

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 document the inception of the new Artificial Intelligence curriculum at Lakewood High School's Center for Advanced Technologies (CAT) program, celebrate breast cancer awareness month by highlighting East Lake High School's 15th annual 'Strike Out Cancer' softball game, and meet two Clearwater High School alumni who are now teaching side by side at their alma mater.

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

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

LISTEN & LEARN

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Oct. 12, 2023

5:30 - 7 p.m.

Boca Ciega High School (Area 3)

School Board Members Attending:

Carol Cook and Laura Hine

Nov. 8, 2023

5:30 - 7 p.m.

Hollins High School (Area 4)

School Board Members Attending:

Lisa Cane and Stephanie Meyer

WHAT'S INSIDE



In addition to your neighborhood school, Pinellas County Schools offers more than 80 magnet, fundamental and career-focused programs. through the District Application Program (DAP). You can also apply for a Special Assignment Request (SAR), which



provides your child the opportunity to attend a non-DAP, non-zoned school.

SAR Application Period:

Nov. 6-17, 2023

[Learn More](#)

DAP Application Period:

Jan. 9-19, 2024

[Learn More](#)

Magnet, Fundamental and Career program events:

Oct. 16, 2023: 5:30 p.m.

All Things DAP Facebook/ YouTube Live Event

Oct. 21, 2023: 9 to 11:30 a.m. at

Pinellas Park High

All County DAP Fair

Oct. 26, 2023: 6 to 7:30 p.m. at

Countryside High

North County DAP Fair

November 2, 2023: 6 to 7:30 p.m. at

Gibbs High

South County DAP Fair

Oct. 23, 2023 - Jan. 19, 2024

DAP Discovery Nights

January 8, 2024: 5:30 p.m.

How to Apply for a District

Application Program

Facebook/YouTube Live Event



The East Lake varsity softball coach is in her 10th year of hosting the 'Strike Out Cancer' game, which raises funds for families affected by cancer or organizations that support cancer patients and their families.

East Lake Coach Kristie Delk helps players 'Strike Out Cancer'

What started as a small intramural game to honor a player's grandmother diagnosed with breast cancer has grown into a highly anticipated softball event drawing 500-plus fans and raising over \$50,000.

When Kristie Delk began coaching varsity softball at East Lake High School 11 years ago, she had already been a part of a small cancer awareness game at St. Petersburg High School. And East Lake had an annual "Play for the Cure" intersquad event. So, it seemed only natural to take the event to the next level.

"We decided to invite another team to bring more awareness, get more involvement and raise more money, so we could start giving back," Delk said of East Lake's 'Strike Out Cancer' game. This year, the game will take place at East Lake's home field versus Clearwater High School on Feb. 20.

In its 15th year at East Lake, the event goal is to make a large donation to either a family directly impacted by cancer or an organization, such as the Tampa Children's Cancer Center. Last year, the team was able to donate almost \$60,000 to the Lange family, who lost patriarch Tony Lange to cancer in February. Trey and Sierra Lange went to Ozona Elementary, Palm Harbor Middle and graduated from Palm Harbor University High School. Their mom Tammy Lange worked as a massage therapist in the district for 16 years.

"This was our biggest one yet," Delk said of the 2023 game. "This is one game that sets the tone for the entire season. Yes, our job on the field is to win softball games, but on this night, it's about something much bigger."

[Watch the video and read the full article](#)

ACHIEVE TOGETHER

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Mrs. Mize and Mrs. Jakubzak graduated from Clearwater High School in 2001 and 1999 respectively. Now, their classrooms adjoin.

If there is one thing the Clearwater High School staff knows about Katy Mize and Jennifer Jakubzak, it's that they come as a package deal.

The two alumni teachers went to school at the same time - Jennifer graduating from Clearwater in 1999 and Katy graduating in 2001 - but it wasn't until Katy moved into Jennifer's old classroom in 2016 that they went from former classmates to instant best friends.

"Teaching next to my best friend is amazing!" Mize said. "It really does make each day a lot better. We're here for each other on the tough days. We laugh and cry together."

[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](#)



North Shore Elementary mom is making professional soccer referee history

PCS parent Tori Penso made history when she became the first-ever soccer official from the United States to referee a World Cup Final. But, when she's at home, life transitions from training and technical briefings to homework and dinner as a family.

"I didn't really think it was possible to be a mom and a professional referee," Penso said from the library at North Shore Elementary, where her daughters Brinley, Jovie and Piper are in kindergarten, second and fourth grades respectively. Prior to 2019, she was working in digital media for an agency in Tampa and refereeing for a semi-pro league on the weekends.

"Then I had a moment where it kind of hit me – what if I go all-in on soccer?" Penso said. "What if I focus all my energy and efforts? Maybe I could be a referee in the World Cup."



Lakewood High School Implements New Artificial Intelligence Track

Pinellas County Schools is one of only 12 Florida districts to bring the "Artificial Intelligence Foundations" curriculum to its schools. And Lakewood High AI educator John Matthew Cortez is a big reason for that.

Cortez, a 2014 graduate of Osceola High School is helping write the content for the University of Florida AI education program, which is being used by Lakewood High School for its new, three-year track within its Center for Advanced Technology (CAT) Program.

"Everything they touch and use every day has AI in it," Cortez said from his classroom, where his AI 3/4 students are working on designing an AI-controlled pet in groups of four. "These kids are so lucky – this school has so much technology."

[Read the full article](#)



FAFSA Updates and Financial Aid Presentation Dates

The FAFSA dates have changed! The application did not open Oct. 1, as in years past, but will open sometime in December.

The district's 17 traditional high schools will be hosting Financial Aid Presentations over the next several weeks. Topics will include Bright Futures and other scholarship programs, and the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA). Students must complete the FAFSA to receive financial aid from the federal government.

Read more about the changes to the FAFSA by visiting our newsroom [here](#).

The Superintendent Says...

"At Pinellas County Schools, we are thrilled to offer nearly 100 educational opportunities to meet your child's specific interests and your family's needs. From neighborhood schools to District Application Programs and Career Academies, the possibilities are 'Limitless.' We can't wait to see you soon at one of our upcoming DAP events!"



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