



The student chefs and Sodexo chefs from across the District during the Future Chefs Competition at PCTA Saturday, March 18.

# CONNECTIONS

MARCH 31, 2023

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

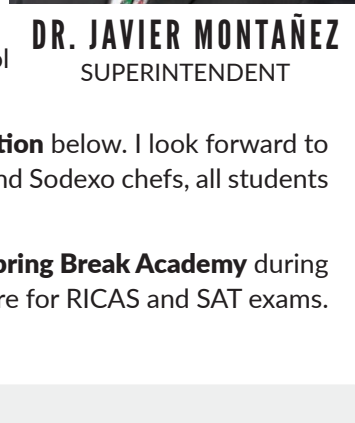
Welcome to the latest edition of the Providence Public School District (PPSD) bi-weekly newsletter! If you or someone you know misses any of our newsletters, you can find past editions on the [District's website in multiple languages](#).

Last week, I visited **Mount Pleasant High School** with **Mayor Brett Smiley**. I was able to spend time with the students and staff to get feedback on their school and the District. Our students continue to impress me during our conversations. The Mayor was also impressed and received a warm welcome from staff and students.

I always get a little excited as the cold starts to fade and the days get longer. In spring, we see the world with a new lens as trees start to bloom and flowers blossom. It is also a time when our students show us their best -- as our high school students share their college acceptance list, military commitment plans, and business plans. They have hopes and dreams that naturally get their school communities excited.

We have extraordinary talent across the District. Be sure to check out **Sodexo's Future Chef Competition** below. I look forward to one day trying the green guacamole created by Carnevale's Shawn Andrews. According to the judges and Sodexo chefs, all students who participated made impressive dishes.

Soon our schools will be on recess. We are excited that over 2000 of our students will participate in **Spring Break Academy** during that week. We are excited to engage them in fun, hands-on learning opportunities to help them prepare for RICAS and SAT exams. We hope all of our students and staff enjoy a well-deserved spring break.



**DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ**  
SUPERINTENDENT

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- **GOOD FRIDAY (NO SCHOOL)**  
Friday, April 7
- **SPRING RECESS**  
Monday, April 10 - Friday, April 14
- **SPRING BREAK ACADEMY**  
Monday, April 10 - Friday, April 14  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **FREE MEAL DISTRIBUTION**  
Tuesday, April 11  
10:00 a.m.  
*Asa Messer, Feinstein at Broad,  
DeSesto, Gilbert Stuart, Nathanael  
Greene, Roger Williams*

### APRIL SCHOOL MENU



## DISTRICT UPDATES

### SURVEYWORKS DATE EXTENDED

The deadline for all parents in Rhode Island to fill out the annual **SurveyWorks** feedback form has been extended to Friday, April 7th. Please visit [www.RIDE.ri.gov/SurveyWorks](http://www.RIDE.ri.gov/SurveyWorks) before April 7th. The survey takes just 20 minutes to complete on a computer, tablet, or mobile device. Parents of PPSD students can visit the link above, or look for text messages from your school and from the District with a QR code that you can scan. Your voice matters to us, and we appreciate your feedback!

### MAY 17TH CALENDAR UPDATE

Please note in your calendars that **Wednesday, May 17th** has been changed to a full school day instead of an early release day. There will be no early release day for professional development during the month of May.

### SPRING RECESS REMINDER

A reminder to all PPSD students and their families that spring recess will be on Monday, April 10th to Friday, April 14th. Classes will resume again on Monday, April 17th. Sodexo will be hosting a free meal distribution Tuesday, April 11th beginning at 10:00 a.m. at six schools: **Asa Messer, Feinstein at Broad Street, DeSesto, Gilbert Stuart, Nathanael Greene, and Roger Williams**. We hope you all have a wonderful and relaxing April break!

### SPRING BREAK ACADEMY

We are excited to have over 2,000 students registered for PPSD's **Spring Break Academy** so far! There is still time for families of students in grades 3-5, grade 8, and grade 11 to register for the Academy happening during spring recess (Monday, April 10th - Friday, April 14th) from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Join us for a week of fun and hands-on learning in math, science, and reading. Register with your child's school or here: <https://www.providenceschools.org/SpringBreakAcademy>

## EQUITY IN PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### WORDS ARE POWERFUL

Those who work in the pursuit of equity, diversity, and belonging all over the world, will attest that the work can be both amazingly rewarding and beautifully challenging. This is mostly because our work often challenges the values and beliefs that we have carried with us since we can remember. For some humans, the challenges can result in deep reflection, adjustment of long held beliefs, and the development of new values. For others, the emergence of feelings of fear and anxiety can result in poor choices and the use of derogatory words. We must remember that while we can disagree, our choice of words matters. Our young people are watching. Check out [this blog from UNICEF's Voices of Youth](#).

