



Students in the PPSD Summer Program at Young Woods Elementary School.

CONNECTIONS

JULY 29, 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.

Closing the achievement gap and building the school district our students deserve is a year-round effort. That's never been more clear than this summer! There are a number of projects and improvements underway to help us start the 2022-23 school year strong next month.

Students will soon be wrapping up their summer learning programs across all grade levels. Our K-8 students expanded their education through project-based learning in literacy, math, STEM, and arts enrichment courses. In addition to credit recovery, our high schoolers have been able to access career pathways through our Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. Thank you to the hundreds of dedicated staff members who helped make our summer learning program possible!

At the same time, buildings across the District are receiving several million dollars in upgrades utilizing a capital revolving fund established with the City of Providence. These upgrades include water bottle filling stations in all schools, refinishing several gym floors, boiler replacements, and other critical improvements.

The District is also forming new partnerships to establish local teacher pipelines and provide professional development opportunities for staff. Several dozen recent PPSD graduates have joined a partnership program between the District and Local Union 1033 designed to help graduates enter the teaching profession. The District has also partnered with Johnson and Wales University to provide significant discounts for PPSD staff pursuing advanced degrees, as you'll see below.

There are dozens more summer projects going on right now that I don't have the space to list, but I want our students, families, and community to know that the team at PPSD is hard at work to keep building on the momentum we established last year.



DR. JAVIER MONTANEZ
Superintendent

DISTRICT UPDATES

Turnaround Action Plan Progress

The community's **Turnaround Action Plan (TAP)** is the guiding star for building the school district our students deserve. [Click here to view](#) the latest progress report on the TAP, including critical steps taken towards the plan's pillars of World-Class Talent, Excellence in Learning, Engaged Communities, and Efficient District Systems. You will also learn what steps are in progress or being planned next to continue the District's positive momentum.

JWU Partnership

The Providence Public School District is proud to announce a [partnership with Johnson and Wales University \(JWU\)](#) to increase the pipeline of world-class educators in PPSD. Master's and doctoral-level education degree programs will be offered with discounted tuition for certain PPSD individuals including administrators, teachers, staff, and volunteers. Master's students will receive a 50% discount on tuition, while doctoral candidates will be offered a \$15,000 grant. The first cohort of students will be accepted this fall.

Welcome to New PPSD Hires

The District is excited to welcome all of our new educators and staff that have joined PPSD for the upcoming school year! You are joining a dedicated team of educators that is deeply

committed to helping students succeed. We are also excited to welcome new members of the District's [executive leadership team](#), including:

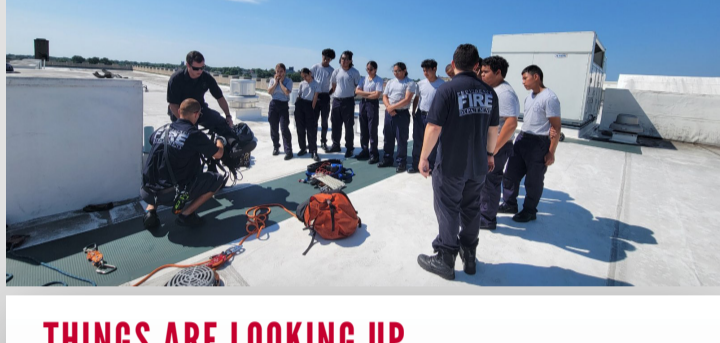
- Arzinia Gill, Senior Director of Principals' Support
- Cory McCarthy, Executive Director of School Improvement, Redesign, & Innovation
- Dr. Nkolika Etell Onye, Chief Equity Officer
- James Scott, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs & Special Projects
- Scott Sutherland, Executive Director of Secondary Schools
- Colleen Van Brunt, Executive Director of Professional Development

2022-23 Teacher Academy

The Providence Public School District (PPSD) is dedicated to providing educators with training and support to ensure professional growth. The District is excited to announce the **2022-2023 Teacher Academy**, which will run from August 15 through August 19. This year's academy will offer over 100 sessions including but not limited to the following topics: social-emotional learning, instructional supports/strategies for multilingual learners, dual language programming, mathematical and literacy pedagogy, equity, and/or specialized instructional. Teachers will earn \$40/hour and Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for all sessions attended. Sessions will be live and available for sign-up in Frontline beginning August 1 through August 10!

CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



THINGS ARE LOOKING UP

This summer, 12 rising seniors at **Central High School** began over 400 hours of paid Fire Academy training with the Providence Fire Department, in partnership with the District's CTE program and Junior Achievement of Rhode Island. The program will run through the next school year, and at the end students will have a chance to enter the City's Fire Academy to become a firefighter!



SUMMER SWAG

Students in the graphics summer program at **PCTA** are putting their Photoshop skills into action! Last week, they designed and made shirts for all students in CTE summer programs. This year 200 students at three schools took part in **CTE** programming, including several new programs such as firefighter training, certified nursing assistant (CNA) certification, and CCRI dual enrollment courses for **P-TECH** students.



2022 WINNER
MARQUIS BUCHANAN
Classical High School — SR

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to **Classical High School** graduate Marquis Buchanan, who was named **Boys Athlete of the Year** at the 2022 RI High School Sports Awards! We wish Marquis all the best as he moves on to play wide receiver for the University of Rhode Island's football team this fall.



HOMETOWN HERO

Hope High School graduate Maurice Cooper was recently highlighted in WPRI's **Hometown Hero** feature. Last school year, Maurice became the first Hope High wrestler to earn Division 1 All-American honors. This fall, he will continue his wrestling career at Johnson and Wales.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

Tracy Corcoran

General Education Pre-K teacher

Located in: Young Woods Elementary School

Joined PPSD in: 2020

How would you describe your job?

Every day is different. And it's busy – half the time you forget to eat lunch! I'm always like, "did I eat today?" In Pre-K the job evolves a lot during the year too. In the beginning of the year, you try to get students who have never been away from their families to learn how to trust you and become more independent. We do a lot of social-emotional work, teaching the students about their emotions and how to problem solve. We're nurses, caretakers, referees as well as teaching science, literacy, and math. It's exhausting, but it's the most rewarding job. That's why I've been doing it for 27 years.

"We know we're giving these kids a high quality pre-education. These kids are capable and confident and they're ready to rock."

What's your favorite part of being a Pre-K teacher?

The difference between the September child and the June child. The growth in Pre-K is amazing! They come in scared little kids – they've never been away from their family, some speaking different languages, so they're learning to be independent from their families and find the confidence within themselves. But in June I have students who can follow a classroom routine independently, they know their letters and sounds, some are reading, they can count to 100, they're confident, and they learn how to be compassionate and kind and they make friends. And all that happens in one school year!

The Pre-K program at Young Woods recently became the first in the District to receive a 5-star rating. How did that feel?

We have an amazing team. We all came together from another district in 2020 and we said this was a great opportunity. We know how to work with each other so well, and the teachers at Young Woods as well as Dr. Reilly and Kelly Spaziano have really embraced us and guided us. It's a real family here, which is important. We each have our own class, but we collaborate which has been so helpful in our teaching, and our coordinator Diane Nault is a big part of that also. The 5-star rating is an acknowledgement of all that work. We know we're giving these students a high-quality education. These children are capable and confident and they're ready to rock.

What are you looking forward to next year?

I always tell myself to remember in September that the new students are not from scratch. They'll learn in time, not on time. So I refocus and remember that my goal is to create a family in our classroom, a community where we respect each other and help each other. That builds the bridge to learning. Once we help the child control their emotions and know they're cared for here, that's when we can start the real learning. We help them in the beginning, but in the end they have the tools to problem solve on their own.

