



TALENT OF THE WEEK

First edition of **Hope High School's Blue Wave News**, a student-led broadcast.

CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 17, 2023

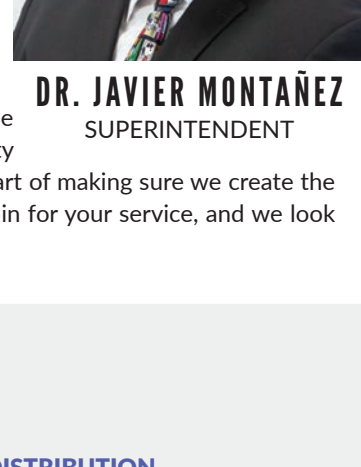
SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

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](#).

This week, we welcomed four new members to the Providence School Board during their first full Board meeting. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Toni Akin, George Matouk, Erlin Rogel, and Carolina Roberts-Santana. I'd also like to congratulate Mr. Rogel for being elected as School Board President by his fellow Board members, and Member Travis Escobar for being elected Vice President.

Being a School Board member requires long hours that often go unseen, on top of the already-busy lives that members have. So on behalf of the staff, students, and families of Providence Public Schools – thank you all for your service to the District and your advocacy for improving the quality of education for our children.

Providence Public Schools are at a critical point right now, with many historic changes on the horizon and some historic changes already underway. I'm a firm believer that we get our best policy decisions when we have a diversity of opinions and perspectives around the table. The voices of our new School Board members will be a critical part of making sure we create the modern learning environments that will help students in Providence thrive for decades to come. Thank you again for your service, and we look forward to working with you.

DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ
SUPERINTENDENT

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

○ **WINTER RECESS (NO SCHOOL)**
February 20 - 24

○ **KINDERGARTEN LOTTERY REGISTRATION BEGINS**
Monday, February 20

○ **FREE MEAL DISTRIBUTION**
Tuesday, February 21,
10:00 a.m.

○ **EARLY CONTRACT HIRING FAIR**
Thursday, February 23
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
DeSesto Middle School

○ **PPSD EMPOWER MEETUP**
Tuesday, February 28
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Bom Bom Nutrition

Gilbert Stuart, DeSesto, Roger Williams,
Nathanael Green, Feinstein Elementary
School at Broad Street

MARCH SCHOOL MENU



DISTRICT UPDATES

KINDERGARTEN LOTTERY REGISTRATION

A reminder to PPSD families with incoming kindergartners that kindergarten lottery registration begins on Monday, February 20. For more information on how to register, what you need to register your child, and how the process works, visit www.providenceschools.org/KinderGartenReg.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL LOTTERY

The school choice lottery for incoming middle school and high school students will take place on Tuesday, March 7. The school choice lottery placement announcements will be sent home to families via Skyward followed by a letter in the mail. Thank you to all our fifth and eighth grade families for turning in your school choice forms and participating in the process!

CTE Placement notifications were sent to students and families on Monday via Skyward and a reminder was sent via Kinvo. If you have any questions about the CTE lottery please reach out to cte@ppsd.org.

WINTER RECESS BEGINS FEBRUARY 20

A reminder to all PPSD students and their families that winter recess will begin on Monday, February 20. Classes will resume again on Monday, February 27.

During break, on Tuesday, February 21, kids under 18 can receive free meals from Sodexo at select school locations. Please click on the [flier attached here](#) to learn more. All sites open at 10 a.m. and meals will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. We hope you have a safe and relaxing February break!

EARN UP TO \$1K FOR STAFF REFERRALS

PPSD is committed to hiring the highest quality team members that represent the students and communities we serve. We want to make it easy for our team to share opportunities and information with your networks - and to reward you for doing so! Providence Public Schools has increased the **referral bonus** to any **current employee** who refers a permanent teacher, school leader, teacher assistant, clerk, or crossing guard candidate that is subsequently employed within the school system, full-time, as a result of that introduction provided all of the terms of this policy are met. [Find more details here.](#)

DRIVERS WANTED: PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

First Student, PPSD's contracted bus drivers, are an integral part of the communities they serve and are looking for part-time drivers here in Providence! They are committed to safety, customer service, and have genuine, caring attitudes for children. They help you prepare for your written DMV tests and obtain your CDL permit with a variety of bonuses and paid training. [Learn more here.](#)



