



CONNECTIONS

FAMILY EDITION

Spaziano Elementary School Principal Abdi Lidonde sits with Spaziano students before the ribbon cutting for the new school on December 8, 2023.

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

DECEMBER 21, 2023

Happy Holidays from the Providence Public Schools team! As the holiday break approaches, I want to thank and applaud the hard work of our students and families. We have committed to making strides in attendance and have had double digit decreases in Chronic Absenteeism in almost all of our schools. Let us all keep pushing forward with the needle and encourage our students to come to school everyday.

Recently, I had the privilege to be at the ribbon cutting for **Spaziano Elementary School** with **Governor Dan McKee, RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green, Mayor Smiley, School Board Vice President Escobar** along with members **Tyrelle Stephens** and **Night Jean Muhingabo, City Councilor Ana Vargas**, and our wonderful students and staff. So many people including our board members played pivotal roles in making this school a reality.

In this edition of the newsletter, we will be focusing on the District's school redesign efforts at our five schools: **Hope High School, Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex, Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School, Mount Pleasant High School, and Governor Christopher DeSesto Middle School.** As a reminder, 5th and 8th grade students will receive their school choice forms in January to make a decision for the 2024 school year.

We will also be showcasing our Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Be on the lookout in January for CTE applications; we have 20 exciting CTE programs across all of our schools for Providence students, so keep an eye out after the New Year.

Onwards and upwards!

Dr. Javier Montañez, Superintendent



Spaziano Elementary School Ribbon Cutting ceremony



DISTRICT UPDATES

FAFSA FOR 12TH GRADE STUDENTS

The **FAFSA application** will be rolling out on Sunday, December 31st for current 12th grade students and parents in the District. Students and parents will need their FSA ID log-in and other documents to complete the application. For a full list of items needed to complete the FAFSA and helpful links to use, [please see the flier here](#).

Students and parents can also use the Rhody Ready Chat Bot, a free texting service that will provide messages to help them understand the new FAFSA rules, stay up to date on alerts, and submit the FAFSA application on time. The chatbot also provides reminders about important deadlines in the college application process.

The District will be holding a **FAFSA Night** sometime in February. The FAFSA Night, much like the FSA ID Night in October, is for students and parents who have questions about FAFSA and need help completing it. Stay tuned for more details. In the meantime, students and parents should make an appointment with their school's school counselor to help get the process started. For more information, visit <https://www.providenceschools.org/domain/2665>.

PROVIDENCE PROMISE

Want to earn money for college? Providence Promise will help you set up a 529 college savings account for your children and give you \$100 to get each account started. You can get paid for filling out Surveyworks, having good grades and attendance, doing extracurriculars, and many more! Visit pvdpromise.org or email jrosales@pvdpromise.org to get started today. Families who enroll by December 31 will get \$150 per child instead of \$100.

SUPERINTENDENT STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

We are delighted to share the success of first **Superintendent Student Advisory Council** meeting on December 5, 2023, which saw a great turnout and engagement from our dedicated student representatives. A special note of gratitude goes out to our Principals and Guidance Counselors for their invaluable role in recommending outstanding students to join the council. The diversity of perspectives brought forth during our first meeting promises a year of meaningful discussions and positive initiatives.



Congratulations to the students for their acceptance to Student Advisory Council. Your achievement in representing your school as student leaders is truly commendable, and we are excited about the positive impact you will make.

To the families of these accomplished student leaders, we share in celebrating your child's success as representatives of their school. Your support has played a crucial role in shaping emerging leaders.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVANCED ACADEMICS

Providence's **Middle School Advanced Academics** is an accelerated learning program which supports students with unique strengths, talents, and/or abilities by providing them with the opportunity for in depth study beyond the basic curriculum while preparing them for secondary and post secondary success. We are excited to announce that Middle School Advanced Academics will be expanded to ALL middle schools for the 2024-25 school year, where in the

past this program has existed only at select Middle Schools. Humanities (ELA and Social Studies) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) courses will be offered at all middle schools. Families of students who are invited to Advanced Academics received a letter through Skyward and our family messaging system Parentlink with next steps. If you did not receive a letter and would like your 5th grade student to be considered, you can appeal by completing and submitting an information packet. Learn more at providenceschools.org/advancedacademics.

