

TOGETHER PCS



KEEPING PACE WITH PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS



Congratulations to this year's Pinellas County Schools Principal of the Year, Assistant Principal of the Year, Support Employees of the Year and top 10 Teacher of the Year Finalists!

Principal of the Year: Kelly Austin, Sandy Lane Elementary School

Assistant Principal of the Year: Etje Ramdohr, Disston Academy

Support Employee of the Year: Andrew Tremblay, Head Plant Operator, Tarpon Springs Middle School

Top 10 Teacher of the Year Finalists:

- Kelly Hefty, Azalea Elementary School
- Kaley Olles, Safety Harbor Middle School
- Dennis Zuercher, Gibbs High School
- Brandy Ashby, Campbell Park Elementary School
- Judith Deeley, Dunedin High School
- Brittany Fuller, Clearwater Fundamental Middle School
- Carrie Snyder, Belleair Elementary School
- Jill Shircliff, Osceola Middle School
- Tarik Mowatt, Meadowlawn Middle School
- Natalie Steratore, Curlew Creek Elementary School

Welcome to

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

In this issue, we celebrate our Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year and our Top 10 2024-25 Teacher of the Year Finalists. We also highlight the orientation and mobility team, who is using Ray-Ban Meta glasses to help the district's visually impaired students as well as introduce you to Mary Kay Andrews, a New York Times best-selling author who graduated from Lakewood High School.

If you know someone who should be featured in TogetherPCS, please click the "Nominate Here" button below.

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

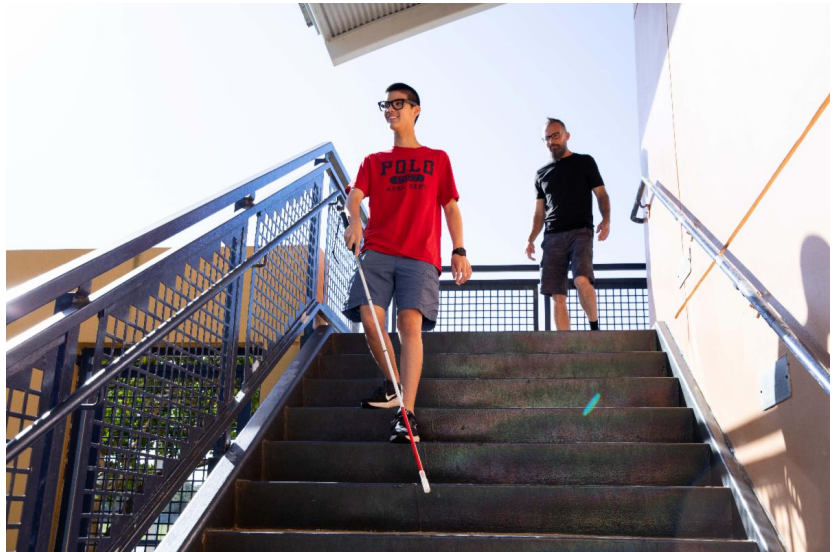


WHAT'S INSIDE



District Launches Community Dashboard

PCS is thrilled to unveil our new District Strategic Plan (DSP) community dashboard. This first-of-its-kind, innovative online tool allows the public to monitor our strategic plan's progress in real-time. Last year, we started sharing quarterly updates on our key strategies and initiatives. Now, these reports are complemented by our community dashboard, making it easy to see the



Bryan Evans, a mobility specialist for Pinellas County Schools, helps Joshua Chen navigate the stairs at Safety Harbor Middle while he wears one of five pairs of the district's Meta glasses.

Meta glasses provide accessibility for several PCS students

Marcus Rivera Scott uses a pair of Ray-Ban Meta glasses to read street signs, identify landmarks and help with his schoolwork. But his favorite thing to use them for is to identify the makes and models of cars.

"He will run his hands along the grill, the door handles, the wheels, and try to figure out what kind of car it is, and then he will ask Meta to see if he's right," said Bryan Evans, an orientation and mobility instructor for the visually impaired, who has been with Pinellas County School for 29 years. "He could walk a parking lot for hours."

Marcus, a seventh grader at Safety Harbor Middle School who

strategies and data together. Stay informed about the progress of our three-year plan and see how we're shaping the future for 100% student success. Visit our [dashboard](#) and start exploring now.

has been blind his whole life, has been using a pair of Meta glasses periodically for about six months now. Evans purchased a trial pair in March to use with his students and quickly decided he needed more.

"These are a game changer for the visually impaired," Evans said. "So, we decided we needed to get as many kids as possible experiencing this."

Watch the video and read the full article

ACHIEVE TOGETHER

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Kathy Trocheck, who writes under the pseudonym Mary Kay Andrews, is a New York Times best-selling author who graduated from Lakewood High School. On a recent visit, she stopped by her alma mater and did a Q & A with several journalism students.

Kathy Hogan Trocheck may be a New York Times best-selling author of 34 novels, but she is still not immune to the anxiety induced when being back on her high school campus.

"I feel like one of my teachers is going to jump out of the bushes and give me a detention," said Trocheck, who has written under the pseudonym Mary Kay Andrews since 2002, from the media center of her alma mater. "It's surreal."

Trocheck graduated from Lakewood High School in 1972, and although she visits the area with some regularity, she hasn't been back on campus in decades. The school's Center for Journalism Studies did not yet exist at the time she attended, but Trocheck said she took as many English and writing classes as possible to satisfy her interest in becoming a journalist.

Read the full article



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!

[Click here to be featured](#)



Bob's Candy Shop offers Carwise students a 'sweet' deal

Robert Walker knows a thing or two about sales.

For the bulk of his 25-plus-year career as an



In addition to your neighborhood school, Pinellas County Schools offers more than 85 magnet, fundamental and career-focused programs. through the District Application Program (DAP). You can also apply for a Special

electrical engineer, he sold high-tech electronics to manufacturers of various equipment.

But now his clientele looks a little bit different: they pay with “shark bites,” their favorite product is a blue Jolly Rancher, and they fall for his “special” joke every time.

“I always tell them, you get one for \$1, but I have a \$2 special. You buy one and the second one is free,” said Walker, better known as Grandpa Bob to the students at Carwise Middle School. “It’s a lot of fun to kid with them a little.”

After retiring in 2000, like many, Walker decided he would spend his next chapter as a substitute teacher. He worked at any school north of Gulf to Bay Boulevard and wasn’t picky about which subjects he would teach. He simply enjoyed the interaction with the students and liked being able to fill in when needed.

Assignment Request (SAR), which provides your child the opportunity to attend a non-DAP, non-zoned school.

DAP Application Period:

January 7-17, 2025

[Learn More](#)

January 6, 2025: 5:30 p.m.

How to Apply for a District Application Program

Facebook/YouTube Live Event

February 11, 2025: 5:30 p.m.

Navigating the DAP Acceptance Period Facebook/

YouTube Live Event

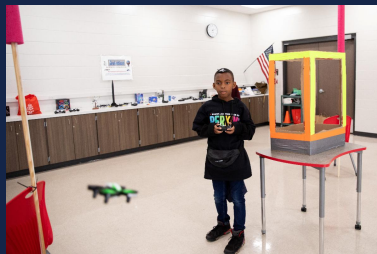
DAP Acceptance Period

February 12 - 21, 2025

Watch the video and read the full article



Experience PCS



The Superintendent Says...

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to our students, teachers, families and community. This was an unprecedented start to the school year - we were named an A district for the first time in history - and we faced back-to-back hurricanes. I hope you are able to take a well-deserved, restful and restorative holiday break. I look forward to all we can accomplish together in 2025."



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](#)