



PSCS Families' Guide to Student Achievement

In accord with Senate Bill 49, Session Law 2023-16, *The Parents' Bill of Rights*

The purpose of the *PSCS Families' Guide to Student Achievement* is to empower parents and guardians to be active participants in student learning and to provide access to information relevant to teaching and learning, including curriculum and instructional materials. A hard copy of this document may be requested at the administrative office located at 9232 Bob Beatty Road, Charlotte, NC 28269.

How can my child be promoted to the next grade level?

Student promotion is determined by both NC State statutes and Pioneer Springs Community School policy. Following are the relevant state and local requirements for promotion, including graduation:

[North Carolina Statutes](#)

[North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Graduation Requirement Matrices](#)

[Pioneer Springs Community School's Academic Progress Policy](#)

[Pioneer Springs Community School's High School Course Catalog with graduation requirements](#)

[Summary of H259: Early Graduate Path and Scholarship Program](#)

What is my child learning at school?

How can I review the instructional materials used to teach these concepts?

Pioneer Springs' instructional program is shaped by three guiding documents: *The North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, the *NC Environmental Literacy Plan* and the *NC Digital Learning Standards*.

- The [North Carolina Standards](#) can be found on the Office of Academic Standards webpage and is broken down by subject and grade level. It includes information about what students should know and be able to do as they grow.
- North Carolina's [K-12 Environmental Literacy Plan](#) outlines strategies to enable students to examine environmental issues while balancing cultural perspectives, the economy, and public health.
- Today's students must be prepared to thrive in a quickly evolving technological world. [The ISTE Digital Literacy Standards](#) adopted by the NC Department of Public Instruction are designed to empower and keep students safe.

In order to effectively teach these standards, Pioneer Springs's teachers design meaningful instruction through Backward Design, beginning with the scope and sequence of instruction as reflected in [curriculum maps for all grades and subjects](#) and use research-based and high-yield instructional materials. These include:

- [iReady Mathematics 2024](#) in elementary grades and *Open Up Math* for [6th Grade Math](#), [7th Grade Math](#), [8th Grade Math](#), [Math 1](#), [Math 2](#), and [Math 3](#)
- [Magnetic Reading](#) by iReady and [Expeditionary Learning ELA resources](#)
- [Mystery Science](#) and [STEMscopes](#)
- [Big History Project](#), [C3 Inquiries](#), and [The North Carolina Journey](#)
- [Renaissance Learning](#) benchmarking

Parents may review curriculum materials, including textbooks and teacher materials, by accessing our [Parents' Bill of Rights webpage](#).

How will I learn about my child's progress in school or with a class?

Pioneer Springs Community School uses a variety of means to communicate students' academic progress including authentic feedback on assignments, progress reports and quarterly report cards, parent conferences, MTSS and benchmarking letters, student and parent portal access through PowerSchools (high school only) and mandated state testing. The following links provide more information about those tools and resources:

- [PSCS Academic Progress Policies](#)
- [Guide to standards-based grades \(K-8\)](#)
- [Pioneer Springs Community School Course Catalog with grading scale and Grade Point Average](#)
- [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#)
- [NC DPI Accountability—mandated state testing overview](#)

What are the qualifications of my child's teachers?

Pioneer Springs employs teachers who are both effective instructors and whose background—whether educational or experiential—contributes to and supports the mission and value of the school. Teacher certification status— which can be emergency, provisional, residential, initially-licensed or continuing— is public record and accessible through the [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Licensure Portal](#).

Families can also request information about teacher certification through the [Parents' Bill of Rights webpage](#).

What are the enrollment requirements, including necessary or recommended immunizations?

Enrollment in a North Carolina public charter school is directed by state legislation and individual school policy. The requirements include NC state residency, certain medical and immunization records, and a copy of the student's birth certificate. Interested families can learn more about enrolling at Pioneer Springs on the school's [enrollment webpage](#).

- [NC State admission requirements for public charter schools](#)
- [Pioneer Springs Community School Lottery, Admissions and First Day of School Policy](#)
- [North Carolina School Immunization Policy](#)
- [Pioneer Springs Community School Immunization Policy](#)
- [North Carolina School Health Assessment Requirements](#)
- [CDC Recommended Immunization Schedule](#)

How can families help their child(ren) make progress?

