



PPSD Teacher of the Year: Lindsay Paiva
See the video: <https://youtu.be/loASaLFYeQ4>

CONNECTIONS

JUNE 10, 2022

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Welcome to the latest edition of the Providence Public School District (PPSD) bi-weekly newsletter! If you or someone you know misses any of our newsletters, you can find past editions on [the District's website](#) in multiple languages.

By this time next week, graduation ceremonies will be wrapping up for our senior class. On behalf of the entire PPSD community I want to congratulate our graduates for everything they've accomplished during two-plus years of pandemic learning. Think about that for a moment - more than half of their high school tenure was impacted by COVID!

And yet here they are, ready to tackle the next stage of their lives and pursue success. One of my favorite quotes about success comes from Booker T. Washington. He was born into slavery, but went on to become an educator, an author, a businessman, and an advisor to several U.S. presidents. Here's what Booker T. Washington said about success:

"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which [they] overcome while trying to succeed."

I couldn't agree more. Success is not about where we are, but what we went through to get here. And by that measure, every graduating senior is already a success in my book. But it doesn't end here!

To our graduating class, I want to say - life is about choices. The ones you've made so far have helped you persevere and graduate during some of the most difficult years I can remember in education. Continue to stack up those good choices going forward in your next chapter. I can't wait to see how you will be leading our community in the future with the choices you make today.



DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ
Superintendent

DISTRICT UPDATES

School Safety Assessments

Providence Public Schools is finishing **safety assessments** at every school throughout the District. These walkthroughs will be used to plan immediate and long-term security upgrades to make schools safer for students and staff. Schools will also be hosting community discussions to keep families informed and give them an opportunity to provide feedback. Please look for an invitation from your student's school with details on community discussions on your child's building.

Kindergarten Placements

Attention families! **Kindergarten placements** for next school year have been announced. Log in to [Skyward](#) to find your child's placement. Families should also have received a hard copy letter and/or an email notifying them of their child's placement. We are excited to share that 91% of students received their 1st or 2nd choice schools! Additional information on transportation eligibility will be provided in August.

Expanded Newcomer Program

Providence Public Schools now has two options for multilingual learners (MLLs) who are newcomers in grades 9 through 12. The **Newcomer ESL Program** and the **Newcomer Academy** provide welcoming and respectful environments that meet the specific linguistic, academic, and social/emotional needs of newcomer students based on their unique cultural attributes. Both programs seek to provide college and career readiness, and grade-level proficiency in English. [Learn more about both programs here.](#)

Juneteenth Reminder

The City of Providence has identified June 20, 2022, as a day of observation of Juneteenth. Because the 2021-22 school calendar was developed prior to the designation of Juneteenth

as an observed holiday, it will remain a regular school day for all PPSD employees and students this year. Juneteenth has been included as an observed holiday and day off in [our school calendar for next school year](#). If you have any questions, please email humanresources@ppsd.org.

Open Enrollment Period for Employees

PPSD employees, this is a friendly reminder that **Open Enrollment** ends on June 17, 2022. Open Enrollment is the period in which employees may make changes to their elected benefit options, such as health insurance. All employees should have received the necessary forms via email, but if you need additional forms or have questions please contact the Benefits Department via email at benefits@ppsd.org.

Summer Learning Job Opportunities

We are excited to offer summer learning programs to over 3,000 students this year, and we want your help in closing the achievement gap! There are several **job opportunities** we want to make you aware of, especially in the elementary grade levels. Please follow the links below to view our summer job postings:

[Internal candidates click here](#)

[External candidates click here](#)

2022 High School Graduations

This year, all **PPSD graduations** will be held at the Rhode Island Convention Center. For the full schedule of each school's ceremony, please visit www.providenceschools.org/graduations2022. Congratulations to all of our graduating seniors!

CELEBRATING STUDENTS

Our hardworking, talented students are doing amazing things every day! Here are just a few examples.



CIVICS IN ACTION

Students from the **Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex (JSEC)** presented their Generation Citizen Project at the Rhode Island Civics Day at the State House. Students presented on issues important to them, like afterschool programs and mental health support, and took home the highest overall score in each of the following categories: *The Grassroots Change Award, The Systemic Impact Award, The Collaboration and Diversity Award, The Action Award, and The Open-Mindedness Award.* Great work!



