

HEAT Program Staff

HEAT Office: 727-507-4766

Erika Gist
Homeless Liaison
giste@pcsb.org

Brenda Johnson
Clerk Specialist II
johnsonbre@pcsb.org

Erin Copeland, MSW
Social Worker
copelande@pcsb.org

Joanne Mercier, LCSW
Social Worker
mercierj@pcsb.org

Lisa M. DePaolo, LCSW, Ed.S.
Managing Officer of Prevention

Donna Sicilian, LCSW, Ed.S.
Executive Director,
Student Services

Helping Educate All in
Transition



Vision:

100% Student Success

Mission:

“Educate and prepare each student for college, career and life.”

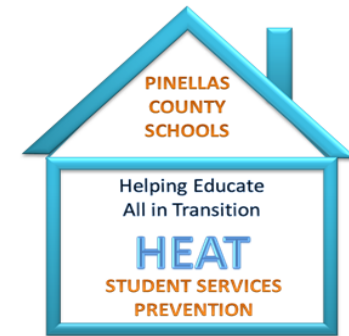
School Board Members

Lisa N. Cane
Laura Hine
Carol J. Cook
Caprice Edmond
Eileen M. Long
Stephanie Meyer
Dawn Peters

Superintendent

Kevin Hendrick

**Pinellas County Schools
Administration Building
301 Fourth St. SW
Largo, FL 33770**



The HEAT program serves students from birth to twenty-one years of age who are eligible to receive services under the federal McKinney-Vento Act (MVA). All schools (including charter schools) have a designated HEAT Office representative and a school-based MVA Contact who can assist with the educational, social, and family needs of students experiencing homelessness.

HEAT supports include collaborating with the schools and district offices and referring families and students to various community programs and services. The HEAT program, staffed through the Student Services, Prevention department, is jointly funded by Title I services and a McKinney-Vento grant.

Mission Statement

“The mission of the HEAT Program is to support and advocate for the educational success of students experiencing homelessness by implementing the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and referring to community programs and services.”

McKinney-Vento Act

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Act (MVA) reauthorized in December 10, 2015, a family is considered in transition (or homeless) if they and/or their children:

Lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence:

- Share the housing of others due to financial hardship
- Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, substandard housing due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Live in emergency or transitional shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals
- Live in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Live in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- Are migratory children living in circumstances described above
- Are unaccompanied youth who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

The definition does not include any person imprisoned, detained or in the custody of the state.

MVA eligibility is good for one school year. Families or students must contact their HEAT representative to determine eligibility annually.

HEAT Program Services:

School Selection:

- Enrollment in “school of origin” or the school zoned for the student’s address.

Immediate Enrollment without Documentation:

- Families are encouraged to provide the required documentation as soon as possible.

Transportation:

- The school can request Pinellas County Schools (PCS) bus transportation. If a student changes address during the school year, PCS transportation may be provided for the remainder of that school year. HEAT staff can provide a limited number of public (PSTA) bus passes or a gas card until PCS transportation is arranged.

Free Breakfast and Lunch Meals at School:

- Once eligibility is determined, the student is automatically eligible for free meals for the remainder of the school year.

School Supplies:

- Backpacks and/or school supplies are available.

College Assistance:

- SAT & ACT waivers (limited)
- Post-secondary education options for juniors and graduating seniors (e.g., Free Application for Federal Student Aid – FAFSA, waivers of college application fees and tuition)

Referrals to local community resources:

- Emergency shelters, housing, rental/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, meals/food, clothing, childcare, legal assistance, domestic violence, health/dental/mental health services.

Online Resources

PCS Parents’ Guide:

www.pcsb.org/Page/9688

PCS HEAT Website:

<https://www.pcsb.org/Page/1577>

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares:

<http://www.211tampabay.org>

Florida Coalition for the Homeless:

<http://www.fchonline.org>

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth:

<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Center for Homeless Education:

<http://nche.ed.gov>

The National Coalition for the Homeless:

<Http://nationalhomeless.org>

The National Law Center:

<http://www.nlchp.org>

PCS Homeless Liaison Role

- Oversees the implementation of homeless services for MVA students in the district.
- Ensures that every MVA student receives services provided under the MVA.
- Mediates enrollment disputes.