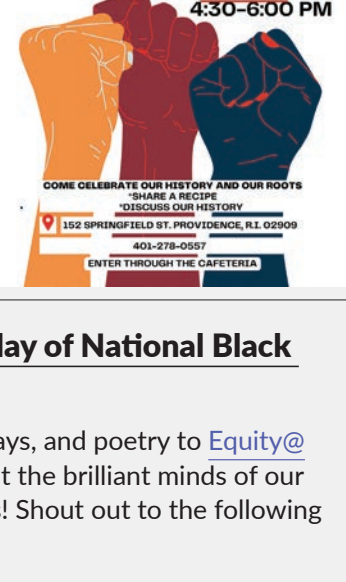
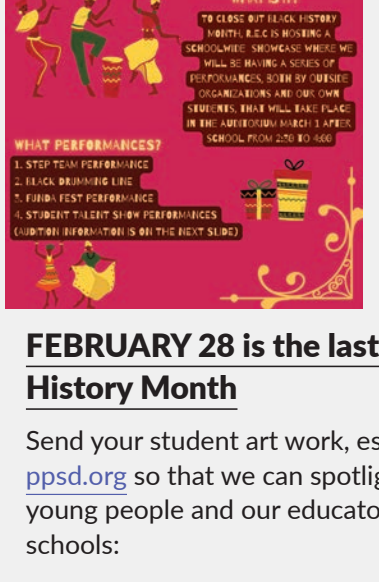
CITY YEAR RECRUITS WANTED

City Year Providence is looking for dedicated young adults to mentor and support local students. [Click here](#) or visit [their website](#) to learn more about this amazing opportunity, the impact it can have on our students here in PPSD, and the life skills and benefits that go along with it. Please share this information with any young adults who may be interested!

Women's History Month 2023 National Theme:

CELEBRATING WOMEN WHO TELL OUR STORIES

The theme of National Women's History Month 2023 is **"Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."** During the month of March, we will highlight women of past and present who have been active in all types of media and storytelling. For more information regarding National Women's History Month, [click here](#). If you are an educator, parent, and/or community member and you want to know what you can do to prepare young people to engage in activities that will get them inspired about National Women's History Month, [click here](#). Check out our Equity and Belonging website, during the month of March, for more resources and celebrations!



FEBRUARY 28 is the last day of National Black History Month

Send your student art work, essays, and poetry to Equity@ppsd.org so that we can spotlight the brilliant minds of our young people and our educators! Shout out to the following schools:

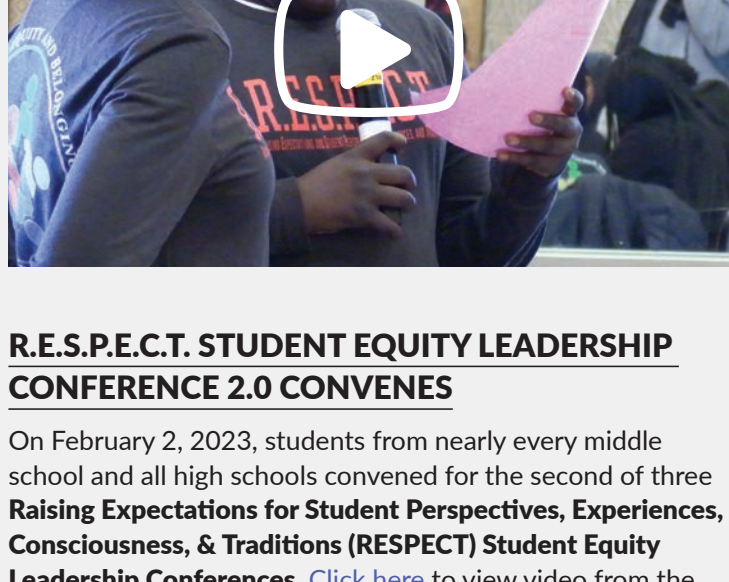
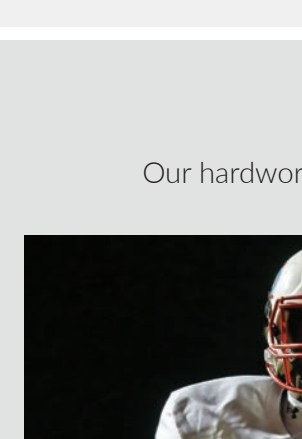
- **DeSesto Middle School** will host a Black History Month Celebration on February 28, 2023 from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- **Classical High School** will be hosting a Black Excellence Exhibition on March 1, 2023 in the auditorium from 2:30-4:00 p.m.