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

- [City leaders break ground on Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School Annex](#) WJAR, July 20, 2022
- [JWU partners with Providence schools to increase educator pipeline](#) Providence Business News, July 19, 2022
- [Donated van means more than just mobility to Providence family](#) WPRI, June 30, 2022
- [Young Woods Elementary pre-K program receives 5-star award](#) Providence Business News, June 21, 2022
- [RI Lego artist unveils replica of Providence elementary school](#) WPRI, June 20, 2022

AROUND THE DISTRICT



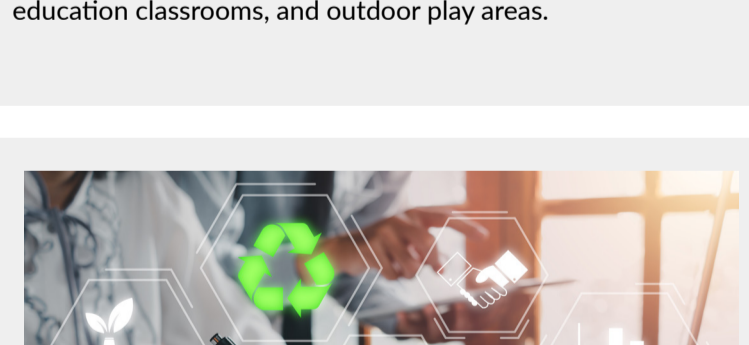
BREAKING NEW GROUND

Last week, Providence city leaders gathered at the **Frank Spaziano Elementary School** to announce re-construction of the school's annex and construction of a new building. The \$44 million project will have Pre-K through fifth grade classrooms as well as art and STEM rooms, a cafeteria, special education classrooms, and outdoor play areas.



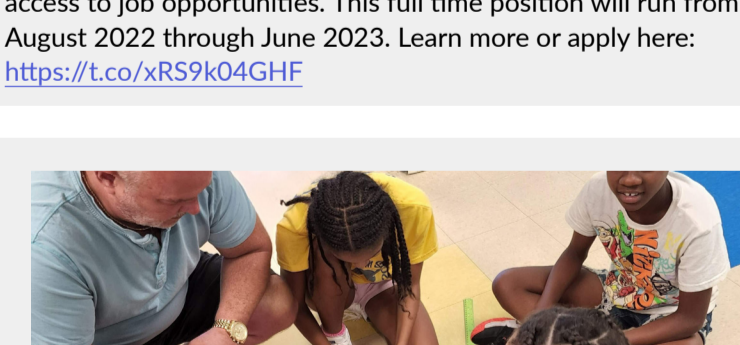
MENTORS AND TUTORS WANTED

City Year Providence is recruiting young adults from ages 17 to 25 to serve as mentors and tutors in six Providence Public Schools. This opportunity includes a \$935 bi-weekly stipend (pre-tax), employer-paid health insurance, an education award, access to scholarships, professional development, and direct access to job opportunities. This full time position will run from August 2022 through June 2023. Learn more or apply here: <https://t.co/xRS9k04GHF>



ELECTRONICS AWARD

Congratulations to our Information Technology (IT) team and IT Officer Peter Santos for again being [awarded for their efforts](#) in purchasing and using environmentally friendly electronics in the District. For the fifth straight year, the IT team was recognized by the **Global Electronics Council** for using equipment that is energy efficient, long lasting, and easy to recycle. Compared to less efficient options, last year alone the electronics purchased by the IT team saved enough energy to power 71 U.S. households for an entire year!



EXPLORING STEM IN SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

The **Summer Learning Program** has been an opportunity for our elementary students to practice and hone their science and engineering skills through **Mystic Aquarium's STEM Accelerator Kits**. Teachers led students through hands-on lessons that combined social emotional development with academic enrichment. From building clay boats to straw towers, students explored STEM careers and developed skills that will support them throughout the school year.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

○ **LAST DAY OF SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM**

Friday, July 29, 2022

○ **STAFF RETURN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Monday, August 22, 2022

○ **FIRST DAY OF CLASSES**

Monday, August 29, 2022



FREE BACKPACKS & SCHOOL SUPPLIES
Saturday, August 27
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Drive-By Event
Multiple Locations including:

- Providence Community Health Center, 31 Atwood St.
- West End Community Center, 109 Bucklin St.
- Providence Information & Student Registration, 325 Ocean St.
- Nathanael Greene Middle School, 721 Chalkstone Ave.



FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR STUDENTS
Ages 18 and under
Began July 5

Through the **EAT, PLAY, LEARN PVD** program, all Providence youth 18 years of age and under are eligible to receive free summer meals. Free summer meals through August. For a complete list of locations and times, see [attached flyer](#) or visit eatplaylearnpvd.com/summermeals

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.