



# CONNECTIONS

PPSP's Director of School Improvement Christopher Sanacore talks with attendees about the five redesign schools during the recent High School EXPO.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

OCTOBER 27, 2023

The leaves are changing and we're already more than halfway through our second month of school! We are seeing great things happening at our schools each week. This week we shared some news about the **2023 Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)** from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). RICAS is administered yearly to students in grades 3 through 8, from March to May.

Providence Public School District (PPSD) 2023 results show math proficiency rose by 3.2% and surpassed the pre-pandemic level. ELA proficiency increased by 2% and is equal to the increase seen statewide. A special congratulations to **Leviton Dual Language School**, whose students accounted for the highest growth in ELA in an elementary school in Rhode Island!

Our growth shows that our educators' talent and commitment is translating into gains for our students. We still have a long way to go but I am proud of the efforts of our schools despite the challenges of a global pandemic.

With that said, I would like to emphasize that it is critical that students are present in school every



**DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ**  
SUPERINTENDENT

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**We are excited to share that several PPSP elementary schools saw great improvement in their RICAS scores.**

**The top four schools with the most growth in RICAS ELA scores are:**

- Leviton Dual Language School (17.3% gain)
- Reservoir Avenue Elementary School (7.9% gain)
- Asa Messer Elementary School (7.6% gain)
- Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School (7.2% gain)

**The top five schools with the most growth in RICAS math scores are:**

- Leviton Dual Language School (14.5% gain)
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (14.4% gain)
- Robert L. Bailey, IV Elementary School (14.2% gain)
- George J. West Elementary School (10.5% gain)
- Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School (10.2% gain)

# DISTRICT UPDATES

## REDESIGN SCHOOL INFORMATION SESSIONS

During the 2022-23 school year, **Hope High School, Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex, Mount Pleasant High School, DelSesto Middle School, and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School** engaged in a rigorous data-driven process to redesign their academic programs. Through the redesign process, the District is creating new school options that meet student and family interests and prepare students for success in their post-secondary education.

Each redesign school will host an information night for 8th grade or 5th grade students and families. Principals and school staff will share updates on their redesign plans and provide opportunities for students to learn more about current and upcoming academic programs. Interpretation services will be provided.

School	Location	Date and Time
Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School	375 Adelaide Ave. Providence, RI 02907	Wednesday, November 1, 2023 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
DelSesto Middle School	152 Springfield St. Providence, RI 02909	Thursday, November 2, 2023 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

## CLASSICAL HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM

Attention all 8th grade Providence residents! Current 8th grade Providence residents who are attending **Private Schools, Parochial Schools, Charter Schools, Nathanael Greene Middle School, and Times 2 Academy Middle School** will take the Entrance Exam on Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 7:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. For those students that can't make either Saturday date due to a religious observance, they will take the exam on Thursday, October 26, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. The 8th grade students from **DelSesto Middle School, Esek Hopkins Middle School, Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Nathan Bishop Middle School, Roger Williams Middle School, and West Broadway Middle School** took the exam this past Saturday. Students will enter through the main entrance on Westminster Street, and will need two #2 pencils, a drink, and a snack. For more information, please visit <https://www.providenceschools.org/domain/100>.

## PPSD FLU CLINICS

PPSD is hosting one more schoolwide/community flu clinic that are free and open to all. The flu clinic will be held at the following location:

- **DelSesto Middle School**, 152 Springfield Street (02909) Thursday, November 9, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

day ready to learn. The latest scores also showed that there is a correlation between attendance and student performance, making it clear that every single school day counts.

The growth and performance of recently exited multilingual learner (MLL) students stood out with 27.5% of MLLs being proficient in RICAS ELA and 19.7% in math, exceeding the performance of all the District's student body.

October is **National Principals Month**, and we are grateful for our great principals and the leadership they show every day. We're lucky to have both principals who have been leading by example for almost 30 years and newer principals who are beginning on their long journey ahead. As a former principal for over two decades, I'm thankful for the time I was able to commit for my teams, colleagues, and students in our schools.

Thank you always for the trust you place in us each day. Onwards and upwards!



*RIDE Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella and Mayor Brett Smiley joined PPSD on a tour of Nathanael Greene Middle School, led by Principal Reilly and Assistant Principal Marshall. They discussed the importance of positive school culture and classroom attendance. Pictured are RIDE Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella, left, PPSD Chief of Family and Community Engagement Carina Pinto de Chacon, Principal Dr. William J. Reilly, Mayor Brett Smiley, and Superintendent Dr. Javier Montañez.*



Dr. Nkoli Onye speaks to guests during the first emPOWER meetup of the school year that took place on October 10, 2023 at BomBom Nutrition.

# EQUITY AND BELONGING

## emPOWER Meetup Highlights

The first emPOWER meetup of the school year took place on October 10, 2023 at BomBom Nutrition. **Shout out to Nathanael Greene, who had four staff in attendance!** Dr. Marcela Astudillo, PPSD Supervisor of Social Studies and Civic Education, was the featured speaker and spoke about creating space for student narratives and experiences in teaching and learning practices. emPOWER Meetups for Educators of Color are events hosted by the PPSD DEI Working Group to bring PPSD educators together for networking, community-building, open feedback sessions, professional/leadership development, mentorship, and goal-setting. All PPSD educators are welcome.