Please support these schools with your presence and participation. Let us know how your school or organization will be celebrating! Email us at Equity@ppsd.org!

FEBRUARY emPOWER Meet Up for Educators of Color

February 28, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Feedback from our first meetup in January was overwhelmingly positive. [Click here to access flier and registration information](#). Please register to attend. Space is limited.



R.E.S.P.E.C.T. STUDENT EQUITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2.0 CONVENES

On February 2, 2023, students from nearly every middle school and all high schools convened for the second of three **Raising Expectations for Student Perspectives, Experiences, Consciousness, & Traditions (RESPECT) Student Equity Leadership Conferences**. [Click here](#) to view video from the day. See important information regarding RESPECT below:

RESPECT 2.0 Theme: Embrace YOU to Ignite Change

RESPECT Student Equity Leadership Conference Purpose

- To activate your mind to think creatively and make change
- To inspire your will to demand change
- To motivate your heart to lead change

RESPECT Part 2 Objectives

- To reflect on your identity to empower equity work; use creative expression to explore and express identity
- To learn how other student groups are doing this work
- To evaluate the progress of your project and develop next steps
- Connect your creative thinking to your action planning so that you can:
 - » Engage and activate your peers
 - » Create adult allies to support your project
 - » Engage in discussion with school leaders
 - » Identify and prioritize equity issues
 - » Make change

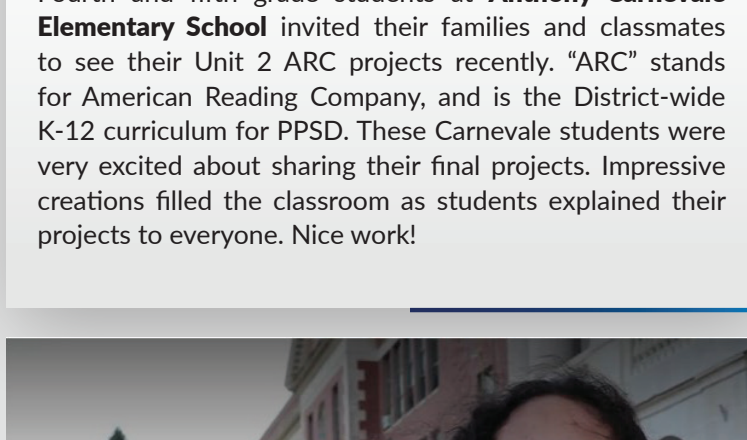
CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



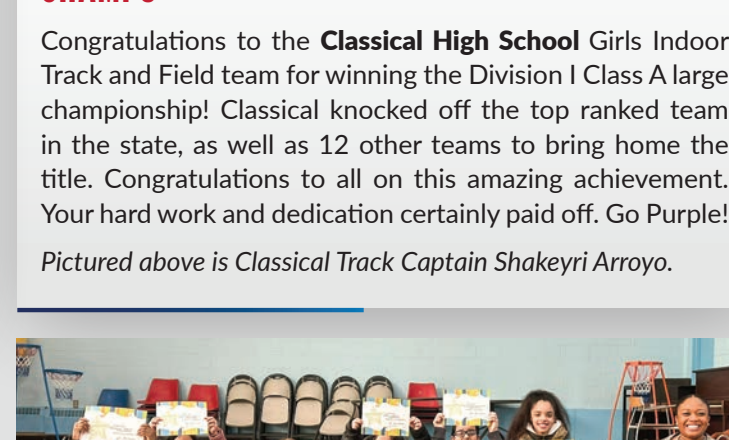
ALL STATE FOOTBALL HONORS

Congratulations to **Mt. Pleasant High School** senior wide receiver Israel Hiraldo (left), **Central High School** senior flex Armase Edouard (right top), and **Central High School** junior offensive lineman Jatan White (right lower) for being named to the 2022 Providence Journal All-State Football First Team. All three players had an amazing season, and are truly deserving of this honor. Congratulations!



