

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

PROOF OF PUBLICATION STATE OF GEORGIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared , who on oath says that he/she is a Legal Advertising Representative of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a Daily newspaper published in said City and State that is a newspaper of general circulation in Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Jasper, Meriweather, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Polk, Rockdale, Walton, White, Banks, Butts, Dawson, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Haralson, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Monroe, Murray, Oconee, Pickens, Pike, Spalding, and Whitfield Counties, and State of Georgia, and that the attached copy of Legal Advertising was published 1 time(s) in said newspaper on 12/11/2025 and last date of Publication 12/11/2025.

CLASSIFIED ADS PLUS
17110 GUNN HWY
ODESSA, FL 33556

Invoice/Order Number: 0000886483

Signed NOVA HARRISON
(Legal Advertising Agent)

Sworn or affirmed to, and subscribed before me, this 16th day of December, 2025 in Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal, the day and year aforesaid.

Signed _____
(Notary)

Please see Ad on following page(s).

Tyshawn Harrison
Notary Public - State of New York
No. 01HA0005298
Qualified in Erie County
Commission Expires 04/07/2027

CLASSIFIED ADS PLUS
17110 GUNN HWY
ODESSA, FL 33556

Invoice/Order Number: 0000886483

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.
12-11-25

0000886483-01

EXHIBIT A

**PINELLAS COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL FURNITURE
Bids due January 5, 2026
2:00 PM EST
REQUEST FOR BIDS**

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

Published Dec. 12, 2025. 4117240

PROOF OF PUBLICATION

CUSTOMER'S COPY

CUSTOMER NAME AND ADDRESS

RUSSELL JOHNS
Kim Ridgeway
17110 Gunn Hwy
Odessa, FL 33556

ACCOUNT NUMBER

65753

ACCOUNT NAME

RUSSELL JOHNS

TELEPHONE

727-450-6172

ORDER #

DN0030385

CUSTOMER REFERENCE NUMBER

Pinellas County School District Bid

CAPTION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

DN0030385

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

AS THE DESERET NEWS, INC. LEGAL BOOKER, I CERTIFY THAT THE ATTACHED ADVERTISEMENT OF **LEGAL NOTICE FOR RUSSELL JOHNS** WAS PUBLISHED BY DESERET NEWS, INC., BIWEEKLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH GENERAL CIRCULATION IN UTAH, AND PUBLISHED IN SALT LAKE CITY, SALT LAKE COUNTY IN THE STATE OF UTAH. NOTICE IS ALSO POSTED ON UTAHLEGALS.COM AND REMAINS ON UTAHLEGALS.COM INDEFINITELY. COMPLIES WITH UTAH DIGITAL SIGNATURE ACT UTAH CODE 46-2-101; 46-3-104.

PUBLISHED ON 12/12/2025

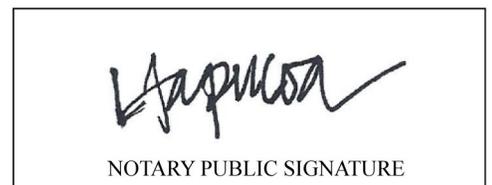
DATE 12/12/2025

STATE OF UTAH
COUNTY OF Salt Lake

SIGNATURE

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME ON THIS 12th DAY OF DECEMBER IN THE YEAR 2025

BY KARYN VIGIL



Independent Record

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

See Proof on Next Page

Helena Independent Record
2222 N. Washington St
Helena, Montana 59602
(123) 456-7890

State of Florida, County of Orange, ss:

Edmar Corachia, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That (s)he is a duly authorized signatory of Column Software, PBC, duly authorized agent of Helena Independent Record, a newspaper of general circulation published that is a "legal newspaper" as that is published daily in the City of Helena, in the County of Lewis and Clark, State of Montana, and has charge of the Advertisements thereof.

If this certification is for the State of Montana, I hereby certify that I have read sec. 18-7-204 and 18-7-205 MCA, and subsequent revisions, and declare that the price or rate charged the State of Montana for the publication for which claim is made in printed copy in the amount of _____ is not in excess of the minimum rate charged any other advertiser for publication of advertisement, set in the same size type and published for the same number of insertions, further certify that this claim is correct and just in all respects, and that payment or credit has not been received.

PUBLICATION DATES: December. 11 2025

NOTICE ID: jKjnXsYWAbS8EKM7SkvE

PUBLISHER ID: COL-MT-201789

NOTICE NAME: School Furniture

Edmar Corachia

(Signed) _____

VERIFICATION

State of Florida
County of Orange

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 12/12/2025



Notary Public

Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.



