



Families participate in the School Choice Fair at the PCTA field house.

CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2, 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.

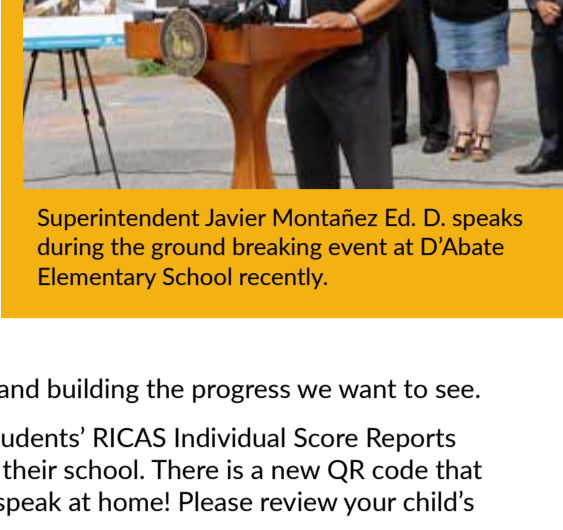
Our number-one focus in Providence is improving outcomes for our students. Re-committing ourselves to that goal is more important than ever, with the massive impact the pandemic had on students and learning loss over the past several years.

Maybe the most well-known measure of student progress is the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System, or RICAS. With our latest round of testing, we're proud that almost all PPSP elementary schools made improvements in RICAS math scores in 2022, compared to 2021.

In fact, PPSP has already recovered roughly 60% of math learning loss in elementary and middle schools compared to the 2019 RICAS results. Make no mistake, these scores aren't nearly good enough, and we must continue to make improvements. But it's important to know that we're stabilizing after the pandemic and building the progress we want to see.

Beginning next week, families across the District will receive hard copies of their students' RICAS Individual Score Reports (ISRs) from the spring of 2022. Hard copies will be sent home with each student by their school. There is a new QR code that will provide a personalized video about your child's score, in the language that you speak at home! Please review your child's information on their English Language Arts and math assessment.

Thank you as always for your partnership in your students' education. I look forward to working together to keep increasing our scores, and most importantly, our student outcomes.



Superintendent Javier Montañez Ed. D. speaks during the ground breaking event at D'Abate Elementary School recently.

DISTRICT UPDATES

REBUILDING PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For the first time ever, Providence has [over \\$500 million to invest](#) in modernizing our public school buildings. This is an opportunity to re-shape the District and create 21st century learning environments for students and educators. Community feedback is critical to a successful use of these funds, so PPSP has held several community engagement sessions, with two more coming up next week. These [virtual sessions will be held on Zoom on Monday, December 5, and Thursday, December 8](#), both from **6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** If you can't attend, one of these virtual sessions will be recorded and posted on the PPSP website, and you can use the Community Feedback section on [www.rebuildpvdpschools.com](#) to submit your questions or comments.

EARLY RELEASE DECEMBER 14

This is a friendly reminder that **all schools** will have their next monthly two-hour early dismissal on **Wednesday, December 14**, for teacher professional development. Middle school families should note that this is different from the regular

Wednesday dismissal time for middle school students. Middle schools will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m. on December 14, to allow buses to run on time for other schools that are also dismissed early that day. Families should also remember to double check the schedules at local recreation centers, as some may not open until 3 p.m. because of staffing.

SCHOOL CHOICE 2022

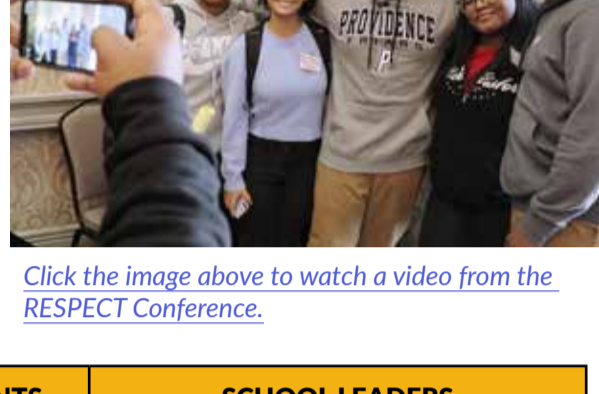
Last month, all Providence Public Schools gathered in the PCTA field house for the annual **School Choice Fair**. The event was a terrific opportunity for families and students to learn about the terrific programs, opportunities, and athletics in our schools, plus upcoming construction projects.