CARNEVALE PROJECT CELEBRATIONS

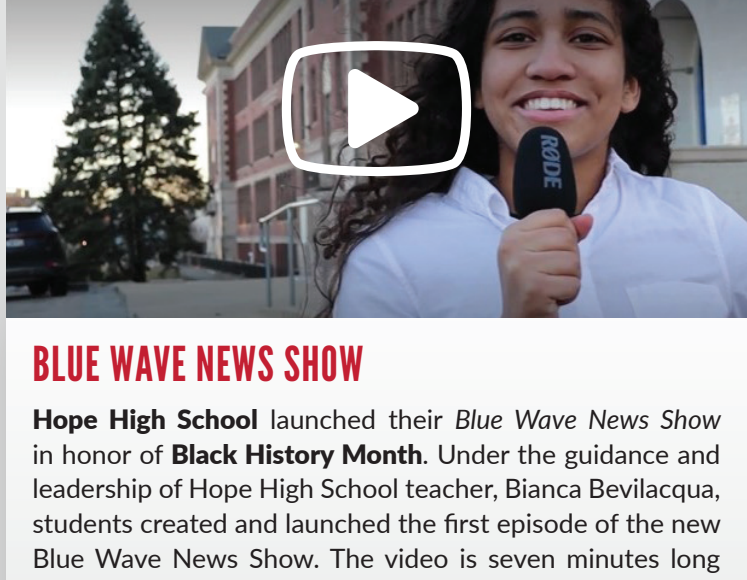
Fourth and fifth grade students at **Anthony Carnevale Elementary School** invited their families and classmates to see their Unit 2 ARC projects recently. "ARC" stands for American Reading Company, and is the District-wide K-12 curriculum for PPSD. These Carnevale students were very excited about sharing their final projects. Impressive creations filled the classroom as students explained their projects to everyone. Nice work!



CLASSICAL GIRLS INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPS

Congratulations to the **Classical High School** Girls Indoor Track and Field team for winning the Division I Class A large championship! Classical knocked off the top ranked team in the state, as well as 12 other teams to bring home the title. Congratulations to all on this amazing achievement. Your hard work and dedication certainly paid off. Go Purple!

Pictured above is Classical Track Captain Shakeyri Arroyo.



BLUE WAVE NEWS SHOW

Hope High School launched their *Blue Wave News Show* in honor of **Black History Month**. Under the guidance and leadership of Hope High School teacher, Bianca Bevilacqua, students created and launched the first episode of the new Blue Wave News Show. The video is seven minutes long and they plan to do this every two weeks, and then move to every week once students take on more of the logistics/filming on their own. Some things they intend to add is a sports highlight and an alumni segment so students can see the talent that has come out of Hope in the past. [Click here to watch the first episode.](#)



PERFECT ATTENDANCE BREAKFAST

The celebrated students at **Harry Kizirian Elementary School** celebrated attendance and their parents for achieving perfect attendance during the first and second quarter of the school year. The students and their parents enjoyed a delicious breakfast, and got certificates to help celebrate their achievement. Parents, thank you for supporting your child's educational journey. And students, keep up the great work!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

Samboeun Gee

School Counselor, Guidance Peer Support Group Creator, Assistant Boys Volleyball Coach

Located in: Classical High School

Joined PPSD in: 1996

"This journey as a School Counselor for me is about finding ways to help children succeed. I just love that."

What made you want to be a School Counselor, which is a new role for you? How do you describe what you do?

The choice to pursue a position as a School Counselor for me was based on a strong desire to make the biggest impact on the children of Providence. I see school counseling as a chance to work with students at a critical time in their lives. Children are like sponges. They are willing to make mistakes and that allows them to absorb lessons. I enjoy helping students become better people. That is how it all started for me.

A counselor can't be summarized by a job description. It is multifaceted and complex. A counselor offers students the ability to explore many possibilities. The role of a school counselor is to promote one's full potential by empowering and inspiring students and allowing them to go beyond what they think they can do.

