

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 meet Clearwater High School alum and Take Stock in Children scholarship recipient Nelson Taylor, Jr. He was last year's Gold Glove Award winner within his organization and was recently assigned to the **Portland Seadogs, a Boston Red Sox AA affiliate**. We also feature the Mighty Mu math competition, which is in its 28th year and included almost 500 students. And we capture the first districtwide multilingual speaking competition, where students speaking Spanish, French and English as a Second Language competed for top honors.

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

[NOMINATE HERE](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE



RISING STARS
Presented by the McIntyre Family

SEE OUR FINALISTS PERFORM ON
APRIL 21, 2026

CULINARY Jontae Nettles Aiden Rowe Sydney Young	INSTRUMENTAL Kaleb Adams Jake Johnson Alana Samson Paul Stoici	DANCE Hannah Bruce Eleanor Koh Michael Nikolas Audrey Kayasone	THEATER Molly Bartholomew Mikaela Diane Elijah Jordan Ian Wickham
VISUAL ARTS Paulina Hall Sophia Julian Finn Reddick Dziyana Rolik	VOCAL Griffin Abrams Gabriella Califano Bella Moss Veronica White		

Congratulations to the 2025-26 Rising Stars Finalists! Join the **Pinellas Education Foundation** on April 21 to watch talented Pinellas County Schools juniors and seniors take center stage at Mahaffey Theater, delivering show-stopping performances in



Mighty Mu makes math fun

music, dance, theater, and more! The Rising Stars Scholarship Competition is a year-long initiative that helps students hone their audition, portfolio and performance skills and celebrates the artistic talent of students across our community. Participants in Rising Stars compete for college scholarships in six categories: Culinary Arts, Dance, Instrumental, Theater, Visual Arts and Vocal Performance. This free, ticketless event is open to the community and offers a chance to experience the remarkable talent across our district. **Learn more about the event here.**

What started in 1997 with just 140 students from 15 schools has grown into one of Pinellas County Schools' most exciting academic traditions.

This year, the 28th annual Mighty Mu Math Competition brought together 470 students in grades 4–8 from 28 schools across the district, each one spending months preparing to test their problem-solving skills.

Students competed in a wide range of individual events, including grade-level competitions for 4th through 7th grade, Algebra 1, and Geometry. Additional challenges like the Elementary Open Test, which focused on puzzles and logic and the Middle School Open Test, which centered on probability and statistics, encouraged students to think even further beyond the classroom.

Mental Math, the Rubik's Cube competition, and the Pi-Off, where participants recited as many digits of π as possible, were fan favorites.

[Read the full article](#)

ACHIEVE TOGETHER

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



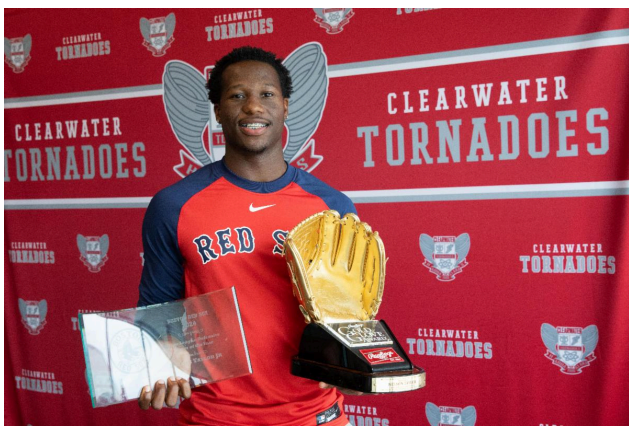
Nelson Taylor, Jr. is a Clearwater High School alum from the class of 2021. He was just assigned to the Portland Sea Dogs, the AA affiliate of the Boston Red Sox.

Nelson Taylor Jr. has a hard time keeping his composure when reflecting on his journey from a young kid in Clearwater to joining the ranks of the **Boston Red Sox**.

His is a story of resilience, determination, and unwavering family support that. Even years after graduation, it instantly brings him to a place of nostalgia when stepping on the Clearwater High School campus.

"Immediately, I feel respect," Taylor said. "It's good to see the old faces, the new faces, and how things have changed for the better."

Nelson, known to his family and teammates as simply "Nelly," walked the campus with a mix of reflection and energy. He visited former teachers' classrooms, receiving warm welcomes and high-fives as they celebrated his success.



“It was amazing to see them again,” he said. “It felt good to show them what I’ve been able to accomplish.”

[Read the full article](#)



'Multilingual Voices' competition showcases student talent and pride

Samara Rodriguez Juan walked into the inaugural Multilingual Voices competition



District announces Emerging Teachers of the Year

riddled with nerves and unsure what to expect.

But the moment she saw the faces of the other competitors, her anxiety turned into appreciation.

“Everyone was so welcoming and joyous and encouraging,” Samara said. “It’s great to meet more people in your community who share similar goals.”

A senior at Hollins High School, Samara was born in Venezuela and moved to the U.S. when she was eight. After taking two years of Spanish in middle school and one year her freshman year, she returned to the language for AICE Spanish as a senior.

She says the Spanish taught here—more influenced by Spain—is very different from the Spanish she grew up speaking.

“It has been one of the best classes I have taken my entire high school career,” she said. “It has helped me appreciate my culture even more than I did before. I was very intrigued because I’m a very competitive person and I like to get involved to help my school.”

The competition, launched by the district’s multilingual services department in October 2025, gave students across Pinellas County Schools the opportunity to practice authentic speaking in English, Spanish and French, and to showcase the progress they’ve made in ESOL and world language classrooms.

[Read the full article](#)

Congratulations to the 2025–26 Emerging Teachers of the Year: Katherine Richardson, a Pre-K teacher in the Intensive Sensory & Communications Disorder (ISCD) classroom at High Point Elementary School, and Madeline Payne, a 6th and 7th grade Science Honors teacher at Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School.

Both educators exemplify passion, purpose, and a deep commitment to student success. Richardson is in her third year pursuing her lifelong dream of becoming a special education teacher and creating a nurturing and supportive environment where every child can grow in communication, confidence, and independence.

Payne, in her second year, brings energy and curiosity to her classroom, fostering a love of science while ensuring students feel celebrated for both academic achievements and personal growth.

The Emerging Teacher of the Year program honors exemplary new teachers who are in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching and have demonstrated excellence through the representation of the district’s core values.



Schools are reaching out to families to invite students to Summer Bridge based on new criteria this school year. More information is available at pcsb.org/SummerBridge. Rising K will be open to Pinellas County Schools students registered for

Class of 2026

Where are you headed to college? Taking a gap year to study abroad or travel the world? Going straight to work to begin your trade career? Tell us about your future plans by visiting pcsb.org/futureplans.

kindergarten for the 2025-26 school year. Rising K is focused on preparing children for kindergarten and does not have the same eligibility requirements as other elementary programs. Families can learn more about Rising K at pcsb.org/risingk.



The Superintendent Says...

"With graduations just around the corner and our Class of 2026 valedictorians and salutatorians announced, I couldn't be prouder of our students. Their hard work and achievements throughout their time with Pinellas County Schools are amazing. We celebrate all they've accomplished and can't wait to see what's next for them."

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