A HELPING HAND

Derek Silva is an 8th grader in need of a helping hand. Derek has two forms of muscular dystrophy, as well as multiple sclerosis. His family relies on public transportation to get Derek to his doctor's appointments, but they desperately want to get a specialized van that can accommodate Derek's wheelchair. [Click here to learn more about Derek's story](#) from a recent feature on 12 News, and use this link if you would like to [donate to Derek's cause](#).



NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR

Congratulations to **Classical High School** senior **Elena Hurtado Solberg**, who was one of just 8 Rhode Island students to receive a **National Merit Scholarship** this year! The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. The group estimates that over a million students enter the program each year, but only 7,500 students receive National Merit Scholarships. Great work, Elena!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Get to know the amazing people who work with our students every day!

Hope Fernandez

Community Specialist

Located in: West Broadway Middle School

Joined PPSD in: 2018

Graduated Mount Pleasant High School (CTE program)

Tell us about the role of a PPSD Community Specialist.

Two big parts of the community's Turnaround Action Plan are parent engagement and student attendance. I think that's where our Community Specialists really shine. These roles are new this year and we're all working so hard to tackle chronic absenteeism and re-engage our families and students. Building up that culture is so important, and Community Specialists who have been in our schools understand how to make that happen. I've been a PPSD kid since Pre-K, from Young Woods to Pleasant View to DelSesto to Mount Pleasant. Being able to talk to a student or family and say, "Hey, I understand," can go such a long way.

"You can tell people are excited to see where this is going. It's a group that came from the same lifestyle as these kids and now we have a chance to shape our community."

What makes a Community Specialist so important?

I think the most important piece of what we want to accomplish as a district comes down to student attendance. Yes, we want to increase test scores and graduation rates, but the kids have to be here for those other things to fall into place. So what can we do in the school to make kids want to be here? As a Community Specialist I see my role as someone who builds morale, who makes students feel welcome and appreciated by working with our culture team and counselors to build up students.

What's the best part of your job?

The connection you get to build with the kids. Being inner city, Latina, coming from their situation, I am one of these kids. It wasn't until fifth grade that I finally saw someone that looked like me as a teacher. I knew then I wanted to work with kids and give them that same sense of someone like them being a teacher. It gives you such a boost of confidence. So now I get to come to work every day and bring that confidence to our kids and our community.

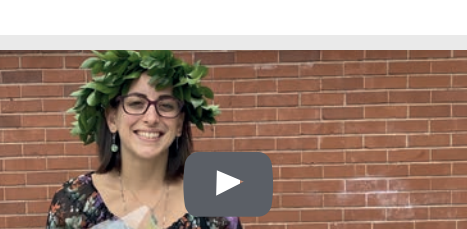
This has been a challenging year to work in education. What's a victory or an obstacle you've overcome that you're proud of?

Honestly I'm just so proud of the whole group. Community Specialists are new this year, and sometimes "new" can be a little scary. But sometimes "new" can be such a positive thing too. I think we're really starting to make changes in our schools that people are noticing. All of the specialists meet every month and you can tell people are excited to see where this is going. It's a group that came from the same lifestyle as these kids and now we have a chance to shape our community. I wouldn't take back that experience for the world.

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

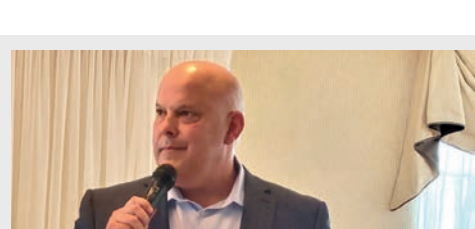
- [Providence teacher recognized as Teacher of the Year](#) WPRI, June 2, 2022
- [RHODE ISLAND PBS WEEKLY: The Superintendent](#) Rhode Island PBS, June 5, 2022
- [8 Rhode Island Students Win National Merit Scholarships](#) Patch, May 11, 2022
- [Providence Public Schools Honor Students in Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Program](#) providenceschools.org, May 26, 2022

AROUND THE DISTRICT



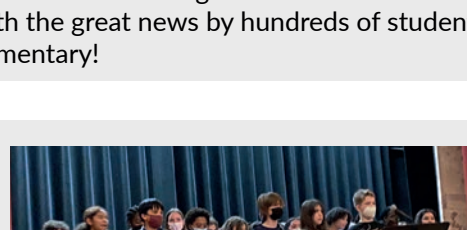
TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to **Lindsay Paiva**, Third Grade ESL Teacher from **Webster Avenue Elementary School**, who was named the Providence Public School District's 2022 Teacher of the Year! Ms. Paiva was selected by the 2022 Teacher of the Year Committee, which reviewed more than 50 candidate submissions by District staff. Click the image above to watch Ms. Paiva be surprised with the great news by hundreds of students and staff at Webster Elementary!



