



Young Woods Pre-K wins 5-star rating from BrightStars!

# CONNECTIONS

JUNE 24, 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 [PPSD website](#) in multiple languages.

We made it to the end of another difficult pandemic school year. I want to again say a big congratulations to all of our graduating seniors – we're proud of you and we can't wait to see the amazing things you do in the future!

I also want to say a heartfelt thank you to our incredible teachers and staff, our parents and students, our community partners, the team at the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Providence School Board for all of your hard work and support this year.

Together we have put in so much effort, and it's been exhausting at times. But we've also made so much progress towards our Turnaround Action Plan pillars: Excellence in Learning, World Class Talent, Engaged Communities, and Efficient District Systems.

- Our students showed significant growth towards **Excellence in Learning** with improvement in Math, Reading, and English Language Arts over the course of the year, as highlighted in our [May 13 newsletter](#).
  - The team at Young Woods Elementary also earned the first [5-star rating](#) for a Pre-Kindergarten program in the District.
- The incredible educators in our schools continue to embody **World Class Talent** and grow professionally. This year they won several awards for their hard work, including [RI Principal of the Year](#), [RI Assistant Principal of the Year](#), [RI School Psychologist of the Year](#), [RI School Social Worker of the Year](#), [PPSD Teacher of the Year](#), [Recess Rocks RI Champions](#), [Jr. Achievement Educator of the Year](#), [RIIL Male Coach of the Year](#), and the [RIIL Distinguished Service Award](#).
- Teachers also showed their commitment to **Engaged Communities** by including parent-teacher meetings in their contract. The team in our Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office hosted dozens of [community meetings](#) on [important topics](#), and together we all helped set a new record for the number of families responding to Surveyworks.
- And we have dozens of projects underway that show the value of **Efficient District Systems** in improving our schools. Projects like the [Narducci Learning Center](#), [millions of dollars](#) in [renovations](#) to bring schools into the 21st century, new heating and cooling equipment in buildings, and water bottle fillers in every school.

We also added increased supports in all of our schools across the District when our staff and students needed it most. Supports like Assistant Principals, Guidance Counselors, and Community Specialists. And this summer, we'll continue to close achievement gap with more than 3,000 students in high quality summer learning programs. The list goes on and on, but I only have so much space here!

We finally have a foundation for success. I truly believe that all of your efforts have PPSD at a turning point. It's an honor to work with all of you, and I look forward to building on this positive momentum through the summer and into next year.



DR. JAVIER MONTAÑEZ  
Superintendent

## DISTRICT UPDATES

### One of the Best in Rhode Island

Congratulations to the Pre-Kindergarten team at **Young Woods Elementary School** for being the first Pre-K program in the District to receive a 5-star rating from BrightStars! BrightStars is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, and helps families in Rhode Island access quality child care, early learning, and school-age programs.

The 5-star rating recognizes programs that demonstrate quality above and beyond state licensing standards. The Pre-K program at Young Woods was assessed across many quality standards and criteria.

Currently Rhode Island has 127 RI Pre-K state classrooms in 18 communities across the state, serving more than 2,300 four-year-old children. To be eligible to attend, children must be 4 years old by September 1, 2022, and be residents of one of the identified RI Pre-K communities. For more information on these communities and the lottery application process please visit the [RIDE RI Pre-K Page](#).

### Superintendent's Teachers Cabinet

Teachers – your voice matters and the Superintendent wants to hear from you. Providence Public Schools will launch a **Superintendent's Teacher Cabinet** in September 2022. The Cabinet is designed to give teachers a stronger voice in shaping our District.

This program gives teachers the opportunity to meet with Superintendent Montañez on a monthly basis to provide input

on district policies, share their perspective from the classroom, and discuss the aspirations and concerns of teachers.

Additionally, the program provides teachers from across the District with the opportunity to engage with one another and generate new ideas.

The Superintendent plans to select up to 10 individuals with a range of experiences, expertise, and roles. Nominations for the Superintendent's Teachers Cabinet should be submitted via [this form](#) by June 30.