If you or someone you know missed the school choice fair, you can learn more about all of our schools by visiting <https://www.providenceschools.org/schoolchoice> to view schools' profiles in several languages!

EQUITY IN PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDENT EQUITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE RESPECT

On November 16, 2022, history was made in Providence when 60 student leaders from our Providence middle and high schools met at the Downtown Providence Marriott for our first ever [Student Equity Leadership Conference RESPECT](#). **Mr. William Winfield** served as the keynote speaker and set the stage for deep engagement, collaboration, and problem solving. Students spent time calibrating their collective understanding of the meaning of equity, belonging, and inclusion. They articulated a vision for their success and identified those challenges which serve as barriers to their success. The student leaders then spent the afternoon creating action plans that they will use to engage adults in their respective schools to influence change. This was part one of a three-part series of student leadership trainings scheduled for this school year. Below are additional planned events for major stakeholders. For more information, contact the Office of Equity and Belonging at 401.456.9100 ext. 11358 or send an email to equity@ppsd.org.



Click the image above to watch a video from the RESPECT Conference.

| STUDENTS | EDUCATORS/COMMUNITY/PARENTS | SCHOOL LEADERS |
|--|---|--|
| Student Equity Leadership Conference RESPECT Part 1: November 30, 2022 | Culturally and Historically Responsive Education Work Session with Dr. Gholdy Muhammad Part 1: November 30, 2022 | Equity Focused Leadership Work Session with Dr. Mark Gooden Part 1: November 3, 2022 |
| Student Equity Leadership Conference RESPECT Part 2: February 2, 2023 | Culturally and Historically Responsive Education Work Session with Dr. Gholdy Muhammad Part 2: May 31, 2023 | Equity Focused Leadership Work Session with Dr. Mark Gooden Part 2: June 1, 2023 |
| Student Equity Leadership Conference RESPECT Part 3: May 15, 2023 | Developing Habits of Mind: Going Deeper with Culturally and Historically Responsive Teaching (Cohort Model) Nov-June 2023 | |
| | Developing a Baseline for Equity Cohort in Your Practice (Cohort Model) Jan-June 2023 | |
| | Deepening Equity Practices to Learn and Lead (Cohort Model) Jan-June 2023 | |

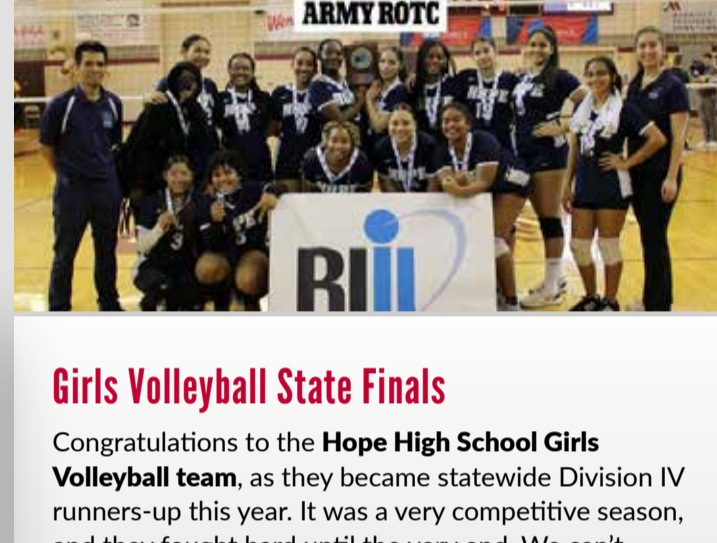
CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



PCTA Students Design School Choice Flier

A big thank you to students in the graphics program at PCTA, who designed the flier used for this year's PPSP School Choice Fair! As part of the project, students were also able to learn about the major contributors to the graphic design industry, and were able to showcase their research through different designs. The graphic design program is just one of the many great programs that PCTA has to offer.



Girls Volleyball State Finals

Congratulations to the **Hope Statewide Girls Volleyball team**, as they became high school Division IV runners-up this year. It was a very competitive season, and they fought hard until the very end. We can't wait to see what the Blue Wave can accomplish next season!



Think Like an Archaeologist

West Broadway Middle School, in collaboration with **Brown University's Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the RISD Museum**, are offering a "Think Like an Archaeologist" program for 6th grade students. The students have the opportunity to explore different artifacts brought in, and can learn more about the archaeology field.