PAMELA BAEZ

Notary Public - State of Florida

Commission # HH 732409

Expires on October 19, 2029

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.
December 11, 2025 COL-MT-201789 MNAXLP

HOUSTON CHRONICLE
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF TEXAS:

Before me, the undersigned authority, a Notary Public in and for the State of Texas, on this day personally appeared, a Newspaper Representative for the Hearst Newspapers, LLC – dba HOUSTON CHRONICLE, a newspaper published in Harris County, Texas, and generally circulated in the Counties of HARRIS, TRINITY, WALKER, GRIMES, POLK, SAN JACINTO, WASHINGTON, MONTGOMERY, LIBERTY, AUSTIN, WALLER, CHAMBERS, COLORADO, BRAZORIA, FORT BEND, GALVESTON, WHARTON, JACKSON, and MATAGORDIA and that the publication, of which the annexed herein, or attached to, is a true and correct copy, was published to wit.

MCA RUSSELL JOHNS SIZE BEING : 1.51" x 0.82"

12/10/2025 Houston Chronicle
12/17/2025 Houston Chronicle

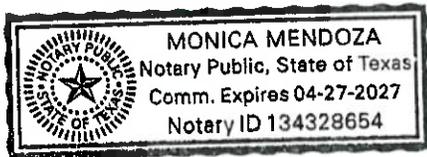
Victoria Bond

NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATIVE (signature)

Victoria Bond

NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATIVE (printed)

Sworn and subscribed to before me, the 22nd Day of December A.D. 2025



Monica Mendoza

Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.
IPLHOU0115648

LOCALiQ

Observer-Dispatch | Daily Messenger
Times Telegram | New Jersey Herald
Times Herald-Record

PO Box 631202 Cincinnati, OH 45263-1202

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

Russell Johns
7853 Gunn HWY
Suite 207
Tampa FL 33626-1611

STATE OF WISCONSIN, COUNTY OF BROWN

The New Jersey Herald, a newspaper printed, published and of general circulation in the County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, and personal knowledge of the facts herein state and that the notice hereto annexed was Published in said newspapers in the issues dated on:

12/12/2025

and that the fees charged are legal.
Sworn to and subscribed before on 12/12/2025

D. Roberts

Legal Clerk

Kongmeng Yang

Notary, State of WI, County of Brown

9-3-29

My commission expires

Order No:	11909105	# of Copies:
Customer No:	1388753	0
PO #:	LNYS0419542	

THIS IS NOT AN INVOICE!

Please do not use this form for payment remittance.

KONGMENG YANG
Notary Public
State of Wisconsin

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

December 12 2025

LNYS0419542

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

See Proof on Next Page

State of Florida, County of Broward, ss:

Anjana Bhadoriya, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That (s)he is a duly authorized signatory of Column Software, PBC, duly authorized agent of Richmond Times Dispatch, a newspaper printed and published in the City of Richmond, State of Virginia, and that this affidavit is Page 1 of 2 with the full text of the sworn-to notice set forth on the pages that follow, and the hereto attached:

PUBLICATION DATES: Dec. 12, 2025

NOTICE ID: 39qYr6X2X67RTacxNGhM

PUBLISHER ID: COL-7005671

NOTICE NAME: School Furniture

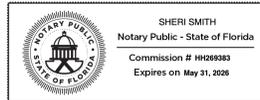
Ad Size: 2 X 8 L

Category: General Legal Notice

Under penalty of perjury, I, the undersigned affiant swear or affirm that the statements above are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Anjana Bhadoriya

(Signed) _____



VERIFICATION

State of Florida
County of Broward

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 12/15/2025

S. Smith

Notary Public

Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.
COL-7005671

STATE OF WASHINGTON – KING COUNTY

--SS.

444839

No.

MCA RUSSELL JOHNS

Affidavit of Publication

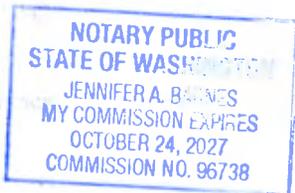
The undersigned, on oath states that he is an authorized representative of The Daily Journal of Commerce, a daily newspaper, which newspaper is a legal newspaper of general circulation and it is now and has been for more than six months prior to the date of publication hereinafter referred to, published in the English language continuously as a daily newspaper in Seattle, King County, Washington, and it is now and during all of said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of this newspaper. The Daily Journal of Commerce was on the 12th day of June, 1941, approved as a legal newspaper by the Superior Court of King County.

The notice in the exact form annexed, was published in regular issues of The Daily Journal of Commerce, which was regularly distributed to its subscribers during the below stated period. The annexed notice, a

BCSB:SCHOOL FURNITURE

was published on

12/10/25



[Handwritten Signature]

Subscribed and sworn to before me on
12/10/2025
[Handwritten Signature]

Notary public for the State of Washington,
residing in Seattle

Affidavit of Publication

State of Washington, King County

Pinellas County School District School Furniture Proposals Due: Jan. 5, 2026

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

Date of publication in the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, December 10, 2025.