### Newsletter Summer Schedule

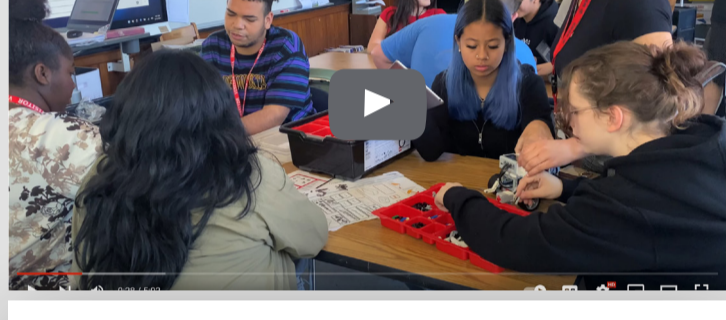
Your favorite newsletter will be taking a brief break this summer, but don't worry, we'll be back before you know it! Look for our **summer edition on July 29**, followed by a return to our bi-weekly schedule on August 19 to get you ready to head back to school. As always, your suggestions for ways to improve the newsletter or great stories to highlight are welcome at [communications@ppsd.org](#).

### Graduation recordings

Congratulations to all of our **graduating seniors!** We are truly proud of all that you accomplished during several difficult pandemic years, and we wish you nothing but success as you move on to your next chapter. If you or any of your family or friends missed one of our nine graduation ceremonies, you can catch them on our [YouTube page](#). They already have several thousand views! Thank you to the team at Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA) for handling audio/visual duties for this year's graduations!

## CELEBRATING STUDENTS

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



### PRE-ENGINEERING PROGRAM

This year, students in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pre-engineering program at **Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA)** took their love of robotics on the road, helping run the Robotics Club at West Broadway Middle School. Click the image above to watch a video about the impact this program has had on students of all ages.



### CELEBRATING PROJECT SEARCH GRADUATES

Congratulations to the **2022 Miriam Hospital Project Search Graduating Class!** Project Search helps prepare young people with disabilities for success in competitive integrated employment. This is the 8th graduating class for The Miriam Project Search Program. Superintendent Montañez was honored to join students during this year's ceremony to wish them the best of luck during their next chapter.



### SODEXO SCHOLARSHIPS

Ten Providence Public School students were recently selected to receive **\$1,000 scholarships from Sodexo**, the food and facilities management company utilized by the District. Students were evaluated and selected by a committee of guidance counselors from across several schools. Thank you to Sodexo for your commitment to our students and for funding these scholarships.



### SCIENCE FAIR STARS

This month, **Robert Bailey Elementary** fourth and fifth graders took part in the school's first-ever Science Fair! Did you ever wonder why some objects float, but others sink? And how do lava lamps work, exactly? The incredible students at Bailey Elementary have got you covered. Great job, everyone!



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

### Marquitta McNair

Social Coach

Located in: Carnevale Elementary School

Joined PPSD in: 2011

### What's a day like in the life of a social coach?

I work with special needs children in grades Pre-K through 5 who are on the autism spectrum, teaching and assisting them with social skills. That includes helping students in the classroom, during specials like gym, art, or music, lunch, and recess. I also hold social groups in and out of the classroom that focus on social/self-awareness, relationship skills, and decision making. During group we check in, read a book, do an activity, or play a game that goes with the lesson. I also make sure to include affirmations because it's very important to build self-esteem and confidence, then we end with a calming relaxation.

### How is your work impacting the lives of students?

When most people walk into a room, we notice social cues and can figure them out. If it's quiet, we know to be quiet too. But for people on the spectrum, processing that information can be a little difficult. A student on the spectrum may not be aware of those social cues, even just in a conversation. We work on things like looking at the person you're talking to, making sure you're facing them, and staying focused on listening. All of these skills that we take for granted will help our students be successful going forward when they interact with people and their peers.

"Even the smallest accomplishment means something. Be kind! Kindness goes a long way."

### What's the best part of your job?

Seeing the growth in students year over year! I had a student who I worked with since 5th grade who just graduated from CCRI in May. That was an amazing feeling. I also work with the Extended School year (ESY) social skills group. It's so great to see

those students each summer because I can really see their growth and progress.

We work on skills like flexible thinking, so that a change in routine doesn't ruin our day – we're able to redirect and keep moving forward.

It's so important to not judge a book by its cover. I feel a lot of people see our special education students and think that they're not capable of great things. But they have so much talent! During our summer program we have a talent show at the end! We have students that are non-verbal who are taking part and singing. But you wouldn't know unless you give them the opportunity. It was just amazing. I know things can take a long time, but if you're patient it's so rewarding. Even the smallest accomplishment means something. Be kind! Kindness goes a long way.

