

# TOGETHER PCS

SOARING TO ANOTHER YEAR AS AN A DISTRICT

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2025-26

### SHARE YOUR FIRST DAY FUN!

Submit your photos from the first day of school to be featured on the district website and social media!

Find the form and other important back to school information at

[pcsb.org/backtoschool](https://pcsb.org/backtoschool)



Welcome students, staff, parents, leaders and community to the 2025-26 school year!

In this issue, we focus on all things Back-to-School. We caught up with first-year teachers (and twin sisters) Marissa and Natalie Richards who are both starting their careers in special needs classrooms at Plumb and Forest Lakes elementaries. We also feature Lakewood High School alumni Shaquill and Shaquem Griffin, identical twin brothers who both started their NFL careers with the Seattle Seahawks.

Starting Monday, we will power up learning and power down devices as we continue to enforce our districtwide cell phone policy and digital responsibility platform.

Find out more on where to find Back-to-School forms, important dates, athletics information, and so much more in this special back-to-school edition of your PCS newsletter.

Have a great school year!

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### Twin sisters launch PCS careers together

From playing sports and hanging out with friends as kids to working in the preschool at their high

school to attending the University of Alabama together, Marissa and Natalie Richards have never been too far apart.

"It's very common - if you see one of us, you will see the other one," said Natalie Richards, who will begin her teaching career with Pinellas County Schools in the kindergarten/first grade autism classroom at Forest Lakes Elementary.

And teaching has always been high on their joint list of pursuits.

*[Read full story and watch video](#)*



*Marissa and Natalie Richards will both begin their respective teaching careers this school year.*



The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) released the 2025 district-level results, and Pinellas County Schools has earned an "A" for the second year in a row.

Even more impressive, every Pinellas County School earned an A, B, or C, with 56% earning an A grade and 89% earning an A or B grade.

"Earning a district grade of an 'A' shows the strength and commitment of our students, teachers, and staff members, as well as the unwavering support of our Board, families, and the community. This is another proud moment for Pinellas County Schools," said Superintendent Kevin Hendrick.

Pinellas County School Board Chairperson Laura Hine added, "This is an exciting and well-deserved designation for our district and schools. As a Board, we are committed to 100% student success, and these sustained results show what is possible when we believe in, invest in, and lead public education. Well done, Pinellas!"

Pinellas County Schools continues to be one of the top-performing



***Now that school buses are back on the roads, here are some safety tips from one of our own PCS drivers:***

- **When the amber lights begin to flash and the stop arm extends from the side of the bus, STOP. This should be treated like a red traffic light.**
- **Cars should not proceed until the stop arm is completely retracted and the lights are no longer flashing.**

school districts in the state. Guided by the 2023-26 District Strategic Plan, the district is committed to elevating academic excellence through innovation for all students. The district continues to provide opportunities to realize the vision of 100% student success, through a focus on engaging student and staff experiences and high expectations.

For more information on individual school grades and the district's accomplishments, visit [pscb.org](https://pscb.org) or the [fldoe.org](https://fldoe.org) website.

- **Please do not attempt to flag down your child's bus driver. If you need assistance, call 727-587-2020.**
- **Please be a courteous driver and yield to bus drivers attempting to merge into traffic, change lanes or enter or exit a highway.**

# ACHIEVE TOGETHER

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



*Shaquill and Shaquem Griffin graduated from Lakewood High School in 2013.*

As poster children for perseverance, overcoming adversity and upholding a strong brotherly bond, Shaquill and Shaquem Griffin have endless football stories they could tell.

But there's one story in particular they envision sharing with their kids and grandkids for years to come.

It was the first time the duo – who had been playing football alongside each other since they were 4 – stepped foot on their college field together.

"He's over there throwing up before the game," said Shaquill of Shaquem, who had spent his first three years at the University of Central Florida redshirted and sitting on the bench due to his self-described arrogance. "I told him he'd better figure it out. It's just football. Just breathe and play football."

*[Read the full article](#)*





## ENTERPRISE VILLAGE CELEBRATES 35 YEARS



Over the course of its 35-year history, more than 200,000 Pinellas County Schools fifth grade students have stepped foot inside Enterprise Village, transforming classroom learning into real-life experience in the blink of an eye. In the 20-plus-business micro-village, students are tasked with running the enterprise of a small town – from the mayor to the radio station deejay and everything in between. Students learn to manage their own bank account, budget for purchases, market sales at their company and work with local media on promotional materials.

“If you’ve ever taken a field trip to Enterprise Village, it’s something you remember for the rest of your life,” said Matthew Blum, manager of Enterprise Village, which is housed inside the Gus A. Stavros Institute. “It exists to give students a real-world experience that helps them understand basic economic concepts and the relationship between businesses and consumers.”

It is also a coveted volunteer opportunity. Last year, 2,939 volunteers helped support students during their Enterprise Village experience, for a total of 17,634 volunteer hours. For more information on volunteering at Enterprise Village, contact Katie Hilton at [hiltonk@pcsb.org](mailto:hiltonk@pcsb.org).



## The Superintendent Says...

"Thanks to you, Pinellas County Schools is soaring to another year as an A district—for the second year in a row! This incredible achievement reflects the hard work of our entire community. Our principals, teachers, and staff have been preparing with great energy and focus to ensure a strong start. As we begin the 2025–26 school year, let's continue to aim high—creating exceptional learning experiences and maintaining high expectations for all!"



*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**

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