

# Academy News

February 2026

Pedro Menendez High School

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A big thank you to Dave Podmeyer, Dave Mathias, Norma Haupt DVM of Healing Animal House Calls, Kayla Lakatos of Gilbane Building Company, Lauren Baker of Atlantic Engineering Services, Thomas Handley, PMHS alum, and Rich Pritt of CPPI (picture below in order) for volunteering to support our ACE of NE Florida students as they prepare for their upcoming competition.

Your expertise, encouragement, and dedication make a tremendous impact. By sharing your knowledge and real-world experience, you inspire our students to push themselves, grow with confidence, and strive to be their very best both inside and outside the classroom.





Mentors working with teams to prepare for their competitions.

Students come to school early once a week to work with their industry mentors.



The following students placed in the regional SkillsUSA competition and will compete at the state level in March. We wish them all Good Luck!

### **Architectural Drafting**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Owen Stavis

2<sup>nd</sup> place Melanie Patterson

3<sup>rd</sup> place Dalton Reed

Alexia Gottschalk Advanced to state

Evan Mastropaola advanced to state

### **Technical Drafting**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Henry Tam

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Isaiah Holden

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Pavin Mooney

Emma Nemecek advanced to state

Jackson Marston advanced to state



# VyStar | Academy of Business

Pedro Menendez High School

## It is certification season for the VyStar Business Academy!



Management students are learning how to become project managers as they prepare for the PMR Project Management Ready certification exam. Entrepreneurship students are studying Financial Management along with Marketing and Sales as they prepare for the ESB Entrepreneurship and Small Business certification exam. The academy is hard at work and students are building valuable skills that will prepare them for future success.

## Thank you to Ray Berger of Edward Jones

We want to give a huge thank you to our guest speaker, Ray Berger of Edward Jones, for bringing incredible energy and inspiration to our students. As a former FBLA



member and state champion, he shared his personal journey, offered real-world insight, and truly connected with our Business Academy students. His presentation was relatable, motivating, and left our students excited about the possibilities ahead.



### **FBLA Shatters Records in Membership and State Leadership Attendance**

This has been a history making year for our FBLA chapter. We did not just grow; we doubled last year's membership and reached a total of 48 members. Even more impressive, we welcomed a record breaking 9 freshmen, the largest freshman group we have ever had.

Our chapter is also sending 11 outstanding students to the State Leadership Conference in March, a new school record. Our FBLA chapter has never looked brighter.



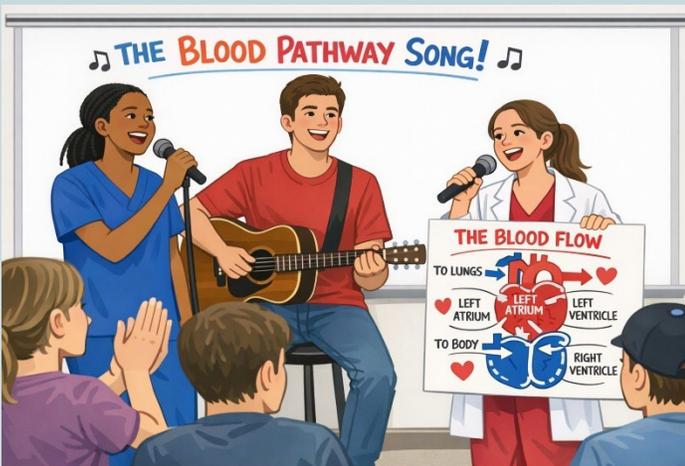
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Health Academy students volunteered at Southwood Elementary for Mighty Me Day, a human body themed field day and in-school field study. Elementary students explored stations throughout the school where they learned how different parts of the body work.

It was inspiring to see our high school students step into leadership roles, guide younger learners, and share their passion for healthcare. Their enthusiasm, kindness, and knowledge helped make the event both educational and fun for everyone involved.







In health science one, students created and performed songs to help explain the blood pathway. By presenting their songs to the class, students used creativity and teamwork to reinforce important anatomy concepts. This activity helped make learning about the circulatory system more engaging and memorable



Allied Health students recently visited UF Health St. John's Hospital for an immersive, hands-on learning experience. During the visit, students practiced essential patient-care skills using medical equipment and simulation tools. They explored how healthcare professionals safely move patients with a lift system and how proper repositioning techniques help maintain comfort and prevent injury. Through these activities, students gained a deeper understanding of the importance of safety, teamwork, and

correct clinical technique. The experience offered valuable insight into the daily responsibilities of healthcare workers and strengthened students' confidence in their growing patient-care skills.



Health academy students spent the day at Jacksonville University exploring future pathways in healthcare and nursing education. During the visit, students toured state-of-the-art medical simulation labs, observed realistic demonstrations of patient-care scenarios, and used interactive technology to study human anatomy. This hands-on experience gave students a clearer understanding of what it's like to train and work in the healthcare field, while also inspiring them to continue pursuing careers in medicine and patient care.



## 2025 Academy Industry Certifications

Course	Certification
Business and Entrepreneurial Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entrepreneurship and Small Business</li></ul>
Management and Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project Management Ready</li></ul>
Business Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project Management Ready</li></ul>
Drafting 1 Drafting 2 Drafting 3 Drafting 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Autodesk Certified User: AutoCAD</li><li>• Autodesk Certified User: Revit for Architecture</li><li>• Autodesk Certified user: Inventor</li></ul>
Health Science Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified Medical Administrative Assistant-CMAA</li></ul>
EKG-Electrocardio Tech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified EKG Technician-CET</li></ul>
Allied Health/Medical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified Patient Care Technician Assistant-CPCT-A</li></ul>
Sports Recreation and Entertainment Essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Media Strategist</li></ul>

All students have the opportunity to earn Florida Ready to Work Soft Skill credentials.

Industry certification exams not only help our students be career ready they may count as college credits! Make sure your future college or university knows about the certifications you have earned. Click here to learn more: [Earning College Credits](#)

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# Pedro Partners

Thank you for your partnership with our students. These businesses provide industry mentors, guest speakers, job shadowing, internships, and supply donations to our students.

*If you or a business you know would like the rewarding experience of helping our students, who will be the future industry leaders, please reach out to our career specialist: Kristina Bransford at [Kristina.Bransford@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Kristina.Bransford@stjohns.k12.fl.us) or call at 904-547-8681.*

