



Middle school students having fun with STEM experiments during PPSD's Summer Learning Program at DelSesto Middle School.

# CONNECTIONS

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

JULY 20, 2023

In the Providence Public School District, July is a time when many people are taking their well-deserved vacations, teachers are off on summer break, and administrators are working hard to ensure a smooth transition into the new school year. At the same time, there are still exciting summer learning programs running at select school campuses.

Last week, I was excited to visit our partner programs running at Bailey Elementary School with **Mayor Brett Smiley**. We saw Providence students enjoying great programming led by **Inspiring Minds, Sylvan Learning** and **YMCA**. Next week, I will be visiting the District programs with **Governor Dan McKee** and **RIDE Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green**.

I have enjoyed learning about the great hand-on experiments happening in our middle school programs at **DelSesto Middle School**. Last week, they learned how roller coasters work using potential energy, kinetic energy, and mechanical energy. In the same building, other students were enjoying the competitive E-Sports program.

At **Lima Elementary**, a pair of teachers led a lesson based on the book *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo. Through the story, students explored the theme of forgiveness, belonging, and hope. Our schools are alive with summer learning at all grade levels. On August 17, seniors participating in the high school summer learning program will receive their high school diplomas during a graduation ceremony at **Providence Career and Technical Academy!** The stage will be a rainbow of school flags and colors representing each high school.

Summer program directors have been welcoming parents into the school to see the program in action and answer any questions. The directors have reported that it has been great to see parents eagerly involved in the child's learning experience.

As many of you spend this break enjoying time with family and friends, I encourage you to take time to read with your children and spend time reading yourself. We know that students cannot do the hard work alone. Students are on this academic journey with caregivers at their side. If you take time to incorporate fun learning activities into the day, students will reap the academic and social benefits. The goal is to avoid summer learning loss and have our students return to school ready and eager to learn.



**DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ**  
SUPERINTENDENT

## Narducci Learning Center Construction site



### IMPROVING FACILITIES

PPSD staff and contractors are working hard to ensure that students find school buildings and classrooms that are bright and inviting for the new school year. We will be opening the doors at the newly renovated **D'Abate Elementary School, Spaziano Elementary School** and **Pleasant View Elementary School** at **Narducci Early Learning Center** this fall.

The doors will also officially open for the **Hope High School** auditorium after the final touches of its \$20 million complete renovation. And **Classical High School** continues its phased renovations with a newly renovated Math wing. Thank you to our hardworking **PPSD operations and facilities team** as well as the **Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Operations** team.

Please take a moment to check out the [Narducci Center renovations in the video here](#).

## DISTRICT UPDATES

### KIZIRIAN RECOGNIZED AS 5-STAR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

PPSD, along with **Governor Dan McKee** and the **Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)**, are happy to announce that the **Harry Kizirian Elementary School Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K)** program has been awarded the **BrightStars** 5-star rating. This is their highest rating. They are the second school in the District to receive this 5-star rating. [BrightStars](#) assesses child care centers, preschools in public schools, family child care homes and stand-alone school-age programs across multiple quality standards and quality criteria. The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children is the managing agency for BrightStars. Rhode Island AEYC is the state affiliate of the [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#).

### BELL TIMES FOR 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

PPSD released an updated **Bell Times** and **Academic Calendar** to families in late June. The updates were a result of the Providence Teachers Union (PTU) vote to ratify an agreement for the 2023-2024 school year. This one-year contract proposes to put into effect an additional 30 minutes of instruction each day, four annual professional development days in August for teachers and 90 minutes of biweekly professional development during the out-of-school time hours. For an updated list of bell times, please [click here](#). You can find the updated [academic calendar here](#).

### EQUITY BOOST GRANTS

**Equity Grants** enable students and educators to test creative new ideas and innovations that support exemplary teaching and learning, while advancing cultural understanding and appreciation, anti-racism commitments, and understanding of civic engagement and democracy. Equity Boost Grants will fund projects budgeted between \$500 and \$4900, annually.

**Who can apply?** PPSD School Faculty/Staff on behalf of the classroom, school, and/or as a sponsor for a student led project, can apply.

**Application deadline:** Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. If you are interested in pursuing a project please submit your [application here](#).



