to students must have a level II vendor badge on them at all times. Vendors are not volunteers.
- *All speakers are required to complete a volunteer registration form and an approved background check prior to the speaking engagement. All speakers will log their speaker hours in the volunteer system. (Great American Teach-In speakers are exempt from the application and tracking process). The school principal must approve all presentations. The Office of Strategic Partnerships and the Family Life Committee must approve any sensitive or controversial topics prior to the presentation.

Volunteer Policies

The Office of Strategic Partnerships will determine the eligibility status, based on School Board policy, before the applicant can begin volunteering. If one of the following applies, but not limited to, the volunteer's status will be marked as ineligible to volunteer and the principal of the school will communicate the status immediately to the volunteer:

- Arrest for felony or misdemeanor.
- Arrest for felony child abuse, child-related offenses or confirmed child abuser.
- Arrest for lewd or lascivious behavior, or other felony sex-related offenses.
- Volunteers may perform assignments as directed by the volunteer program liaison and approved by an administrator.
- Volunteers will not have access to student records and grades unless appointed by the principal and after they watch the confidentiality video and sign the confidentiality paperwork.
- Volunteers may not supervise a class during a teacher's absence.
- Volunteers may ride regularly scheduled school buses to reach their assigned school under certain circumstances. The principal must give final approval. Volunteers may not take a student's seat.
- Volunteers may not bring children who are not registered in the school.
- Children who are not part of the group for whom the field trip was planned are not permitted to attend. *No Exceptions.*
- Alcohol and drug use are prohibited while volunteering in schools or on field trips.

Criminal Background Screening Procedures

If a volunteer marks - **Yes to a Criminal Offense**, applicants must complete the criminal offense information section on the back of the registration form and the application will be placed on hold in the volunteer system until a background check is completed by The Office of Strategic Partnerships, Family & Community Relations.

Revocation/Termination

If a volunteer does not follow the volunteer policy/guidelines, or poses a risk to the health, safety or welfare of students, staff, or visitors, the principal shall revoke the volunteer's status.

The school principal will communicate to the volunteer both verbally and in writing, that the volunteer's status has been revoked. A copy of the revocation letter/email will be kept on file in the Office of Strategic Partnerships, Family & Community Relations.

Abuse Reporting Procedures

Under 39.202, "any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused...shall report..." . "(1) A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a felony of the third degree,..." If you suspect abuse please see a School Administrator immediately. FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-96A-BUSE (1-800-962-2873)

Family and Community Engagement

The Family and Community Engagement Program serves as a bridge between families, communities, and schools to support the academic success of students. The program develops effective partnerships by providing support to families, the community, and schools through workshops.

Family Engagement resources are provided to families and the community that support academic success at www.pcsb.org/family-engagement

Resources include:

- Websites that support families and academics
 - Monthly Family Engagement Calendar
 - Parent Tips
 - How to Be Engaged
 - Everyday Parent Tips Videos
- **P2ACC (Parents Preparing to Advocate for their Children and Community) Parent Academy** - Pinellas County Schools has launched Parent Academy workshops to promote parental engagement and enhance student academic success. These workshops are offered in schools, libraries, community centers, government offices, and faith-based organizations.

Academic advocacy and engagement by parents and caregivers provides a foundation for success. Researchers have found that family engagement and interest in a child's education creates positive effects on student achievement and future success, including:

- Increased achievement in math, reading, and science.
- Better attendance and homework completion.
- Participation in advance learning classes, additional earned credits and improved graduation rates.
- Early postsecondary education and career planning,
- Social and behavioral gains.

Classes for parents and caregivers are free and focus on three primary areas:

- **Academic Success:** To provide tools to promote student academic achievement and to navigate the Schools system.
- **Parenting & Advocacy:** To provide tools to more effectively enhance parenting skills, advocacy, and leadership skills.
- **Personal & Individual Growth:** That provides tools for supporting personal and professional growth.

To learn more or register go to: www.pcsb.org/parentacademy

Parental Advocacy

The Parental Advocacy program assists families of students by serving as a bridge of communication between families and schools. The program provides support for families when responding to concerns about student advancement, deficiencies, retention, discipline, special needs of students, and/or any additional educational concerns. The parental advocate will serve as a liaison to train and empower parents in ways to advocate for their children. The Parental Advocacy program will also provide opportunities for school personnel to obtain information and skills to enhance family involvement.

Please contact the parental advocate at (727) 588-6484 for assistance.



Community & Business Partnerships

Pinellas County Schools believes that partnerships transform the educational landscape for student success. Partnerships are defined as a collaboration of efforts agreed upon between two mutual parties to accomplish common goals and to share the profits or benefits of mutual investments. These partnerships are developed to provide services, support and opportunities to improve student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.

Partnerships benefit by providing students' an expanded learning horizons, including their awareness of the relationships of schoolwork to employment. Students learn that community members care about their academic achievement. They also develop increased self-confidence and receive important encouragement to stay in school, seek training after high school and secure employment after graduation.