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Canvas is Providence Schools' new online learning platform and gradebook. While Skyward continues to allow families to see report cards, progress reports, and assignment grades, Canvas allows students and families to see individual assignments, scores on those assignments, teacher feedback, and due dates. In addition, Canvas pulls information on all students' courses together into one place, providing students and families with more transparency around what students are learning on a day to day basis so that families can provide ongoing support. For families to create a Canvas account, they will need a pairing code that can be found in the students' Canvas account. Find directions and a video on creating an account at providenceschools.org/canvas.

TEACHER ASSISTANT ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Help us spread the word! Our first **PPSD Teacher Assistant (TA) Accreditation Program** will be January 10-18. Classes will run Tuesday, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5:00-7:30 PM. For our first cohort, we will be accepting 25 participants who are interested in becoming a PPSD TA in a high need area (Special Education, Pre-K, Bilingual/ESL). Selected applicants will receive a 50% tuition discount for a 1-year commitment at PPSD for a program cost of \$137.50.

- [Application](#)
- [Flyer](#)
- If you have any questions, please reach out to Erin Flood (Erin.Flood@ppsd.org)

EQUITY AND BELONGING

RESOURCES FOR HOLIDAYS

With over two dozen religious holidays celebrated between November 1 and January 15th, the holiday season is upon us. For many of us, the holidays are a time to relax, enjoy, and celebrate with family and friends. However, this time of year can also be stressful for many families.

"It [holidays] may even be more challenging with the ongoing world events, including wars, climate disasters, the ongoing effects of social injustice and racism, and rise of hate speech and crimes. Although the impact of COVID has changed over time, many families continue to be affected. For those families who have recently experienced the death of a family member or are currently separated from family members, the holiday season may be even more challenging as we think about those that won't be with us this year."

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network

As we approach winter recess, the following resources may be useful to support students and families:

[Supporting Children Through the Holiday Season](#)
(National Association of School Psychologists)

UPCOMING ASSESSMENTS

DECEMBER

8-19 Math = STAR Benchmark, grade 1-8

JANUARY

8-12 ELA = STAR Reading Benchmark, grades K-8

16-26 Multi-Language Learners (MLL) ACCESS testing, K-12

29-31 ELA iReady Reading Assessment, grades K-8

29-31 Math & ELA, STAR Benchmark, High School

29-31 SurveyWorks (RI School Improvement survey) = All families

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

- [Brown University's new initiative strives to boost college enrollment for Providence public school students](#)
WJAR, December 7, 2023
- [Rhode Island leaders to celebrate Spaziano Elementary School with ribbon cutting](#)
WJAR, December 8, 2023
- [Providence to cut the ribbon on new elementary school](#)
ABC6, December 8, 2023

Mount Pleasant Early College & Career Academy

- An early college model school with dual and concurrent enrollment.
- Offers CTE programs in advanced manufacturing, pre-engineering, teacher, academy, and computer science.
- Partnerships with RIC, URI, and industry partners.

Hope Visual & Performing Arts

- Integrated arts with a focus on project-based learning and interdisciplinary instruction.
- Partnerships with RISD, Brown, and community art organizations.

DelSesto STEAM Academy

- Campus focused on STEAM education and programs.
- Inquiry-based instructional practices with robust SEL supports.

Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School of Healthcare & Finance Careers

- Healthcare and finance career pathways with project-based learning and work-based learning instruction.
- Partnerships with RI hospitals, RI Nursing Education Center, NAF, and local and national financial institutions.

Juanita Sanchez Life Sciences Institute

- Project-based and work based learning focused on life sciences and bio technology.
- Partnerships with RI Hospitals, bio-tech startups, the NAF and the new Life Sciences Hub in downtown Providence.

Providence
Schools

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS' REDESIGN SCHOOLS

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 careers. In our steadfast commitment to preparing our students for an ever-changing world, PPSD is engaged in redesign work across five schools:

- **Hope High School**, a beacon of the arts with a brand-new auditorium, will infuse the arts throughout academic subjects, becoming a hub for arts education.
- The **Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex** will offer work-based learning in biomedical industries, capitalizing on downtown Providence's focus and investments in the life sciences and its proximity to our hospitals.
- **Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School** will provide work-based learning aligned with health care careers and new financial entrepreneurship.
- **Mount Pleasant High School** will strengthen ties with higher education institutions such as Rhode Island College, offering early college learning and enhancing career and technical education programs.
- And lastly, **Governor Christopher DelSesto Middle School** will integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) education across the curriculum, emphasizing hands-on learning and strong student-teacher relationships.



Providence Schools is dedicated to supporting all students as redesign is implemented. PPSD, along with the City of Providence and the state, is investing substantially in our students, educators, administrators and communities to pave the way forward for successful redesign.

