



Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School

# CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 16, 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.

I know we're all ready for our first "normal" school year in a long time. And thanks to the hard work of our educators, operations team, staff, and healthcare workers, we're off to a great start. But of course we're still dealing with the effects the pandemic has had on education. That's especially true when it comes to attendance.

Several national studies have found that chronic absenteeism spiked under COVID, and we need to get our students back in the habit of being in the classroom every day. That's why we're excited to have a new Attendance Team in PPSD this year, with the job of making sure our students are showing up.

The Attendance Team is taking several new steps to make sure that we are stepping in early, often, and equitably when it comes to students who miss school. You can find [a video on their terrific efforts](#) a little further down in this newsletter.

To borrow a phrase from one of our Attendance Team leaders, "showing up is a skill." That's the mindset we want our students to have. Attendance matters so much for their success. That's why I want to make sure we're here to help with new programs like this. And we want all of our PPSD community members to be part of this attendance effort! To learn how you can be an Attendance Hero, please reach out to our K-12 Culture Specialist, Stephen Grace, at [Stephen.Grace@ppsd.org](mailto:Stephen.Grace@ppsd.org).



Superintendent Dr. Javier Montañez (center) greets students on the first day of school.

## DISTRICT UPDATES

### A New Era of Investment

Providence Public School facilities are being rebuilt into modern learning spaces that our students and staff deserve. [Click here to see highlights of some of the new projects underway](#) that are reshaping the District and addressing decades of neglect. These exciting renovations include brand new media centers, swing spaces that allow students to thrive while their buildings are renovated, and full-scale new construction. Check back periodically for updates and details on even more construction and renovation projects!

### LifeChanger of the Year Nominee

Congratulations to Donna Marcaccio, fifth grade teacher at the Lillian Feinstein School at Sackett Street, who has been nominated for the 2022-23 National LifeChanger of the Year Award! Sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation, the LifeChanger of the Year Award recognizes K-12 educators and school district employees across the United States who make a difference in the lives of students by exemplifying excellence, positive influence, and leadership. LifeChanger of the Year winners are chosen by a selection committee comprised of former winners and education professionals. Winners will be announced in early 2023. The selection committee will consider testimonials provided by colleagues and parents of students impacted by each nominee, **so providing your support for Ms. Marcaccio at [www.LifeChangeroftheYear.com](http://www.LifeChangeroftheYear.com) is critical.**

### RIPTA Passes Now Available

High school families, you can now request WAVE cards from the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) by completing the form located here: <http://ow.ly/acF050KcFeB> Please note that RIPTA WAVE cards are available for high school students who live more than one mile from school. While RIPTA has agreed to allow all students to ride for free during the month of September, WAVE cards must be used from October 1 onward. You can find details on any service disruptions to RIPTA bus routes at <https://www.ripta.com/alerts/>.

### "All Rhode Island Day"

Students in Providence Public Schools will have a special "All Rhode Island Day" for lunch on Tuesday, September 20, 2022. Sodexo School Services is proud to highlight their many local suppliers, farmers, and vendors with a statewide celebration of their Farm to School program. Working with supplier Roch's Fresh Foods, located in West Greenwich, Sodexo will bring to their students the flavors of many Rhode Island farms and food producers.

## EQUITY IN PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Dr. Nkolika E. Onye, Chief of Equity and Belonging

Dear PPSD Community,

In the past few weeks I have had great conversations with partners, parents and young people about the vision for the Equity and Belonging Office. During one of my conversations with a student, she suddenly got quiet and then she looked at me and asked, "Miss, what is equity? What do you mean by that? I'm trying to understand." We talked for some time and she realized that she actually knew more than she thought she did, which was not surprising. Our young people have a wealth of experiences and social capital. We just, at times, need to help them find the words and help them make connections.

As I reflected afterwards, however, I wondered how many adults have a true understanding and mental model of what we mean by equity, especially instructional equity. My discussion with this student served as a reminder to me that we are all in different stages of learning. We have to be patient with one another, meet people where they are, and create experiences for them that will serve as a mental model and bridge for understanding. Over the next few months, we will be offering learning opportunities for members of the PPSD community, as well as community members, to come together and learn together so that we can begin to gain a common understanding. Stay tuned.

[Click here](#) to learn what's new in the Equity and Belonging department, including our Student Leadership Conference, positions we're hiring, and how to join school member information sessions scheduled for 9/22.