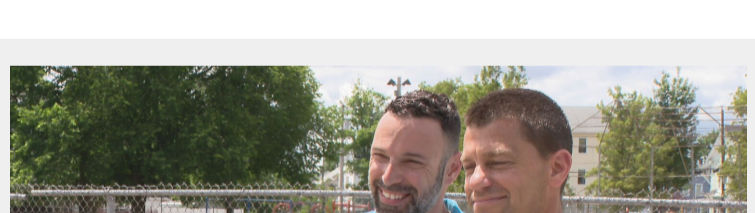
### What's something about your job you want people to know?

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

- [A-Venture Academy students raise money to repair monument honoring fallen marines](#)  
NBC 10 NEWS, June 20, 2022
- [Students raise money to repair vandalized memorial](#)  
WPRI 12, June 20, 2022
- [Recess Rocks in Rhode Island champions named](#)  
NBC 10 NEWS, June 20, 2022
- [Why a Providence restaurant raised \\$12,000 to help Mount Pleasant valedictorian attend URI](#)  
Providence Journal, June 17, 2022
- [Nets David Duke Jr. hosts basketball camp at his alma mater](#)  
WPRI 12, June 18, 2022

## AROUND THE DISTRICT



### RECESS ROCKS CHAMPIONS

This month, **Mary Fogarty Elementary School** Physical Education Teachers Ken Anderson and John Passerelli helped their school become **Recess Rocks RI Champions** for 2022! Recess Rocks in Rhode Island is a six-year old partnership of Playworks New England, the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

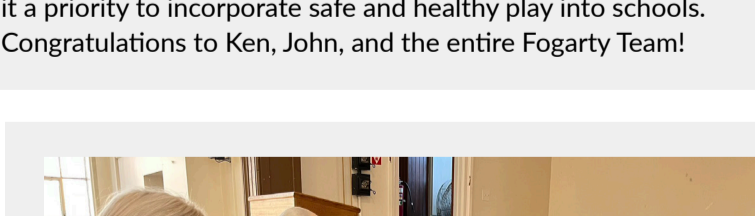
In 2021, Playworks and the RI Healthy Schools Coalition launched an initiative to recognize professionals who have made it a priority to incorporate safe and healthy play into schools. Congratulations to Ken, John, and the entire Mary Fogarty team!



### CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Last week, colleagues and friends gathered for a [surprise celebration](#) of the retirement of **Joe Prisco, the longest tenured Providence Public Schools employee**, after nearly 50 years with the District! Joe began his career with PPSD in 1973.

He has served as an English Teacher at several high schools, and most recently has been a Guidance Counselor at **DelSesto Middle School** for several years. Thank you, Joe, for your decades of dedication and for the impact you had on the lives of thousands of students!



### LEARNING WITH LEGOS AT LAURO

Rhode Island Lego artist Andrew Grover visited **Carl G. Lauro Elementary School** in Providence this week to deliver his latest creation – [a Lego model of the school](#) is now on display. Students were the first ones to get a look at the completed model, and spent time asking Grover questions about his construction process and the history of their school, which was built in 1927. The model will be placed in a protective case and displayed in the school's lobby, next to a plaque commemorating the completion of construction of the building.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### LAST DAY OF CLASSES

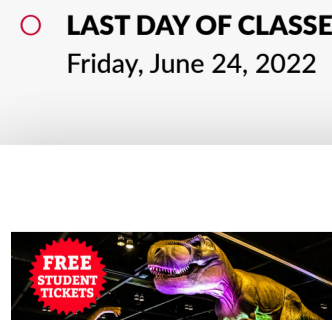
Friday, June 24, 2022

### FIRST DAY OF SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

### LAST DAY OF SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

Friday, July 29, 2022

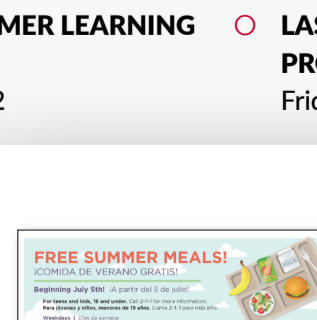


### FREE STUDENT TICKETS TO DINO & DRAGON STROLL

June 25 and 26

RI Convention Center

All Providence Public School students 17 and under are offered free tickets to the **Dino & Dragon Stroll**, a family-friendly event targeted to an elementary and middle school audience. Students can receive free tickets by using the **discount code: SCHOOL** at <https://www.dinostroll.com/events/providence-ri>. Please note additional tickets for family members must be purchased.



### FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR STUDENTS

Ages 18 and under

Begins 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 begin July 5. For a complete list of locations and times, see attached flyer or visit [eatplaylearnpvd.com/summermeals](http://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](mailto:communications@ppsd.org).