Families are an important part of the learning process at Pioneer Springs and can support student learning in the following ways:

Be Committed

- sign and abide by the [Covenant](#)
- express your support for the school and teachers to your student(s)

Stay Informed

- read the [Coop Scoop](#) and classroom newsletters weekly
- communicate with teachers regularly. [Elementary](#), [middle school](#), and [high school](#) teachers' emails are listed on the PSCS website
- go through work that has been sent home with your student
- read through report cards, benchmark testing results, state testing results, and other communication about academic progress. Ask questions when you need more information

Get Active

- nurture a culture of reading in your family by reading with your student, reading in front of your student, and making regular library visits
- participate in conferences
- implement strategies for learning at home that are suggested by teachers
- [volunteer](#) and participate in the [WINGS PTO](#)

How can a parent help his child develop citizenship, social skills and respect for others?

Pioneer Springs is [deeply committed to the development of the whole child](#), including the development of citizenship, social-emotional skills, and respect for others.

Some of the ways we cultivate these skills include:

- daily [Morning Mindfulness](#) and Closing Reflection in every classroom; through Morning Mindfulness and Closing Reflection students connect to their classroom community, explore mindfulness, learn how to recognize and regulate emotions, practice expressing empathy for others, engage in citizenship, and practice metacognitive skills that support learning

- as a Basic school, Pioneer Springs focuses on [Seven Core Virtues](#); teachers explicitly teach these virtues, and integrate them into their exploration of the curriculum
- students in grades K-8 attend weekly Connect class with our guidance counselor; this class uses Made to Be Me, a [research-based](#) SEL curriculum
- [Pioneer 101](#) is a series of monthly parent-school gatherings in which families can learn more about our efforts to teach citizenship, social-emotional skills, and respect for others.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to build on Pioneer Spring's efforts by discussing Morning Mindfulness, Closing Reflection, the Seven Virtues, and Made to be Me themes with their students. Should parents or guardians need support in reinforcing a particular concept at home, they are encouraged to reach-out to teachers.

How can a parent strengthen communication with the school?

A strong school-home partnership is essential for a high quality education for students. Communication is the foundation of strong relationships. To cultivate strong communication with the school/ teacher:

Be Proactive

- participate in [Covenant Conferences](#) so that you have the opportunity to begin building a relationship early in the school year
- participate in academic conferences quarterly, and request a conference if you have substantial concerns
- if you ever have a question, concern, or are curious about something, [reach out to the appropriate staff member](#); remember that Pioneer Springs staff members do not communicate about campus events, classroom happenings, or particular student's needs on social media, so communicate directly with the appropriate staff member
- read all school-home communication, including classroom newsletters, the [Coop Scoop](#), teacher emails, student work that has been sent home, academic reports, report cards, etc.

Be Curious

- ask your students open-ended questions about their experiences so that they are free to share their own perspective
- ask teachers and staff follow-up questions as needed

Be Open-Minded

- remember that our teachers and staff are professionals with extensive training and experience, and that they work hard to provide an excellent experience for your student
- always assume the best
- keep in mind that children (and adults) often do not know the full context of a situation, so may not be sharing the whole story—if you have a question or concern, ask for clarification

Be Informed

- The Pioneer Springs Community School has established a policy promoting effective communication between schools and parents, outlined in the [Parental Involvement Policy](#), and [Title I Parent and Family Engagement at Title I Schools](#)
- NCDPI-developed parent guides offer suggestions for building strong relationships with your child's teacher and supporting communication between home and school, including guides such as "[Building Strong Relationships with Your Child's Teacher](#)" and "[How You Can Use Questions to Support Your Child's Learning](#)" from the NC Rethink Education Program
- For additional general parent guides and recordings of parent resource webinars, please visit [this website](#)

What support services are available for students and their families?

Pioneer Springs provides several services to students and their families. Student support services include health services, extracurricular programming, athletic opportunities, and career and college counseling as well as support for homelessness, English as a Second Language, and students with disabilities. Please access the following contacts for more information about each program or contact [Mr. Jose Martinez, Dean of Student Support Services](#).

- [Acute Mental Health—Karlee Morton](#)
- [Nursing and health needs—Arman Casini](#)
- [Pioneer Plus Extracurricular and Athletic opportunities—Latosha Casini](#)
- [Career and College Counseling—Lynn Curley](#)
- [Homeless, ESL, and 504 support—Jose Martinez](#)
- [Students with Disabilities—Nakia Massey](#)
- [Homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Act](#)

What are the opportunities for parents to participate with school?