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

CTE APPLICATION OPENS: JANUARY 3, 2024

CTE APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 12, 2024



Providence Public Schools (PPSD) Career and Technical Education Program (CTE) is a focused educational experience that prepares students for both industry and higher education, offering multiple pathways to success. In turn, this program helps students become career-ready in these sectors, along with providing them the opportunity to take college-level courses at a high school level.

With over 1500 program participants, students have the opportunity to transfer these credits over with them upon entering college. Students from ninth grade to twelfth learn critical career related skills that are the foundation of future trades and careers. To be successful in CTE, students must commit to the pursuit of an academic diploma and RIDE-mandated industry credentials. Students will work harder than many of their peers, and be positioned for high-wage, high growth careers.

On June 8, 2023 CTE Office held a **CTE Career Signing Day** to celebrate the graduating seniors going directly to industry positions. This ceremony honored 83 graduates of CTE programs as well as seniors that participated in after hours workforce development programs. The 83 students had offers in high wage/high growth careers in a wide range of industry clusters from Construction to Manufacturing to Education & Human Services. Fourteen local employers were at the ceremony to participate in the on stage signing, representing **Electric Boat, LiUNA, North Atlantic Carpenters Union, and two city departments.**

On June 6, 2024, the CTE Team hopes to honor 166+ Class of 2024 Graduates during CTE Career Signing Day! To reach this goal, the District is working to double the number of students placed in area businesses and apprenticeship opportunities.

Learn more at: providenceschools.org/octe

CTE PROGRAMS AND PATHWAYS

ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION

- Carpentry: PCTA
- General Construction: PCTA
- Electrical: PCTA
- HVAC/Plumbing: PCTA

ARTS, A/V TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

- Graphic Communications: PCTA
- Visual Arts: Hope
- Film Production: Hope
- Music: Mount Pleasant

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & FINANCE

- Business & Cosmetology: PCTA
- Finance: Alvarez

EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES

- Teacher Academy: Mount Pleasant

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

- Bio-Medical: JSEC

HEALTHCARE

- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA): Alvarez
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT): Alvarez
- Community Healthcare Worker: Alvarez

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

- Culinary Arts: PCTA
- Pastry Arts: PCTA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- P-TECH Information Technology: E-Cubed
- Computer Science/CS4RI: JSEC, Mount Pleasant, Alvarez & Central

LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND GOVERNMENT

- Law & Public Safety Firefighter: Central
- JROTC: Central

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

- Pre-Engineering: Mount Pleasant & PCTA

MANUFACTURING

- Maritime Welding: PCTA

TRANSPORTATION

- Automotive Technology: PCTA

CTE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

ASHLEY MORALES

PCTA Graduate, Class of 2023

CTE Program of Study: HVAC/Plumbing

Accepted into Carpenter's Union

Interned at Regan HVAC

Participated in a co-op program with RI Women in the Trade

What made you choose PCTA for high school?

I did previous research on schools with the purpose of finding a high school that offers vocational programs. Knowing that I would be able to graduate with a skill that could push me forward towards a career that had to do with working with my hands or joining a union is why I chose PCTA.

What interested you about HVAC/Plumbing? Was it always an interest of yours, or did you explore other CTE options?

When I was a little girl, my grandfather, who was a plumber, would take me to his job and I would be fascinated by how he did the jobs. He gave me the honor of becoming his little helper, and he would teach me tips and techniques of how plumbing systems worked so it became one of my goals to try out the HVAC/Plumbing program.

You were just accepted into the Carpenter's Union. Can you explain a little more about what that is?

Being in a Union means to become a part of a team that is united against any discrimination on the job or inequalities. I decided to apply to the Carpenter's Union because I liked the thought of becoming a pile driver. These are the people that run piles under bridges, even sometimes underwater, and I found out that the Carpenter's Union has a specialty that focuses on that field.

Describe your experience with the co-op program, RI Women in the Trade.

My experience with the co-op program RI Women in the Trade was empowering, motivational, and powerful because in nine weeks I got the chance to explore my options and determine what my career would look like. I got to expand my social network and meet amazing people.

You recently spent a weekend in Washington, D.C. at the Trades Women Build Nations/NABTU Conference. Describe what that was like for you. What did you learn?

I felt inspired during my trip because I had the incredible opportunity to meet women involved in the trades from all over the world. I learned about the general barriers that women face in the trades, sisterhood, and how to implement change in the construction field.