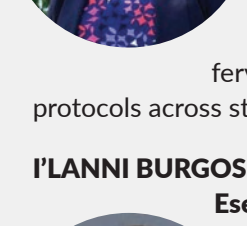
### MARCH 31ST IS TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY!

**Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV)** is recognized worldwide as a day to raise awareness about and celebrate transgender people. It is also a day to build awareness around the discrimination and inequalities transgender people face, as well as their resilience and power in living authentically.

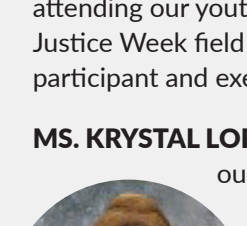
PPSD is proud to have a Nondiscrimination Policy for Transgender and Gender Expansive students, as well as a Workplace Gender Transition Policy for staff. Please check out the [Equity & Belonging website at providenceschools.org/equity](#) for resources to support and affirm our transgender and gender expansive students and colleagues. Guidance around updating student information is available there too.

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

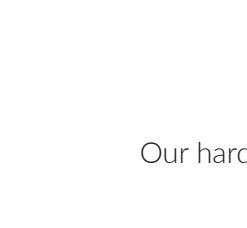
**REBECCA KISLAK** is a seasoned attorney, policy expert, PPSD parent and Rhode Island State Representative. Through her professional and board leadership, she has demonstrated excellence in relationship building, collaborative advocacy, program development, facilitation and strategic planning. She is a committed and engaged member of the Equity Advisory Council and fervently advocates for equitable policies and protocols across state and district levels.



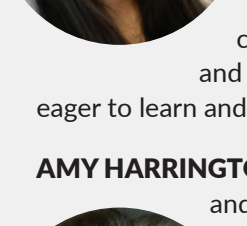
**L'LANNI BURGOS** is an eighth grade student attending **Esek Hopkins Middle School** and one of our District Equity Warriors. She is excited to attend Classical High School in the fall where she looks forward to exploring different careers. She is interested in interior design, law and astronomy. She has recently taken interest in the Interior Architecture concentration at RISD and is exploring different law school options. While attending our youth leadership summit and recent Social Justice Week field trip, Lanni has consistently been an active participant and exemplary community member.



**MS. KRISTAL LOFTON** is one of many equity warriors in our District. She has intentionally created space and time for the Equity and Belonging Office to provide professional development for Assistant Principals, focused on leading for equity and racial consciousness. Ms. Lofton believes that it is her duty to ensure that we have "right now" leaders who are culturally responsive, and are relentless about pushing change that improves teaching and learning, and advances equity.



**XARIS** is a junior attending **Alvarez High School** and one of our District wide equity warriors. Xaris has the unique ability to find the best in her classmates regardless of the cultural diversity that may exist. Her peers and teachers when describing Xaris say, "she is always available to help you and bring out the best in you." She is a quiet and confident leader that influences the ideas and actions of others in her community. Xaris is eager to learn and dedicated to creating change.



**AMY HARRINGTON** is a Middle School Literacy Specialist and veteran educator. She is dedicated to supporting teachers in their culturally responsive practices to reach each student. An upstander, Amy actively empowers those around her to address and eliminate bias. Thanks, Amy, for being an equity champion.



**ANGIE MICHEL** is an outstanding equity warrior, student leader and role model for her peers. Angie was elected as the student president at **Nathan Bishop Middle School**, and she has been impressing everyone with her exceptional leadership skills ever since. As the student president, Angie has taken on a multitude of responsibilities, including overseeing student government operations, representing the student body on various committees, and advocating for student interests. She exemplifies the qualities of a responsible leader, one who listens, respects, and values the perspectives of others. Angie is a truly remarkable student president and a source of inspiration for her peers. Her outstanding leadership and academic achievements have set a high standard for others to follow, and she has proven herself to be a valuable asset to the student community.