The role isn't simply introducing students to colleges. It's more about making connections with students and helping them to become self-aware. I enjoy exploring information about what peaks their individual interests and reminding students to be open-minded about the future. The message I want them to embrace is nothing is impossible and to promote a "NEVER GIVE UP" mentality. The students continue to surprise me and make us proud. That's what makes it all worthwhile; it's powerful!

I was inspired by an incredible school counselor, Mr. Bernie McCrink, Sr. He taught me to recognize my capabilities. He helped me secure a job at a law office delivering mail for the lawyers. This incredible person supported me greatly. At every stage of my life, I always had a mentor in some area whom I could connect with. There is something about people who went above and beyond to assist me. I want to be that kind of person for students.

Personally, I had not been challenged in my professional abilities until I arrived at Classical High School. The environment and being supported by your colleagues is a learning opportunity in which we learn and try something different. That spirit of commitment to success transfers to students in a contagious kind of way.

As a graduate of Providence Public Schools, what drew you back to your alma mater?

It's one of those things where you feel a sense of connection that is hard to explain, but it draws you back. The school needed someone to help out with boys volleyball in 1996. I played volleyball for Classical. I loved the sport and my former high school teacher asked me to help out. In the process, I fell in love with that Classical spirit. I continued to volunteer until a job became available. Once I was hired, I chose to get my high school teaching certification. Before coming to Classical, I was teaching at the former Samuel W. Bridgman Middle School. I taught there for five years in a Special Education classroom.

What was it like for you as a Newcomer to Providence Schools?

I started at Providence Schools when I was ten years old at George J. West Elementary School. I came here from Cambodia and didn't know any English. I was in a self-contained ESL class where they taught life skills and vocabulary through pictures. I started there in September and, by January, the teacher recognized that I was getting bored. Once I was identified, educators began to take me out of class for special reading and math groups. As an immigrant child new to the country, I did not feel part of a group because of the language barrier.

However, there was one experience that changed my outlook of America. I was in gym class, and I got hit really hard by a ball and started crying. The physical education teacher went to go find my teacher. I don't know what they said because I really didn't understand. The teacher just came and hugged me. That one hug made a huge difference in my life. It was a small gesture. It's a hug saying that you're accepted and you're loved. A total stranger, not even my family, did that for me, and it was big. I tell this story to all my students.

Tell me about the Guidance Peer Support Group you started at Classical.

Because I coach and get to do so many other things, I need to meet many amazing students that do very well. They get very little, but they have hearts of gold. I ask students if they would mind coming after school on certain days and helping support some of the kids who are struggling. They do, and they enjoy it. This is how the guidance club came into existence. I saw these students as mentors. They don't realize their skills and abilities. I kind of just put them together and it has been transformative. I want to take one student's skills and abilities and see how that can assist another student's future.

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

Oh my gosh, I am so incredibly blessed to be in my new position. I feel like there is so much more that we can do as a school. I am just excited to see what we can bring as a school and what I can accomplish in my new role. I look forward to continuing my goal of helping all students develop mindsets and behaviors necessary to experience long term success. Mr. Bernie McCrink, Sr. guided me in the direction of maintaining a positive attitude toward learning and a strong work ethic. I intend on counseling and assisting students in the same way as my mentors with compassion and mindfulness.

Overall, I am honored to be a member of the Classical High School Counseling Department. This school has allowed me to be able to come up with solutions to many different problems. It is a place where my talents can flourish and be acknowledged in positive ways. I feel encouraged, lifted up, and loved. This journey as a School Counselor for me is about finding ways to help children succeed. I just love that. The support is so much greater when you work with the whole school community to help a student. It is not what I can do individually, but what we can do together for students.