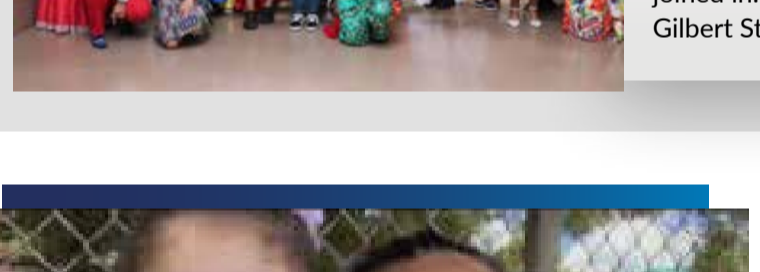
Reading Buddies

Pre-K students at **Young Woods Elementary** are thankful for their 5th grade reading buddies who come into the classroom to do activities with them this month. Teachers Ms. Withers and Ms. Corcoran planned an activity that incorporated many different skill sets such as problem solving, fine motor skills, listening, math, and literacy. Thank you for reading with our Pre-K students!



Celebrating Hispanic Heritage

Students and staff at **Gilbert Stuart Middle School** did a terrific job honoring the Hispanic heritage of their school community with a parade and celebration! Many staff members including teachers, administrators, custodians, lunch staff, community liaisons, and culture coordinators joined in. This annual tradition has become an important part of the Gilbert Stuart community, and we can't wait for next year's celebration!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

Bianka Medeiros

Third Grade Teacher

Located in: **George J. West Elementary School**
Joined PPSP in: **2013**

What made you want to teach third grade?

I love third grade! It's that cusp year - the students are independent but they still need you. It's the year they're really starting to apply their knowledge of reading, and they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Exciting things start happening when they learn new skills and can apply the evidence. I like it because it's also that year where you start to identify kids that may need more support so you can help set them up for success.

How do you describe your job to people who don't work in education?

As a teacher you come in to be ready as jobs as the kids come in. In some years you have 26 kids looking to you for the energy you come in with. You don't know what the students are coming in with, so it's important to always check in with them during morning circle. It's not a job you can do unprepared. The planning and preparation part of my job is done outside of work. Last night I was correcting tests and today we went over them to learn how to use our strategies more effectively. All my analysis, reflections and strategy comes after school - what worked well, what could be better? I'm always going over that in my mind and trying to improve my practice.

What do you wish more people knew about being a teacher?

For me, it's that futures are in my hands. If students don't get these skills and strategies before they leave third grade, they're not set up for success. I enjoy my job and I have fun, but I know how important it is. This is the foundation for the rest of their life.

"I enjoy my job and I have fun, but I know how important it is. This is the foundation for the rest of their life."

language and I see myself in my students. My focus is to have my kids love learning and know it's okay to make mistakes. When we make mistakes and understand where we went wrong, that's how we build new learning. It's so important to build a growth mindset, have them learn to take chances, and take feedback from you. Those conversations are where you see the lightbulb go off, and that is one of the greatest rewards.

What have been some of the highlights this year so far?

You can see the effect COVID had on the class I have this year in terms of academics and social-emotional skills. We've been working really hard on routines, expectations and building stamina. I feel like we're starting to turn a corner and that's been rewarding. The first couple months were hard, but we made a lot of growth together. It's great seeing a change in their ability to work now and how they're building that stamina to support meeting grade level expectations.

What are you looking forward to for the rest of the year?

Seeing my students grow, now that they're getting it. We look at data and scores together, and my students know what growth looks like. I'm a big believer in having my students take ownership of their education so they understand the importance and can begin to set goals for themselves.

I also love working with my colleagues! I couldn't do this job without them. Our administrative team is very supportive too. The work can be messy, but we're in here working as hard as we can to give our students the best education possible. We have some of the best teams and teachers here in Providence. We bounce ideas off each other, plan together, and the community here at West is amazing.

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSP IN THE PRESS

- [Community Focus: Natalie Fleming joins 12 News to discuss supporting students' mental health](#) WPRI, November 10
- [All Providence 8th graders offered Classical HS entrance test. New date, accommodations](#) RI News Today, November 9
- [Young Woods Elementary psychologist speaks on increased mental health crises](#) WJAR, November 3
- [NJWRJ superintendent has plans to fix underperforming schools](#) The Public's Radio, November 2
- [Hope High gets facelift, as ongoing effort to modernize schools statewide](#) ABC6, November 1

AROUND THE DISTRICT



FROM STUDENT TO PPSP PRINCIPAL

Meet **Rosario Johnson**, principal at **Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School**. Rosario and her family moved to the United States from Ecuador, and she started going to school in New Jersey before moving to Providence with her family when she was in third grade. She continued her education in PPSP, and graduated from Classical High School. Being a former MLL student, she said she's grateful for the programs that PPSP had to offer that cater to MLL students, as they helped her while she was in school.