12/10(444839)

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

Account #	Order Number	Identification	Order PO	Cols	Depth
54178	IPL0297565	Legal Ad - IPL0297565		1.0	11.0L

ATTENTION: Kim Ridgeway
 17110 Gunn Hwy
 Odessa, FL 33556
 kridgeway@russelljohns.com

State of South Carolina

County of Richland

I, the undersigned, makes oath that the advertisement, was published in The State, a newspaper published in the City of Columbia, State and County aforesaid, in the issue(s) of

1.0 insertion(s) published on:
 12/12/25 Print

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

IPL0297565
 Dec 12 2025

[Print Tearsheet Link](#)

[Marketplace Link](#)

Sherry Chasteen



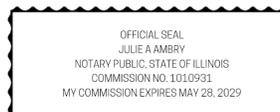
Sherry Chasteen

Julie A Ambry



Sworn to and subscribed before me on

Dec 12, 2025, 10:03 AM EST



Online Notary Public. This notarial act involved the use of online audio/video communication technology. Notarization facilitated by SIGNiX®

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.
IPL0297565
Dec 12 2025

The Sun (San Bernardino)
473 E. Carnegie Drive, Suite 250
San Bernardino, California 92408
(909) 386-3864

NOTICE FOR BIDS

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

The Sun (San Bernardino)

Published: 12/12, 12/19/25

0011768802

My Classified ads
7853 Gunn Hwy, Suite 206
Tampa, Florida 33626

PROOF OF PUBLICATION (2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA County of San Bernardino

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer of The Sun (San Bernardino), a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in the City of San Bernardino*, County of San Bernardino, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of County of San Bernardino, State of California, under the date of 06/20/1952, Case No. 73084. The notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to wit:

12/12/2025, 12/19/2025

I certify (or declare) under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at San Bernardino, California

On this 19th day of December, 2025.



Signature

*The Sun (San Bernardino) circulation includes the following cities:
[UNKNOWN LIST]

Albany Times Union
News Plaza
Box 15000
Albany, New York 12212

MCA RUSSELL JOHNS

Account Number: 600133349
Order Number: IPLATU0115091

7853 Gunn Hwy

Tampa FL 33626

STATE OF NEW YORK)
:SS.:
COUNTY OF ERIE)

The undersigned, being duly sworn, says that he/she is a Authorized Custodian of Records of THE TIMES UNION, a daily newspaper printed in the county of Albany, Town of Colonie, and Published in the County of Albany, Town of Colonie and the City of Albany, aforesaid and that notice of which a printed copy is annexed has been regularly published in the said ALBANY TIMES UNION on the following dates:

12/12/2025

George Hearst, Publisher

By: Nora Hewson

Nora Hewson

Authorized Designee of George Hearst, Publisher of the Times Union

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 12th day of December 20 25.

Notary Public Signature

Tyshawn Harrison
Notary Public - State of New York
No. 01HA0005298
Qualified in Erie County
Commission Expires 04/07/2027

IPLATU0115091

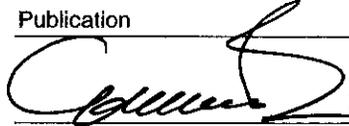
The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

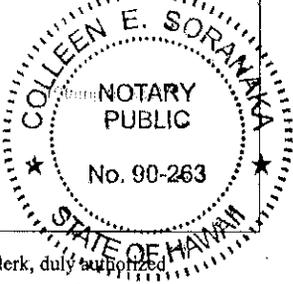
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

IN THE MATTER OF
The Pinellas County School District

}
}
}
}
}
}
}

STATE OF HAWAII }
} SS.
City and County of Honolulu }

Doc. Date: DEC 17 2025 # Pages: 1
 Notary Name: COLLEEN E. SORANAKA First Judicial Circuit
 Doc. Description: Affidavit of
Publication

 Notary Signature Date DEC 17 2025

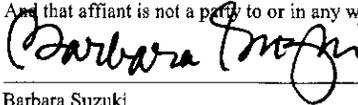


The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST. (SA1513092: 12/10, 12/17/25)

Barbara Suzuki being duly sworn, deposes and says that she is a clerk, duly authorized to execute this affidavit of Oahu Publications, Inc. publisher of The Honolulu Star-Advertiser, MidWeek, The Garden Island, West Hawaii Today, and Hawaii Tribune-Herald, that said newspapers are newspapers of general circulation in the State of Hawaii, and that the attached notice is true notice as was published in the

Honolulu Star-Advertiser 2 times on:
12/10, 12/17/2025
 MidWeek 0 times on:
 The Garden Island 0 times on:
 Hawaii Tribune-Herald 0 times on:
 West Hawaii Today 0 times on:
 Other Publications: 0 times on:

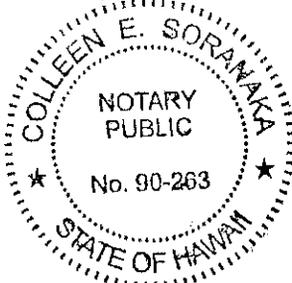
And that affiant is not a party to or in any way interested in the above entitled matter.