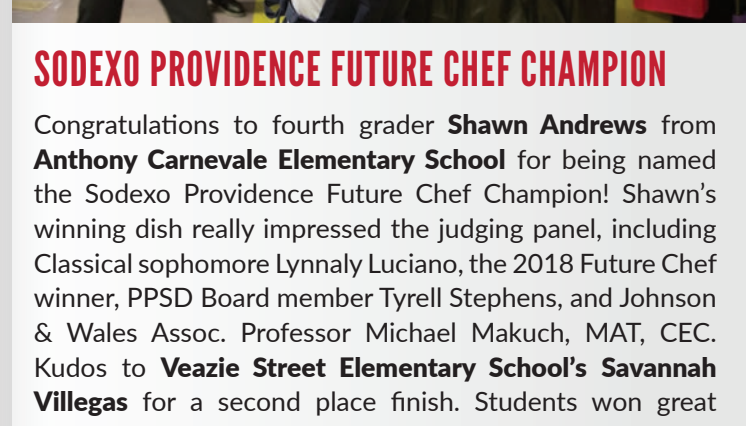
## CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



### CENTRAL E-SPORTS MOVES INTO FIRST PLACE

Congratulations to **Central High School's E-Sports team** on their win over Ponaganset! This win locked Central into first place! Shout out to **Dasani Silva** for being the match MVP, and the rest of the team for securing the win for the Knights. Great job, and good luck with the rest of the season!



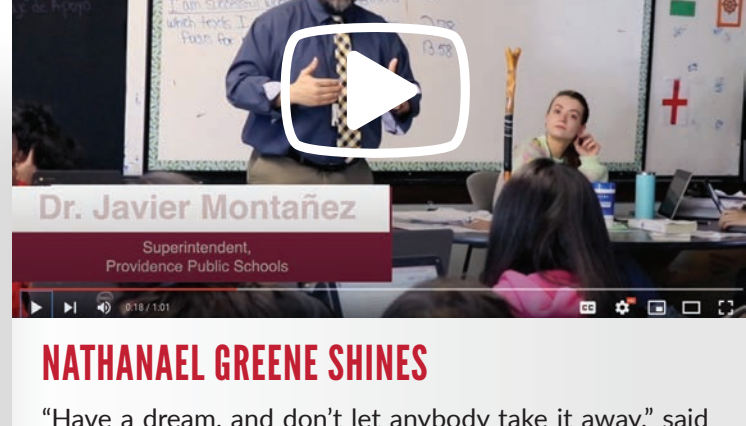
### SODEXO PROVIDENCE FUTURE CHEF CHAMPION

Congratulations to fourth grader **Shawn Andrews** from **Contry Carnevale Elementary School** for being named the Sodexo Providence Future Chef Champion! Shawn's winning dish really impressed the judging panel, including Classical sophomore Linnaly Luciano, the 2018 Future Chef winner, PPSD Board member Tyrell Stephens, and Johnson & Wales Assoc. Professor Michael Makuch, MAT, CEC. Kudos to **Veazie Street Elementary School's Savannah Villegas** for a second place finish. Students won great prizes including cookbooks and new cookware! All of the aspiring young chefs did extremely well in the competition, and should all be very proud of their accomplishments.



### VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR DAY

Kindergarten students at **Asa Messer Elementary School** celebrated "Very Hungry Caterpillar Day" by reading the beloved children's book by Eric Carle. The students made caterpillar hats and other various crafts to help celebrate the day! Everyone had a lot of fun reading the book and participating in the arts and crafts!



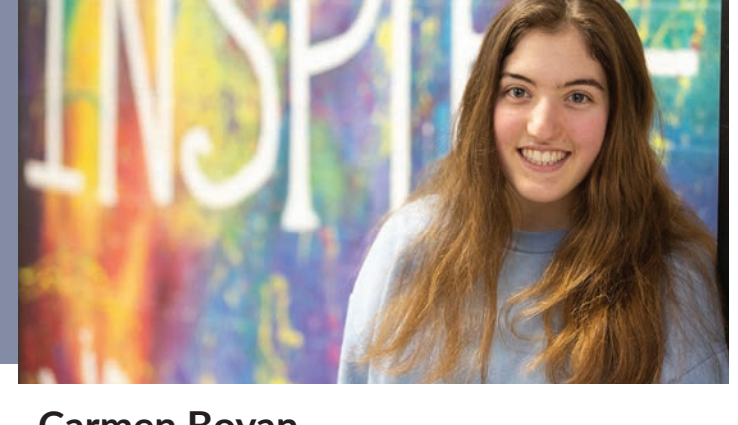
### NATHANAEL GREENE SHINES

"Have a dream, and don't let anybody take it away," said Superintendent Montañez Ed.D. during a recent visit to **Nathanael Greene Middle School** to speak with students, teachers, and administrators. He spoke to the class about the importance of education and following their dreams. He encouraged students to come to school and "give yourself the best opportunity for the best life."



