



MITTYE P. LOCKE ACHIEVEMENT ACADEMY 2026-2027 PARENT HANDBOOK

Phone Number 727-246-5352



Staff Directory

Principal: Amy Riddle

Assistant Principal: Angie Saxton

Administrative Assistants: Cassandra Gaskins, Sylma Niles

Behavior Specialists: Debbie Comito, Abby Scarbrough, Brian Scoville

Social Worker: Mandy Simkins

School Psychologist: Caitlyn Franklin

School Nurse: Deb Inglese

Clinic Assistant: Holly Nice

Student Support Specialist: Traci Lane

Behavior Assistants: James Jackson, Mckenzie Pratt

Teachers:

Jill Bryson-Art

Shawn Durand-4

Josh Green-PE

Mimi Johnston-Bridge

Pierre Lannon-4/5

Katie Landelius-3

Thea Martin-5

Meghan Rosica-K/1

Tara Sagias-2

Abigail Scharber-1

Paige Vito-3

TBD-Music

Instructional Assistants:

Steve Baginskie

Alex Basey

Jesse Bermudez

Katie Coe

Dayelis Gomez

Victoria Hernandez

Swathi Kammella

Kim Perry

Becca Ranck

Agnes Skowron

Mission

At MPLAA, we provide a safe, nurturing environment where students with emotional and behavioral challenges receive individualized support, mentorship, and high expectations. We offer a second chance for success—academically, socially, and emotionally—preparing students to transition back to traditional schools and life beyond.

Vision

Empowering every student with the compassions, structures, and support they need to heal, grow, and thrive—so they can return to their school communities as confident, capable, and caring individuals.

Daily Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

Consistent, on-time attendance is essential for student success—both academically and behaviorally. To help students be fully prepared to learn, we expect all students to attend school every day and remain for the entire school day.

We understand that some students may have medical or therapy appointments. These will be accommodated as needed. Please be sure to communicate any absences, late arrivals, or early dismissals directly with your child's teacher. Be sure to go on your Pasco One parent portal to report an absence as well.

Student Discipline Policy

Our school follows a progressive discipline matrix developed and maintained by Pasco County Schools. You can view the district's full discipline policy here: <https://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/ssps/page/conduct>

If a student is assigned an Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), you will be contacted directly by the Principal, Behavior Specialist, and/or your child's teacher. In addition, a written notice of the suspension will be available in the PascoOne App. At MPLAA, our staff is committed to using proactive strategies and de-escalation techniques to support students and prevent the need for OSS whenever possible.

Our Commitment to Excellence

At Mittye P. Locke Achievement Academy (MPLAA), we are dedicated to providing a challenging and engaging curriculum within a safe and supportive environment so that every student can reach their highest potential—academically, socially, and emotionally.

With the support of families and the community, our goal is to help students become lifelong learners and productive citizens. At MPLAA, we offer specialized educational support grounded in research-based practices to foster continuous growth in both academics and social-emotional development.

Our program incorporates two specialized wellness and resilience curricula that are thoughtfully embedded throughout the school day. One of these, 7 Mindsets, emphasizes the transformative power of positive thinking. Students engage with structured lessons within each unit, each centered around one of the seven core mindsets. Through aligned activities, discussions, and daily practice, students internalize and apply these strategies, fostering a positive and resilient mindset throughout their learning journey.

The Zones of Regulation is a structured learning framework designed to help children recognize and manage their feelings and behaviors using a simple, color-coded system. The four zones—green, blue, yellow, and red—represent different states of alertness and emotional energy. Through engaging lessons, students learn to identify their internal states, understand which zone they're in, and develop effective strategies to manage their responses and maintain focus and self-control.

Daily Data Collection and Home Communication

Each day, our staff collects data on your child's academic and behavioral goals to provide a summary of their day, including whether they met their daily goal percentage.

Because this is an intensive behavior program, behavior data is collected throughout the entire day. This information is calculated and summarized in the Daily Home Note. If you ever need additional data—such as detailed reports or graphs—please contact the Behavior Specialist, and we will be happy to provide that information.

Encouraging Positive Behavior at Home

To support our efforts in promoting positive behavior, we strongly encourage families to:

- Review your student's Home Note each day.
- Celebrate their success when they meet or exceed the minimum percentage required to "make their day."
- Praise consistent positive choices and acknowledge their efforts in making good decisions.

In addition, when your child does not meet their daily goal:

- Talk with your child about the specific choices that led to lost points.
- Encourage them to identify their own actions (rather than focusing on others).
- Ask reflective questions like, "*What could you do differently next time to earn those points?*"
- Help them explore positive strategies such as:
 - Taking a break when feeling overwhelmed
 - Asking for help when unsure
 - Rephrasing inappropriate comments in a respectful way

Your involvement and encouragement at home are key to your child's growth and success.

Individualized Support and Collaborative Planning

In addition to the core components of our program—such as classroom expectations and the wellness and resiliency curriculum—each student also works toward personalized goals aligned with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and, when applicable, their Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Our team collaborates to regularly review behavior data and develop research-based interventions, instructional strategies, and reinforcement systems tailored to each student's unique behavioral needs. The student's support team may include, but is not limited to:

- The classroom teacher
- Behavior specialist
- Social worker
- Other specialists who work closely with the student

Families are valued partners in this process. As a parent or guardian, you have the right to request an IEP meeting at any time to discuss your child's progress or make adjustments to their plan.

Behavior Level System

Our program is built around a Behavior Level System, which serves as the foundation for promoting positive behavior and student growth. This system is designed to reinforce appropriate behavior while helping students develop the skills they need to be successful, independent learners.

Students earn privileges and reinforcements by consistently demonstrating appropriate behavior and making progress toward their IEP and FBA goals. As students move up through the levels, they gain increased independence and access to additional privileges, reflecting their growth and readiness for more responsibility.

Ultimately, this system also supports students in preparing for a successful transition back to their home schools, equipped with the tools and strategies they need to thrive in a less structured environment.

MPLAA Classroom Rules

1. Remain in your designated area.
2. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
3. Keep property safe. No destroying or stealing property.
4. Use appropriate language and voice tone. No bullying arguing, or instigating others.
5. Follow adult directions the first time they are given, including completing your work.

Level Drops and Non-Negotiable Behaviors

In certain situations, a student may be dropped to a lower level in the behavior system. This typically occurs when a student engages in behaviors that are considered non-negotiable.

Students will receive day drops for the following infractions:

- Elopement
- Aggressive Behavior
- Property Damage
- Transportation Referrals

These behaviors are taken seriously, as they compromise the safety and structure of the learning environment. All other level changes are made at the discretion of the Principal and Behavior Specialist, based on the student's behavior data and individual circumstances.