## EQUITY AND BELONGING

advocate for change and help build capacity for equity-focused school leaders, as they help to develop plans for how to effectively implement and sustain change.

We are still accepting in-house applications. We are seeking two teachers in each school to participate in this uniquely designed leadership training, intended to prepare all to lead equity leadership teams in their schools during the 2024-25 school year. The training will last all year and will be grounded in the concepts discussed in the *Five Practices of Equity-Focused Leadership*. Training will be facilitated by one of the authors, **Dr. Mark Gooden**. Due to recent calendar updates, the new summer training dates are **August 23 and 24th from 9am-2pm**, location TBD. If you are interested in applying please be sure to speak with your Principal.

### Student Equity Summer Leadership Academy

The **Student Equity Summer Leadership Academy**, hosted by The Office of Equity and Belonging, is a two-week institute invested in bolstering students' critical thinking, leadership, advocacy, reading and writing skills. Our program is designed to equip young leaders with the tools and knowledge necessary to create impactful change in their communities. This Academy will take place **August 15, 2023** through **August 25, 2023**. Participants will be meeting on the Brown University campus, on the Main Green, for the duration of the Academy. Invited guest facilitators include: [Austin Martin](#), [A.R.I.S.E](#) and [Non-Violent Schools Rhode Island](#).

### Equity Leadership Team Lead Ambassadors Training

An equity leadership team is a diverse group of stakeholders: teachers, staff, parents, community members, and students that work together to unpack, analyze, and understand the issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging that are present in their school or district. Equity leadership teams

### Good News Report Highlights

This [OEB Departmental Metrics Report](#) provides a concise overview of the performance and achievements accomplished by the Office of Equity and Belonging since its' relaunch in July 2022. It includes key metrics and all significant milestones achieved and future plans. This document serves as a comprehensive understanding of the department's progress and aids in ensuring transparency with all relevant stakeholders and members of the PPSD community.

### Upcoming Professional Development Offerings

The Office of Equity and Belonging will be providing professional development facilitation and training throughout this upcoming year, including during **Orientation Week**. If you are interested in inviting the office into your school to present for your faculty or staff during Orientation Week (August 28-31), [please sign up here](#).

## IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

- [Providence school vendor intends to hire 200+ employees laid off by previous provider](#)  
*Providence Journal*, July 10, 2023
- [Providence middle school adopts policy to restrict cell phone use while in class](#)  
*WJAR*, July 14, 2023

# CELEBRATING STUDENTS

Our hard-working, talented students are doing amazing things every day. Here are just a few examples.



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP TOTALS

We wanted to highlight and give a huge shout out to our **PPSD seniors** who just graduated in June and were awarded scholarships to continue their education. Below are the scholarship totals for each high school in PPSD. The scholarships that are awarded include Federal and/or State Aid, Outside Grants, Awards, Scholarships, and Institutional Scholarships and all of them are tracked. The tracking includes all scholarships awarded from each higher education institution they were accepted into, not just the one they will be attending. Congratulations to all!

| High Schools | Scholarship Dollars Received |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 360          | \$3,420,865.00               |
| Alvarez      | \$2,939,281.00               |
| Central      | \$5,663,851.00               |
| Classical    | \$18,320,000.00              |
| E-Cubed      | \$2,645,169.00               |
| Hope         | \$2,579,255.00               |
| JSEC         | \$704,350.00                 |
| Mt. Pleasant | \$4,410,150.00               |
| PCTA         | \$2,782,530.00               |
| Total        | \$43,465,530.00              |

## SUMMER PROGRAMS

**PPSD Summer Programs** are in full swing, and students are learning with exciting curriculum and dedicated staff! A big thank you to the teachers who took time out of their summer to help educate our students. Check out some photos from our various Summer Learning Programs here to see what our students at PPSD have been working on over the past couple weeks!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **VICTORY DAY**  
(No Summer Programs)  
Monday, August 14, 2023
- **SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM ENDS**  
Thursday, August 17, 2023
- **TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS**  
Monday, August 28 - Thursday August 31
- **LABOR DAY**  
(No School)  
Monday, September 4, 2023
- **TEACHER ORIENTATION**  
(No School for Students)  
Tuesday, September 5, 2023
- **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**  
Wednesday, September 6, 2023