

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 catch up with a Lakewood High School alum who just entered his seventh season as an NFL offensive lineman as well as celebrate Brayden Lyons, who competed in the international Geography Bee in Austria this summer. We also share the stories of two PCS employees who returned to school to earn their GEDs, received promotions at their school sites and walked across the stage at Countywide Graduation last month.

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

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"I VOLUNTEER BECAUSE IT GIVES ME A **PURPOSE**. TO DO SOMETHING THAT BRINGS **MEANING** TO ME."

Find out how you can become a PCS volunteer or mentor by visiting pcsb.org/volunteer.



Linda Reynolds is a volunteer at Nina Harris ESE Center and was a 2023-2024 Outstanding School Volunteer finalist. **Watch more here.**

WHAT'S INSIDE

LISTEN & LEARN

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

September 18, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School



Providing opportunities for the stakeholders of Pinellas County Schools to engage with the School Board, Superintendent and district leadership is imperative to continuous improvement for our students, families, staff and community.

PCS Community Meetings will be in-person events with virtual option for stakeholders. Each meeting will last approximately 90 minutes and include: an opening and welcome by Board Member(s) and Superintendent, a presentation including highlights and happenings of the district, a question/answer session and feedback opportunities during which stakeholders can have direct conversations with the Superintendent, School Board and district leaders who are present.

[Learn more here](#)



- Sept. 24 - 5:30 p.m. - All Things DAP Facebook and YouTube Live Event.
- Sept. 24 - 5 p.m. - All-County K-12



Four PCS students spent two weeks in Nagano, Japan this summer as part of Clearwater's Sister Cities student exchange program.

Student Exchange Program sends four to Nagano

Other than their hot, humid summer climates, Nagano, Japan and Clearwater, Florida have very little in common.

"McDonald's doesn't taste like McDonald's, 7-11 is more like a gourmet restaurant and students actually have a cleaning period where they help clean and maintain their school campus," said Thai Cheng, a senior at Countryside High School. "And the most popular Domino's pizza has potatoes and mayo on top."

But none of those things kept Thai from falling in love with Clearwater's sister city when he and three other local exchange students visited Nagano over the summer. The four students lived with host families, went to school with their host brothers and sisters, ate homemade meals and even took part in miniature Japanese language lessons over dinner.

"The program is really a great and unique opportunity because it offered an entirely different viewpoint on traveling," said Jenna Alandary, a junior at Palm Harbor University High School. "I think it really changes you as a person – to travel somewhere without a lot of supervision and to just be completely different from your environment."

The Sister City relationship between Nagano and Clearwater began in 1959 and in 1990, the student exchange program launched. To apply to be a high school exchange student, students must be Clearwater residents, have a 3.5 GPA, write an essay as part of their application as well as attend six orientations prior to the trip date. Similarly, the young ambassador's program, which began in 2001, provides middle school students with a cultural immersion experience in the city of Nagano.

Both groups of students presented on their trip at the August 15 Clearwater City Council meeting.

"I am so happy this program has existed in Clearwater for

Art Exhibition - District
Administration Building

- **Sept. 26** - p.m. - North County
College & Career Fair - Countryside
High School

so many years,” said Clearwater Mayor Bruce Rector.
“You’re not just representing Clearwater; you are
representing Florida and our country.”

[Read the full article](#)

ACHIEVE TOGETHER

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Lakewood High School alum Isaiah Wynn is an Offensive Lineman for the Miami Dolphins and offers a free football camp at his alma mater each summer.

For Isaiah Wynn, inspirational text messages with family and friends grew from something he enjoyed reading every Wednesday in high school and college to a full-fledged nonprofit.

But launching Win with Wynn was just the beginning.

The Miami Dolphins’ offensive guard now hosts free football clinics at his former high school and awards five scholarships to local graduating seniors each year. This summer, he held his first offensive line camp as well as his second annual Back-to-School Bash, where he donated school supplies and backpacks, at Campbell Park Recreation Center.

[Read the full article](#)





Brayden Lyons earns memories of a lifetime at international Geography Bee

As told by his mother, Missy Lyons:

The International Geo Bee has come to a close. One week of competitions, tests, events and games. For those who have asked how Brayden did, here's how I explain it.

This child saw the King of England in person, viewed Buckingham Palace, sailed on the Thames River, crossed the Danube River, walked alongside the Seine River, visited Westminster Abbey, had traditional afternoon tea with our UK family, stood on the easternmost point of the British Isles, rode on the Eurostar through the Chunnel, walked amongst the bones of the Catacombs, stood on top of the Eiffel Tower, ate lots of delicious food, watched the Olympics being set up, meandered through the Louvre, learned to navigate around a foreign city, spoke different languages, visited Budapest and Bratislava, went to countless museums, learned a ton of information on tours, walked through palaces, toured the grounds and Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, ate in Parisian cafes, attended a classical music concert, celebrated an important soccer match in the UK, met new friends from around the world, had fun at an amusement park in Vienna and learned about lots of



Seminole Middle night foreman earns degree at 37

Heidi Hayden had tried to return to school before.

Nine years ago, Hayden, the recently promoted night foreman at Seminole Middle School, tried to return to get her General Education Diploma (GED) but the timing wasn't right.

"I wasn't motivated enough and just stopped going," said Hayden, who recently walked across the stage in the Countywide Graduation ceremony at St. Petersburg High School. "But I went back, and I did it. You have to stop coming up with excuses and just do it."

Hayden, who would have graduated from East Forsyth High School in North Carolina in 2005, is mom to seventh and 12th-grade daughters and has worked at Seminole Middle for almost six years. She started as a plant operator, and, last July, when the night foreman position became available, she knew she wanted it.

But she had to get her degree first.

So, Hayden attended classes at St. Petersburg College's Seminole campus and last August, after just five months, she completed her GED.

BACK TO SCHOOL 2024-25



The Superintendent Says...

"Amazing things are happening within Pinellas County schools. I'd like to congratulate every student, teacher, staff member and administrator on making our district an A district. It is because of each and every one of you that we have earned this historical designation. Our students, staff and alumni continue to make me proud to lead such an active and vibrant district."



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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