Barbara Suzuki

Subscribed to and sworn before me this 17th day of December A.D. 2025

Colleen E. Soranaka, Notary Public of the First Judicial Circuit, State of Hawaii
My commission expires: Jan 06 2028

Ad # 0001513092



ICSP NO.: _____

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF NEVADA)
COUNTY OF CLARK) SS:

MCA RUSSELL JOHNS
7853 Gunn Hwy, Suite 206
TAMPA FL 33626

Account #
Order ID

105557
346462

Leslie McCormick, being 1st duty sworn, deposes and says: That she is the Legal Clerk for the Las Vegas Review-Journal/Las Vegas Sun, daily newspaper regularly issued, published and circulated in the Clark County, Las Vegas, Nevada and that the advertisement, a true copy attached for, was continuously published in said Las Vegas Review-Journal/Las Vegas Sun, in 1 edition(s) of said newspaper issued from 12/10/2025 to 12/10/2025, on the following day(s):

12/10/2025

**Request For Bids
(RFBs)**

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

PUB: Dec. 10, 2025
LV Review Journal

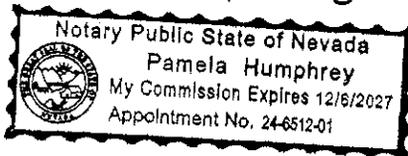
Leslie McCormick

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this December 10, 2025

Notary

Pamela Humphrey



MAINE TRUST

–for Local News–

12/12/2025

MCA Russell Johns
Attention: Kim Ridgeway
17110 Gunn HWY
Odessa, FL 33556

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We hereby certify that the following:

LEGAL AD: The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture.

was published by the Maine Trust for Local News, a newspaper having its principal place of business in the State of Maine. With general circulation in the Counties of Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford, Kennebec, Aroostook, Cumberland, Franklin, Piscataquis, Waldo, York, Washington, Knox, Hancock, Somerset, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Penobscot.

Date(s) Published: 12/10/2025, 12/11/2025, 12/12/2025.

Tearsheet (s): ENCLOSED

Maine Trust for Local News
Lewiston Office



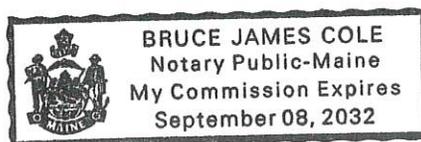
Daniel Rand
Advertising Assistant



Subscribed and sworn to me this 12 Day of December, 2025 at Lewiston, in the County of Androscoggin, in the State of Maine.



NOTARY PUBLIC



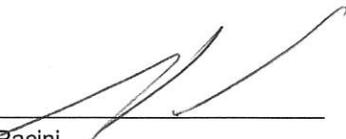
December 15, 2025

Affidavit of Publication

To Whom It May Concern:

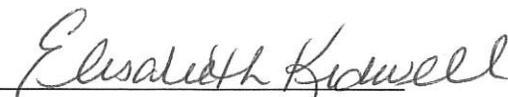
I am a duly authorized representative of MCA Russell Johns Associates LLC, the company handling the advertising matters for USA Today a daily newspaper distributed within the United States.

A public notice ad was placed by Coretrust (Pinellas County School District) and was published in said newspaper within the marketplace section of the National USA Today Marketplace on December 8, 2025 and December 15, 2025..

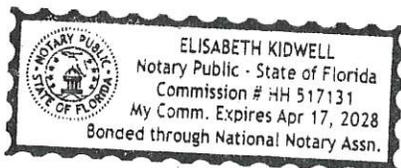


Anthony Pacini

On this 15th day of December, I attest that the attached document is a true, exact, complete, and unaltered tearsheet.



Notary



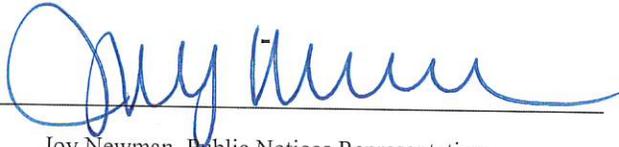
CAPITAL CITY PRESS

**Publisher of
THE ADVOCATE**

PROOF OF PUBLICATION

The hereto attached notice was published in **THE ADVOCATE**, a daily newspaper of general circulation published in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the Official Journal of the State of Louisiana, City of Baton Rouge, and Parish of East Baton Rouge or published daily in **THE TIMES-PICAYUNE/THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE**, in New Orleans Louisiana or published daily in **THE ACADIANA ADVOCATE** in the following issues:

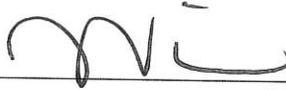
12/11/2025, 12/18/2025



Joy Newman, Public Notices Representative

Sworn and subscribed before me, by the person whose signature appears above

24 Dec 2025



Tiffany Victorian,

Notary Public ID#182846

State of Louisiana

My Commission Expires: Indefinite



TIFFANY VICTORIAN
Notary Public
Notary ID No. 182846
West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsd>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2025 2:00 PM EST.