CYBERSECURITY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The **IT Department** at Providence Public Schools encourages everyone to shop smart and stay safe this holiday season with a few simple [security tips from the Center for Internet Security](#). Seemingly small steps like avoiding public WiFi, being cautious with offers that look too good to be true, and using strong passwords can be the difference between shopping safely and falling victim to identity theft!



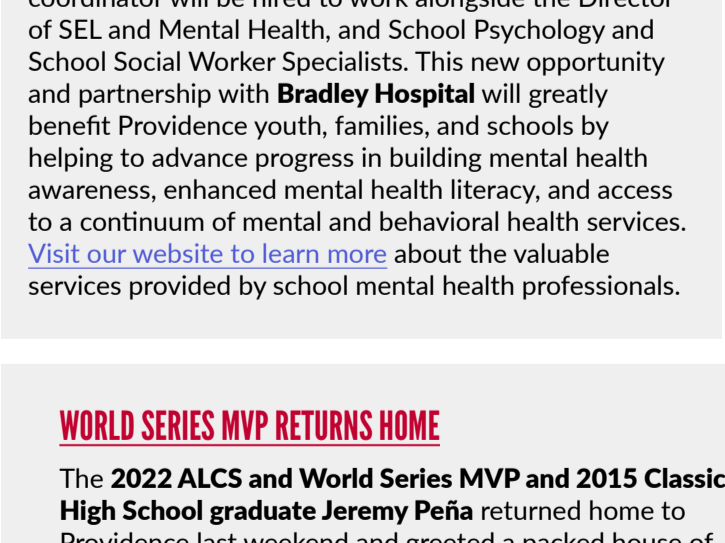
Supporting Student and Family Mental Health

This month, the PPSP Office of Student Support and the newly formed Department of Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health partnered with Bradley Hospital to support continued progress in building infrastructure that supports social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health across a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Through PPSP's latest Project AWARE grant, a full-time coordinator will be hired to work alongside the Director of SEL and Mental Health, and School Psychology and School Social Worker Specialists. This new opportunity and partnership with **Bradley Hospital** will greatly benefit Providence youth, families, and schools by helping to advance progress in building mental health awareness, enhanced mental health literacy, and access to a continuum of mental and behavioral health services. [Visit our website to learn more](#) about the valuable services provided by school mental health professionals.



Providence Principals Recognized on National Stage

The National Association of Assistant School Principals honored the top principals and assistant principals in the nation this month. Among them were **Rhode Island's 2022 Principal of the Year, Scott Barr of Classical High School**, as well as **Rhode Island's 2022 Assistant Principal of the Year, Renee Walker of Central High School**. Both were in Washington, D.C. this month to be honored for their roles as great administrators. Congratulations to Principal Barr and Assistant Principal Walker, and thank you for all you do in leading our students and educators!



WORLD SERIES MVP RETURNS HOME

The **2022 ALCS and World Series MVP** and **2015 Classical High School graduate Jeremy Peña** returned home to Providence last weekend and greeted a packed house of fans at PCTA. This year the rookie shortstop also won a Gold Glove, and had a standout season with the Houston Astros. [Click on the video below to hear his inspiring message!](#)

WINTER COAT DRIVE

For most of our Newcomer families, this is the first time they will experience a New England winter.

Join the MLL team in support of our Newcomer families by purchasing warm winter clothing items for children and young adults from ages 5 to 20.

Please place donations in bags. There will be a collection box in the lobby of 797 Westminster Street until Friday, December 16.

Items being collected (new only):

- Coats
- Hats
- Scarves
- Gloves/mittens
- Socks



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- **Rebuilding Providence Public Schools Community Engagement Session** Monday, December 5 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- **Parent University: Eat Well, Spend Less** Wednesday, December 7 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- **Rebuilding Providence Public Schools Community Engagement Session** Thursday, December 8 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

- **Parent University: Supporting Multilingual Learners** Tuesday, December 13 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- **Early Release** Wednesday, December 14
- **Holiday Break** December 23 - January 1

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.