**DR. NKOLIKA E. ONYE**  
Chief of Equity and Belonging

## CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



### Adobe After Effects for PCTA Seniors

Seniors at Providence Career and Technical Academy are learning how to create animations using key framing techniques in Adobe After Effects. Thank you to the amazing staff for making this available for the students.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1569449915411046405>



### The Central High School Football Team Back with a Vengeance

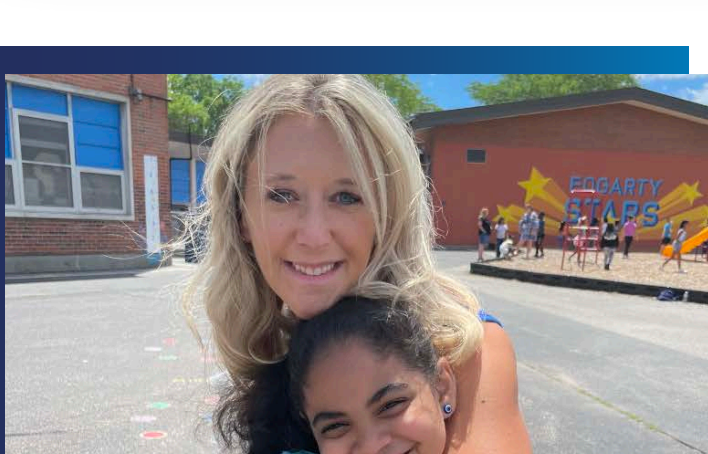
Football season's back, and the Central High School Football team is wasting no time. "We have to learn to stay patient," says running back Armase Edouard. "If we play our game, we can beat any team out there." We can't wait to see the Central High School Knights tear up the field this season!

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1569735020545449986>



### Reading with Students at Webster Elementary

American Reading spent some time reading with students at Webster Ave Elementary. This student read a book involving spiders, and he couldn't decide whether or not to read the passage about wolf spiders because he doesn't like spiders! Thank you for reading with us, American Reading.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

### Jennifer Lander

Self-Contained Special Education Teacher

Located in: Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School

Joined PPSD in: 2011

### Tells us about a typical day as a Self-Contained Special Education Teacher?

I work in a separated classroom for up to twelve Kindergarten and First Grade students. When the students come in, we do a welcome and greeting geared to their reading goals, like sight words. Then we do breakfast, sing a song, and get into our morning work. After that, we'll get into small groups to work on academics based on everyone's individualized education program (IEP). We use a station rotation model so everyone learns to work both independently and with partners. After lunch and recess we get

into math, again geared towards everyone's IEP and using small groups. And we usually end the day with science, based on themes that go along with the season like apples, pumpkins, experiments with snow, and so on.

### What's something people don't know about the job?

I think most people probably don't know how much we differentiate instruction because we have to meet students where they're at. That means I'll plan three lessons each day for reading, and another three for math. There's a lot more that goes on behind the scenes than people realize to make sure our lessons are interactive and that every student gets the most out of them. Today we did the letter "C" using Play-Doh to get that sensory element to get them engaged and exploring. It might sound simple but there's a lot of thought and customization that goes into each day.

**"There's a lot more that goes on behind the scenes than people realize to make sure our lessons are interactive and that every student gets the most out of them."**

### What kind of progress do you see in your students throughout the year?

Oh you see it every day! Today one of my Kindergartners called me "Mrs. Lander" for the first time, which we had been working on. So even those little things like following directions, sitting correctly on the rug, or developing work stamina, those are all real milestones for students who

may have never been in a classroom or away from their family before. By mid-year they know exactly where they're going and what they're doing in class, and they're much more independent. That's important growth in itself, and it also

makes the academics easier in class because we're able to get right into the work quicker. So all of these little victories we see each day kind of snowball and you see a huge amount of progress throughout the year.

What are you looking forward to this year?

Masks are gone, so we're finally starting a year off with some normalcy. It's so nice to give hugs and see the students' faces. It just feels like a fresh start. Watching them get off the bus, you can see how excited they are to be here. And they can see that we're excited to see them, and they feel it too. I'm also just excited to be back in our building – Fogarty is the best place! Last year the Boston Globe did a piece on how [Fogarty Elementary is the best kept secret in Providence](#), and it's so spot-on. We have an amazing staff. There isn't one person who I couldn't go to for help if I needed it, and we have really good systems in place to help each other and the students.