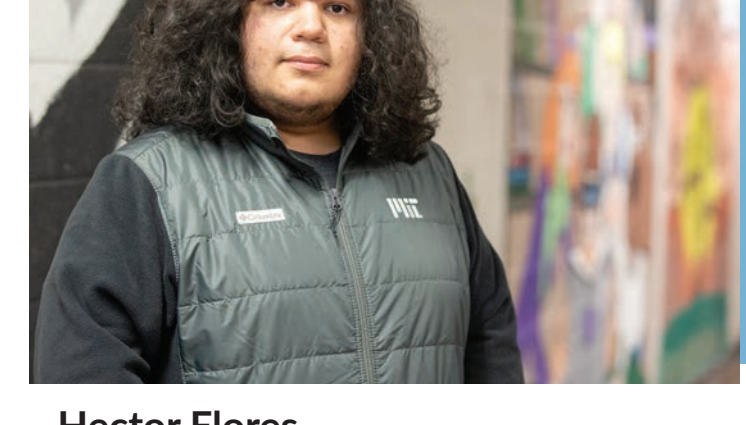
## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Get to know our amazing senior students in the District!  
Meet Classical seniors Carmen and Hector who both were accepted to MIT



### Carmen Boyan

Senior, **Classical High School**  
ES: Henry Barnard Elementary at RIC  
MS: Bishop Middle School



### Hector Flores

Senior, **Classical High School**  
ES: Lauro & West Elementary  
MS: Nathanael Greene Middle School

#### What are your plans after high school?

**CB:** I got into Stanford early action. I also got into MIT and the University of Chicago. I am still waiting to hear back from Harvard and Columbia. I really like the combination of great academics and great sports, and Stanford with the warm weather at MIT. I applied to six schools all together. I was really surprised that I got into some of the schools I did.

I like science, but I am not sure in what field of science. I have experience in genetics. I did an internship at Brown University last summer which was in computational genomics, which is like a cross between genetics and computer science. But I am also very interested in neuroscience, which was formed during my AP Psych class. Also environmental science, which is what attracted me to Stanford. Maybe I will go into research or something like that, I'm not sure.

#### How both got into MIT? Was that always your goal?

**HF:** I did not definitely scare—the whole admissions process—so I applied to many schools to be safe. I applied to 18 schools. We have fee waivers, so it makes it easier to apply to a lot of schools, that, and the Brown App. My top contenders were MIT, Harvard, and Cornell. But I withdrew from the Ivy League schools after I got admitted to MIT. My second choice was WPI. MIT was my dream school, and I've checked out the school with my cousin a few times both before and after I got in.

I am interested in a robotics track. I am not from here; I came from Mexico when I was in the first grade. I did the ESL program in elementary school. The reason I mention that is because it was my grandfather who got me into science. He taught me basic wiring and soldering to get me started in electronics.

#### What are your extracurricular activities?

**CB:** For the past four years at Classical, I've played volleyball and lacrosse. I also do rock climbing club which is really fun, Spanish club, and band all four years. I also play violin and piano.

**HF:** I did gender equality club. I played the trombone. When I came here, there wasn't an official robotics club. A friend of mine wanted to make one, so I worked with her to make it happen. We had started looking for grants and outside funding, and we came across this article about how in Touch wanted to expand robotics in high schools. We got in touch with a professor at Brown University and got supplies. It was a slow start at first because of COVID, but during junior year it picked back up.

**"Classical kind of brings in everyone from different places. It doesn't matter where you come from, as long as you demonstrate you are capable of hard work."**

#### Which staff member has made a big impact on your life?

**CB:** Ms. Hickey and Mr. Harding. Ms. Hickey is also my field hockey coach, and I had her class freshman and sophomore year. She always challenged me. She has a strong personality that is always fun to be around. Mr. Harding is a guidance counselor. He is just the best, and will do anything for anyone.

**HF:** Since the very first day, my guidance counselor, Mr. Verecchia, wanted to get to know me. It helped that I knew what I wanted to do from the beginning. He likes to mention how I reached out to him the summer of my 8th grade year because I called him to learn more about AP options in school. He offered to meet with me at the school, recognized I had a lot of ambition, saw that I was committed to my work, and helped me with AP classes. He saw my potential. It's those small actions that make it obvious that there are people looking out for you that want you to succeed.