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

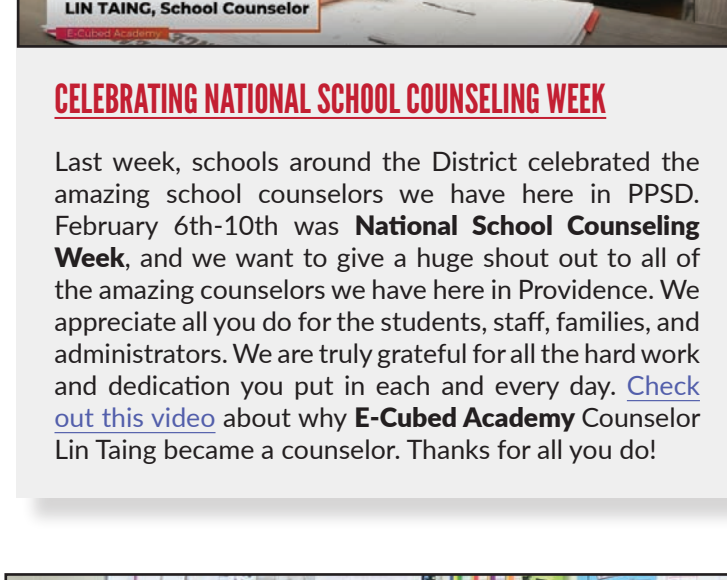
● **PC's Carter gives back to community after career night**
WPRI, February 15

● **E-sports give RI students a new way to compete**
WPRI, February 14

● **Hometown Hero: Angelica Guarcas, Classical**
WPRI, February 13

● **Eliezer Delbrey's Extraordinary Success Starts With Believing In Himself**
Yurview, February 10

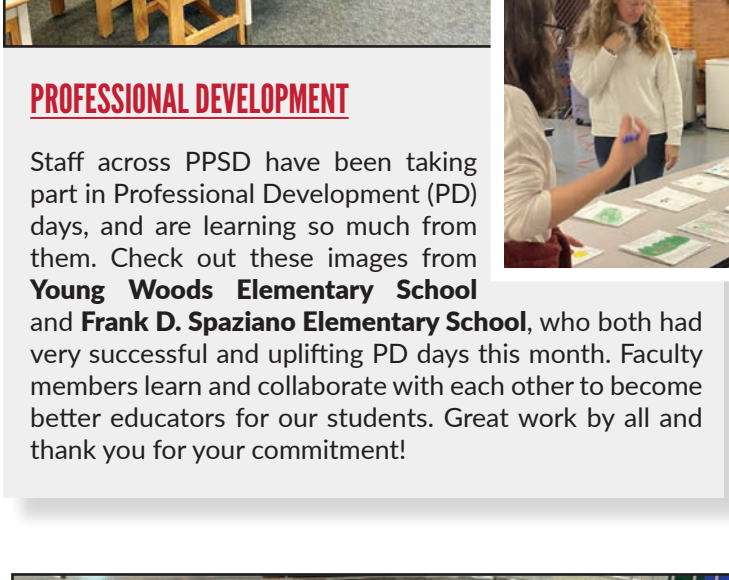
AROUND THE DISTRICT



LIN TAING, School Counselor

CELEBRATING NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Last week, schools around the District celebrated the amazing school counselors we have here in PPSD. February 6th-10th was **National School Counseling Week**, and we want to give a huge shout out to all of the amazing counselors we have here in Providence. We appreciate all you do for the students, staff, families, and administrators. We are truly grateful for all the hard work and dedication you put in each and every day. [Check out this video](#) about why **E-Cubed Academy** Counselor Lin Taing became a counselor. Thanks for all you do!



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff across PPSD have been taking part in Professional Development (PD) days, and are learning so much from them. Check out these images from **Young Woods Elementary School** and **Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School**, who both had very successful and uplifting PD days this month. Faculty members learn and collaborate with each other to become better educators for our students. Great work by all and thank you for your commitment!



STAR RATING ON THE RISE

Another PPSD school went up in their Star Rating recently! Star Ratings are assigned to every public school in Rhode Island by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). Ranging from one to five stars, the rating simplifies and summarizes overall school performance, providing an easy to understand snapshot for parents and communities.

Robert L. Bailey Elementary School went from a one star to a three star due to their scores in Achievement and School Quality, and Student Success. This is an amazing accomplishment for the school, and we're so proud of all the hard work they do each and every day. Congratulations!

[See video on Bailey Elementary School here.](#)



STEAM NIGHT

Pleasant View Elementary School had their second annual STEAM Night Family Engagement event this week! There were lots of exhibits to explore at the event, such as: The RI Audubon Society-Raptors with live birds, a Dentist Exhibit with Brown University Pre-Dental Students, Fire Safety with the Providence Fire Department, a math escape room and so much more. A food truck was also featured, that served lots of comfort food for all. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event such a huge success for our students and families at Pleasant View!