169569-DEC 11-18-2T

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

Russell Johns
7853 Gunn HWY
Suite 207
Tampa FL 33626-1611

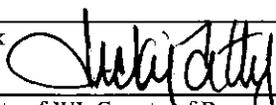
STATE OF WISCONSIN, COUNTY OF BROWN

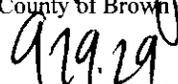
The Arizona Business Gazette, a newspaper published in the city of Phoenix and general circulation in the counties of Maricopa, Coconino and Pinal, State of Arizona, and personal knowledge of the facts herein state and that the notice hereto annexed was Published in said newspapers in the issue:

PNI azcentral.com 12/18/2025
PNI Business Gazette 12/18/2025

and that the fees charged are legal.
Sworn to and subscribed before on 12/18/2025



Legal Clerk 

Notary, State of WI, County of Brown


My commission expires

Order No: 11909120 # of Copies:
Customer No: 1388753 0
PO #: LAZS0419525

THIS IS NOT AN INVOICE!

Please do not use this form for payment remittance.

VICKY FELTY
Notary Public
State of Wisconsin

Request for Bids

The Pinellas County School District is soliciting competitive bids for School Furniture. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/pcsb>. Responses must be received by January 05, 2026 2:00 PM EST.

December 18 2025

LAZS0419525

WORLD CUP

Toughest to easiest – ranking all 16 groups

Erick Smith
USA TODAY

The draw for the the 2026 World Cup draw is complete and now everyone knows the groups for next summer's soccer event to be played in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

This World Cup is expanding with 48 countries participating after the quadrennial event in Qatar in 2022 had 32. The field will feature perennial powers Brazil, Germany, Argentina and France. Italy has not yet qualified. The event will feature newcomers and a return of some familiar countries that have been missing recently.

The 48 teams have been split into 12 groups of four with each team playing one game against the other three group members. The top two teams in the group will advance along with the eight third-place teams with the highest point totals. Those 32 teams will play knockout games until the winner is decided on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Not all groups have an equal balance of teams. The draw separates the 48 teams in four pots of 12. Pot 1 features the three host nations and the nine highest teams in the FIFA rankings. The next 12 best-ranked teams are in pot 2 and followed by the next 12 in pots 3. Pot 4 has the six lowest-ranked qualified teams and six spaces for teams that qualify in the playoff round in March. This structure creates some difficult groups and some that should be smooth sailing for contenders. Which are the hardest and easiest? We rank them.

Group I

Whichever group had Norway and goal-scoring machine Erling Haaland was always going to be one of the toughest groups, but putting them with France – the champions from 2018 and finalists from 2022 – and a strong Senegal team makes for big challenge that could knock one team out of knockouts. Including Haaland, this group has a ton of star power with France's Kylian Mbappé and Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and Senegal's Sadio Mane.

Group L

The draw did no favors to England as it looks to end its World Cup drought. Croatia would have been a pot 1 team without the hosts occupying three spots. The Luka Modric-led group has been to a final in 2018 and semifinals in 2022. Ghana is a dangerous team with enough European quality to cause prob-



Norway's Erling Haaland, left, competes for a ball with Italy's Davide Frattesi during a FIFA World Cup qualifier match on Nov. 16. MARCO LUZZANI/GETTY IMAGES

lems. Panama will need to play above its head. Still, the English are so full of talent it should get out of this group.

Group B

Canada is the lowest-ranked host nation and the weakest pot 1 team, though it still has a talented group. Star defender Alphonso Davies is due to return for Bayern Munich after an ACL injury and his health will be critical to make a deep run. Switzerland is the clear favorite with Qatar joining as the three known members. If we assume Italy makes it out of the playoff group with Wales, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, then this will be a difficult path for the hosts. But it's no given since Italy has not qualified for the last two World Cups.

Group E

Germany has taken a step back from its golden days when it routinely advanced deep in the tournament. Unless manager Julian Nagelsmann can get things sorted, this is a challenging group with Ecuador finishing South American qualifying second in the table and Ivory Coast, the reigning African champions. Curacao will enjoy the experience of playing in its first tournament.

Group A

Mexico will have the advantage of playing its matches at home with the acclimation to the weather and altitude of Mexico City being an advantage. El Tri

will be trying to make it out of the group stage after its run of seven consecutive knockouts ended in 2022. There could be some challenges, however. Denmark would be the favorite if it can get out of the playoff with its strong midfield and defense. South Korea is a potential threat with Son Heung-min among its standout players. South Africa will have an uphill battle to garner points.

Group C

Brazil and Morocco might be the two best-matched teams from pots 1 and 2. Brazil – despite all of its talent – has struggled through qualifying. Carlo Ancelotti is now firmly entrenched as the new manager, and he has six months to galvanize the group. Morocco is full of European players and made the semifinals in Qatar. It won't catch anyone by surprise this time. Scotland is a bit of a step behind those two after a memorable qualifying run. The Scots could cause problems with their defense. Haiti shouldn't pose much of a problem.

Group H

This is a top-heavy group with Spain and Uruguay, two teams that have combined to win multiple World Cups. Spain is off winning the Euros in 2024 and has depth to endure a long tournament. Uruguay should sail through and could win the group with a strong group of European players, notably Federico Valverde and Ronald Araujo of Real Madrid and Barcelona, respectively. Saudi Arabia and Cape Verde have an uphill fight.