- **Hispanic Leadership Council** - is a community partnership responding to the needs of a changing Hispanic/Latino population through public education, advocacy, enhanced services, and elimination of barriers, for the betterment of the community. The purpose is to bring together people and organizations from many sectors of the community to assess the needs of the Hispanic/Latino population and initiate strategic projects.
- **Citizens Alliance for Progress, Inc., (CAP)** - is a non-profit community based, multicultural, civic organization that provide educational support services, youth development, and family support services to the residents of Tarpon Springs. CAP partners with Pinellas County Schools to serve as a site for grade recovery, tutorial support, and offers P2ACC (Parents Preparing to Advocate for their Children and Community) parent workshops for parents and the community.

- **Peace 4 Tarpon** - is a community initiative that brings together partners within Tarpon Springs to create a community that works towards finding solutions to the many challenges that manifest from unaddressed trauma issues by increasing awareness and promoting healing. The vision is for the Tarpon Springs community to become a place where children and families are safe, healthy, educated, and feel valued.
- **Family Service Initiative (FSI)** - is collaboration among four partner agencies: Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB); 211 Tampa Bay Cares; Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN); and Personal Enrichment for Mental Health (PEMHS). This initiative extends beyond these major partners to include many service providers in the community and the Pinellas County Schools system. The initiative is about prevention and providing families the right service, at the right time, for the right need. The initiative provides support and wrap-around services to meet families' basic needs and helps empower them to become self-sufficient.
- **Concern Organization for the Education of Black Students (COQEBs)** - is a coalition of community organizations and individuals organized for the purpose of working to ensure that Pinellas County Schools fulfills its commitment to provide quality education for black students. There are four key components: student achievement, discipline, equity and resources, & assignment to programs and classes.
- **Cross and Anvil Human Services** - is a community based organization that provides educational support, family support services, youth programs and social services to the elderly and community members who reside in the Campbell Park Community.

Student Program Initiatives

- **District, School & Classroom Partnerships (Adopt-A-Class)** - are essential to the success of our students. The Office of Strategic Partnerships matches community resources to identified needs of the school district and individual schools. The district and schools provide resources to meet identified needs of a particular partner such as business or community group. Partnerships provide resources to our schools in various forms. The contributions of money, donation of time in sending tutors and mentors to volunteer, speakers to talk about their businesses or organizations as it relates to the curriculum is invaluable. Classroom partnerships are innovative community involvement programs. The program is also known as the 'Adopt-A-Class' partnership.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters BBBS** - is a school based mentoring program that matches students with mentors in a supervised environment, under the direction of a professional BBBS Match Manager.



- **The Fairmount Park Children Initiative** - is a reform initiative, modeled after the Harlem Children Zone, New York. The initiative is designed to provide students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade with an infrastructure of support through educational programs, integrated community services, social services, early intervention and prevention programs, and resources that will increase students' academic performances, improve behavior and increase parental engagement and community support. The scope of the initiative provides students with highly effective teachers, best pedagogy practices; quality social services, social work assistance, enrichment activities, and before and after school care. The partnership between Juvenile Welfare Board, City of St. Petersburg, and Pinellas County Schools believes that this initiative will stimulate students' passion for learning, cultivate a positive learning environment at home, and bridge the gap between parents, communities, and stakeholders to the education institution.
- **21st Century Community Extended Learning Program (iClass)** - initiative is a key component of the "No Child Left Behind" Act. It is an opportunity for students to enhance and reinforce academic lessons of the regular school day, while also allowing them to learn new skills and discover new opportunities through enrichment activities after school.
- **Students Targeted for Educational Performance (S.T.E.P.)** - program is comprised of minority students who maintain a cumulative 2.5 or higher GPA and FCAT scores that fall within level 3 in reading and /or math. The program will provide a school-based supportive structure for minority students in order to optimize academic achievement through encouragement, support, and guidance.
- **Take Stock In Children College Scholarship (TSIC)** - a scholarship program that gives students in grades 6-10 the opportunity for a two-year college tuition scholarship or technical training. A TSIC scholar must meet income eligibility, maintain grades of C or better, display good

Awards & Recognition Programs

behavior, remain crime and drug free, and have good school attendance. The scholarship provides college tuition funds, a mentor, a school-based ambassador, and a college success coach to monitor student progress and enhance student learning through enrichment activities.