Pioneer Springs Community School values family participation and offers multiple opportunities for parents and guardians to contribute to the school community. The expectation for family participation is outlined in the [Pioneer Covenant](#) and supported by resources available on the [school website](#). Opportunities for participation include membership in [WINGS PTO](#), campus and classroom [volunteerism](#), attendance at [Pioneer 101 Family Education events](#), and service as a room parent or a member of the Family Advisory Council. For more information about how to get involved, contact Heidi Magi at heidim@pioneersprings.org.

What rigorous academic programs are available for my child?

At Pioneer Springs, we strive to make all academic programs challenging, engaging, and meaningful, pushing students to think critically and explore subjects deeply. Rigor does not mean simply assigning more work, rather it means providing opportunities for students to solve real-world problems, stretch their thinking, and grow to their full potential both academically and personally.

Every class at Pioneer Springs is designed to provide a rigorous experience for students by supporting critical thinking, project-based learning, and engagement with real world problems. Additional opportunities for rigor include:

- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** Through MTSS Pioneer Springs assesses every student's academic achievement level and offers targeted support to ensure that students are receiving just the right amount of challenge and support to reach their full potential
- **Explore** is a middle school connect class in which all students in grades 6-8 explore career options, and complete complex hands-on projects
- **Math 1 in Eighth Grade** for students who are ready for the rigor of high school math
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** [courses at the high school level](#) ensure that have the opportunity to receive career training
- **Communities in Action (CIA)** All Pioneer Springs high school students participate in [CIA](#) all four years of high school. CIA gives high school students the opportunity to focus on their area of academic interest, to explore how they can use their passion to make a difference in their community, requires the completion of complex group and individual projects, provides an opportunity for Work Based Learning in the community, and culminates in a Capstone Graduation Project

- [North Carolina Virtual Public School \(NCVPS\)](#) courses are open to high school students who are looking for an academic challenge, or who are interested in taking coursework not offered on the Pioneer Springs campus
- **Dual Enrollment through Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)** High School students who show academic readiness may enroll in dual enrollment courses at CPCC, and are able to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree
- **High School Honors & AP Courses** All core high school courses are offered at the honors level for students who are seeking an academic challenge; select classes are also offered as AP courses through NCVPS
- **Credit By Demonstrated Mastery** High school students who can show that they have mastered the standards of a particular course may receive course credit for their demonstrated mastery

What school choices are available for my child?

The Charlotte Region offers a large, established [public school district](#) as well as a rich selection of schools-of-choice, including Pioneer Springs. Before enrolling in Pioneer Springs, look at all of your options to ensure that Pioneer Springs is the right choice for your student and your family. [This guide](#) offers information about the variety of area schools. Additional non-public options include [private schools](#) and [homeschooling](#). Scholarship grant programs/voucher information for private school enrollment is available via the [NC State Education Assistance Authority](#).

What rights do students with disabilities have?

Pioneer Springs provides the full spectrum of services for students who are identified as having a disability under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. The following links provide important information regarding the procedural safeguards available to ensure a free, appropriate, public education.

[Parent Rights Handbook](#)
[IDEA Dispute Resolution](#)
[Special Education Surrogate](#)

More information or questions can be directed to the EC Coordinator, Nakia Massey at nakiam@pioneersprings.org.

What are some resources to support my child's health and well-being?

Acute Counseling Services:

Every PSCS student has access to individual counseling services to address issues impacting students in the school environment. Contact the [school's guidance counselor](#) to inquire about short-term services. While students may seek in-the-moment support for issues that arise during the school day, the school does not provide ongoing counseling services.

Nursing Services:

Pioneer Springs' students have access to a [full-time nurse](#) who can respond to acute health needs, dispense medication per the direction of a physician, and who coordinates other health services like vision and hearing screenings.

Social and Emotional Learning:

K-8 students receive weekly instruction with the [Made to be Me](#) social and emotional research-based curriculum based on five (5) core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships and responsible decision-making.

Anonymous Reporting:

5th through 12th grade students are trained annually on the use of the [Say Something](#) anonymous reporting app which allows them to share concerns for safety about themselves or others with highly trained crisis counselors.

Vision to Learn:

Pioneer Springs partners with [Vision to Learn](#) to offer screenings, eye exams and glasses at no costs to families.

What is the contact information for the school office?

Families can call the school's office at 704-494-0777 or send a document to P.O. Box 480537, Charlotte, NC 28269. Other means of contact include:

[The school's contact directory](#)

[Contact webpage](#)