

# TOGETHER PCS



WELCOME BACK! LET'S POWER UP LEARNING

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2024-2025

### 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, leaders and community to the 2024-25 school year!

In this issue, we focus on all things Back-to-School. We caught up with a first-year teacher Madison Cossairt who is starting her career at Mount Vernon Elementary School, and chatted with Dr. Len Chatman at the ECET2 conference. Chatman shares all about how he prepares for a new school year.

Starting Monday, we are powering up learning and powering down devices with our new districtwide cell phone policy and digital responsibility platform.

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

Have a great school year!

## WHAT'S INSIDE



*Now that school buses are back on the roads, here are some*



# EXCELLENCE ELEVATED

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS IS AN **A** DISTRICT

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) released the 2024 district-level results, and Pinellas County Schools has earned an “A” for the first time in its history.

Another first, every Pinellas County School earned an A, B, or C.

“I am incredibly proud as this designation is the result of the dedication and commitment of our Board and every PCS employee,” said Pinellas County School District Superintendent Kevin Hendrick. “The work of every one of our schools is evident, and the excellence of our amazing students continues to elevate because of the work in our classrooms, schools, and district offices. This is a historically great day for our community.”

Pinellas County School Board Chairperson Laura Hine added, “This is exceptional news for the families of Pinellas County and is the result of leadership having sustained laser focus on the work at hand - 100% student success.” The District’s Strategic Plan for 2023-26 set an objective of obtaining a district grade of an A and they earned it in year one.

“Well done and well deserved to my fellow school board members, Mr. Hendrick, the leadership of the district, the leadership of our teachers, staff, students, and families who made this possible with their commitment to our schools and to each other,” added Hine.

[Read full story here](#)

*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.
- Please do not attempt to flag down your child’s bus or 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

It was a little over five years ago when Madison Cossairt was sitting at her desk as a student at Osceola Fundamental High School, dreaming about a time when she would be the one standing in front of the class.

Now, after graduating from the University of South Florida and completing her internship at Mount Vernon Elementary School, Cossairt will welcome her first group of students into her “camping themed” classroom on the same campus where she interned.



"I love Mount Vernon. I love how small of a school it is and I love that it's so community driven," said Cossairt, who completed her internship with second graders but will have her own first grade class for the 2024-25 school year. "I wanted to stay at the school however I could."

[\*Read the full article\*](#)

*Madison Cossairt will begin her first year as a first-grade teacher at Mount Vernon Elementary School.*

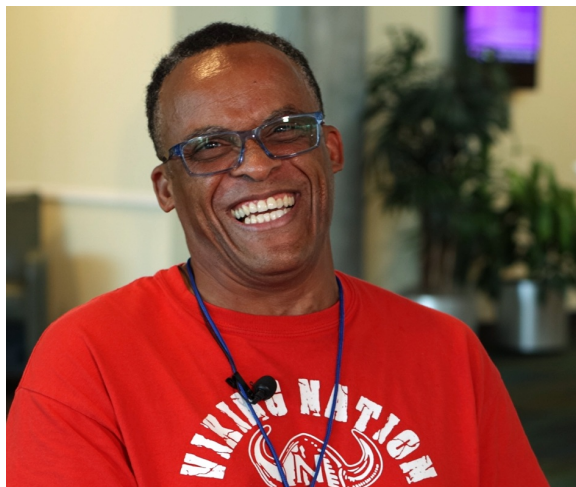






## PCS celebrates Mangrove Bay Middle School opening

Pinellas County Schools, along with the YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg, celebrated the ribbon cutting for Mangrove Bay Middle School on Aug. 8. Mangrove Bay's Health and Wellness Leadership Academy is a mid-county magnet program that offers students in grades 6 through 8 a project-based curriculum, designed to challenge students to think critically and excel academically. The school is connected to the Speer YMCA and the two will share several facilities, including the pool, gymnasium and outdoor track.



## Northeast High teacher uses psychology background to prepare students for learning



## Power Up Learning

Schools are relying on technology more and more and educators play a crucial role in teaching these skills. However, teachers often face overwhelming demands, making it challenging to prioritize digital literacy alongside core curriculum. This year Pinellas County Schools will introduce initiatives and recommend resources like Common Sense Education's K-12 Digital Responsibility Curriculum, which offers comprehensive lessons and engaging materials.

Dr. Len Chatman has a unique way of preparing for a new school year.

"I am going hiking and kayaking down the Suwanee River for seven days," Chatman said while attending this year's Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teachers and Teaching (ECET2) conference at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. "I clear my mind, truly unplug, journal and think about what I want to focus on for the year."

Chatman, a social studies teacher at Northeast High School, transitioned from the military to teaching through Troops to Teachers and PCS's Transition to Teaching program. He says in an effort to truly get to know his students, he doesn't conduct any academic learning in his class the first two weeks of school.

"I spend a lot of time thinking about what my kids are going to feel when they walk in my class the first day," Chatman said.

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

We will have ready-made lessons and engaging videos on a range of key topics.

Powering up learning in Pinellas County Schools involves innovative learning experiences for all students.

## Power Down Distractions

Pinellas County Schools recognizes the ever-increasing importance of technology in students' lives and the beneficial role it can play in student education and communication when used responsibly. The possession and use of such devices should not interfere with academic instruction, student safety or a positive school climate. Pinellas County Schools has updated its Code of Conduct as it relates to the [usage of cell phones and other wireless devices](#) during instructional time on and off campus.

*[Learn more about digital responsibility and the district cell phone policy here.](#)*

## PCS Launches Employee Childcare



### The Superintendent Says...

"Welcome back students and families! And thank you for helping make Pinellas County Schools an A



district! Your principals, teachers and staff have been diligently preparing to get right back to learning! We accomplished so much together last year. Let's continue to build on that success by staying focused on having great student and staff experiences and maintaining high expectations for all. Here's to a great 2024-25 school year!"



*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**

Pinellas County Schools | 301 Fourth St. SW | Largo, FL 33779 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!