- **St. Pete's Promise** - is a multi-faceted initiative aimed at turning at-risk students in St. Petersburg into students with promise. It provides opportunities to invest in schools, teachers, and children.
- **5000 Role Model of Excellence** - is a program designed to boost the self-image, increase social skills, and academic performance of targeted males, in part, by motivating them to interact with respected successful men whose real-life accomplishments can inspire young males to succeed. Students are paired with mentors and they meet bi-weekly to discuss academics, current teen issues, and world-wide issues.
- **The Born Eagles Youth Network** - is a collaboration of a broad cross section of students, parents, community agencies and corporate citizens in Pinellas County committed to promoting positive youth development, learning, networking and resource sharing.
- **America Reads and America Counts** - are tutoring programs that provide reading tutors for elementary school students and middle school math students. The tutors are college students who are trained by Pinellas County Schools personnel.
- **Girlfriends of Pinellas County** - is a program designed to empower young ladies through academic support and mentorship. Students are provided with the resources, tools and guidance necessary to encourage self-discipline, positive behaviorism, and to cultivate high self-esteem and self-reliance. Mentors, community leaders, teachers and school administrators work closely with students to foster a supportive relationship through social growth. Students have an opportunity to participate in field trips that will enhance cultural awareness; community service learning projects are part of the program that builds a sense of citizenship and community pride. To find out more information or how you can be involved, contact Mary Brown @ 727-866-0817.

- **Outstanding School Volunteers** - is presented annually to school volunteers who have shown outstanding dedication and commitment to quality education in Florida. A student, adult and senior volunteer from each of the five Florida regions are recognized by the commissioner of education. Volunteers are selected based on:
 - Number of hours served; years of services; unusual contribution and or characteristics of services rendered
- **The Golden School Award** - is given annually by the Florida Department of Education to recognize public schools with exemplary volunteer programs. A Golden School must meet the following criteria:
 - A staff training on volunteerism in which a minimum of 80% of the school staff attended.
 - A Volunteer Liaison has been designated to provide leadership for the school volunteer program.
 - A total number of hours in instructional volunteer service that equals twice the number of students enrolled in the school.
- **5 Star Award** - is a state award presented annually to

schools that have shown evidence of exemplary community involvement. To earn the Five Star school recognition, a school must show documentation that it has achieved 100% of the established



criteria in the categories of: Business Partnerships, Family Involvement, Volunteerism, Student Community Service, and School Advisory Council.

- **Young Heroes Award** - sponsored by DITEK, Corp., recognizes students who have demonstrated excellence through their service and contributions to the community and others. Students, representing each grade level are honored with a \$500 Saving Bonds.
- **Unsung Heroes Award** - recognizes individuals who have encouraged and supported the goals and accomplishments of our teachers, students and staff. They are the ones behind the scenes who are making great contributions to stimulate learning, develop and implement processes, and provide a helping hand to our educators.
- **Dr. Joseph Carwise Minority Achievement Award** - is for minority students in North Pinellas who are selected by their administrator, teachers, or counselor to receive the Achievement Award. This award is given to students who have maintained high academic performance and displayed exemplary character throughout the year. Minority seniors have an opportunity to apply for the scholarship that is awarded to two students each year.
- **Family Friendly School Award** - is an initiative for building the capacity of schools to implement school-wide family engagement strategies and practices that strengthen partnerships between families and schools. This award recognizes schools that have created a family friendly school and strengthened engagement practices and built relationships with families and the community.

Orientations & Workshops

Schools provide orientation sessions for new and returning volunteers. Contact the school's family & community liaison for parent and student workshops offered at the school.

- **Mentor Strategies Workshops** - attendees are provided information about being a mentor, who offers encouragement. Participants will learn mentoring policies & procedures, effective listening skills, goals setting, communication skills and relationship building. Attendance is required for all new mentors.

- **Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Workshop** - High school seniors and juniors mentors are peered with incoming freshman. Students learn about effective listening & communication skills, goal setting and relationship building. Students share their experience and knowledge on how to navigate through high school.
- **Tutor Training Workshop** - provides volunteers with tutoring techniques, teaching pedagogies and learning modalities to enhance the instruction of the tutoring session.
- **Home Learning Environment and Literacy Training Workshops** - the workshop builds a bridge between family, home and school so the child reaches the student's full potential. These workshops focus on independent thinking skills, creating a home learning environment, designing the workspace, community coop learning and tutoring techniques.
- **P2ACC Parent Academy Workshops** - focuses on student academic success, parenting and advocacy, and personal growth. Each workshop is approximately one hour to accommodate families' busy schedules. Workshops are offered throughout the Pinellas County community, and are free of cost to all participants.
- **Family Engagement Information Workshop** - provides families with information on the impact of family engagement, ways to be involved in your child's education at all grade levels, how to create a home learning environment, how to support education at home, homework and study tips, how to have a successful parent/teacher conference, how to advocate for your child when issues/concerns arise, and how to navigate the PCS website.
- **Family Friendly Schools Workshop** - provides schools with tools and resources that focus on positive customer service skills, communication skills, the benefits of a professional and helpful attitude, and creating a school culture and climate that "welcomes" families and the community.

For further information on any of these workshops please call Office of Strategic Partnerships, Family & Community Relations at (727) 588-6405



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For more information on how to become a volunteer/mentor please contact the Office of Strategic Partnerships, Family & Community Relations volunteer program coordinator at 727-588-5050.



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