Group K

Portugal is still seeking its first World Cup title and this will be Cristiano Ronaldo's last run with the team. This group won the Nation's League this past summer and is full of elite talent. There might be a test from Colombia, a rising group that has Bayern Munich's Luis Diaz as one of its leaders. DR Congo would be a possible challenger to the top two if it wins its playoff, with Uzbekistan unlikely to have enough firepower to make much of dent.

Group D

The United States last hosted the World Cup in 1994 and rode a wave of emotion into the knockout rounds. Expect a similar advantage for a group that had some early bumps with new manager Mauricio Pochettino but has had a strong fall, albeit without some of the established stars. It's a pretty friendly draw with Australia and Paraguay along with a playoff winner from Europe, though Turkey could present a challenge if it advances. Look for the U.S. to qualify and Paraguay and the playoff winner to be a threat.

Group J

Defending champion Argentina with Lionel Messi likely making his final World Cup appearance has the motivation to make a deep run again. It gets a pretty easy group with Algeria and Austria fighting it out for second, and Jordan coming last. But crazy things happen at the World Cup. It's worth remembering Argentina lost its opener in Qatar to Saudi Arabia.

Group G

Belgium failed to get out of its group last time. It would be a disaster for a squad with Kevin De Bruyne, Jeremy Doku and a healthy Romalu Lukaku to miss the knockouts with this easy set-up. Egypt does have Mohamed Salah, who has been off form with Liverpool, and could threaten. Iran and New Zealand are a step or two behind the others and might fight for a third-place spot.

Group F

Netherlands – one of the biggest soccer powers not to win the World Cup – couldn't have asked for a much better path out of the group. Japan is a dangerous team with its unique style of play, but Tunisia and the European playoff winner – likely Ukraine or Poland – should be manageable.

10 must-see group stage games worth anticipating

Jim Reineking
USA TODAY

The draw for the 2026 World Cup is complete, and with that we know each of the matchups for the group stage at next summer's soccer tournament in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

With an expanded 48-team tournament, the group stage might be watered down a bit from the previous 32-team fields, but there are still banger matchups on the slate.

We've picked out 10 must-see group stage games:

Mexico vs. South Africa – June 11: This is the opening match of the World Cup, so of course we'll all be watching. Mexico will be looking to start strong at the iconic Estadio Azteca after not advancing past the group stage at the 2022 World Cup. South Africa – which has never advanced past the group stage – will attempt to play spoiler. This is a rematch of the opening game of the 2010 World Cup, which ended in a 1-1 draw.

USMNT vs. Paraguay – June 12: The United States' opening game at SoFi

Stadium in Inglewood, California, might be its toughest (unless Turkey gets through the UEFA playoff). The U.S. and Paraguay recently played a friendly, which the USMNT won 2-1. That "friendly" also got heated, and multiple players on both sides got into a late-game kerfuffle.

Brazil vs. Morocco – June 13: Morocco is a rising force in world soccer, placing fourth at the 2022 World Cup. Brazil is a five-time World Cup winner (most in men's history), but it has been 24 years since the Seleção last won the tournament. Coach Carlo Ancelotti will look to get Brazil on track after an unimpressive World Cup qualifying campaign. This is a tough opener for his team.

Netherlands vs. Japan – June 14: The Netherlands typically carries the title of "best team to never win the World Cup." Having reached the Round of 16 in the previous two World Cups, Japan is a formidable foe and pulled off a stunner at the 2022 World Cup when it upset Germany in both squads opening game. The Oranje will aim to avoid such a fate.

Belgium vs. Egypt – June 15: What does Mohamed Salah have left? Can the generational talent push Egypt into the knockout rounds? Belgium followed up a third-place finish at the 2018 World Cup by not even getting out of the group in 2022. This World Cup figures to be the last for Belgium's aging stars Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and Thibaut Courtois.

France vs. Senegal – June 16: This matchup is noteworthy as it is a rematch of one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history. In the opening game of the 2002 World Cup, Senegal shocked the world with a 1-0 win over France, which was the reigning World Cup champions. Didier Deschamps' squad will strive to avoid a similar stunner.

England vs. Croatia – June 17: Croatia and England headline the 2026 World Cup's unofficial "Group of Death." This is a brutal opening draw for England, which will be on the short list of tournament favorites. Croatia is the No. 10-ranked team in the world and has enjoyed success in the previous two World Cups, advancing to the final in

2018 and finishing third in 2022.

France vs. Norway – June 26: Hoo boy, drop whatever you are doing on June 26, because this could be the best game of the group stage. Behind the devastating goal-scoring prowess of Erling Haaland, Norway is back in the World Cup for the first time since 1988. France has made the final of the previous two World Cups, winning it in 2018.