#### What lesson did you learn in high school?

**CB:** I think making friends and working with others to try to understand things was a big lesson. Like in physics last year, a bunch of us didn't understand concepts so we would visit Brown University, use the whiteboard in their building, and do all the problems out. There are a lot of ways I learned to work with others when not everything came naturally to me.

**HF:** I think that Classical taught me to value the amount of time and effort I put in. I remember challenges during my earlier years, as I remember having a lot of challenges to face getting used to the language. Classical taught me that there is hard work that needs to be put in, that not many things are going to come to you for granted. So you should always strive to do the best work you can. That is very valuable, as a school like MIT is going to be very challenging.

#### Are you grateful to be a product of Providence Schools?

**CB:** My friend and I gave a little speech at freshmen orientation last month, and we spoke about how proud we are to say we went to Classical. I have a lot of Purple Pride. It's a fun place.

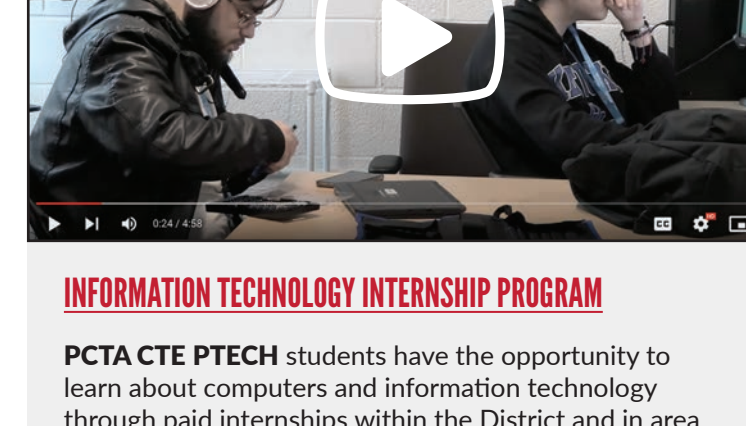
**HF:** I think that the culture you find at Classical and the school spirit comes from the diverse backgrounds that come together here. We all have a good time. I imagine it is something you get at public schools that you may not get at a private school. Classical kind of brings in everyone from different places. It doesn't matter where you come from, as long as you demonstrate you are capable of hard work.

## AROUND THE DISTRICT



### PPSD ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Assistant Principals from across the District attended a [strategic leadership and development program](#) recently. The program is geared toward helping APs grow into stronger leaders. "My biggest takeaway is the collegiality and the collaboration," said Jaime David, **Nathanael Greene Middle School** Assistant Principal, "knowing that I'm not the only one feeling the way I'm feeling. That I'm not the only one that is in need of certain levels of support... I learn different ways to tailor my leadership in a way that is collaborative and successful." Thank you to all of our wonderful APs in the District!



### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**PCTA CTE PTECH** students have the opportunity to learn about computers and information technology through paid internships within the District and in area businesses. The internship program is growing at PCTA, and they are working to expand it to other CTE schools in the District. Students have the opportunity to dive deeper into the professional industry and experience working hands-on within the field in advance. Learn more about how the experience has been for students and their respective employers in the [video here](#).



### MAYOR SMILEY VISITS MOUNT PLEASANT

Thank you to **Mayor Brett Smiley** for coming to visit **Mount Pleasant High School** to speak with out students and teachers. The Mayor, along with Superintendent Dr. Javier Montañez, did a walkthrough of the high school, and had the opportunity to speak to some of the amazing students and staff, as well as learn about the investments being made to the school. Thank you for visiting, Mayor Smiley!



### DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

Students at **Gilbert Stuart Middle School** worked together to make different designs to put on their classroom doors as part of a door decorating contest. The theme for the contest was Community, and the students had to come up with different ways to incorporate the theme into their artwork. Great job on collaborating with each other to make some amazing door designs!

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

- [Brown to provide full Pre-College scholarships to all admitted Providence public school students](#)  
Hopen News, February 16
- [Hope High Honors Gloria Patterson In A Most Appropriate Tribute](#)  
Yurview, March 13
- [Providence high school athlete wins Gatorade Player of the Year award](#)  
WJAR, March 17
- [The Jack of All Trades - Classical's Tyler Lee](#)  
WPRI, March 25

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).