## Equity Advisory Council

The PPSD Equity Advisory Council held its first meeting of the school year on October 5th. Our work is currently focused on developing an Equity Lens Tool. Composed of students, teachers, parents and community partners, the Board thoughtfully collaborates to elevate the voices of our diverse communities by advising District staff, providing input, and helping to prioritize district-wide equity efforts, policies, strategies and investments. Our next meeting will be on November 2nd at 4:30pm. If you are interested in taking part in this work, please email [equity@ppsd.org](mailto:equity@ppsd.org).

## Equity Boost Grants

Equity Boost Grants are still available and are intended to 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 school-based projects between \$500 and \$4900. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis here: <https://forms.gle/3esuPey7mPHm1L1v8>



On October 24, the 2023-24 RESPECT Student Equity Leadership Conference series brought together students from PPSD middle and high schools who were selected by their school leaders to represent their peers. Students developed project action plans to foster equity in their school communities, and worked in partnership with adult leaders to implement their plans. Students will meet again in February and May.





**SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT**  
**CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL**



**Principal:** Robert DiMuccio

**Assistant Principals:** John Kavanagh, Michaela Keegan, Francesca Salvadore, and Renee Walker

**What makes your school unique?**

Our school’s motto is Once a Knight, Always a Knight! The school culture is very strong, which is evident in the large number of alumni who now work at the school as teachers, staff members and administrators!

**Are there any exciting new things this year?**

Our **School Counselor Gina Vessella**, pictured above, was recognized by the Rhode Island Department of Education as School Social Worker of the Year. Vessella has been with us for over 14 years and brings her therapy dog Fred with her each Friday to school.

**What is your vision or goal for your student body for the 2023-24 school year at this time?**

We are really focusing on improving attendance, increasing FAFSA completion among our seniors and increasing the number of students who are proficient in Reading and Math.

**Does your school have a mascot or school colors?**

Mascot: Knight

School Colors: Black and Gold



**PRE-K CORNER**

**WILLIAM D’ABATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Pre-K students at **William D’Abate Elementary School** learning their routines in their interest centers the first six weeks of school. They are working towards their first unit in the curriculum. Watch them soar!



# CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



## SOMETHING SWEET AT PLEASANT VIEW

Something sweet is brewing at **Pleasant View Elementary School**! The ECS teachers started a Friday Cafe with goodies such as coffee, tea, cookies, seltzer, and more. Students are able to work on independence towards life skills, community engagement, and language. It's also a way for these students to engage with the PVE school community. All proceeds will be recycled towards materials needed for each week. We can't wait to see next week's menu!



## FACTS ON FIRE SAFETY

Big thank you to the Providence Fire Department for teaching students at **Lillian Feinstein Elementary School at Sackett Street** the facts on fire safety during Fire Prevention Week! Students had the chance to meet with Providence Fire Department members, learn about the trucks and the different equipment, and even got to meet Sparky! Thanks for all you do to help keep our city safe!



## HOMETOWN HERO BENJAMIN SOE

Shout out to **Mount Pleasant High School's Benjamin Soe** who was recognized as NIROPE Hometown Hero by WPRI. A high school senior, Soe has helped the Mount Pleasant Kilties football team get off to a 4-1 start as running back.

[See the video here >](#)



## SAFETY PATROL TEAM AT SACKETT

Say hello to **Lillian Feinstein Elementary School** students who were pinned members of the Sackett Safety Patrol team. They are all committed to being school leaders and role models for the younger students. Congratulations to these hard working students!

# AROUND THE DISTRICT



## HIGH SCHOOL EXPO

PPSD hosted a high school expo at PCTA for 7th and 8th graders. Students were given the chance to learn about the exciting options available to them for high school, including more about our redesign schools, CTE programs, and more. We are very excited to give prospective middle school students the opportunity to see which high school would be the best fit for them. Thank you to everyone who made this event possible!



## RIBBON CUTTING AT NEWCOMER ACADEMY

Last Friday Superintendent Montañez joined students and teachers from the **Newcomer Academy** for a ribbon cutting ceremony and tour session! At Newcomer Academy, the mission is to provide exceptional **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** opportunities that cater to the unique needs of multilingual learners from diverse backgrounds. Attendees received tours of the Newcomer programs that include welding, soldering, electric and motor vehicle repair, and construction. Through innovative and inclusive educational approaches, Newcomer Academy aims to cultivate their students' talents, language proficiency, and cultural awareness, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue successful careers. We wish all our students the best luck and a successful year ahead!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

○ CLASSICAL HIGH ENTRANCE EXAM

Religious Observance Date

Thursday, October 26, 2023

7:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Classical High School, 770 Westminster St.

○ CLASSICAL HIGH ENTRANCE EXAM

Saturday October 28, 2023

7:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Classical High School, 770 Westminster St.

○ COMMUNITY FLU CLINIC

Thursday, November 9, 2023

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

DelSesto Middle School, 152 Springfield Street

○ SCHOOL CHOICE FAIR

Thursday, November 16, 2023

5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

PCTA, 41 Fricker Street

### OCTOBER SCHOOL MENU