Spain vs. Uruguay – June 26: In all likelihood, Group H will come down to this intriguing showdown of nations that have combined to win multiple World Cups. Spain won the 2024 Euros and features 18-year-old phenom Lamine Yamal. Uruguay had a disappointing 2022 World Cup and will have its sights set on a deep tournament run next summer.

Portugal vs. Colombia – June 27: Cristiano Ronaldo gets one last major tournament run (probably) with Portugal. Standing in the way of winning Group K is Colombia, which collected wins over reigning World Cup champs Argentina and Brazil in Conmebol qualifying.

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WNBA star Clark 'finally back to 100%'

Cydney Henderson
USA TODAY

Indiana Fever All-Star Caitlin Clark is finally feeling like herself again.

After being limited to 13 games in the 2025 WNBA season because of a series of soft tissue injuries, Clark said "it feels nice to finally be back to a hundred percent" following her first Team USA senior training camp practice.

"I put together a pretty incredible stretch of never missing a game," Clark said during her media availability on Dec. 12. "The fact is when you're a professional athlete, it's going to come at some point. That's just how it goes. I think it's honestly taught me more than I've probably ever learned through the course of my career of how to take care of your body, how to get right, how to stay healthy, and then just taking time for yourself."

Clark has to shake off some rust. She gave up a side-step, game-winning 3-pointer to Paige Bueckers, who confidently said "that's game" and white (team) wins" during Friday's practice scrimmage. Despite dealing with some early nerves, Clark said being on the court again was "pretty satisfying."

"It just made me smile quite a bit. I really did kind of feel like myself out there," she said. "Just continuing to get my lungs back, but I felt like I was moving really well."

The practice was a full-circle moment for Clark, who wasn't selected to represent Team USA at the 2024 Paris Olympics, a decision that sparked



Caitlin Clark practices during the United States Women's National Basketball Team training camp.

JACOB KUPFERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

controversy. But Clark said she didn't feel disappointed about being excluded. "It could've gone either way of me being on the team or not being on the team," she said in June 2024. Instead, it gave Clark "a little more motivation" and something to work toward.

"In my past, it's been all junior (Team USA) national teams and I've been cut from some of those and I've played for three of them. I've experienced both sides of it," Clark said on Friday. "This is the biggest honor you can possibly have,

playing basketball in our country is wearing USA across your chest. I'm just excited to be here and honored. Obviously it's kind of like the start to the new Olympic cycle."

Clark said she felt nervous when she first stepped on the court at practice alongside her compatriots, who feature a mix of young stars (that Bueckers dubbed the "young and turnt" core) and experienced veterans. Clark last played in the WNBA on July 15 before being sidelined by a right groin injury and missing the rest of the regular season and the Fever's postseason run to the semifinals.

"It was one injury and then it was a little better and then it kind of continued to compound and get worse and other things pop up. And then I had the ankle injury," Clark recalled on Friday. "I did everything I could to try to be able to come back and be able to play for my team, but it just didn't really work. I think that was almost a way of relief for myself, just knowing that I gave everything I could to possibly try to play, but my body just wasn't really letting me."

Clark continued to rehab after the season ended, a process she said "took probably longer than I expected," adding her "body's in a really good spot."

And the nerves quickly melted away when she was back in her element. "When I touched the basketball to start warming up before the practice even started, that's probably when I felt pretty comfortable," she said.

"I've worked so hard. I haven't taken a break since the beginning of the (2025)

WNBA season, just all my rehab and getting back to where I wanted to be," she explained. "This has kind of been my next thing that I've been working for since our season ended. ... For myself, it's not proving it to yourself again, but it's just that feeling."

USA women's national team managing director Sue Bird said she's noticed a new level of maturity from Clark following her injury-plagued season.

"I can really only imagine, for a player like Caitlin, you come off your college season - epic. You go straight to your (rookie) WNBA season. You finish a first-teamer," Bird said on Thursday. "You have this long offseason, where you probably can't wait to get back on the court only to have a couple of injuries sideline her."

"That is a challenge for a player ... I thought what was most impressive was just the way she's staying engaged. You could see it whether you're watching (the Fever) on TV or you're catching something on social media. ... I think that really shows her maturity."

Clark has been busy in the offseason, rehabbing, attending the Team USA camp and even participating in the Annika Pro-Am golf exhibition last month. Clark said she "plans to play in the WNBA" for the upcoming season as CBA negotiations continue but noted that her golfing career may be over.

"I put the golf clubs away now," she joked. "I'm truly focused on basketball. It makes my body a little sore, so I would rather just stick to basketball. But I love it and it's always great to be outside."

Angel Reese confirms 2026 return to Sky

Cydney Henderson
USA TODAY

There's uncertainty surrounding the 2026 WNBA season amid ongoing collective bargaining agreement negotiations, but it's business as usual for Chicago Sky All-Star Angel Reese, who made her intentions for next season clear.

"I'm under contract, so yes I plan on returning to the Sky," said Reese, who was attending Team USA training camp this past weekend at Duke. Reese's blunt confirmation comes after a tumultuous end to her second WNBA season, which left some wondering whether a split was on the horizon.