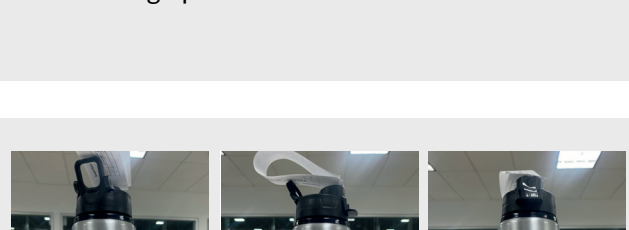
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Congratulations to **Central High School** Assistant Principal **Bobby DiMuccio** for receiving the Rhode Island Interscholastic League's (RIIL) Distinguished Service Award! Also a member of the Principals' Committee on Athletics, Assistant Principal DiMuccio has served as the RIIL's Wrestling Sport Director for more than a decade.



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Last month **Nathan Bishop Middle School** hosted International Night for students, families, and staff, celebrating the many cultures and backgrounds that make up our community. With music, food, dancing, comedy skits, and even gymnastics, it was a night to remember! Thank you to all of the organizers who helped show that we truly are stronger together.

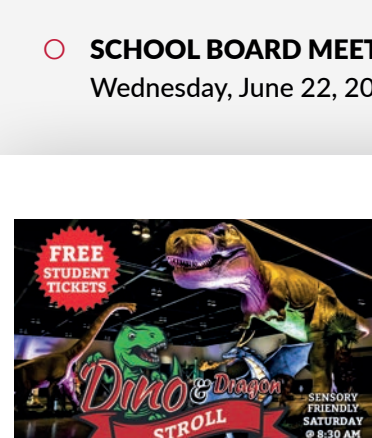


THANK YOU TO PPSD STAFF

Educating students during a pandemic requires extraordinary commitment by each and every staff member. Today, Superintendent Dr. Javier Montañez offered a **small token of appreciation** by providing every educator a metal reusable PPSD water bottle, which can be used with the new bottle filling stations being installed in every school for next year. While no one gesture can capture how important our teachers and staff truly are, sometimes we all need a reminder to hydrate and practice self-care.

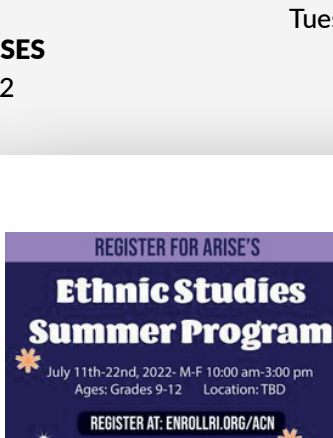
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- **LAST DAY FOR SENIORS**
Monday, June 13, 2022
- **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Wednesday, June 22, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
- **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS**
Monday, June 13 - Friday, June 17
- **LAST DAY OF CLASSES**
Friday, June 24, 2022
- **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) MEETING**
Tuesday, June 21, 2022, 6:00 p.m.



FREE STUDENT TICKETS TO DINO & DRAGON STROLL

All Providence Public School students 17 and under are offered free tickets to the **Dino & Dragon Stroll**, a family-friendly event targeted to an elementary and middle school audience. Students can receive free tickets by using the **discount code: SCHOOL** at <https://www.dinostroll.com/events/providence-ri>. Please note additional tickets for family members must be purchased.



ARISE SUMMER PROGRAM

Grades 9 - 12

July 11 - 22

The **Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE)** is offering an Ethnic Studies summer program for rising 9th through 12th grade students. Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with an emphasis on the experiences of a people of color in the United States.

Learn more or enroll at: <https://enroll.ri.org/acn>

Terrific things are happening across the District, and we want to get the word out! If you have a program, event, staff member, or student with an amazing story that you'd like to highlight, please email communications@ppsd.org.