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

- [A partnership in education helps fulfill a vision for aspiring teachers and their students](#)  
Partnership Journal, September 12, 2022
- [At Providence's Central High, football is more than just a game](#)  
Providence Journal, September 9
- ['It takes a village': Providence schools outreach team works to combat absenteeism](#)  
WPRI, September 8
- [Providence unveils classroom renovations at Classical High School](#)  
WPRI, August 30
- [As Providence students head back to school, COVID is in the rearview mirror](#)  
Providence Journal, August 30

## AROUND THE DISTRICT



### "FRIDAY NIGHT RIVALS" TO BROADCAST HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAMES

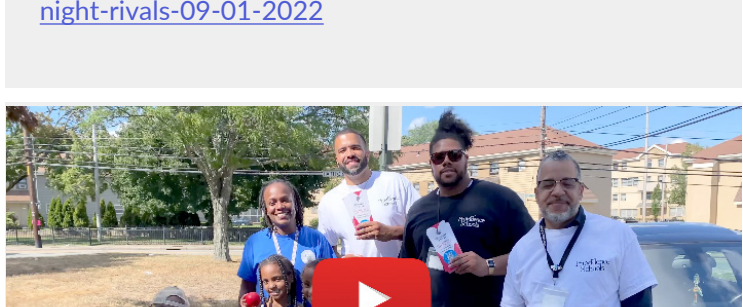
NBC 10 News's "Friday Night Rivals," the station's weekly high school football show, is broadcasting a number of high school football games this season. They air on Charge! which is available over the air on Channel 10.2 and on cable systems. For fans who are unable to attend away games that Providence high schools have, they can now livestream them wherever they are. A full list of the games that will broadcast this season can be found here:

<https://turnto10.com/sports/friday-night-rivals/friday-night-rivals-09-01-2022>



### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

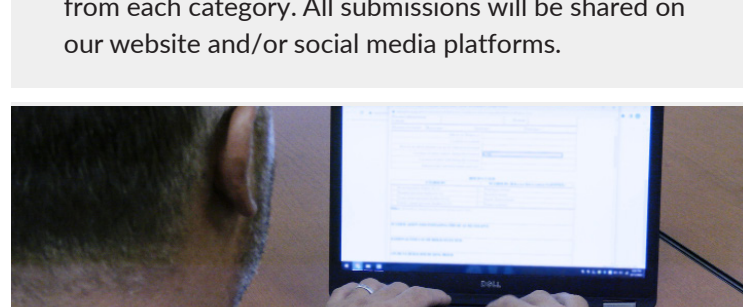
The theme for Hispanic Heritage Month is **Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation**. In honor of Hispanic Heritage month, we are calling for student submissions. We want to know how our students are leading in their schools and/or connecting, learning, celebrating, and interpreting this theme, through their writing, poetry, spoken word, art, music, service to the community, video or photography. Please send submissions to [nkoli.onye@ppsd.org](mailto:nkoli.onye@ppsd.org). In the subject line please write "Unidos". Submissions must be in no later than October 15, 2022. Winners will be selected from each category. All submissions will be shared on our website and/or social media platforms.



### PPSD ATTENDANCE ACADEMY - COMMUNITY WALKS

The Attendance Academy helps to develop, train, and improve the attendance intervention strategy at Providence Public Schools. The community walk is a designed communication and delivery method for attendance intervention. Members of the Academy go out into the community and interact with students and families throughout the District, getting them excited about school and the certain things administrators and leaders have planned for Providence Public Schools. Watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBv1jB1Mm8>



### CYBER HYGIENE ALERT

With a recent increase in cyber scams, the PPSD IT team recommends everyone [take these four simple steps](#) from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to protect yourself online.

First, use multi-factor authentication on your accounts -- a password alone isn't enough. Second, turn on automatic updates for all of your devices. Third, think before you click -- more than 90% of successful cyber-attacks start with a phishing email. And fourth, use strong passwords. Remember, it takes all of us

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

○ **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**  
September 15 - October 15

○ **2-HOUR EARLY DISMISSAL**  
Wednesday, September 21, 2022

○ **ROSH HASHANAH (NO SCHOOL)**  
September 26 & 27, 2022

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](mailto:communications@ppsd.org).