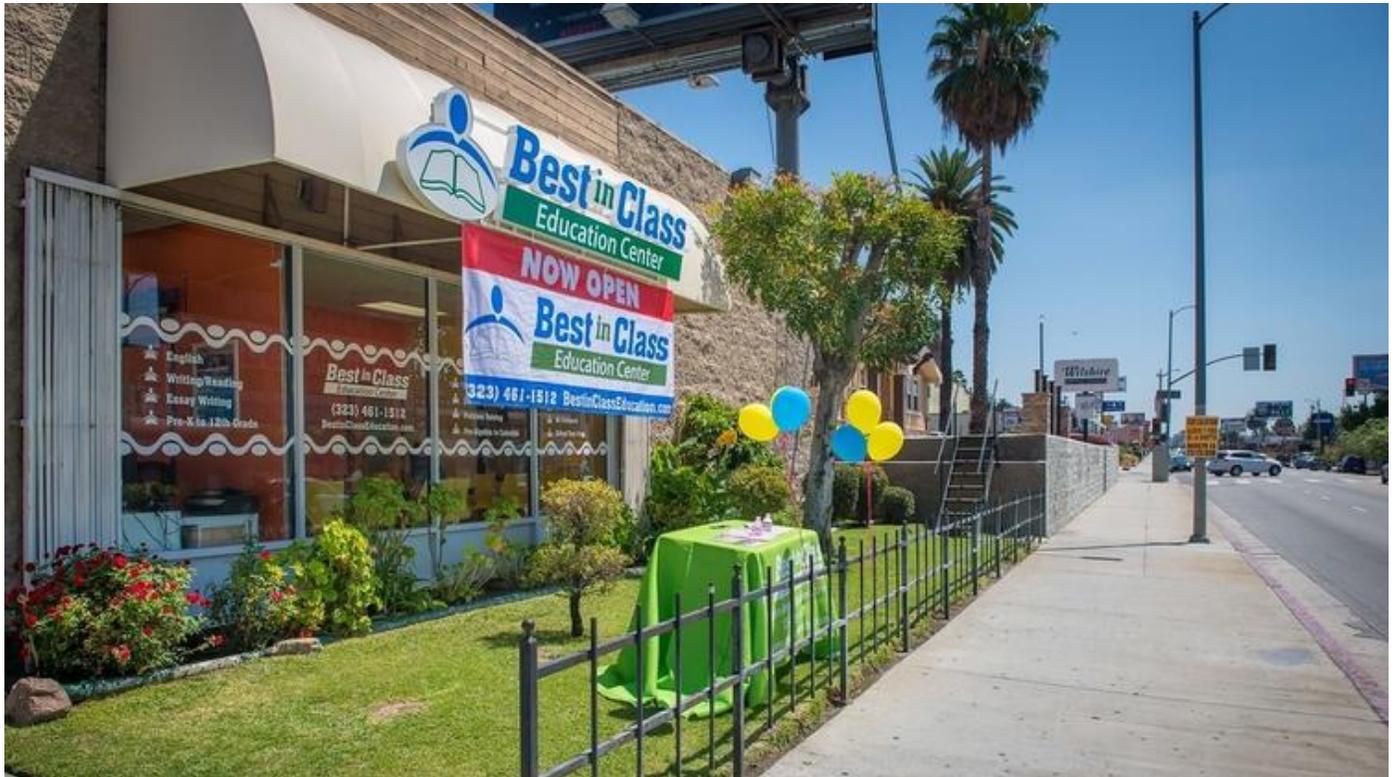


Fast-growing tutoring company to enter Orlando market in 2019



This national education/tutoring and SAT/ACT prep business now operates in 14 states and is entering Orlando in 2019. (Handout)

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Seattle-based **Best in Class Education Center** is planning to expand into the Orlando area and is looking for retail space to accommodate the tutoring centers.

“Next year our goal is to open 20-25 centers and at least three will be in the Orlando market,” said Sharon Peterson, Vice President, of Franchise Recruitment & Development, Best in Class Education Center.

Currently operating over 55 locations in 14 states, Best in Class helps K-12 students in many subject areas including math, English and SAT/ACT prep. There are 11 different curriculum options including test prep and the offerings vary by location and time of year. “We really cater to the needs of each individual student,” Peterson said. All of the classes are either small or private and each student goes through an evaluation process before beginning a program.

There are now three Florida locations, all in the Tampa Bay area with an additional location opening soon in Broward County. “We have three people who are in our exploration process [for potential Orlando franchisees] and are pretty close to the finish line,” Peterson said.

The company charges a \$35,000 franchise fee and 12-percent royalty. Estimated start-up costs are between \$63,000-122,000.

The target locations for the centers are in the Hunters Creek/ Kissimmee area, Winter Park, and Vista Lakes. The Orange County school district is of particular interest to Best in Class because it is one of the largest districts in the country, Peterson said. “It’s such a large potential market to help so many kids.” The number of colleges and universities in the area also help with recruitment for instructors.

Once the company selects the franchisees, they will look for physical space. “We’re not a large school. With our locations, they are about 1,000 to 1,500 square feet. Ideally, we want to focus on retail space,” Peterson said. They target centers with a grocery store and other child-oriented businesses or gyms. “Most parents drop their kids off. They don’t stay for the 75-minute class.” Having a grocery store or gym nearby will provide something for those parents to do while the children are learning.

Many franchise owners are teachers or school administrators who are looking for something different, but still involving learning. “We have a unique incentive program that allows us to partner with educators,” Peterson said, adding many of them are owning their own businesses for the first time. The owners fly out to the headquarters in Seattle for interviews and training and the company provides support along the way.

“The buildout for our locations is fairly minimal,” she said. Everything is set for the owners including the types of fixtures they need to the number of pencils they should stock.

If the 20-year franchise agreements are in place during the first quarter of 2019, Peterson says the centers should open for business in the second quarter of next year.

Once the first three centers are open, the company has plans to double the number of sites during the following two years. Many franchisees in other areas own multiple locations. “We don’t want to over-saturate a market, we do provide a large protected area for our franchise owners,” Peterson explained. “We’re really excited about our growth in Orlando. It’s going to be a phenomenal market for us.”

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