Reese was handed a half-game suspension on Sept. 7 for statements detrimental to the team after vocalizing her frustrations with the franchise, telling the Chicago Tribune she's "not settling for the same s--- we did this year," among other comments. She missed the remaining two games of the season due to a back injury and the Sky finished tied at the bottom of the standings at 10-34, the team's third consecutive losing season.

The two-time All-Star cleared the air on Friday Dec. 12 in her first media availability since September.

Reese said she'll ride out her rookie-scale contract that could keep her with the Sky through 2027. "I'm continuing to talk to Tyler (Marsh) and building that relationship with Jeff (Pagliocca)," Reese added, referring to Sky head coach Tyler Marsh and Sky general



Angel Reese tries to clear a path against Kiki Iriafen during Team USA training camp at Duke.

JACOB KUPFERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

manager Jeff (Pagliocca).

Before Reese can tip off her third season, the WNBA and WNBPA must agree on a new collective bargaining agreement. The current CBA is now set to expire on Jan. 9, following a pair of extensions, but Reese said she's "preparing for a season as everyone else is."

Reese said her focus for the year is "being completely healthy." Her rookie season was cut short by a hairline fracture in her wrist. She aggravated the injury during the inaugural season of Unrivaled in March and was sidelined for the final stretch of the 2025 season with a back injury.

Reese said her back is fully recovered and "all good now."

"I recovered at the end of the season.

... Just continuing to do recovery on my whole entire body and figuring it out," Reese said. "Going into year three, that was my focus this offseason, just being completely healthy."

"Obviously USA is something that I'm never going to pass up on, so I had to do this, but being able to be in this moment here and embracing it, but also being healthy at the same time."

Reese was among 10 players making their senior national team debut at the Team USA training camp this weekend. Paige Bueckers dubbed the group the "young and turnt" crew, which Reese fully endorses.

"I've watched Sue (Bird) and I've watched Kara (Lawson) when they were part of the USA team, and being able to

walk in their footsteps I think is something that you don't take for granted," she said. "I've dreamed of playing for the Olympics and especially for LA, because I want to represent this country well."

Team USA women's head coach Kara Lawson said she was impressed by Reese's first practice, noting this is the first significant time she's spent up close and personal with Reese.

"I hadn't spent a lot of time with Angel before," Lawson said. "She's great. Got a great personality, works hard in the practices, wants to be good, coachable, just all of the things you would expect from a good young player, and she's physical competitive, so I thought it was great to see that. I mean, that's kind of what you expect, but it's good to see that."

Lawson said she hasn't determined how she'll use Reese just yet, but USA women's national team managing director Sue Bird pointed at how Reese's ability to expand her position will be beneficial to the team.

"Whether it's a post player being able to initiate an offense, whether it's guards who can use post play to their advantage. I think that's just like the modern game that we're seeing. So I love to see it," Bird said. "Anytime you can have players on the court that can do multiple things, it's so advantageous to your whole group."

"So to see a player like Angel (Reese) putting that in her package, I think that's great. It's great for her. It's great for us."

All-Stars address ongoing WNBA CBA talks

Heather Burns
USA TODAY

Chicago Sky forward Angel Reese and Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark agree the WNBA and WNBPA need to come to an agreement that gets the players paid and back on the court for the 2026 season.

"Everybody's very intentional about what we want. ... We're riding together on everything," said Reese who, along with Clark, is participating in the Team USA camp at Duke University. "So, I'm preparing for a season like everybody else, but ... it's really important for us to come to a

common ground that we can all agree on. It's all fair and everybody benefits from it."

The WNBA and WNBPA agreed to extend the current collective bargaining agreement through Jan. 9. Clark said the players will "fight for everything we deserve" and look for "compromise" because the league "needs to play basketball."

"That's what our fans crave - the product on the floor," Clark said. "That's what the fans want to show up for. So, it's business, and it's a negotiation, and there has to be compromise on both sides. And we're starting to get down to the wire of it."

Within days of the WNBA and WNBPA agreeing to extend the CBA, the league reportedly offered a new proposal, which included a max player salary of \$1 million, with projected revenue sharing raising max players' total earnings to \$1.2 million. However, the WNBPA reportedly plans to reject the WNBA's latest offer over concerns with the league's "math."

Revenue sharing continues to be a point of contention for the players' association. In the WNBA's latest salary proposal, The Athletic reported, players would receive less than 15% of league revenue. The WNBA's revenue projection, according to the report, has that percent-

age decreasing over the life of the CBA. Under the current CBA, WNBA players receive 9.3% of league revenue.

Los Angeles Sparks star Cameron Brink, who is also at the Team USA camp, said every player is locked in to what's next as the deadline approaches.

"As someone that's part of the league, definitely would be silly not to follow closely," Brink said. "So definitely something I'm paying attention to. And I would say I'm preparing in the same way that the season's going to come around at some point. So, just waiting like everyone else."

Contributing: Meghan L. Hall

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