Do you have any advice for current CTE students or students who are thinking about joining a CTE program or school?

The advice that I have for current and upcoming CTE students is to cherish the programs that are available to them, put in the effort, and take it to the next level. I was mentored, supported, and encouraged along the way of my journey. But, it all happened with programs and staff members that were willing to make that change and impact on my life.



NEW PLAYGROUND AT ASA MESSER

Superintendent Montañez joined **Providence City Council President Rachel Miller** at the **Asa Messer Elementary** playground for the opening and ribbon cutting of their new playground. Thank you to **Providence City Council** for helping secure the funds for this fantastic space for play.



JOICE VALERA

Jorge Alvarez High School Senior, Class of 2024

CTE Program of Study: Certified Nursing Assistant CNA

First student to become **fully licensed Certified Nursing Assistant**

Participated in PPSD summer CNA program at **Rhode Island Nursing Education Center**

What interested you about the nursing assistant; program? Was it always an interest of yours, or did you explore other CTE options?

I picked the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program because I knew I want to be a nurse in the future and it's a great way to start that process. I always like helping people and helped my grandfather, so I knew I wanted to be a Registered Nurse (RN), and eventually a travel RN.



2023 Graduates of the Rhode Island Nursing Education Center (RINEC) CNA Summer Program that was taught by CCRI.

What made you choose Jorge Alvarez for high school?

I didn't know what school I should join. However, when my friends and I were looking for programs, Alvarez had what I wanted, which was the CNA program.

You recently participated in our summer CNA program at Rhode Island Nursing Education Center, how was that experience?

It was so much fun, and there were many people. We did a lot of on the ground training and practiced how to be a CNA in the field. We went to hospitals and nursing homes. There we were trained to help nursing homes residents. It was a great learning experience. I know I want to be a registered nurse and someday I really want to be a travel nurse.

You were the first of your cohort to become a fully licensed Certified Nursing Assistant, congratulations! What was it like to take the written tests and practicals?

Thank you! It was pretty nerve wracking, I'm not going to lie. It was my first time, but after the tests I felt so happy. I prepared for it on the website on practice tests and kept practicing what we were taught in class.

Do you have any advice for current CTE students or students who are thinking about joining a CTE program or school?

The advice that I have for current and upcoming CTE students is to just go for it. If you know you like the program and you know what you want, you should definitely join. The support I had was amazing, and if you have the opportunity you should take it.

What was your favorite part of being in the CNA program?

My favorite part of the CNA program was that we all worked as a team and focused on passing the written tests. It was a team based learning experience and it really helped when I took the tests.

ATTENDANCE STARS

Currently, compared to the same date as last year, 14 of the top 25 schools in decreasing chronic absenteeism in the STATE are Providence Schools.

Top 5 for PPSD are:

1. D'Abate 29.2% improvement #2 in the state
2. Veazie 27% improvement #4 in the state
3. Asa Messer 26.8% improvement #5 in the state
4. Sackett Street 25.9% improvement #7 in the state
5. Fogarty 24.2% improvement #12 in the state



PRE-K CORNER



PLEASANT VIEW FOURTH GRADE READS TO PRE-K

Grade 4 students in Kathleen Ribeiro and Sierra Stewart's rooms read to Amy Webber's Pre-K class at **Pleasant View Elementary School at the Narducci Center**. These partnerships will be maintained for the entire year. For younger students, they get to hear more experienced readers model how to read fluently, with expression and phrasing, and they get 1:1 assistance as they build their own literacy skills.



LEARNING INVESTIGATION AT D'ABATE

Pre-K students at **William D'Abate Elementary School** had so much fun making pillows last week! Pre-K students are learning about how clothing is made. As part of their learning investigation, they participated in the design and creation of their own pillows. Look at all that stuffing!



LILLIAN FEINSTEIN MUSICIANS

Lillian Feinstein Elementary School Chorus, left, performs during the **City of Providence Tree Lighting Ceremony**. The Lillian Feinstein Elementary School Guitar Ensemble performed during the **Mayor's Holiday Party at City Hall**.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

○ **HOLIDAY RECESS (NO SCHOOL)**

Friday, December 22, 2023 -
Monday, January 1, 2024

○ **CTE FAMILY NIGHT**

Tuesday, January 9, 2024
PCTA, 41 Fricker Street

○ **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY (NO SCHOOL)**

Monday, January 15, 2024

○ **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) MEETING**

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

JANUARY SCHOOL MENU



○ **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, January 17, 2024
797 Westminster Street